SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, SELF-IDENTITY, AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

by

Cedric Oliver Evans

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I attempt to give an account of the experiential self: the self of inner experience. I put forward the view that the empirical self is the only self there is, and attribute attempts to identify a Transcendental Self, a Pure Ego, a Mind, or a Soul, to a misunderstanding of the nature of the empirical, experiential self. The postulation of a real, or metaphysical, self is put down to the fact that philosophers have entertained altogether too simple a view of the nature of the empirical self. Their major assumption has been that if we have experience of an empirical self, a real self must be postulated which does the experiencing of the empirical self. On this basis the real self cannot itself become an object of experience without this leading to an infinite regress. My contention is, on the contrary, that the empirical self can itself perform all the functions allotted to the metaphysical self. On this view, the notion of a metaphysical self is redundant, and we are saved the embarrassment of defending the existence of a peculiarly elusive metaphysical entity.

The position I have just outlined could quite easily be mistaken for one leading up to a theory like Strawson's in which a self is identified with a man; or Shoemaker's in which a self is described as a non-spiritual substance. In fact it will be seen to differ radically from these two, essentially coincident, approaches. Strawson and Shoemaker, together with most recent philosophers dealing with the problem of self-identity, see the problem exclusively in terms of the identity of _other_ persons; not

in the identity of a person for himself. Even when the question of one's own identity arises, this is still taken by them to be a problem of the identity of other persons. Thus on their view if I have to establish my own identity, I must use precisely the same criteria as other people would use if they had to establish my identity. The problem I am concerned with, however, is one about which Strawson is silent: namely, the problem of explaining in what consists our own identity for ourselves. Chapter one opens with a discussion of the significance of the fact that we have first-hand knowledge of what selves are. The Pure Ego Theory and The Serial Theory are rejected for failing to take advantage of the unique position this places us in, to describe what selves are.

While it is true to say that the Serial Theory offers an account of the self which is firmly rooted in experience (and in this respect meets one of the essential requirements I have laid down for a theory of the self), it is shown to be unsatisfactory because it rests on acceptance of Hume's introspective account of the empirical self as a bundle of perceptions. I argue that in general empiricism fails to do justice to the function of attention. In consequence it misdescribes the experiential data on which The Serial Theory of The Self is based. It is my contention that the "perceptions" of which Hume speaks are one and all elements of experience singled out through the operation of attention. As such they represent but a fragment of total experience. By identifying the empirical self with the perceptions disclosed by introspection (attention) the Humean account mistakes the part for the whole. I seek to show that once this error is corrected, an account of the empirical self can be given that overcomes the traditional objections that have been brought against it, and which have been used to justify appeals to

non-experiential interpretations of the self.

Since I dispute the widely held Humean view of the empirical self, and since I wish to take cognizance of the fact that we ourselves are the selves to be identified, I undertake an analysis of consciousness itself. Most of chapter one is devoted to that task. The reality of consciousness is defended against arguments denying its existence, and an exclusively empirical analysis of consciousness is offered. This is to protect my programme from the objection that a metaphysical interpretation of the self is only avoided at the cost of introducing a metaphysical interpretation of consciousness. To this end I defend the proposition that consciousness is nothing over and above its several manifestations, and I deny in particular that consciousness consists of acts of awareness. Then again adherence to the notion of consciousness is defended against the reductionist argument that reference to it should be dispensed with, in favour of piecemeal references to its manifestations. It is maintained that it is erroneous to conceive of consciousness as an aggregate of its manifestations.

As a preliminary to investigating the constitution of consciousness two opposing points of view are considered in the form put forward by four Nineteenth Century philosophers. The views of Hamilton and Ferrier who contend that consciousness exhibits a duality between subject and object are contrasted with those of Hodgson and James who deny that consciousness has any such "inner duplicity." This short survey leads to the conclusion that an independent analysis of consciousness is needed, in view of the fact that opposing positions are defended by appeals to self-evidence that cancel each other out. What is required, and what I undertake, is to give an analysis of consciousness that is based on empirical facts and eschews any appeal

to intuition or self-evidence.

Attention is made the subject of study in chapter two, because it supplies immediate evidence of the existence of the bifurcation of elements within consciousness. This effect of attention is investigated in the surmise that it might turn out to be the empirical basis to the alleged duality between subject and object. I attempt to show that attention is operative in all normal forms of consciousness: even when we believe ourselves to be totally inattentive. It transpires that attention reveals the structure of consciousness. It polarizes consciousness into that part of it that is receiving attention and a remaining part that is not. The part receiving attention I refer to as the object of attention, and the part from which attention is withdrawn I refer to as residual consciousness. These two aspects of consciousness are dealt with in chapters two and three, respectively. Evidence from the psychologists William James, and his French contemporary, T.H. Ribot, is adduced to support the analysis of the relation between consciousness and attention.

A central distinction to my enterprise is the distinction I draw between what I call "interrogative attention" on the one hand, and "non-interrogative attention" on the other. I argue that these two forms of attention amount to the different ways in which consciousness may be structured. In the case of interrogative attention, in which attention is bestowed without a problem-solving intelligence being brought to bear on the object of attention, the two poles of consciousness--residual consciousness and object of attention--are merely severed from each other. In the case of interrogative attention, in which attention is given for the sake of finding something out, the two poles of consciousness are in a systematic relationship with each other. The investigation suggests that the

different forms of attention are just the different ways in which consciousness may be structured. There is therefore no suggestion that attention may assume the role of an occult cause. Although the structure of consciousness will vary according to the form of attention, its bi-polarity is a formal feature common to all such structures. No matter what the content, the form of consciousness remains unchanged. There is nothing static about the content of residual consciousness on one side, nor about the object of attention on the other. Both, it is maintained, change ceaselessly through the continuous interchange of elements from one pole of consciousness to the other. An important observation is made to the effect that the changing content of the two poles is not noticed equally at both poles. The nature of the structure of consciousness is revealed to be one in which the changes occurring to the object of attention attract notice, while the changes taking place in the content of residual consciousness pass largely unnoticed. This is shown to be necessarily the case, and the feature of consciousness in question I describe as the <u>directionality</u> of consciousness.

Chapter four is the crucial chapter in the work. The two preceding chapters are designed to prepare the ground for the denouement which it presents, and much of the significance of the earlier discussion can only be fully appreciated in its light. In it the view is advanced that the bi-polar structure of consciousness accounts for the duality between subject and object which Hamilton had asserted to be a self-evident feature of consciousness. The essence of the theory is that residual consciousness (which may be said to be, metaphorically speaking, the negative pole of consciousness), is the empirical self for which we have been searching. It is shown to have all the "marks" philosophers have taken to be characteristics

of the self. The empirical self is, on this theory, located within consciousness, and for this reason its knowability is guaranteed. At the same time the empirical self is not identified with the content of consciousness, and in this way the difficulty that the self is continuously passing away, which besets the Serial Theory of the Self, is overcome. From this perspective it can be appreciated that the Humean identification of the self with a series of perceptions is the very reverse of the truth. It is tantamount to the identification of the self with what is essentially not-self: viz. the objects of attention (i.e., the wrong pole of consciousness: the positive instead of the negative pole, so to speak).

I contrast this theory with its closest rival--the theory that identifies the self with the mass of somatic feeling--and demonstrate its manifest superiority to the latter theory. Objections to the plausibility of the proposed identification of the self with residual consciousness are considered and answered. It is shown to share the merit, which is particularly claimed by the somatic feeling theory, of enabling us to maintain that even an isolated perception can be said to be the perception of a self, quite independently of its relation to other perceptions. In this way it overcomes a major stumbling block to theories of the empirical self which in general permit of no such claim. At the same time this feature of the theory destroys the basis of one of the strongest arguments in favour of a Pure Ego Theory: namely the supposal that only on a Pure Ego Theory could it be maintained that one isolated perception could be the perception of a self. Finally the implications of the theory on the question of self-consciousness are drawn out, and the limits to complete self-objectification are explained.

Perhaps the single greatest difficulty for a theory that locates the self within experience, is to account for self-identity through time: in other words, the problem of the continuity of the self. A theory identifying the self with residual consciousness must seem particularly vulnerable in this respect, because of the fact that residual consciousness has an ever-changing content. This problem is taken up in chapter five. The Serial Theory is subjected to close examination, because it is offered as a solution to this problem. It is shown to be unsatisfactory, because of its dependence on the Humean view of consciousness, which, as I have already indicated, I dispute. I try to show that my analysis of consciousness escapes the atomistic implications of the Serial Theory, and demands instead that consciousness be seen as a continuum.

The argument put forward to establish the fact that consciousness is continuous, is dependent on a subsidiary thesis that runs parallel to the main one throughout the work. It is the contention that states of consciousness come into being in conjunction with the bodily activities involving the use of our sense-organs. In the present context this thesis is brought in to explain the continuity of consciousness, in the following manner. I show that states of consciousness are sustained by bodily activities, and reason that since bodily activities are continuous while they last, the states of consciousness they sustain must themselves be continuous for as long as the bodily activity continues. The inference is then drawn that since residual consciousness is a part of consciousness, the continuousness of consciousness must be reflected in residual consciousness as well. Thus, on the basis of the identification of the self with residual consciousness, the continuity of the self is assured. Memory is then brought in to explain our <u>awareness</u> of our

self-continuity.

The thesis concludes with a sketch of some of the wider implications of my findings. It is argued that the relation between bodily activity and consciousness demands that the self be conceived of as embodied. And finally it is suggested that the theory offers the prospect of a reconciliation between Realism and Idealism; if not in the main, at least in respect of the issue of the active versus the passive self in perceptual experience.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONSCIOUSNESS

1. To the question "What is the self?" it would be apposite to reply as St. Augustine did to the question "What is time?": "If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not." (1) Let us, *per impossible*, imagine asking ourselves this question on the supposition that we who ask it are not ourselves selves. Our first thought might then be: "If only *we* were selves, we would have the answer." But of course we *are* selves, and should therefore be in the best possible position to know what selves are. It is perplexing to realise that we have this advantage, and yet in spite of it, are unable to give a satisfactory account of the self. The native knowledge we have of ourselves seems to defy every attempt to put it into words, and it is this dilemma we find ourselves in which makes St. Augustine's despairing cry peculiarly applicable to knowledge of the self.

There is a danger that if we come to the conclusion that we are unable to utilize this native knowledge we have of ourselves, we will dismiss it as being of no use anyway, and try to provide a theory of the self which ignores the fact altogether. Let me illustrate this point. What I have described as our native knowledge of ourselves is the knowledge we have of our own being, and this knowledge is not propositional in form. It is also the knowledge we have of ourselves when we are not asked what the self is. In other words it is pre-

(1) *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (New York, 1949), p.253.

reflective knowledge. In view of this fact a request to have this knowledge described is self-defeating. As soon as we try to describe it, it ceases to be the knowledge we have when we are not asked--i.e., pre-reflective knowledge--and becomes the knowledge we do not have when asked. Let us, then, concede this logical difficulty, just as we concede to a mystic the indescribability of his mystical experience, before proceeding to read his description; and consider an attempt to describe the self of which we have pre-reflective knowledge.

In the course of his exposition of Hume's theory of self-identity, MacNabb presents a view of the self, which, although he does not think of it in these terms, corresponds with the self of pre-reflective knowledge. I am suggesting, in other words, that a description, if one could be given, of the self of which we have pre-reflective knowledge, would come remarkably close to this description, given by MacNabb:

> I suggest that there is much plausibility in Berkeley's view, that we have an experience which we call the self, or soul, an experience different in kind from our other experiences, more internal than the most personal emotion we feel, and not needing or able to be represented in thought by an image, since in all thinking it is actually present. (1)

On this account our selves are, so to speak, "with us" the whole time, and this gives rise to our feeling of complete familiarity with the self, of which MacNabb's passage gives such a distinct impression. This is, to be sure, the way we feel about ourselves when we are not asked what the self is. But no sooner have we found words to describe this experience, than their self-defeating character becomes evident. MacNabb, we notice, refers to an experience "which we call the self." This means that the self is an experience. And the question at once

(1) D.G.C. MacNabb, David Hume His Theory of Knowledge and Morality (London, 1951), p.147.

arises "Who experiences this experience?" It cannot be the self, because the self has been identified with the experience experienced. We are left with the feeling that the experiencer who experiences the self has been left out of the picture, and the suspicion remains that the experiencer in question is after all the self we have all along been trying to identify. As the fruit-laden branches receded out of reach whenever Tantalus attempted to grasp them, so does the self seem to elude us when we attempt to grasp it. Equally, when we do not attempt to grasp the self in a self-reflective act, it seems as close to us as was the fruit to Tantalus when he made no effort to reach it.

Many philosophers have resigned themselves to this predicament, and have retreated to the view that the self is, in itself, unknowable. Our knowledge of the self, on this view, is in principle indirect. The self is known only through its manifestations. We know what the self experiences and what it accomplishes, but what the entity is in itself, remains forever concealed from us. We call it the self, the mind, the ego, or the subject, but apart from giving it a name, we cannot say what it is. Such a view as this is in effect the particular application to the self of the general doctrine of a substance and its attributes. On this reasoning, whatever property we ascribe to a substance is an attribute of the substance, and what we know of a substance is always one of its attributes, never the substance itself. The substance becomes an unknowable something in which attributes "inhere," and its sole raison d'etre is to be a "support" for a collection of attributes. This illustrates the danger we face if we try to understand what the self is, without taking into account the fact that we are dealing with entities which we ourselves are, and of which, in consequence, we have a certain native knowledge. Language itself seems to collaborate in turning the self into an unknowable

substance without any determinate characteristics. We refer to the things which belong to each of us as, for example, "my house," "my car," "my shoes" and so on. In these cases the possessive adjective of the personal pronoun "I" dissociates me from what is mine. I am not my house, my car or my shoes. Now it is easy to believe that this is a general logical feature of the word "my," which is true of all its uses: whatever I can call "my," or "mine" must be something other than myself. Thus when I speak of "my body," "my consciousness" or "my mind," these are items which belong to me, but I am something different from them all. I am not my body, my consciousness, or my mind. But what then am I? There seems to be only one possibility. I am the substance which "possesses" these attributes. The self is bereft of all characteristics, and appears as a pure logical subject, but one which nevertheless exists. This is the dilemma.

We do not have to look far to find an example that falsifies the analysis of "my" as equivalent to "belongs to me"-- what may be called the dissociative analysis. We have after all the word "myself". This word does not agree with the dissociative analysis of "my." I cannot say "I am not myself" (except in the non-literal sense which means "I am not feeling like, or acting like, myself") without contradicting myself. This exception means that the dissociative analysis cannot be given of all uses of "my," and so it cannot be true *a priori* that a given use of "my" is dissociative. We cannot tell *a priori*, for instance, that the use of "my" in "my body" is dissociative. And yet it is hard not to believe that the assumption that it is has played its part in adding plausibility to the theory that the relation between a self and its body is a contingent one.

The view of the self I have been concerned with is known as the Pure Ego Theory. On this theory all we can know of the self is the fact that there is a self, and what it does and what it experiences. Of the nature of this entity we know nothing. If we describe the entity as a substance, it transpires that we know no more about this substance than we do about any other. It shares the inaccessibility of substance in general. To make this theory come alive, I shall quote a passage in which it receives expression: the work of a M. Gatien-Arnoult.

> I turn my attention on my being and find that I have organs, and that I have thoughts. My body is the complement of my organs; am I then my body, or any part of my body? This I cannot be. The matter of my body, in all its points, is in a perpetual flux, in a perpetual process of renewal. I,--I do not pass away, I am not renewed. None probably of the molecules which constituted my organs some years ago, form any part of the material system which I now call mine. It has been made up anew; but I am still what I was of old. These organs may be mutilated; one, two, or any number of them may be removed; but not the less do I continue to be what I was, one and entire. It is even not impossible to conceive me existing, deprived of every organ; I, therefore, who have these organs, or this body, I am neither an organ nor a body.
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> Neither am I identical with my thoughts, for they are manifold and various. I, on the contrary, am one and the same. Each moment they change and succeed each other; this change and succession takes place in me, but I neither change nor succeed myself in myself. Each moment I am aware or am conscious of the existence and change of my thoughts: this change is sometimes determined by me, sometimes by something different from me; but I always can distinguish myself from them; I am a permanent being, an enduring subject, of whose existence these thoughts are only so many modes, appearances, or phenomena;--I who possess organs and thoughts am, therefore, neither these organs nor these thoughts.
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> I can conceive myself to exist apart from every organ, But if I try to conceive myself existent without a thought,--without some form of consciousness,--I am unable. This or that thought may not be perhaps necessary; but of some thought it is necessary that I should be conscious, otherwise I can no longer conceive myself to be. A suspension of thought is thus a suspension of my intellectual existence; I am, therefore, essentially a thinking,--conscious being; and my true character is that of an intelligence,--an intelligence served by organs. (1)

(1) This passage is quoted by Sir William Hamilton, and is to

Now there are many objections which one would wish to level against the view of substance I have been considering, but it is not these which I am interested in at the moment. I am interested in the extension of the general doctrine of substance to the self. Such an extension is implicit in the passage I have just quoted. It seems to me just conceivable that a philosopher could bring himself to believe that substance in general was, in Locke's phrase, "something I know not what" in which qualities inhere. But this view is least convincing in respect of those particular substances which we ourselves are. We might be brought to agree that we knew nothing of <u>other</u> substances, but that we are similarly ignorant of the entities we ourselves are, is altogether less credible. It seems to fly in the face of what I have called our native knowledge of ourselves.

At the opposite pole to the Pure Ego Theory are the theories which C.D. Broad has called "Non-Centre" Theories. (1) As the name implies, the self is understood in such theories to be equivalent to the set of its manifestations. Theories of this form are better known as Serial Theories of the self, and I shall so refer to them. If a dialectic process is evident anywhere in philosophy, it is surely in the movement from theories of substance to forms of phenomenalism. Once a substance is understood to be nothing more than an unknowable support or substrate for qualities, it is inevitable that some way of accounting for the compresence of a group of qualities should be sought, which is free of the intellectual embarrassment of

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be found in F. Bowen, <u>The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton</u> (Boston, 1881) p. 109 f. This source, to which I shall make frequent reference, is a systematic arrangement of Sir William Hamilton's philosophical works, in an abridged form.

(1) C.D. Broad, <u>The Mind and Its Place in Nature</u> (London, 1951), p. 584.

an unknown substrate. The simplest alternative is to attribute the unity of a group of qualities to no other fact than the fact that they constitute a group. It is because they cohere together, so it is argued, and not because they inhere in a substance, that a group of qualities is deemed to form a unity. In phenomenalist terms, what is called a substance is nothing but a collection of attributes.

As is well known Hume gave this phenomenalist analysis of the one substance which had until then been thought exempt; namely the self. Where others had argued that the self or mind could only be known through its manifestations, Hume remorselessly asserted that the self was identical with its manifestations: the self being nothing but a "bundle of perceptions." (1) An important implication of Hume's analysis, and one for which we are indebted to him, is that he brought the self back squarely into the world of experience. However, the cost of doing so, it is admitted on all sides, is that the unity of the self was destroyed in the process. If the self is a bundle of perceptions, it is no ordinary bundle, for it is a bundle which is in some way aware of being a bundle. Hume was unable to explain how this could be.

But apart from the difficulties intrinsic to phenomenalist theories, of the sort I have pointed out in Hume's account, there is the further point that such theories share the defect of the Pure Ego Theory of being <u>counter-intuitive</u>. Theories of the self, are theories of what we ourselves are, and a theory may be as logically rigorous as we please, and yet may fail in that we cannot recognise ourselves in the self described in the theory. There is this peculiar difficulty about theories of the self, that they, like any other theory, must fit

(1) David Hume, <u>A Treatise of Human Nature</u>, bk. I, pt. iv, sec. 6.

the facts, and yet it is by no means easy to say what the facts are, which the theory is required to fit. This brings us back to St. Augustine's saying. When no one asks me, I know what I am, but when I am asked I do not know. The situation is, I think, rather like this: I can tell when a theory of the self does not fit the facts. I can say that I know the self is not as you describe. But if you ask me what description of the self does fit the facts, I do not know. To put it differently, I can test a theory of the self in terms of my own experience, and I can judge a theory to be untrue to my experience, but I do not judge the suggested theory by comparing it with the theory of the self I know to be true. My judgment is not based on any <u>theory</u> of the self at all: it is based on experience of being a self--quite another matter.

When MacNabb says there is much plausibility in Berkeley's view, and goes on to describe an experience of the self, he is, I am sure, thinking of what experience seems to testify, and he is reacting against Hume's account because it seems contrary to what we know to be true of ourselves. It is worth dwelling for a moment on the view MacNabb attributes to Berkeley, for I believe it is possible to discern in his description two features to both of which a theory of the self must do justice, if it is to receive the backing of personal experience. Interestingly enough, the Pure Ego Theory, and the Humean Theory, each do justice to one of the features concerned, but only at the expense of the other. The ideal theory would therefore be an amalgam of both these two theories, incorporating the half-truth of each and thereby presenting the truth about the self as a whole.

The point about the Pure Ego Theory which convinces us as being intuitively right is that it makes it clear that the self is a single entity which persists, although its experiences change.

When MacNabb identifies the self with an experience in the passage quoted on page 10,he implicitly shows his recognition that the self is some one thing. This is the lasting attraction of the Pure Ego Theory. What makes it unacceptable, as I have suggested, is the view that the entity which is identified as the self lies outside all experience. This is where the Humean theory in particular, and the Serial Theory in general, comes into its own. They stand firmly for the position that the self must lie within experience, and it is this feature which we feel is intuitively right about the Serial Theory. This feature, too, receives recognition in the account given by MacNabb when he says of the experience called the self, that it is "more internal than the most personal emotion we feel." This description places the self quite unequivocally within experience. It is because it attempts to do justice to both these features, and because it is at the same time self-defeating in the way I have shown, that I take MacNabb's account to be a presentation of our intuitive understanding of ourselves.

The problem of the self arises precisely because any such account seems to be radically incoherent. Philosophical reflection appears to have shown that if the self is a single persisting entity, it cannot be found in consciousness, and if the self is found in consciousness, it cannot be a single persisting entity. Our intuitive account which demands that both features be honoured, wants to have things both ways, and the consensus of philosophical opinion is that this is impossible.

2. We have seen that both the Pure Ego Theory, and the Serial Theory, are in effect logical extensions to the entities we ourselves are of analyses which in the first instance were taken to apply to

material objects. To extend such analyses to the self thus takes it for granted that we are material objects along with all the others, and that what is true of material objects in general must likewise be true of us. But this approach really begs the question, and this is the major criticism I have to level against these theories. Until we identify the entities we call selves, we are in no position to say whether or not they are subject to the same analysis as entities which are not selves. Futhermore, by making so large an assumption, we deny by implication the possibility that we have a special knowledge of what selves are, in virtue of the fact that selves are what we ourselves are. To put it another way, this is to deny that the best way of finding out what a thing is, is to be the thing in question.

I would like to make this last point clearer, if I can. We can identify an argument pattern of the form: "The best way of finding out what it is to be an X, is to become an X." This argument pattern is in essence a formal way of describing the appeal to direct experience. Now there are many sorts of cases in which we claim that we can only gain knowledge of something through personal experience. The argument pattern presupposes two conditions, without which it cannot be applied. It presupposes (a) that one is not already an X, and (b) that it is possible to become an X. Thus if the argument is used in the case of a desire for knowledge of what it is to be a racing driver, it reads: "The best way of finding out what it is to be a racing driver, is to become one." The argument then presupposes that the person to whom it applies is (a) not already a racing driver, and (b) is able to become one, if he wishes. This argument we can think of as representing the paradigm case of finding out what it is to be an X. However, very often we are satisfied with less than the best kind of

knowledge. We find out what it would be _like_ to be an X, and this we do by _consulting_ someone who is an X, and relying on his powers of description. It is to be noted that in a sense it is misleading for a person who is an X, to claim to know what it is _like_ to be an X. If I am a racing driver, and I made the statement "I know what it is like to be a racing driver" my statement might give the impression that I was not, now, a racing driver. If one _is_ the thing in question, one is in a position to make a stronger claim than the claim to know what it is like to be the thing in question. Whereas if one is not the thing in question, one's only kind of knowledge of it, is the knowledge of what it is _like_ to be the thing in question. Furthermore, the next best thing to knowing what it is to be an X, because one is an X, is knowing what it is like to be an X, because one _was_ at one time an X. Thus, we concede most authority to those people who are at the moment numbered among the things in question, and we concede the next most authority to those people who _were_ some time previously numbered among the things in question. Our racing driver is an example of the first sort. Knowing what it is like to be a schoolboy, or girl, because one was once oneself a schoolboy or girl, is an example of the second sort of case.

The next thing to notice about the argument pattern: "The best way of finding out what it is to be an X, is to become an X;" is that the conditions (a) and (b), above, are not necessarily satisfiable by everybody. Take these two instances of the argument for instance. "The only real way of knowing what it is to be a mother, is to become a mother" and "The only real way of knowing what it is to be a husband, is to become a husband." The possibility of everyone knowing what it is to be a mother, or a husband, is excluded, for the obvious reason that men cannot become mothers, and women cannot become husbands.

This leads on to the next possibility I wish to consider, and this is the possibility that conditions (a) and (b) might be satisfiable by no one. But before going on to consider this, it will be useful to be able to refer to someone who makes use of the argument pattern, by naming such use. If a person makes a statement of the form: "I know what it is to be an X; you see, I am an X." we shall call such a statement the *standard reply* to the argument pattern.

I wish now to consider the case mentioned above, which gives rise to what I shall call a *secondary form* of the argument pattern. I call it a secondary form, because it is an application of the argument pattern even though conditions (a) and (b) are absent. One can know what it is to be an X, because one is an X, even though there never was a time when one was not an X: i.e., there never was a time when one *became* an X. Such a case is obviously one to which conditions (a) and (b) do not apply, as they are concerned solely with the conditions which must be satisfied if one is to *become* an X. Being born blind and being a female, fall into this category. Because conditions (a) and (b) are not relevant here, the argument pattern must be formulated in a different manner. It now reads "One cannot really know what it is to be an X, unless one is an X." It should be observed that the standard reply retains its identical verbal form for the secondary form of the argument pattern as well: "I know what it is to be an X; you see, I am an X."

It must not be thought that the difference between the primary and secondary argument patterns is without consequence. The primary argument pattern points to a much more favoured form of knowledge than the secondary argument pattern. When one knows what a thing is, in virtue of having become the thing, one knows both what it is to be the thing, and what it is not to be the thing. One is in the position of

having experience of both sides of the matter: When one knows what a thing is, and there never was a time when one was not one of the things in question, one lacks the comparative basis to one's knowledge which the other sort of case enjoys.

For instance, suppose we apply the secondary argument to the case of someone's being blind from birth (hereafter abbreviated as "blind(c)"). We derive the statement "I know what it is to be blind(c); you see I am blind(c)." Now this knowledge is of a more limited kind than the knowledge a husband has of being a husband. The husband will have experience of being a husband and also of being a bachelor. His knowledge of the difference between the two states is based on direct comparison of one with the other. As a result he gains a better appreciation of what it is to be a husband. The blind(c) man has no comparable experience of a man with sight. (I am not taking into account the possibility of a blind(c) man having his sight restored.) This means that his knowledge of what it is to be blind(c) is not similarly enlarged and defined by experience of what it is to have sight. He can make no direct comparisons, as the husband could. It is in this sense that the knowledge pointed up by the secondary argument pattern is less favoured than that belonging to the primary argument pattern. Now of course it is open to the blind(c) man to improve his knowledge somewhat, by <u>consulting</u> people with sight on their knowledge of what it is to be able to see. In this way the gap between the first sort of knowledge and the second can be narrowed.

I now wish to consider how our knowledge of what it is to be a self fits into these argument patterns. We see at once that the primary argument pattern is inapplicable, owing to the fact that conditions (a) and (b) are not satisfied. It is not possible for us

not to be selves, except by our ceasing to exist altogether, and if it is logically impossible for us <u>not</u> to be selves, it is logically impossible for us, in turn, to become selves. However the reasons which rule out the application of the first argument pattern, are the very ones which allow the statement "I know what it is to be a self; you see I am a self" to satisfy the secondary argument pattern. We saw in the case of the blind(c) man that his knowledge could be extended by consulting a man with sight. The question arises whether we can extend our knowledge of selves in the same way. Obviously it is logically impossible for a self to consult anything which is not-self (e.g. a material object) in order to find out what it is like not to be a self. Moreover any being which could be <u>consulted</u> would <u>ipso facto be</u> a self, and hence no contrast with a self would be forthcoming. What we have to realise, however, is that we are dealing with the selves we ourselves are, and not with the pure logical possibility of a self. That is, our concern is with <u>human</u> selves, since these are the only selves which we ourselves are, and which we can claim first-hand knowledge of. But of course we can contrast human selves with other forms of self. Now it so happens that we have come across no non-human selves whom we could consult. This is a straightforward empirical fact. Thus although on the question of consultability, selves are at a disadvantage as compared with blind(c) people, the limitation faced by selves is a contingent limitation and not a logical one. The next best thing to extending our knowledge of human selves by consulting non-human selves is to contrast human selves with selves created in our imaginations, such as angels.

This method of broadening our understanding of ourselves is to be found in Kant's well known concept of the Holy Will. A being with a Holy Will is a being who is in a sense the antithesis of ourselves

in the ethical sphere. What is less well known is that Kant employed this method in epistemology as well. Walsh has shown that Kant envisaged the possibility of epistemological subjects which were at opposite poles to the sort of epistemological subjects we ourselves are. These he called an intellectus ectypus and an intellectus archetypus, respectively.

> "Neither of these concepts," explains Walsh, "need be taken as being actual, though the first represents the human mind as conceived by the pure empiricist, whilst the second, which is the idea of a mind which creates objects simply by thinking of them, has sometimes been equated with the divine intelligence."(1)

Kant introduced these possible forms of mind so that by contrast we could get a better grasp of the particular form of our own minds. This is essentially what I am suggesting is possible in respect of knowledge of selves as such.

I return now to the question of the import of the standard reply to the secondary argument pattern as applied to the self; viz. "I know what it is to be a self; you see, I am a self." It cannot have escaped notice that the statement "I am a self" which appears in the standard reply, is a tautology. Now it might be objected that the argument pattern has no meaningful application in the cases in which the standard reply takes the form of a tautology. If this objection were accepted, it would mean that the argument pattern could not be appealed to, in the way I have done, in the case of knowledge of what it is to be a self. I have left this objection until now, because I believe that the foregoing discussion will itself have done much to show that it is really no objection at all. Of course the statement "I am a self" is a tautology, but that does

(1) W.H. Walsh, "Philosophy and Psychology in Kant's Critique," Kant Studien, 57. Jahrgang, Heft 1-3, 1966.

not mean that there is never any philosophical point in asserting a tautology. Let me go back to the example of the blind(c) man to start with. It will be remembered that a blind(c) man, using the standard reply, makes the statement "I am blind(c)." Now let us suppose that he makes this statement in the course of a discussion in which he is the only one in the company who is blind(c). Let us further suppose that the discussion is concerned with the mercy killing of extremely malformed infants, and that one of the company tactlessly includes sightless infants in this class. It would be natural for the blind(c) man to feel constrained to remark "I am a blind(c) man myself, don't forget." No one need have overtly denied this fact, before it was affirmed. On the contrary, everyone in the company, we shall suppose, knew perfectly well that the man who made the statement was blind(c). This, we could say, was a fact not open to doubt. Thus if one of the company had denied that he was blind(c), his denial would be not merely false, but perverse; unintelligible. But then is it not equally perverse, or unintelligible, for the blind(c) man to state that he is blind(c) when this fact is known to all those present? We would not say so for the simple reason that people frequently need reminding of what they know to be true. Now although the blind(c) man's statement is not a tautology, it is not, for the reasons mentioned, a straight forward statement of fact either. Thus the contrast between the statements "I am a blind(c) man" and "I am a self" are not nearly as great as they appear to be when the first is described as an empirical truth, and the second a tautology. If we further take into account the fact that it is a contingent truth that there exist no non-human selves for us to consult, the statement "I am a self" is seen to approximate even more closely the statement "I am blind(c)" in

respect of its logical behaviour.

In practical life there are no situations which would give point to the statement "I am a self," in a way which is comparable to the point the statement "I am blind(c)" can make in the sort of circumstances I have envisaged. But from a philosophical point of view the statement "I am a self" made in the context that I am a human self as opposed to a non-human self, ceases to be a tautology, whether or not there exist non-human selves for us to consult. This can be made clearer if we imagine ourselves to be for a moment not human selves, but beings who are in some ways the antithesis of ourselves--let us say, angels. As angels we would understand the claim of a human self to be a self, in precisely the way we now understand the blind(c) man's claim to be blind(c). The human self's statement would have point. We angels might then remark: "The only way to know what it is like to be a human self, is to be one." The human self observes: "I know what it is to be a human self; you see, I am one." We can now drop the pretence of being angels. If the advantage of actually being a human self is evident to us as angels, its advantage must also be evident to us as human beings.

This exercise has been designed to make us see ourselves in a way which is not obviously transparent, and this in turn enables us to appreciate how favoured our knowledge of ourselves is. The argument pattern: "I know what it is to be a self, because I am a self" liberates us from too familiar a perspective; and the association of the argument pattern with other sorts of knowledge, carries us towards new perspectives when we return to knowledge of the self. Knowledge of what the self is, which is not based on knowledge we have of our own experience of being selves, is less than the most favoured form of knowledge open to us. From this we conclude that knowledge

of the self which assimilates the self to other sorts of object, and which therefore gives a description of a self which is the same type of description as is given to other sorts of objects, will also be a less favoured form of knowledge. Our first-hand experience, or what I have called our native knowledge of ourselves, must be the starting point for a theory of the self. Provided we are not asked to explain our knowledge, we all know what it is to be a self.

3. The first fact we need to investigate about ourselves is what is involved in our description of ourselves as conscious. I cannot know what it is to be a self, if I am not conscious. Equally if I do have native knowledge of the self, it must be a self which has its locus within the field of consciousness. If consciousness is to be made to disclose the putative self of which we claim to have native knowledge, consciousness will have to be subjected to analysis before it yields up its secret. In the Nineteenth Century, British philosophers of note such as Sir William Hamilton, James Ferrier, and Shadworth Hodgson, all founded their philosophical systems upon an analysis of the structure of consciousness. They believed this to be a necessary starting point to a valid philosophy. In contemporary Anglo-American philosophical circles, on the other hand, "consciousness" has not been one of the concepts which has excited the attention of philosophers. Frequently the word appears in the contemporary literature, but it is assumed to have an ordinary language meaning which is understood by everyone, and which there is no need to explicate.

Without going into the historical question of why philosophical interests veered away from an interest in "consciousness," there are three points to be borne in mind during the course of the examination

of consciousness which follows. Firstly, as the Philosophers of Consciousness disagreed amongst themselves about the meaning of the concept, it came to be felt that the word was too vague and ambiguous to carry the weight these philosophers hoped it would carry. Secondly, scepticism about the validity of the introspective method as a source of philosophical knowledge resulted in a corresponding decline of interest in consciousness. And thirdly, the rise of Behaviourism in psychology has in turn influenced philosophy and challenged the importance of consciousness as a central concept in the Philosophy of Mind. These remarks do not apply to the Phenomenological Movement, however.

It never occurred to Philosophers of Consciousness like Hamilton, Ferrier, or Hodgson, that the existence of consciousness might be denied. To deny its existence seems a greater paradox than to deny the reality of Time, or the existence of the External World. And yet more recently the existence of consciousness has frequently been questioned, if not categorically denied. Ryle, for instance gives short shift to consciousness when he says of it:

"The myth of consciousness is a piece of para-optics." (1)

Faced with the denial of the existence of consciousness, there is the temptation to reply that consciousness is a fact; one of those ultimate facts about reality which cannot be justified or supported by an appeal to any other sort of fact; a fact we must just accept. This sort of defence of consciousness carries its own dangers with it. If consciousness is a fact, its existence is an empirical matter, and this means that the non-existence of consciousness is a contingent possibility too. Hence the proposition "There is no such thing as

(1) G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind (London, 1951), p. 159.

consciousness" must be a meaningful one. But is it? If we do not separate the fact denied, from the fact of its denial, we create the paradox that the very denial of the existence of consciousness is itself proof of its existence. We meet the same situation when a man makes the statement "I am not conscious." By making the statement he demonstrates its falsity. These considerations suggest that the existence of consciousness cannot be a fact, and they play into the hands of those who deny its existence. It appears, therefore, to be paradoxical to deny the existence of consciousness, and paradoxical likewise, to affirm its existence. Evidently the notion of consciousness needs careful scrutiny.

I shall open this enquiry by considering what philosophers might have in mind when they deny the existence of consciousness. Very often a first step to determining what a thing is, is to ascertain what it is not. To deny the existence of consciousness seems a paradox, because it seems to imply that we are all unconscious, or Cartesian automatons. It seems to imply that we are incapable of feeling, and have no sense experience. Now it would plainly be ridiculous to believe any such thing, and we cannot seriously believe that this is what the philosopher denying the existence of consciousness has in mind. When a philosopher's position seems to be out-rageously false, it is wise to consider the possibility that he is denying the truth of a particular philosophical account of the incontrovertible facts, and not the incontrovertible facts themselves.

Let us therefore find out what at least one philosopher has in mind when he denies the existence of consciousness. I refer to William James' famous paper "Does 'Consciousness' exist?", (1) which is the classical statement of the position.

(1) William James, Essays in Radical Empiricism (London, 1912), ch. I.

The first point that should strike us, is that William James puts the word "consciousness" in inverted commas. This should warn us that he is not referring to consciousness as ordinarily understood, but to a specific philosophical doctrine of "Consciousness." The word "consciousness" had been taken up into the technical terminology of a number of philosophical systems, and it was to its employment in these systems that he took exception. This the following passage makes immediately clear.

> 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 in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is invoked. That function is knowing. (1)

This passage leaves us in no doubt that what James is denying, is not in fact the existence of consciousness, but the correctness of certain types of description of consciousness: viz. those which entail its being an "entity" or "aboriginal stuff." That is to say, James is disputing the truth of the descriptions certain philosophers give of consciousness. This is a far less radical challenge than is implied in the unqualified statement that consciousness does not exist. Other philosophers have not been as meticulous as James in putting the word "consciousness" in inverted commas, before denying its existence, thus making their position seem needlessly provocative and paradoxical.

I proceed now to the substance of James' objection: his claim that consciousness is not an "entity" or "aboriginal stuff."

(1) Ibid. p. 3.

Although not mentioned by James, a statement made by Hamilton gives a good idea of the sort of view he was objecting to:

> Consciousness may be compared to an internal light, by means of which, and which alone, what passes in the mind is rendered visible. Consciousness is simple,--is not composed of parts, either similar or dissimilar. It always resembles itself, differing only in the degrees of its intensity; thus, there are not various kinds of consciousness, although there are various kinds of mental modes, or states, of which we are conscious. (1)

When Ryle referred to "consciousness" as a piece of para-optics, he no doubt had passages such as this in mind. It is also the sort of view which is subject to the strictures of William James. But it is in G.E. Moore's "The Refutation of Idealism," which contains his well-known analysis of sensation, that we have the clearest expression of the doctrine of "consciousness" which James repudiated. Extracts from Moore's article are actually quoted by James as representing the view he was objecting to. Moore maintains:

> We have then in every sensation two distinct elements, one which I call consciousness, and another which I call the object of consciousness. This must be so if the sensation of blue and the sensation of green, though different in one respect, are alike in another: blue is one object of sensation and green is another, and consciousness, which both sensations have in common, is different from either. (2)

If it is doubted that this passage commits Moore to the proposition that consciousness is a sort of "aboriginal stuff," the next passage in which he elaborates his meaning, settles the issue.

> For the element "consciousness" being common to all sensations may be and certainly is regarded as in some sense their "substance" and by the "content" of each is only meant that in respect of which one differs from another. (3)

Although Moore claims that this is only one of two possible ways of

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, p. 120

(2) G.E. Moore, Philosophical Studies (London, 1960), p. 17.

(3) Ibid. p. 23.

describing the position, he does not give any indication that he is opposed to this formulation.

Now it is quite clear that when philosophers such as James and Ryle deny the existence of "consciousness," they are not denying that we are conscious in the ordinary sense of the word. They are denying rather views such as those held by Hamilton and Moore as exemplified in their contention that all our experiences contain an element in common which they, rather confusedly, also name "consciousness." The fact that Moore, for instance, means by "consciousness" something entirely different from what is ordinarily meant by consciousness is proved beyond a shadow of a doubt in the following passage:

> . . . The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see what, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish: it seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous. (1)

In the ordinary sense of "consciousness" the presence or absence of consciousness is not something that we can only detect after taking great pains. On the contrary the impact of the presence of consciousness is powerful and immediate--if I may be permitted for the moment to speak in these terms. Moreover, as ordinarily understood "consciousness" is not to be conceived of as something over and above the occurrence of thoughts and feelings. We are, therefore, free to determine the meaning of consciousness as ordinarily understood, without fear that we might be referring to something which in no sense exists, and without falling foul of James and Ryle. (2)

Any attempt to discover the meaning of consciousness, as it is

(1) Ibid. p. 25.

(2) I resume discussion of James's analysis of consciousness in section 7 below.

ordinarily used, would meet with the immediate objection of Ryle, who argues, quite rightly, that the word is ordinarily used in a number of different contexts for a variety of purposes. (1) Ryle himself has done us the service of distinguishing five different uses to which the word "conscious" and its cognate "self-conscious" are put in real life. I do not wish to dispute the fact that the word is used in these five senses, and indeed I believe I can add a sixth. I would not deny, either, that a great deal of confusion has been caused by the fact that philosophers who have given the concept of consciousness a prominent place in their philosophical systems have failed to keep the various senses distinct. One frequently finds a philosopher like Hamilton sliding from one sense of the word to another seemingly without being aware of doing so. Where I do wish to take issue with Ryle is in connection with his unspoken assumption that these several uses are all on a par with one another,--none being more basic than any of the others. As against Ryle I shall argue that there is a basic meaning of "consciousness" which we may understand philosophers to have in mind when they use the word. I shall further argue that a philosopher may make use of this basic meaning without this carrying the implication that he is using the word in a special philosophical sense which is different from any of its ordinary uses (as we discovered to be true of Moore).

The criterion I shall use in respect of which a particular sense to the word "consciousness" is basic, can at once be defined. A sense of "consciousness" is basic if a person's being conscious in that sense does not entail his being conscious in any other sense, whereas his being conscious in any other sense does entail his being

(1) Ryle, The Concept of Mind, pp. 156 - 7.

conscious in that sense. I propose now to give excerpts of Ryle's analysis of the different ways in which the words "conscious" and "consciousness" are used, so that we can consider whether there is not a sense of consciousness which is basic in the sense I have defined.

(a)People often speak in this way; they say, "I was conscious that the furniture had been rearranged," or, "I was conscious that he was less friendly than usual." In such contexts the word "conscious" is used instead of words like "found out," "realized" and "discovered" to indicate a certain noteworthy nebulousness and consequent inarticulateness of the apprehension. The furniture looked different somehow, but the observer could not say what the differences were; or the man's attitude was unaccommodating in a number of ways, but the speaker could not enumerate or specify them. . .

(b)People often use "conscious" and "self-conscious" in describing the embarrassment exhibited by persons, especially youthful persons, who are anxious about the opinions held by others of their qualities of character or intellect. Shyness and affectation are ways in which self-consciousness, in this sense, is commonly exhibited.

(c)"Self-conscious" is sometimes used in a more general sense to indicate that someone has reached the stage of paying heed to his own qualities of character or intellect, irrespective of whether or not he is embarrassed about other people's estimations of them. . .

(d)Quite different from the foregoing uses of "conscious," "self-conscious" and "unconscious," is the use in which a numbed or anaesthetised person is said to have lost consciousness from his feet up to his knees. In this use "conscious" means "sensitive" or "sentient" and "unconscious" means anaesthetised or insensitive. We say that a person has lost consciousness when he had ceased to be sensitive to any slaps, noises, pricks or smells.

(e)Different from, though closely connected with this last use, there is the sense in which a person can be said to be unconscious of a sensation, when he pays no heed to it. A walker engaged in a heated dispute may be unconscious, in this sense, of the sensations in his blistered heel, and the reader of these words was, when he began this sentence, probably unconscious of the muscular and skin sensations in the back of his neck, or in his left knee. A person may also be unconscious or unaware that he is frowning, beating time to the music, or muttering.

"Conscious" in this sense means "heeding". . . (1)

(1) Op.cit. pp. 156 - 7.

To this list I would like to add:

> (f) "Conscious" is sometimes used synonymously with "distracted by." "I couldn't concentrate on Mark Anthony's speech, because I was conscious of the actor's American accent all the time."

Of these six senses of consciousness sense (d) is the only one which could be considered basic: namely the sense in which "conscious" means "sentient." However as it stands, Ryle's description of this sense of "consciousness" is not sufficiently clearly drawn. A person is "sensitive" or "sentient" while he is fast asleep, and yet no one can be conscious in any of the other senses while in a dreamless sleep. Before we have a sense of "conscious" which is truly the basic sense, we have to rule out this possibility.

This has been done very clearly by John Wisdom, in an analysis which antedates Ryle's analysis by some fifteen years. I shall quote the relevant section almost in full, for it cannot be much abridged without loss of intelligibility. The interest of this analysis lies in the fact that Wisdom is concerned to determine, what is from my point of view, the fundamental sense of consciousness.

> I cannot analyse what I mean by "conscious," but I want to make known to you what I attribute to a thing when I call it "conscious." When using the word in this special sense I will write it <u>conscious</u>. And I will now set down the clues to what I mean by <u>conscious</u>.
> (i) <u>Conscious</u> implies <u>either feels</u> or <u>is aware</u>.
> (ii) Consider the change which comes over a man as he comes round from chloroform or from <u>dreamless</u> sleep. You know quite well the change I mean. That kind of change I call "becoming <u>conscious</u>." Of course as you come round from chloroform all sorts of <u>bodily</u> changes are taking place--the nerves are recovering from the chemical poison; and as you come round from sleep more blood flows to the brain. So that, strictly, there is nothing that can be called "<u>the</u> change" which takes place when one comes round from chloroform and sleep. Nevertheless, these bodily changes are not the ones you thought of when I spoke of <u>the</u> change; you never thought of blood and brain. That kind of change which you immediately thought of when I spoke of the change from sleep or chloroform, is the one I express by "becoming <u>conscious</u>."

> (iii) *Conscious* does not mean *alive*. A tree is alive but not conscious. An amoeba is certainly alive yet quite likely not conscious.
>
> (iv) *Conscious* does not mean *living and sensitive*. A man in a dreamless sleep is a living and sensitive being; but he is not at that time conscious in my sense, i.e., *conscious*. Of course such a man is conscious compared with a tree or a dead man; more accurately there is *a* sense of "conscious" in which it is correct to say that he is a conscious being. He is conscious in the derived and hypothetical sense that, if he were shaken, he would become *conscious* (fundamental sense).
>
> This hypothetical sense of "conscious" is less fundamental than that in terms of which mental facts are to be defined, that is *conscious*. For "conscious" (in this hypothetical sense) has a meaning derived from, i.e., defined in terms of, *conscious*. In other words, if we split up the meaning of the hypothetical sense, we find that one of its elements is *conscious*. . .
>
> (v) S is *conscious* implies neither (1) that S is conscious of his environment nor (2) that S is conscious of himself. As to (1), a man is *conscious* when he is dreaming. . . and therefore when unconscious of his environment. I do not deny, on the contrary I assert, that there is *a* usual and therefore perfectly respectable sense in which "conscious" is used, which *does* imply "conscious of his environment." Thus, when we say "Is he conscious?", meaning "Has he regained consciousness?" (after an accident), we *do* mean "Is he now again conscious *of his environment*. But it will be seen that this third way of using "conscious" is yet another sense derived from our first, that is, the sense we write *conscious*. For "conscious" (sense 3) means "*conscious* of environment."
>
> As to (2), a man may be conscious and yet be unconscious of himself. . . It is important to add clause (2) because some psychologists use "conscious" in a sense which implies consciousness of self. Thus they would deny that animals are conscious, because, although they would admit that dogs smell bones and are therefore *conscious*, they would deny that a dog ever thinks to himself, "I shall do so and so," e.g. "take a bone." In other words, they deny that an animal is ever *conscious* of itself and they express their view very misleadingly by saying that animals are not conscious. This fourth sense of "conscious" is obviously also derived from *conscious*. So we may write:
>
> (vi) *Conscious* is the fundamental sense of "conscious"--that is the sense in terms of which all other senses are defined. (1)

Had Wisdom's analysis been deliberately intended as a commentary on sense (d) of Ryle's list of senses of consciousness, it could not have been more to the point. Wisdom's analysis brings into the open all the ambiguities latent in Ryle's description of sense (d).

(1) J. Wisdom, *Problems of Mind and Matter* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 12-15. This work was first published in 1934.

There are two major points of disagreement between Ryle and Wisdom, and over both points I am in agreement with Wisdom. Firstly, he accepts, as I do, that a fundamental sense of "conscious" may be distinguished. As we have seen Ryle traces no connection between the various senses of consciousness he distinguishes, and he denies by omission that there is a basic sense of consciousness. Secondly, Wisdom asserts that the other senses of consciousness can be defined in terms of the fundamental sense. I, on the other hand, asserted that the other senses entailed the basic sense, but were not in turn entailed by it. We both therefore, assert a dependence of other senses of consciousness, on the fundamental sense, although we see this dependence differently. My relation of dependence is weaker than Wisdom's, and it would still stand even if his claim that other senses of conscious can be defined in terms of "conscious" proved to be false. Ryle of course takes all the senses to be logically independent of one another. This is not to deny that he sees a close relationship between some of the senses. All that is required to bring out the contrast between Wisdom and Ryle on this point, is to recognise that on Ryle's view any one of his senses of consciousness could exist without any of the others existing, and this is impossible on Wisdom's view.

4. Although Wisdom claims that the derived senses of "conscious" can be defined in terms of the fundamental sense of "conscious," it is clear from what he says that he does not believe that the fundamental sense--conscious--can be defined. For this reason he gives us "clues" instead. Wisdom's belief about the indefinability of consciousness, is shared by many philosophers, including Hamilton who says:

> Nothing has contributed more to spread obscurity over a very transparent matter, than the attempts of philosophers to define consciousness. Consciousness cannot be defined; we may be ourselves fully aware what consciousness is, but we cannot, without confusion, convey to others a definition of what we ourselves clearly apprehend. (1)

Let us consider the question why consciousness should be said to be indefinable. The problem of defining consciousness can be brought out well by treating Wisdom's first clue, not as a clue to consciousness, but a definition. (i) would then become "Conscious" means feels, or is aware. The difficulty is that this proposition cannot be offered as a definition without the definition being circular. If we define consciousness in terms of feeling or awareness, the question must be raised in turn "What is "feeling" or "awareness"? ", and the answer to this question is that "feeling" or "awareness" are modes of consciousness. The definition fails, because all that we can do is substitute a synonym for the word "conscious,"--or as near as we can get to a synonym--and we are no nearer a definition of what "consciousness" itself is. This is not to my mind, however, the only reason philosophers have had for saying that consciousness is indefinable. I suggest that the further consideration they have in mind, is that it is impossible to give an idea of what it is like to be conscious, to communicate the "raw feel" of consciousness, by means of a definition. One feels driven to say that unless consciousness is experienced first-hand, it will be impossible to have the faintest idea of what it is like to be conscious. This parallels the situation I maintained to be true of the self, in as much as the knowledge we have of selves is similarly first-hand.

The position is essentially the same as the one we meet

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, p. 125.

in Moore's discussion on the indefinability of yellow. (1) It is clear that when Moore claims that yellow is indefinable, what he has in mind is the fact that no form of words can help us, if what we want is to know what the experience is which we call "seeing yellow." If what we are after is the actual experience of yellow, obviously a definition is no help. It is tautologically true that the only way to acquaint oneself with an experience, is to have the experience. Now when the visual experience we call "seeing yellow" is alleged to be indefinable, the implication is that having the experience is not the only method of being acquainted with the experience, but that defining the experience is conceivably an alternative method of acquainting ourselves with it. When, therefore, an experience, such as the experience of yellow, is alleged to be indefinable, it is made to seem a contingent fact that on this occasion the alternative method is not open to us. We are then supposed to be pointing out a fact about "yellow" when we point out that it is indefinable. But, as I have made clear, there could be no conceivable alternative channel to an acquaintance with experience, apart from having the experience itself. It is therefore entirely misleading to express this point by claiming that yellow is indefinable. For this suggests that the ingenuity of philosophers has failed, and leaves the impression that they have abandoned the attempt to find a definition, when it was sensible to ask for one. But I have argued that it was not.

Where the very idea of giving a definition makes no logical sense, the idea of indefinability likewise makes no logical sense. The same must be said for the alleged indefinability of consciousness, except that the idea of defining consciousness is even more absurd

(1) G.E. Moore, Principia Ethica (Cambridge, 1954), ch. 1.

than the idea of defining yellow. In the case of yellow there may exist people who have never seen anything yellow, and for whom the question "What does yellow look like?" is a real question.

Now in the light of this let us go back to what I claimed philosophers might feel driven to say about consciousness--and indeed to what Hamilton was driven to say. I said that one was driven to say that no one could know what consciousness was unless it were experienced first-hand. We can now see the embarrassment of this position. No one can possibly have failed to have had first-hand experience of consciousness, in the way in which some people may have failed to have had first-hand experience of yellow. No one could therefore possibly be ignorant of what consciousness is, in the way some people may be ignorant of what yellow is. We must therefore raise the question of who it is to whom we are trying to convey the idea of what it is like to be conscious. We must imagine it to be someone who asks, or might ask, the question, "What is consciousness?" Our particular sense of loss with which we greet this question is due to the fact that no-one who asks it can himself fail to have had first-hand knowledge of consciousness. Before he can himself address his question to us, he must have seen or heard us--he must be aware of our presence--and this entails his being conscious in Wisdom's basic sense. He presumably is not unaware of putting his question to us, and in that sense too, he is already conscious. In view of all this, it is utterly unintelligible to reply to the question someone has addressed to us: "What is consciousness?" by saying "You cannot have any idea of what consciousness is, unless you have first-hand experience of it." For it is logically impossible for the questioner to lack this first-hand knowledge. One can't seriously say to someone else "Until you have

experienced consciousness you won't know what it is." I would not be <u>saying</u> this to him, if I thought he could not hear me; was not conscious. So, to make the statement I must presuppose what I then go on to deny in the statement itself, a form of self-contradiction.

Those who deny that consciousness is definable on the basis that personal acquaintance affords our only access to it, are faced with a further embarrassment. If we describe someone as being acquainted with something, or experiencing it, we describe in effect the manner in which he is conscious. To talk of experiencing consciousness, being acquainted with it, or even of having first-hand knowledge of it, is therefore quite anomalous. It suggests the possibility of their being immediate knowledge, or experience, without consciousness, and this is absurd.

Quite clearly, the claim that consciousness is indefinable, is incoherent. Certainly no definition can capture the flavour of being conscious, but how odd to think that this is what a definition should be able to do. The doctrine of the indefinability of consciousness, has, I feel convinced, had a harmful effect on philosophers. Philosophers, quite rightly, shy clear of indefinable terms whenever they can, and when they are told that consciousness is indefinable, their instinct is to try to manage without it. A request for a definition of consciousness cannot be the self-contradictory sort of request I have been considering. It can, therefore, only be a request by someone to whom the meaning of the word "consciousness" is unknown, to be told what its meaning is. This we must be able to do with the word "conscious," just as we must be able to do it with any other word that belongs to language. We need not be as cautious as was Wisdom, when he would commit himself to no more than giving "clues." If a definition is to be successful, the <u>definiens</u>

must consist of terms which are understood by the person to whom the definition is being given. If we can appeal to no words which are known to the person concerned, we are precluded from giving the definition. Thus these "verbal" definitions (i.e., non-ostensive definitions) can only be given to a practiced language-user. This means that if a person asks the question "What is consciousness?" we are entitled to take it for granted that he understands other words--words no language-user could properly speaking be said to lack--which we are not going to be asked to define in turn. Given this condition, we can give the meaning of "conscious" as follows: A person is said to be conscious, if, at the time, he has any thoughts, feelings, mental images, perceptions, desires, intentions, and so forth. When used indifferently to refer to any of these items at the time of their occurrence, the word "consciousness" is used in its generic sense. Consciousness is understood in this sense by James Mill who writes:

> It is easy to see what is the nature of the terms Conscious and Consciousness, and what is the marking function which they are destined to perform. It was of great importance for the purpose of naming, that we should not only have names to distinguish the different classes of our feelings, but also a name applicable equally to all those classes. This purpose is answered by the concrete term Conscious; and the abstract of it, Consciousness. Thus, if we are in any way sentient; that is, have any of the feelings whatsoever of a living creature; the word Conscious is applicable to the feeler, and Consciousness to the feeling: that is to say, the words are Generical marks, under which all the names of the subordinate classes of the feelings of a sentient creature are included. When I smell a rose, I am conscious, when I have the idea of a fire, I am conscious; when I remember, I am conscious, when I reason, and when I believe, I am conscious; but believing, and being conscious of belief, are not two things, they are just the same thing: though this same thing I can name at one time without the aid of the generical mark, while at another time it suits me to employ the generical mark. (1)

(1) James Mill, Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind, ed. by J.S. Mill (London, 1869), I, pp. 225-6.

If we take Mill's definition of consciousness, and qualify it along the lines Wisdom's account suggests to us, we have the account of consciousness I have been trying to reach. We ought not to be dissuaded from accepting Mill's account because of the faulty example at the end of the passage. It is certainly false to claim as he does, that believing, and being conscious of belief, are just the same thing. I believe many things which have not recently crossed my mind. Nevertheless this slip does not interfere with Mill's general argument, which is sound.

We may usefully compare the function of the word "conscious" with the function of the word "colour." Often we are simply interested in the fact that something is coloured, or has colour, without being interested in which determinate colour it has. And yet we do not, on that account imagine, that an object can be coloured without being of a particular shade of one of the colours, or contain a combination of individual colours. Nothing can be coloured without being either white, or black, or red, etc. But this is to labour an obvious point. What is true of the word "colour" is also true of the word "conscious." A person cannot be conscious, without either having some thoughts, or sense experiences, etc. In this sense "conscious" and "consciousness" are, as Mill says, generic terms.

I wish now to offer an explanation of the advantage of this generic term, which to my knowledge has not been fully appreciated. In the passage of James Mill's which I have just quoted, he said in this regard "It was of great importance, for the purpose of naming, that we should not only have names to distinguish the different classes of our feelings, but also a name applicable equally to all those classes." He does not, however tell us what its importance is. Perhaps he took its importance to be obvious, perhaps it is.

There is, however, one respect in which the importance of having the generic term "conscious" is not obvious, and this respect is of philosophical importance. It can best be brought out by returning to the comparison of the generic term "conscious" with the generic term "colour."

When we say that an area has colour, we imply that it has this that and the other colour, and that if we instanced the particular colours of the area, we would have exhausted the colour of the area. We cannot say of any part of the area that it is coloured, but that it cannot be broken down into specific shades of particular colours (I am not here thinking of breaking up colour into primary colours). Now we may wrongly, I think, take it for granted that the same is true in the case of consciousness. If to be conscious a person must be conscious in determinate ways, then on this assumption when we have specified the determinate ways in which he is conscious, we have exhausted the description we give of him when we say he is conscious. In other words to say he is conscious is just an abbreviation for saying that he is either seeing such-and-such, or hearing such-and-such, or thinking such-and-such and so on through all the "particular classes of our feelings" as Mill describes them. Now it is also clear that we are conscious in many such ways at once. I am seeing what I am writing, hearing the typewriter, thinking what to say, feeling the strain in my back, and so on. At any one time my consciousness consists of a great number of these "feelings"--to use another short-hand word: thus proving the usefulness of short-hand generic concepts in this discipline. If we describe the matter in this way we are entitled to draw the inference that if we take a time span of short duration we can specify all the individual "feelings" that together make up some individual's consciousness in that

span of time. If "consciousness" is the name of a class of particulars, then it must be possible to define the class extensionally by denoting all the members belonging to the class. It should be noted that this precisely describes the classical Atomistic Theory of Consciousness. Such would be the position if there were complete logical parity between the generic terms "conscious" and "colour."

I wish to argue that the atomistic account is false, and that the assumption of parity between "conscious" and "colour" breaks down. Let us imagine setting out to draw up a list of all the "feelings" of which a person's consciousness is made up during a time-span of a few seconds,--cashing the consciousness for the real coin of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and desires. The job would be completed when we had entered the very last perception on our list. I will use visual consciousness as an example. At the moment a number of objects are in my visual field: I see various things, each of which must be entered in my list as a particular perception. I at once notice a disconcerting development. The more one looks, the more one sees. When the separable objects seem to have been exhausted, I can pass on to noticing irregularities in the surfaces of the objects, marks, shadows, and other details. It will soon be realized that my description of what I see can go on indefinitely. I cannot exhaust all there is to see in my visual field. It is the source of an infinite number of perceptions. But if this is true of one form of consciousness, it is true of all the others too. Accordingly it is impossible for consciousness to be equivalent to a finite set of constituents.

Now it may be argued that under normal circumstances we are not busy probing our visual fields to discover how many different things and aspects and properties of things we can spot. Normally

there are just a few things which hold our attention, and these are what we see, and these are finite in number. This I concede, but it does not save the position. I will see a few objects in the centre of my visual field discretely and separately, and no doubt they will be the first to go down in my list. But what of the remainder of my visual field? Can I be sure that it is also furnished with equally distinct and separate objects? Is it not more probable that towards the borders of my visual field there is a penumbra within which it is impossible to distinguish separate objects? Could I not find out by having a look? It is logically impossible to do so for two reasons: (a) because if I focus my eyes on the borders of my visual field, I of necessity alter my visual field, thus destroying one of the conditions of the experiment, and (b) because the question is to discover whether what we see and to which we are not paying attention, breaks up into discrete objects in the same way as the visual area to which we are paying attention does. Here too, it is logically impossible to verify the claim that the objects to which we are not attending are as clear and distinct as those to which we are, because to do so we have to attend to the parts of the visual field which were previously unattended to. But then they become objects which are attended to, and they cease to be the objects we wanted to find out about: i.e., objects which were not being attended to.

I have gone far enough, I feel sure, to demonstrate the completely unrealistic nature of the assumption that consciousness is made up of a distinct and separable set of constituent experiences. When an item is picked out of the field of consciousness and described in some such statement as "I see the moon" we must realise that at the same time we always see vastly more than we describe. What we

describe is little better than the top of the iceberg as compared with what we experience but do not describe. I shall have much more to say on this subject in succeeding chapters, however; for the present purpose I hopeit is clear that there is a complete disparity between the generic terms "conscious" and "colour," and that it is the peculiar merit of the terms "conscious" and "consciousness" that they convey the true impression that our lives are at every moment packed with a dense amorphous conglomeration of experiences, or "feelings" as Mill called them. No matter how full we make our description of what we are conscious of at any one time, this will always be the merest sample of the mass of feelings, which go to make up consciousness at that time. Anyone wishing to focus attention on this particular aspect of the matter, will find himself seriously handicapped if he tries to dispense with the term "consciousness."

I have argued that Mill's definition of consciousness in terms of what we see, hear, feel, think, imagine, and desire (to name but some of the relevant phenomena), is the right one. The view that these concepts all refer to conscious phenomena is the lowest common denominator of all theories of consciousness. But few philosophers have taken the course I am advocating of drawing the line here, and insisting that consciousness is nothing over and above a congeries of experiences or feelings. Many of them have gone on to argue that if the one word "consciousness" can be used to cover such a variety of mental manifestations, it must be in virtue of the fact that all these manifestations have some property in common, and until we have identified that property, we have not reached the heart of the matter. Hamilton, who by and large successfully resists the temptation of taking consciousness to be a special faculty, reveals nevertheless, in this passage, to what extent he is in the grip of the idea of a common

property:-

> But before proceeding to show in detail what the act of consciousness comprises, it may be proper, in the first place, to recall in general what kind of act the word is employed to denote. I know, I feel, I desire, etc. What is it that is necessarily involved in all these? It requires only to be stated to be admitted, that when I know, I must know that I know,--when I feel, I must know that I feel,--when I desire, I must know that I desire. The knowledge, the feeling, the desire, are possible only under the condition of being known, and being known by me. For if I did not know that I knew, I would not know,--if I did not know that I felt, I would not feel,--if I did not know that I desired, I would not desire. Now, this knowledge, which I, the subject, have of these modifications of my being, and through which knowledge alone these modifications are possible, is what we call consciousness. (1)

Leaving aside the soundness, or otherwise, of the view expressed in this passage, we see at work in it the assumption of the existence of a property common to all the "manifestations" of consciousness, in virtue of which the word "consciousness" can be applied to them. The same assumption was operative in Moore's analysis of sensation, where consciousness was held to be the element which several sensations had in common. Now we have every reason to be suspicious of this assumption as it applies to consciousness. For we are entitled to ask for the evidence on which is based the claim that consciousness is a common property. The answer, I suspect--for none is explicitly forthcoming--is that it must stand for a common property, for otherwise so heterogeneous a collection of instances (manifestations) could not be subsumed under the concept of consciousness. That is to say, the evidence for the existence of a common property is none other than the fact that the one word "consciousness" is used to cover these diverse instances. Thus the existence of a common property is arrived at by deduction from the existence of the concept

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, p. 126.

for which it is assumed to stand. If my suspicion is well founded, it would enable us to understand why philosophers have insisted that there is such a common property in spite of the difficulty they have experienced in producing evidence of its existence. It would also throw light on Moore's famous observation that consciousness "is as it were diaphanous." We can take this observation to be a sign of how tenuous the evidence for the existence of the common property is. Alternatively we could treat it as evidence of the fact that the putative common property is a myth. On either interpretation we have seen enough of the difficulties faced by the common property view for the basic assumption to be challenged. Moreover it scarcely needs to be said at the present time that the assumption that every general term stands for a common property is untenable.

The way is left open for the position taken up by James Mill and John Wisdom. Consciousness is a concept which covers reference to thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, dreams, and so forth. It enables us to refer to any of these occurrences, and is an abbreviation for them. We have no need to commit ourselves to the view that consciousness is something over and above them all. I shall be using the word "consciousness" in their sense throughout this work. But I would just add the qualification that when I use the term I do so on the understanding that I reject the view that consciousness can be exhaustively specified in terms of any finite set of referents of which it is the abbreviation.

5. We can now return to the broader issue of whether or not the existence of consciousness is an empirical question. It is certainly a contingent fact that there exist beings who have thoughts, feelings, desires, etc. No one could intelligibly deny the existence of

consciousness in this sense. No one could deny that he had thoughts, feelings, desires, etc. without thereby contradicting himself. The universe could have been devoid of consciousness, but, for each one of us, the existence of our own thoughts, feelings, and desires, is conclusive evidence that the universe is not devoid of consciousness. On the other hand, for each one of us, our own consciousness is not an empirical issue. I cannot set about finding out whether I am conscious. There is, however, no inconsistency at all between the fact that my own consciousness is not an empirical issue for me, and the fact that the existence of consciousness as such is an empirical issue. The apparent inconsistency is cleared up once we see these facts in their proper relation. That _something_ is conscious is contingent. But if I am that something, that _I_ am conscious is not contingent. My existence entails the existence of at least one consciousness: my own. However my existence is itself contingent. Therefore the existence of that consciousness, because it is contingent upon my existence, must also be contingent.

If it be granted that I have demonstrated the existence of consciousness, it cannot be granted that the point has yet been reached at which we can deduce the nature of the self from a study of consciousness. It has yet to be shown that consciousness is a possible datum for a theory of the self. On the contrary, it could be strongly argued that such a programme is radically misconceived. According to this way of thinking, the existence of consciousness presupposes the existence of a self who is conscious. Now it must at once be conceded that my attempt to explain the meaning of consciousness in terms of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc., took it for granted that everyone knows what it is to have a thought, a feeling, or a perception. And it may be argued that we each have in

mind, our <u>own</u> thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc., when we assent to the proposition that we know what it is to have thoughts, etc. The attempt, therefore, to define consciousness in terms of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc., is one which implicitly depends on having the concept of a self, and this concept has not been defined. So the definition of consciousness implicitly relies on the undefined concept of a self. If this is so, any reasoning which attempted to base the concept of a self on the concept of consciousness, would be viciously circular. It would amount to a case of first defining consciousness in terms of the undefined concept of a self, and then defining the concept of a self in terms of the concept of consciousness: a classical case of <u>petitio principii</u>.

The position we need to find ourselves in is the very reverse of this. We want consciousness to be the basic notion, such that we can take its existence to be a starting point for an analysis of the self. Let me illustrate how such a position may be conceived. There is a standard objection to Descartes' <u>Cogito</u> argument which runs as follows: "Descartes establishes the fact of his own existence in the <u>Cogito</u> argument, but his reasoning is fallacious on the ground that the first "I" which thinks cannot be identified with the second "I" which exists. The first "I" refers to that which is thinking, at the moment the thinking occurs. This "I" might cease to exist as soon as the particular act of thinking which is attributed to it, itself ceases to exist. But the second "I" refers to a persisting self which retains its identity and continues to exist through a great many successive acts of thinking. In taking for granted the identity between the first momentary "I" and the second permanent "I", Descartes begs the whole question. A possible momentary existent, cannot itself demonstrate the existence of a permanent

thinking substance. All that Descartes' argument really proves is that something exists for as long as thinking goes on, not that it is a continuously existing self doing the thinking." Now if we imagine ourselves adopting this objection to Descartes, we put ourselves in the position to appreciate what it means to suggest that thinking takes place without this implying that it is a self which thinks. If we now substitute "consciousness" for "thinking" in the above line of thought (and it is quite in harmony with Descartes' ideas to do so), we will arrive at an understanding of what it means to maintain that consciousness be treated as a datum without having to presuppose that it is a self which is conscious. The proposition "Something is conscious" may be used to express this idea. This would leave it an open question whether the something which is conscious is to be identified with a self. That, it seems to me, is one way of conceiving consciousness without presupposing the self.

Another possibility would be to exploit the idea of metaphysical solipsism. According to solipsism as a metaphysical theory, all consciousness is my consciousness, and the world has no reality outside of my consciousness. Here too there is a standard argument against this solipsistic position which goes like this: "If the postulate of the solipsist were true, and his was the only consciousness, he could not know that his was the only consciousness. He would be precluded from claiming that the consciousness was his because no meaning could attach to the proposition that it was not his. He could form no concept of his being a self, since the concept of selfhood could not be contrasted with a not-self against which it could gain purchase. Therefore the solipsist would be unable to make the claim "All consciousness is my consciousness.""

Let us, for the sake of argument, grant the success of this refutation of solipsism, and consider a possibility that seems to be left open by the argument. That is the possibility that there might exist a single all-encompassing consciousness, but a consciousness necessarily ignorant of its uniqueness, or of its selfhood. The solipsist would have a consciousness but he would have no concept of himself: he would not be self-conscious. Such a possibility could be described by saying "There is consciousness," but that the consciousness would not in anyway presuppose a self. That would be another way of envisaging consciousness as a basic datum.

6. I have done no more than indicate possible ways of conceiving of consciousness, without presupposing the concept of a self. Before arguing for the coherence of the position which posits consciousness as just such a basic datum, it will be illuminating to see how the problem has been handled by some of the philosophers I mentioned earlier. I shall give a brief survey of the views of Hamilton, Ferrier, Hodgson and James, in that order, on the relation of consciousness to the self. Hamilton's position is implicit in the passage quoted on page 47, which seems to suggest that all consciousness is self-consciousness. The following passage sets out his view more definitely.

> I. I shall commence with that great fact to which I have already alluded,--that we are immediately conscious in perception of an Ego and a Non-ego, known together, and known in contrast to each other. This is the fact of the Duality of Consciousness. It is clear and manifest. When I concentrate my attention in the simplest act of perception, I return from my observation with the most irresistible conviction of two facts, or rather two branches of the same fact;--that I am,--and that something different from me exists. In this act, I am conscious of myself as the perceiving subject, and of an external reality as the object perceived; and I am conscious of both existences in the same indivisible

> moment of intuition. The knowledge of the subject does not precede, nor follow, the knowledge of the object;--neither determines, neither is determined by, the other. (1)

Lest it be thought that it is only in perception that the ego presents itself in this way, let me hasten to add that this duality is present, in Hamilton's view, in every act of consciousness. This is made clear in another place, where he tells us:

> II. We may lay it down as the most general characteristic of consciousness, that it is the recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts or affections. (2)

I suggested that Hamilton's view is one in which no distinction can be drawn between consciousness and self-consciousness. Unfortunately none of his statements of his position make it quite clear which of three possible interpretations of his words is the right one. (a) He could mean that in all consciousness we know that it is a self which is conscious, but we do not have any acquaintance with the self which is conscious. To put it slightly differently, in every conscious act there is the recognition of the fact that a self is conscious, but apart from knowledge of this bare fact, nothing about the self is known. (b) He could mean that in all consciousness it is not only a fact that a self is conscious, but that there is a genuine acquaintance with the self which is presented along with the act of consciousness. (b) would differ from (a) in affirming that we both know that a self is conscious, and have a direct intuition of the self. (c) He could mean that in all consciousness the self knows not only the content or object of consciousness, but its mode of presentation. Thus I know, not only that I am conscious of a visual object, but at the same time that this visual object is one I am perceiving, and not imagining.

The position is made more complicated for us, because Hamilton

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, p. 195.

(2) Ibid. p. 131.

would not describe any of these three possibilities as self-consciousness, which term he reserves for an altogether different distinction. It will be useful to explain what this latter distinction is, but before doing so we need to make up our minds on the question of which of the three positions listed as (a), (b), and (c) represents Hamilton's position. Passage I seems to support (a), while passage II points to (c). On the other hand, a third passage seems to favour interpretation (b):-

III. The various modifications of which the thinking subject, Ego, is conscious, are accompanied with the feeling, or intuition, or belief,--or by whatever name the conviction may be called,--that I, the thinking subject, exist. This feeling has been called by philosophers the apperception, or consciousness, of our own existence; but, as it is a simple and ultimate fact of consciousness, though it be clearly given, it cannot be defined or described. (1)

This passage undoubtedly lends support to (b), but it might just as well be taken to be an unhappy way of stating (a).

Perhaps the following passage will be allowed to have settled the issue in favour of (a).

IV. In so far as mind is the common name for the states of knowing, willing, feeling, desiring, etc., of which I am conscious, it is only the name for a certain series of connected phenomena or qualities, and consequently expresses only what is known. But in so far as it denotes that subject or substance in which the phenomena of knowing, willing etc., inhere--something behind or under these phenomena--it expresses what, in itself, or in its absolute existence, is unknown. (2)

In passage IV we recognise the Pure Ego Theory in all its starkness. According to it we have some special indefinable sort of knowledge of the sheer fact of the existence of the self, but what this self is we still do not know. It lies outside experience. Hamilton's

(1) Ibid. p. 254.

(2) W. Hamilton, Lectures on Metaphysics, i. 138.

description of the Duality of Consciousness thus reduces itself to the assertion that every act of consciousness is presented as the consciousness of a subject, or self. Self and consciousness exemplify the logical behaviour of correlatives.

In view of the unapproachability of the self in Hamilton's Philosophy, we may well wonder what for him passes as self-consciousness. His solution is rather neat.

> V. Perception is the power by which we are made aware of the phenomena of the External world; Self-consciousness, the power by which we apprehend the phenomena of the Internal. (1)

I think we may take this conception of self-consciousness to be negatively defined: viz. An internal phenomenon is any phenomenon which does not belong to the External world. It would then be possible to maintain that self-consciousness is one of the subspecies of consciousness; to be contrasted with perception, and memory, which are two other forms of the "Presentative Faculty" of consciousness. Such a proposal may be criticised on the ground that self-consciousness is made a rag-bag for all instances of presentative consciousness which cannot be classed either as perceptions or as memories. It lacks the character of a coherent category in its own right. Furthermore it is open to a serious objection. Not all memories are memories of events in the external world, and those which are not are eligible for classification under the heading of self-consciousness. And then again perceptive acts themselves would seem to qualify for description as "phenomena of the Internal." I have quoted Hamilton's theory that I cannot perceive without knowing that I perceive, and this should be enough for the act of perceiving to be classed along with the other "phenomena of the Internal."

(1) Op. cit. p. 396.

A more promising interpretation can be put on proposition V than the one we have just seen to be unsatisfactory. When Hamilton refers to the "phenomena of the Internal" he could be interpreted to mean those cases of consciousness in which we ourselves are the objects of our states of consciousness. On this interpretation the facts I know about myself through consciousness, as distinct from the facts I know about objects through consciousness, are what I know through self-consciousness. This interpretation would fit in more happily with the meaning the term "self-consciousness" is often taken to have in ordinary usage. It approximates to Ryle's sense (c) of "self-conscious." (1) The most favourable example in support of this interpretation is provided by such statements as "I am in pain," "I am feeling angry," "I feel thirsty." These statements may be understood as descriptions of states of consciousness, in which the object of consciousness is me myself.

Unfortunately there are many examples which do not fall into this pattern so tidily. For instance if I say "I fear him," who is the object of my consciousness; I or he? There are, therefore, difficulties for this interpretation as well. I do not believe we can appraise these alternative interpretations of self-consciousness without a detailed analysis of consciousness of the sort I propose to undertake, and for this reason I do no more than note these two interpretations of Hamilton's conception of self-consciousness. Both alternatives agree in this, that in self-consciousness there is no direct awareness of the self as such, and self-consciousness is not thought of as a sort of second-order awareness: an awareness of awareness. This cannot be said with equal certainty of the next philosopher we come to: James Ferrier.

(1) See p. 33, above.

In Hamilton's Philosophy the self and consciousness are coeval, but the manner in which the self discloses itself in consciousness is left ambiguous. This is not true of Ferrier, who, in his Institutes of Metaphysics propounds the thesis that all consciousness is self-consciousness. The first metaphysical proposition of his system states:

> Along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or condition of its knowledge, have some cognisance of itself. (1)

This proposition contains the same ambiguity that Hamilton's description of the relation between consciousness and the self suffered from. We are left unsure whether (a) an intelligence can be described as having some cognisance of itself because it knows the bare fact of its existence, or (b) it has some cognisance of the nature of the existent which is known in (a). The following passage seems to establish alternative (b).

> . . . That which we call "I" is the object of intellect alone. We are never objects of sense to ourselves. A man can see and touch his body, but he cannot see and touch himself. (2)

For in it Ferrier goes beyond the point of maintaining that we know in consciousness that there is a self, but not what it is. Whereas Hamilton thought of the self as an unknowable thing-in-itself, Ferrier asserts the self to be an object which discloses itself in an "intellectual experience." The self therefore falls within the ambit of experience, but only of an experience which transcends sense-experience. It must, however, be clearly understood that Ferrier does not suggest that we ever have a pure intuition of the self. For on his theory if all consciousness is self-consciousness, the opposite side of the coin is that all self-consciousness is also

(1) James F. Ferrier, Institutes of Metaphysics (Edinburgh, 1854), p. 75.

(2) Ibid. p. 80.

consciousness of the not-self. The self is only known cognitively in its involvement in the operations of the mind. According to proposition IX,

> The ego, or self, or mind, per se, is, of necessity, absolutely unknowable. By itself--that is, in a purely indeterminate state, or separated from all things, and divested of all thoughts--it is no possible object of cognition. It can know itself only in some particular state, or in union with some non-ego; that is, with some element contradistinguished from itself. (1)

In defence of this claim, Ferrier argues:-

> To suppose that any intelligence can know itself in no particular state, is contradictory; for this would be equivalent to supposing that it could know itself in no state at all, which again would be equivalent to the supposition that it could know itself without knowing itself. (2)

This, he points out, entirely agrees with Hume's observation:- "I never catch myself at any time without a perception." (3)

Ferrier insists that we make a distinction between the ego knowing itself as any one particular state, and the ego knowing itself in a particular state,

> Because if the ego could know itself as any one particular state, it could never know itself in any other particular state. (4)

We find, in addition, Ferrier arguing like Moore and Hamilton that the self is a common element in every "cognition," and he describes this fact by saying that the self is universal as contradistinguished from the content of consciousness which is particular.

These passages reveal that Ferrier shared Hamilton's belief

(1) Ibid. p. 235.

(2) Ibid. p. 240.

(3) D. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, bk. I, pt. iv, sec. 5.

(4) Op. cit. pp. 240 - 41.

in the Duality of Consciousness. On the other hand, he came closer than did Hamilton to maintaining that the self was itself an object of some sort of intellectual intuition. He founded consciousness in self-consciousness in an unequivocal fashion and the same cannot be said of Hamilton.

7. In Shadworth Hodgson we meet a philosopher with a very different view of the relation between the self and consciousness. He mentions Ferrier's thesis that all consciousness is self-consciousness for the explicit purpose of rejecting it. By implication he rejects Hamilton's weaker thesis as well. His thinking is the same in this connection as John Stuart Mill's. Mill attacked Hamilton for maintaining that the distinction between subject and object was an ultimate deliverance of consciousness which could not be doubted. (1) Mill conceded that to the adult intelligence introspection certainly reveals the Duality of Consciousness which Hamilton had identified, and he also admitted that to such a mind any other possibility was inconceivable. But the essence of his criticism of Hamilton is that he mistakes acquired characteristics of consciousness for original ones. (2) Mill argues that it comes to seem inconceivable to us that the distinction between ego and non-ego might not be a necessary condition of consciousness, because the habit of so regarding it has been ingrained from our earliest years. He sums up the position as follows:

> These philosophers, therefore, and among them Sir W. Hamilton, mistake altogether the true conditions of psychological investigation, when, instead of proving a belief to be an original fact of consciousness by showing that it could not

(1) J.S. Mill, An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy (London, 1865), ch. 9, 11, & 12. Mill's views are not found in one place but have to be pieced together from scattered statements.

(2) Ibid. pp. 149-50.

> have been acquired, they conclude that it was not acquired, for the reason, often false, and never sufficiently substantiated, that our consciousness cannot get rid of it now. (1)

Hodgson sides with Mill in denying that consciousness in its original form was polarized into subject and object. He distinguishes three distinct modes of consciousness, which he calls primary consciousness, reflective conciousness, and direct consciousness, in that chronological order. Primary consciousness is a preconceptual stage of consciousness, which corresponds with what Mill calls "original consciousness," and both of them ascribe this form of consciousness to the consciousness of infants prior to the commencement of conceptualization. Primary consciousness is characterized by the absence of any reference to the self, on the one hand, and the absence of any reference to "things" on the other hand. In support of the claim that primary consciousness contains no testimony of the self, Hodgson has this to say:

> Now it is a well attested fact of observation, that infants have feelings and thoughts without having the perception of themselves as persons. There may be a series of feelings and thoughts in what is afterwards perceived as a person, which are not referred by the subject of them to himself as their possessor. A series of feelings and thoughts is therefore a condition of the perception of self, and can exist independently of that perception. (2)

In other words having a thought or feeling must precede any description of the thought or feeling as mine. I cannot describe a thought or feeling as mine without a conception of myself, but I can have the thought or feeling without having any conception of myself.

The next stage in the development of consciousness on Hodgson's theory is for the objects we perceive to be distinguished

(1) Ibid. pp. 150-51.

(2) Shadworth H. Hodgson, The Philosophy of Reflection (London, 1878), I, 108.

from our awareness of them:

> . . . We can clearly represent to ourselves a series of feelings and thoughts existing without their being referred to objects at the time, by the sentient being; although he may afterwards perceive that objects were their condition of existing. (1)

The distinction between the self and objects of knowledge is one, which, according to Hodgson, grows out of primary consciousness. This process of differentiation first takes place when the feelings and thoughts which constitute primary consciousness are recognised to be feelings and thoughts of things. This recognition Hodgson sees as the initial exercise of reflective consciousness. It is the first act of thinking, or conception.

> Our consciousness of things is the perception that the feelings and thoughts composing them are felt; our consciousness of self is the perception that those feelings and thoughts are feelings and thoughts. The same perception, about the same states of consciousness, is at once a perception of the existence of things and of the existence of feelings and thoughts. In primary consciousness there were thoughts and feelings, but there was not the perception either that they were things, or that they were thoughts and feelings. (2)

We notice in this passage that reflection still has not articulated the distinction between feeling and thing felt into the fully fledged distinction between subject and object. When that point is reached, we have reached the third stage of consciousness which Hodgson calls direct consciousness. Hence when Hamilton and Ferrier report their finding of the Duality of Consciousness, it is direct consciousness they are describing. Direct consciousness is the consciousness of the Common Sense view of the world, according to which the world consists of Persons and Things. Strawson's descriptive metaphysics, is, thus, the metaphysics of direct consciousness. (3)

(1) Ibid. p. 109.

(2) Ibid. pp. 111-12.

(3) See, P.F. Strawson, Individuals (London, 1959), pt. 1.

I shall take the liberty of quoting a sizeable extract of Hodgson's description of the advance from reflective to direct consciousness, because it contains a number of important ideas.

> Let us now endeavour to trace the method by which this direct and separative perception springs from the distinction of aspects drawn by reflection. Primary consciousness suffices to separate groups or bundles of percepts, existing simply as states of consciousness, from one another, and the body of the observer is one of these groups. It is that group round which the rest seem to cluster, which is present when any of the rest are, and which is also present when feelings are experienced which have no visible and tangible existence outside the body, or at any rate only an imagined one; I mean such as heat and cold, internal bodily sensations, appetites, desires, and emotions. Upon this state of perception reflection supervenes, whereby feelings and thoughts are distinguished as being at once feelings and thoughts as well as what we afterwards call "things." Two analyses have then to be combined, that given by primary consciousness into separate groups, and that given by reflection of every group into inseparable aspects. Some hypothesis has to be found which will render easy the holding together of these two analyses. This takes place inevitably, in obedience to the Law of Parcimony, which is the ultimate practical law, or motive, of all reasoning, the universal tendency to simplify different facts or theories by reducing them to a single common fact or theory. The hypothesis adopted is, that all feelings belong to the body, and that this "thing," which is already separate from other "things," is different in kind from them, inasmuch as it is the abode and source of feelings; in other words, the body becomes a "person." The objective and subjective aspects are thus separated as well as distinguished; and this state of the matter is that which is expressed by the earliest post-reflective language. This separation of the aspects is complete, when even the "me" is analysed, the body, which was part of it, again classed with "things," and an immaterial substance, the soul or mind, imagined as the subject of the feelings and the bond of their union.
>
> We have, then, the separation between groups of percepts, given by primary consciousness; and we have the distinction between percepts and things, given by the first exercise of reflection. The attempt to combine these two kinds of perception, to put together the distinction between percepts and things and the separation between groups of percepts, results in the grouping of percepts together in the immaterial soul, and the grouping of things together in the external world; that is, results in direct or separative consciousness. (1)

(1) Hodgson, Philosophy of Reflection, I, 114.

Hodgson draws the conclusion from his analysis that Persons and Things are not themselves "absolute existences." By this he means that they have no ontological independence from consciousness. They have an existence only within consciousness itself, and are the conceptual creation of a reflective consciousness. In primary consciousness they are indistinguishable. Now there is one step in this acute analysis which is left less clear than it might have been. Hodgson claims that what he calls "direct" consciousness, is the form of consciousness we all take for granted in our workaday lives, and is also the form of consciousness taken for granted in science. He would be perfectly right, therefore, if he claimed that direct consciousness displayed a duality which polarizes into Persons on the one side and Things on the other. In this, his view coincides with that of Strawson. In his analysis, however, Hodgson detects a movement in thought, from a position in which the self is identified with the body, to one in which the self is separated from the body, when, as he says, the process is "completed." His analysis follows the process of thought all the way to its termination in a Pure Ego Theory of the self such as was held by Hamilton. But the Pure Ego Theory is a philosophical theory based on the fact of the duality of consciousness: the duality of Persons and Things. Qua philosophical theory, it is not identical with the common sense ideas of the non-philosopher. All he assumes is the existence of Persons and Things, not the further proposition that the Person is a Pure Ego. It seems, therefore, that it would be wrong to follow Hodgson to the point of maintaining that the Pure Ego Theory is the deliverance of direct consciousness itself: i.e., the view we unreflectively adopt. (1)

(1) A persuasive attempt has been made to show that the concept of a Person does not presuppose the Pure Ego Theory, by S. Shoemaker, in Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity (Ithaca, 1963).

I return now to the views expressed by William James in his article "Does Consciousness Exist?" They will be seen to have a close resemblance to Hodgson's ideas, and this raises the possibility of a direct influence of Hodgson on James: a possibility strengthened by the fact that many references to Hodgson of a favourable sort are to be found in James's work. Let me recapitulate the position as we left it on page 31. James, it was found, rejected any analysis of consciousness which took it to be a common element remaining invariant throughout a series of changing experiences. We found in particular that he rejected Moore's analysis of sensation, with its claim that consciousness was a single unchanging element common to every sensation. It must now be said that this point was subsidiary to his main purpose, which was to reject in principle any analysis of experience (consciousness) which sought to prove that consciousness could be broken up into a self, ego, or subject, on the one hand, and a not-self, non-ego, or object, on the other hand. In other words, his aim was to refute what Hamilton had called the fact of the Duality of Consciousness. James's own contention is that:

> Experience . . . 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. (1)

If one needs evidence of the thinkers who maintain that consciousness has such an "inner duplicity" of which James complains, one could not do better than point to Hamilton and Ferrier. James is on the side of J.S. Mill and Hodgson in their denial that consciousness in its pristine state has any inner articulation into a self and that which is presented to the self. Those who, like Mill, Hodgson and James, deny the existence of any sort of independent entity which we can identify

(1) James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 9.

as the self, have the responsibility of explaining how we come to have a conception of self, and precisely what this conception amounts to. Sheer denial is not enough. This fact is acknowledged by the three philosophers I have just mentioned.

We have had a look at the way Hodgson tried to handle the matter and now we shall briefly consider James's opinion. In the passage just quoted James said of any dichotomy within consciousness that it comes "not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition." This is just the description it would be fair to give of Hodgson's theory too. How then, in James's opinion, is this "addition" effected? He explains:-

> A given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play(s) 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. (1)

Alongside this passage let me place one from Hodgson making essentially the same point:

> These thoughts and feelings are not only thoughts and feelings, but bundles of constantly connected thoughts and feelings, that is, "things." The connection between them belongs to them. Therefore they are things, as well as, and without ceasing to be, states of consciousness. They have a double aspect; that which was undistinguished has, I now see, a distinction into consciousness and object of consciousness. (2)

The point, I think it is true to say, is the one Wittgenstein had in mind when he said "I am my world." (3)

(1) Ibid. pp. 9-10

(2) Hodgson, Philosophy of Reflection, I, 111.

(3) L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, ed. C.K. Ogden, (London, 1922), 5.631.

8. Certain conclusions may be drawn from this review of a number of philosophical theories on the relation between the self and consciousness. The first fact to strike us, is that philosophers have taken up widely divergent and incompatible positions on the question. Moreover all the philosophers have given the impression that their own views were so evidently true, that they could not be backed up by evidence more compelling than the bare statement of each position itself would be. Some philosophers regard the Duality of Consciousness as one of those ultimate facts which it would be meaningless to wish to ground in some facts still more ultimate. Others, again, state with equal conviction the view that the facts give no support to the claim that the self is anything apart from a particular aspect of consciousness itself. There is complete disagreement. These conflicting claims confront us as assertions of brute fact. The positions are stated rather than argued for. It is not surprising therefore, that later philosophers should have become suspicious of a form of enquiry which seemed to reduce itself to the making of pronouncements because of the alleged indefinability of the concepts concerned; especially as the pronouncements contradicted one another. This eventuality, one suspects, had much to do with the increasing unpopularity among philosophers of appeals to the testimony of consciousness. It led to a stale-mate.

This eventuality can only be avoided if the study of consciousness is put on a new footing. This is what I shall attempt to do. I do not propose to give a formal description of a new approach to consciousness, but prefer this to emerge from the analysis itself. It is sufficient to say that extensive use is to be made of the working distinctions we all make, and which no one would deny our right to

employ, in the descriptions we give of our experiences.

The issue between the Dualists and the non-Dualists can only be resolved by going back to the beginning, and making a close study of consciousness itself, without presupposing one or another of the theories of the self we have examined. This means approaching consciousness as a basic datum. We assume no more than that something is conscious or that there is consciousness. To express the position in these terms might perhaps suggest that the argument is over before it has started, and that I have found in favour of the anti-Dualists. It will be discovered, however, that this is not so.

There is one last matter I wish to clarify before proceeding to the positive side of the programme, and this concerns a remark I made to the effect that if consciousness is defined in terms of what _you_ or _I_ experience, it ceases to be an open question whether consciousness is to be ascribed to selves. It is clear from the way I have defined consciousness that I had in mind each of us referring to his own consciousness, and not the consciousness we ascribe to _others_. I assume, in other words, an ego-centric interpretation of consciousness. Thus the truth of the proposition "Something is conscious" directly follows from the fact that I am at the time conscious. Each one of us will thus assent to the proposition "Something is conscious" on the ground of his own individual consciousness. It would be a pointless subterfuge to pretend that this was not so. I shall therefore continue to refer to instances of consciousness in the first, second and third persons.

What has to be understood is that this is an expository device. That is to say, references to _my_ consciousness, or _your_ consciousness, must not be accorded ontological significance. They must be read as grammatical devices to enable reference to be made to a consciousness with which the reader is acquainted. This must be understood as a

concession to exposition and not as a concession to a philosophical premise. As one philosopher protested, if he were forbidden the use of the pronouns "I" and "you" he would be unable to communicate to others his views about consciousness. I have made the suggestion that we imagine at this stage that we are dealing with a solipsistic consciousness. Now if we entertain the thesis of solipsism, each of us will naturally believe that his is the unique solipsistic consciousness. It is impossible for any of us to entertain the thought that it is not our own consciousness which is the sole reality. This being so, I am asking for the same concession that we make to the solipsist when we examine his position.

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CHAPTER TWO

ATTENTION

1. The object of this chapter is to reveal the structure of consciousness by a study of the operation of attention. After certain preliminaries of a terminological nature, and a section on consciousness and change, I argue in support of Ward's doctrine that attention is a universal feature of consciousness. I give reasons for believing that the sign of the presence of attention in consciousness is the polarization of consciousness into elements occupying its foreground relative to others which recede into the background. The hypothesis that all normal forms of consciousness have this structure is examined in the case of two of its forms which give least promise of supporting it. It is shown that even in such conditions of seeming non-attention the hypothesis is confirmed. Finally, distinctions between different forms of consciousness, proposed by Hamilton and Ribot, are examined and rejected in favour of a distinction between "interrogative" and non-interrogative" attention.

In the first chapter I argued that although "consciousness" was a collective name for our several experiences, it could not be eliminated in favour of direct reference to individual experiences, because no meaning could be attached to the assertion that at any one time an individual had a finite number of experiences which could be exhaustively specified. Nevertheless it will be necessary to refer in a topic-neutral way to the experiences of which consciousness is comprised. I shall use the expression "element(s) of consciousness"-- "element(s)" for short--for this purpose. Unfortunately no designation

which could be chosen entirely avoids misrepresentation of the position. Even the term "element of consciousness" suggests a certain atomistic independence of one element from the next, and this could give rise to the idea that consciousness is an aggregate of such elements. This is an idea I want to resist, and so when I refer to the elements of consciousness, it should be borne in mind that I do so with the reservation that I completely endorse the view expressed in this passage by William James:

> The traditional psychology talks like one should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. The significance, the value, of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it. . . (1)

Besides needing to refer to the elements of consciousness, it is also necessary to be able to refer to their temporal relations to one another. James's metaphor of a stream has a graphic value in this connection. He describes consciousness as a "stream of thought," This creates the image of elements of consciousness floating along in the current of time. For the breadth of the stream we can conceive of all those elements which are compresent at a particular moment, and for the length of the stream we can conceive of a series made up of a succession of such compresent elements. Philosophers have referred to this twofold organization of consciousness in different ways. Broad has described the counterpart of the breadth of the stream as the "transverse unity of a cross-section of the history of a mind," and the

(1) William James, Principles of Psychology (London, 1891), I, 255.

counterpart of the length of the stream as the "longitudinal unity" of a mind. (1) Grice has referred to the contemporaneous elements as a "total temporary state" of consciousness. The succession of elements--Broad's "longitudinal unity" of the mind--Grice refers to as a series of total temporary states. (2) Now I shall use Grice's terminology, not because I think it superior, but because I shall later be examining Grice's views in detail, and it will save time if we are already conversant with his terminology. For the present we shall sufficiently understand what is meant by a total temporary state from the following explanation offered by Grice.

> A total temporary state is composed of all the experiences any one person is having at any given time. Thus if I am now thinking of Hitler and feeling a pain, and having no other experiences, there will be occurring now a total temporary state containing as elements a thought of Hitler and a feeling of pain. Now since total temporary states may be said to occur at various times, they may be said to form temporal series. (3)

It is evident from the above account of a total temporary state that it is a theoretical possibility for a total temporary state to contain but a single element. It would represent the logical limit to consciousness in one direction. A total temporary state which lacked even one element would not be a state of consciousness at all. Now when in the course of my enquiry I have spoken of normal forms of consciousness, the qualification was intended to rule out precisely this possibility of a consciousness a total temporary state of which contained no more than one element. Special significance is

(1) C.D. Broad, The Mind and Its Place in Nature (London, 1951), p. 560.

(2) H.P. Grice, "Personal Identity," Mind, L. (1941)

(3) Ibid. pp. 341-2. Grice attempts to give a definition of a total temporary state, but since its purpose is not relevant at the present level of generality of the discussion, consideration of it is postponed until chapter 5, where it is examined in detail.

attached to this possibility but the matter is left to succeeding chapters. The normal state of affairs, I maintain, is one in which total temporary states have a plurality of elements. A notable French psychologist, Ribot--a contemporary of William James--confirms this fact. He states quite categorically:

> The normal condition is plurality of states of consciousness, or--according to the expression employed by certain authors--polyideism. (1)

2. The proposition that a total temporary state normally contains a plurality of elements is indisputable. We do not cease to have visual impressions when we hear a sound; we do not necessarily cease to hear things when we have thoughts; we do not cease to be aware of any of these things when we have tactile sensations, and so on. Of course our absorption in any of these experiences might diminish our awareness of the others, but this I am not denying. When all our senses are working we receive impressions from them simultaneously, provided of course that the necessary stimuli are present. But even if it be granted that a total temporary state normally consists of more than one element, it is theoretically possible for there to be a series of identical total temporary states. This would constitute a perfectly static consciousness in which no existing element perished and no new element appeared. Accordingly, it also needs to be shown that this is not the case: that a series of total temporary states will be a series of changing elements, in which, although some elements will persist from one state to the next, others will be new. It may be thought that the truth of this proposition goes without saying. Strawson, in his essay on the <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, reveals his

(1) TH. Ribot, <u>The Psychology of Attention</u> (London, 1890), p. 10.

concurrence with Kant's acceptance of it. Speaking of Kant's thesis "that experience essentially exhibits temporal succession," he says,

> The thesis is treated by Kant throughout as an unquestionable datum to which we cannot comprehend the possibility of any alternative; and as such we may be content to regard it. (1)

Nevertheless a certain elaboration will be given by way of introducing one of the themes which will figure prominently in later portions of the thesis.

Changes in the elements in consciousness may be directly inferred from the existence of changing events in the world of which we are aware. On this possibility changes taking place outside consciousness are reflected within consciousness. It implies that changes within consciousness are contingent upon the existence of changes outside consciousness, and that it is not essential to the nature of consciousness that its elements should be undergoing change. The latter and more radical doctrine is put forward by some psychologists who have maintained that we are never aware of sensations as such, but only of changes of sensation. This is certainly true of some sorts of sensation but it is questionable whether it is true of all forms of awareness. It is true of our sensing of hot and cold. We do not feel our own temperature, but we feel changes in our bodily temperature. I say "I feel cold" and this statement presupposes a change from a condition in which I did not feel cold--did not for that matter necessarily feel hot either, but perhaps did not feel my bodily temperature at all. On the other hand the theory that we are only aware of changes of sensation is less plausible if we consider the case of looking at an object. The object is not visible only when it changes its appearance. Its appearance may remain unchanged without

(1) P.F. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense (London, 1966), p. 25.

this impairing its visibility. Nevertheless it is germane to point out that lack of movement (change) is a most successful form of camouflage. (1)

However, from my point of view there is a far more significant manner in which consciousness is dependent on change. We must not forget, although philosophers often speak in a way which suggests that they do forget, that our own bodies are the source of a vast number of the elements of our consciousness. Each movement we make gives rise to a shower of sensations. The movement itself is experienced as kinaesthetic sensation, and it will more often than not be accompanied by tactile sensations caused either by contact with external objects, or by the friction of clothing against the skin, but mostly by both at once. Nor must we forget such factors as the feeling of our heart beat during strenous movement; the sensations in our nose and diaphragm connected with breathing; the noise our own movements make (we can often hear ourselves breathing); the sight of our own movements; and finally the reciprocal feeling of one part of our body in touch with another of its parts. Our oral sensations are a case in point. There are the muscular sensations we get from moving our jaws, our tongue, our lips. There is the feeling of contact between our teeth, and the tactile sensations produced by the exploratory movements of the tongue. In addition there are the auditory sensations produced by oral manipulations. We are inclined to overlook the rich source of elements of consciousness which the movements of our bodies provide. That we do overlook them is no accident, as we shall discover in due course. Nevertheless the fact that we take them for granted should

(1) It might just be mentioned that this position receives some support from the fact that sensations of uniform quality, if monotonously continued, tend to pass out of consciousness, provided of course that they are of no concern to the organism.

not make us impervious to their existence.

There is a further extremely important way in which bodily movement determines the occurrence of elements of consciousness. An example of this further form of dependence of elements of consciousness on movement has already been given above. In movement we normally make contact with objects external to our bodies. When I walk, I feel the ground under me. But if I am sitting with my legs up, I do not feel the ground. This means that by making a certain set of movements--i.e., walking--I bring it about that my awareness of the ground enters my consciousness. Alternatively, when I sit in a chair instead of walking, I put myself in physical contact with the chair, and the feel of the chair against me is a new element of consciousness which I would not have had, had it not been for a movement I made. Once in the chair I shift my position, thereby altering my consciousness in respect of the chair yet again. When we come to the case of visual consciousness, the effect of movement is of even greater moment. The movement made in closing and opening our eyes alters our visual experience from one of not-seeing to one of seeing. Furthermore every move made by the eyes alters their owner's visual experience--whether the movement be due to the eyes themselves, the head, the body, or all three together.

Ribot has stressed in the strongest possible terms the dependence of elements of consciousness on bodily movement. Thus:

> All our organs of perception are at the same time sensorial and motor. To perceive with our eyes, ears, hands, feet, tongue, nostrils, movements are needed. The more mobile the parts of our body, the more exquisite is their sensibility; the less perfect their motile power, the more obtuse their sensibility. Nor is this all; without motor elements, perception is impossible. We will call to mind a previous statement that if the eye be kept fixed upon a given object without moving, perception after a while grows dim, and then disappears. Rest the tips of the fingers upon a table without pressing, and the contact at the end of a few minutes

> will no longer be felt. But a motion of the eye, or of the finger, be it ever so light, will re-arouse perception. Consciousness is only possible through change: change is not possible save through movement. It would be easy to expatiate at great length upon this subject; for although the facts are very manifest and of common experience, psychology has nevertheless so neglected the role sustained by movements, that it actually forgot at last that they are the fundamental condition of cognition in that they are the instrument of the fundamental law of consciousness, which is relativity, change. Enough has now been said to warrant the unconditional statement, that where there is no movement there is no perception. (1)

It must not be thought that the movement which gives rise to an element of consciousness is necessarily reflected in it. For example, by running my hand over the surface of a carpet I can feel the pile, and this feeling will be a fairly sustained uniform feeling. The feeling of the carpet need not reflect the movement of my hand. It would be all the same if my hand were stationary and the carpet were drawn under it. However the actual movement of my hand would be reflected in one or more of the other modes of awareness: either kinaesthetic, or visual. Thus we must not fall into the error of assuming that if a bodily movement is the prerequisite of a certain element of consciousness, [that] that element must itself manifest change. In spite of this qualification, in the majority of cases the elements of consciousness will change as the bodily movement which is their condition, changes. We can therefore conclude that in the numerous cases in which the element of consciousness directly reflects the physical movement which is its condition, the fact that the element of consciousness itself changes is not a contingent state of affairs.

In the foregoing I sought to show that a total temporary state contained a number of elements, and that successive total

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 52.

temporary states in a series would differ from one another in that in normal circumstances each would contain some elements not shared by the others. On this basis I proceed to an examination of the precise relationship between consciousness and attention.

3. "Attention" is no less complex a concept than is "consciousness." Just as the word "conscious" is used in a variety of senses, so too is "attention." I shall not begin, however, by making all the distinctions which have to be made, before a true understanding of attention can be reached. Instead I shall only make the distinctions that have to be made at the level of generality at which the discussion is proceeding; working from the simple to the complex. I should also make it clear, that while it is true to say that the distinctions I introduce are ones which, I believe, are justified on introspective grounds, I try wherever possible to avoid depending exclusively on introspective evidence.

The weakness of introspective evidence is that it is quite undiscriminating between what is subjectively true for the individual introspecting, and what is necessarily true for everybody. This shortcoming can be overcome if introspective evidence is supplemented with an appeal to standard descriptions of states of mind. The descriptions, if standard, must be generally understood, and if generally understood, the distinctions they mark must also be understood. For example I may claim on introspective grounds that I cannot decide whether or not to do something. If I restrict myself to introspection I am not in a position to convince anyone else that other people too, find themselves in that position. However, I can also describe the situation by saying "I am in two minds about it." Anyone understanding that description can be presumed to know what it

is to be in two minds about something. For this reason an introspectable state of mind cannot be written off as idiosyncratic if it carries a standard description. On the contrary the experience is elevated to the inter-personal plane. Before proceeding with the analysis it is necessary to exclude one of the meanings of "attend," which is not the one with which this enquiry is concerned. This is the meaning it has when someone says "I have some business to attend to." "Attend" in this sense is synonymous with "deal with." The sense of "attend" which is the subject of this discussion is the sense it has when by saying "I am attending" I mean "I am paying attention."

An extreme position on the relation between attention and consciousness is taken up by James Ward, who maintains that attention and consciousness are identical. (1) On this view we cannot be aware of anything without attending to it, for the simple reason that to be aware of it _is_ to attend to it. Ward, for reasons which do not concern us, states his preference for treating "attention" as the most suitable word to use, and suggests that the word "consciousness" should be dispensed with entirely. The disadvantage to this suggestion is that "attention" is a term with a contrary, and if it is equated with consciousness, this feature has to be sacrificed. In ordinary language it makes sense to say of a person that he is not paying attention to anything, but on Ward's interpretation this would be tantamount to saying that the person concerned was not aware of anything, and this is hardly what we would mean to imply. Having denied that a state of sheer inattention was possible, Ward was obliged to substitute the idea of _degrees of attention_.

(1) James Ward, _Psychological Principles_ (Cambridge, 1918), ch. III, sec. 1 & 2.

A state that we might wish to describe as one of sheer inattention, would, in his terminology, be a state of a minimal degree of attention, but a state of attention nonetheless. Now it would be as well to consider Ward's suggestion, as we might find that he is correct in maintaining that some degree of attention is present in all forms of consciousness. But this should not stop us from taking issue with him in regard to the implication that if we employ his terminology it is at once necessarily true--i.e., a matter of logic--that there is no consciousness without attention. His position, in fact, tends to blur altogether the distinction between attention and consciousness, and as will emerge, it is important not to equate the two.

It is a merit of Ward's position that the recognition of degrees of attention is so central to it. Our vocabulary is rich in expressions which discriminate between the varying degrees of attention which objects of attention may enjoy. Something may have my complete attention, and then I may be described as wholly absorbed. On the other hand I could be only half attending, or perhaps, not paying much attention. Certainly it is indisputable that we use the comparison of <u>more</u> or <u>less</u>, when describing attention. Ward is not embarrassed, either, by the fact that on his view "attention" has no contrary "inattention." The fact that a concept operates on a sliding scale of degree, does not in itself disqualify it from possessing a contrary. We need only think of "pleasure" with its contrary "pain" to realize that the claim that there are degrees of pleasure is not incompatible with its having a contrary. Ward's recognition of degrees of attention is not the factor which forces him to deny to attention a contrary. It is his identification of attention and consciousness which forces him to do that, as I pointed out above.

Ward is perfectly well able to handle the case of not paying any attention at all. For him this does not indicate an absence of all attention, but a case of paying attention to other things than the thing one is supposed to be paying attention to. The inattentive schoolboy is not a schoolboy devoid of all attention, but a schoolboy who instead of giving his attention to his lessons, gives it to something else which ought not to be occupying his attention. The obvious sorts of fact seem therefore to be covered on his account.

The crucial test-case for Ward's theory, however, is the circumstance best described as a state of sheer inattention, rather than the state of affairs in which there are competing objects of attention. If it can be held that even in the case of so-called sheer inattention some degree of attention must nevertheless be present, Ward's claim that there is no consciousness without attention is established--at least at the empirical level. This state of sheer inattention is brilliantly described by James, who puts forward a theory of attention which contradicts Ward's, by maintaining that there is a condition of consciousness free of any trace of attention whatsoever:-

> Every one knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others, and is a condition which has a real opposite in the confused, dazed, scatter-brained state which in French is called distraction, and Zerstreutheit in German.
>
> We all know this latter state, even in its extreme degree. Most people probably fall several times a day into a fit of something like this: The eyes are fixed on vacancy, the sounds of the world melt into confused unity, the attention is dispersed so that the whole body is felt, as it were, at once, and the foreground of consciousness is filled, if by anything, by a sort of solemn sense of surrender to the empty passing of time. In the dim background of our mind we know meanwhile what we ought to be doing: getting up, dressing ourselves,

> answering the person who has spoken to us, trying to make the next step in our reasoning. But somehow we cannot start; the pensee de derrière la tête fails to pierce the shell of lethargy that wraps our state about. Every moment we expect the spell to break, for we know no reason why it should continue. But it does continue, pulse after pulse, and we float with it, until--also without reason that we can discover--an energy is given, something--we know not what--enables us to gather ourselves together, we wink our eyes, we shake our heads, the background-ideas become effective, and the wheels of life go round again. (1)

Now certainly on his own description of attention, James is quite right when he avers that anyone in this condition is not paying attention. Nevertheless, it seems to me that he lays himself open to attack from Ward's quarter by equating attention with the highest degree of attention. When James describes attention as the mind's taking possession of an object "in (a) clear and vivid form," we are given a description that best suits optimal attention. If therefore, in conformity with Ward's position, we look for traces of minimal attention in the state of distraction so vividly described in the above passage, we should not be altogether surprised to find what we are looking for. The clue is given in James's reference to the "foreground" and "background" of consciousness. In the state of ennui described, consciousness is still differentiated, according to James, into a foreground and a background. Ward would no doubt argue, and I see no reason to disagree with him, that the division of consciousness into a foreground and a background is the hallmark of attention. Indeed these are the very words frequently used for the precise purpose of describing the effect attention has on consciousness. What is more, the picture of a foreground against a background is implicit in the description James himself gives of attention when he says of it: "Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence."

(1) William James, Principles of Psychology, I, 403-4.

James's passage is introspective writing at its best, but I question his belief that attention is entirely lacking even in as "distracted" a condition of consciousness as the one described. There is a possible confusion in his thought on this question. As we have seen, in his description of attention he refers to the mind taking possession of an object in a clear and vivid form, but this is open to two interpretations.

On the one hand, attention may take a clear and vivid form because the object of attention is itself clear and vivid: clarity and vividness in this sense being intrinsic to the object itself. On the other hand, the object may itself be vague and amorphous, and the more clearly and vividly attention is given the object, the more vague and amorphous it is seen to be. Thus in the first case, even if a less than optimal degree of attention were given to the object, the object would still be clear and vivid. While in the second case, even if optimal attention were given to the object, it would remain vague and amorphous. These constitute two distinct senses in which the mind can take possession "in a clear and vivid form," and it is apparent that James's description is ambiguous as between them.

If we now bear in mind these two possibilities, and return to the passage we are examining, we notice that James describes the foreground of consciousness as filled "by a sort of solemn sense of surrender to the empty passing of time." Now if anyone senses anything of the sort, he certainly would not want to describe what he sensed as "clear and vivid." But this does not preclude the person from trying to give his whole attention to such an experience. It may be that the more he attends to the experience the more convinced he becomes of its essential vagueness and indeterminateness. The same may be said for the experience James allies with it, in which

"the whole body is felt." He has no right to conclude, therefore, that if the foreground of consciousness consists of elements which are not clear and vivid, attention has not been brought to bear. I conclude that although James's view of attention is inconsistent with Ward's, the example he has given of a condition of consciousness lacking all attention, fails of its purpose. Nevertheless the failure is a lesson in itself. If such a state of distraction as the one described exhibits signs of the operation of attention, this is itself strong evidence for the conclusion that no consciousness will be found without the presence of at least a dim flicker of attention.

The condition of consciousness in question would be better described as one characterized by the diffusion of attention, rather than by its total absence. However the notion of a diffused attention runs directly counter to the description James gives of attention, when he says of it that "Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence." This assertion seems to express the orthodox opinion on the subject. Hamilton, too, says of attention, "It is consciousness concentrated." (1) In view of the importance of this contention, it must be given closer scrutiny to determine whether it really is at odds with Ward's claim that some degree of attention is present under all conditions of consciousness.

4. William James resorts to visual metaphor when he speaks of the "focalization" of attention, and we shall see in a moment that Hamilton uses an elaborate visual analogy to describe attention. It is in fact difficult to avoid talking about attention in visual

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, p. 160.

terms, nor do I think we should refrain from so portraying it. Visual descriptions, and visual distinctions, are far richer, and have a greater degree of subtlety than their alternatives, and it would be foolish for us to handicap ourselves by avoiding their use. But we must be watchful not to be deceived by the analogy into thinking that what is true of the analogue is true generally; for it might be that we are unwittingly dealing with a non-analogous feature of the analogue.

When James talks of "focalizing" attention, and the "foreground" and "background" of consciousness, he is using ideas which find their natural home in visual perception. Hamilton quite unabashedly takes the analogy with vision to the limit when he says,

> Consciousness may be compared to a telescope, attention to the pulling out or in of the tubes in accommodating the focus to the object. (1)

Now the idea of focusing, and the idea of concentrating, carry with them the idea of something being focussed, and the concentration taking place around a centre. Both ideas point to a "centre of attention." Furthermore, once we have the picture of a centre, we think of the centre as standing out from its surroundings, and we can describe the centre as in the foreground as contrasted with what is outside the centre, which is relegated to the background. (2) The usefulness of the visual model is enhanced because it so easily accommodates the idea of degrees of attention. The structural relationship between foreground and background will be determined by the nature of the centre. On the one hand there could be a large centre with ill-defined edges which imperceptibly merge into the

(1) Ibid. p. 160.

(2) Gestalt Psychology furnishes plenty of evidence of the fact that anything seen as a centre automatically seems to stand out from a background.

background; on the other hand there could be a highly concentrated centre which stands out in sharp contrast against the background. We may think of the operation of a spot-light to give us a picture of one sort of centre passing into the other. If a spot-light is completely out of focus for a certain distance, it will throw a wide, diffuse, beam with a low degree of illumination. As we correct the focus, the circumference of the beam contracts, and the intensity of illumination correspondingly increases, until the point is reached at which the spot-light is fully in focus, and we have a pin-point of light of maximum intensity with a sharply defined circumference. It is important to realize that both the badly focussed beam, and the sharply focussed one may be described as consisting of a centre occupying the foreground and a complementing background. (1)

By analogy, the centre of attention could have a low degree of concentration (corresponding to the badly focussed beam), or a high degree of concentration (corresponding to the sharply focussed beam). Moreover any distinction at all between a foreground and a background would entail the existence of some degree of attention, no matter how little (corresponding to a beam of some degree of concentration). Hence, when James distinguishes between a foreground

(1) It is no accident that we describe an object in focus as being situated in the centre of the field of vision. It is based on a fact in physiology. "In the centre of the retina, in the fovea centralis (the pit in the middle of the so-called yellow spot) there are only cones, and no rods at all. From there toward the periphery of the retina the number of cones decreases and the rods become more and more numerous. The fovea centralis is of paramount importance in our vision. This tiny spot is the only place where you see a sharp image. If you see something in the lateral field of your retina and want to investigate it more thoroughly, you turn your eye so as to cause the image of that object to be projected exactly onto your fovea centralis." W. von Buddenbrock, The Senses (The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 80.

to consciousness and a background in the case of a "distracted" consciousness, he ipso facto describes a consciousness differentiated by attention.

That which is at the centre of attention is frequently described as the object of attention. This description, too, we owe to a visual analogy, since objects are among the things we are said to see. In view of the fact that there is no standard description of that on which attention may be said to be centred, I shall employ the term "object of attention" specifically for that purpose. An object of attention is thus, by definition, anything on which attention is focussed. It must be understood that the visual connotations of the word "object" have no relevance to the defined term "object of attention." A thought, a sensation, or an imaginary object are as properly called "objects of attention" as is a material object.

The discussion of James's point of view has served two purposes. Firstly, it has suggested the idea that consciousness may be organized into a foreground and a background. Secondly, it has introduced the idea of an attention-free consciousness. Both of these ideas are important for the hypothesis I now wish to advance. The hypothesis is that the differentiation of consciousness into a foreground and background is a feature of all normal forms of consciousness. Now I have already shown the appropriateness of describing the operation of attention in visual terms. In particular I have discussed the applicability to attention of the model of a foreground marked off from a background through the presence of a "centre" on which attention is focussed. From that discussion it becomes obvious that we would experience no difficulty in showing that those forms of consciousness that exhibit a high degree of attention, could be appropriately described in terms of a foreground

and a background. The object of attention would function as the "centre" marking off foreground from background. The crucial test of the hypothesis would be to see whether a seemingly attention-free consciousness also displayed this distinction between foreground and background. I have pointed out that the hypothesis seems true in the case of the "distracted" consciousness described by James. I now wish to offer more detailed support for the hypothesis by showing that it is borne out in the case of two forms of consciousness. These are, firstly, a pure sensuous consciousness, and, secondly, a state of reverie. If the hypothesis were false, these two forms of consciousness would show it. If, however, the hypothesis is confirmed for such *prima facie* unpromising forms of consciousness, we can take it to have been established. It should be noted that the first form of consciousness can be satisfied by a single total temporary state, and it, therefore, tests the hypothesis in the one dimension of consciousness. The second form of consciousness is only satisfied by a series of total temporary states, and it, therefore, tests the hypothesis in the other dimension of consciousness.

I begin with the case of a pure sensuous consciousness. I should make it clear immediately that I do not believe that an adult ever attains a pure sensuous consciousness. It is a theoretical limit to which a human consciousness approximates under certain conditions. What I am calling a pure sensuous consciousness can best be explained through an example. We have all had the experience of being asked out of the blue what we are thinking about. On occasion we say that we have not been thinking about anything in particular, not because we wish to be secretive about our thoughts, but because it seems the truthful answer to give. It might be the case that the question was put at a time when we were not having thoughts about any-

thing, but were simply enjoying our present sensations. Lying on a beach sunbathing could be a circumstance in which this would be true. I might be conscious of the sun burning into me, the lapping of the waves, the light coming through my eyelids, the indistinct sound of voices, and so on. Naturally if asked what I was thinking about I would not take the question to be aimed at discovering what I was conscious of. I would take it to be directed at anything I was thinking about which I took to be relevant or interesting to the questioner, and, from that point of view, it is often honest to say: "Nothing." Often in a state of euphoria one says, 'My mind is in a complete blank." It is just such a state in which we give ourselves up to our sensations, and allow our minds to go blank that I describe as a state of pure sensuous consciousness.

What I wish to argue, is that a total temporary state of a pure sensuous consciousness does not contain a number of elements which are all equally submerged in the background, but, on the contrary, that at each moment some one element has the ascendency over the rest. If we try to check this by introspection, we run into several difficulties. In the first place it is not easy to make one's mind go blank. And secondly it is not easy to find out what takes place when one is in a state of pure sensuous consciousness without thereby destroying the state. For these reasons we are forced to rely on memory of such states, and base our findings on what we seem to remember. We may not, even in retrospect, be able to tell just which element was more to the fore than the rest at a particular time. The reason for this is that we are dealing with a fluid situation, with the elements engaging in a game of musical chairs, with one ousting another from the foremost position in consciousness, in a never-ending round of competition. The faster the pace of the game,

the more difficult it is to decide that any single element occupied the position in the foreground. Furthermore, when in a state of non-attention, we are not bothered by the question of which element is at a particular time at the head of the queue. Naturally, too, any element which is in the foreground will possess a poorly differentiated character. The foreground, as in the case of a badly focussed spot-light, will be large and obscure, and this means that the element occupying this position will be similarily inchoate and ill-defined. For instance a general sensation of heat may occupy the central position for a brief period, and then be replaced by an undifferentiated auditory experience, which itself might be followed by the visual sensation of seeing the sunlight through the eye-lids.

I am not suggesting that these elements are not present all at once--they are. What I am suggesting is that at any one time, one element is insinuating its presence more insistently than the others. In other words, I am maintaining that James was right to divide consciousness into a foreground and a background, even in a situation which approximates as closely as experience seems to allow to one of absolute non-attention.

5. I have offered purely introspective evidence to back up the claim that consciousness, even in cases of extreme non-attention, seems to be structured into a foreground and a background. But even if it is agreed that introspection bears me out, it is not necessary to rest the case on the evidence of introspection alone. An explanation can, I believe, be offered for the phenomenon, which may well be convincing to those who remain unmoved by the introspective evidence.

It is Ribot's thesis that attention is grounded in the emotional nature of the organism, and in support of this view he uses the following argument:

> Any animal so organized that the impressions of the external world were all of equal significance to it, in whose consciousness all impressions stood upon the same level, without any single one predominating or inducing an appropriate motory adaptation--were exceedingly ill-equipped for its own preservation. I shall overlook the extreme case, in which predominance and adaptation would favour detrimental impressions; for an animal thus constituted must perish, being an illogical organism--a kind of incorporate contradiction. The usual case remains, viz: the predominance of useful sensations, that is, of those connected with nutrition, self-defence, and the propagation of the species. The impressions of prey to be caught, of an enemy to be avoided, and from time to time, of a female to be fecundated, become settled in the consciousness of the animal with their adapted movements. Attention, thus, is at the service of and dependent upon necessities; always connected with the sense most perfectly developed, the sense of touch, of sight, of hearing, of smelling, according to the species. Here attention is seen in all its simplicity, and here it affords the most instruction. It was necessary to descend to those rudimentary forms, in order to grasp the reason of its power:--attention is a condition of life; . . . (1)

We may agree with Ribot that if, per impossible, an organism could be absolutely indifferent to its environment, there would be no reason for it to pay attention to changes which took place in the environment of which it was aware.

We might in fact go one step further than Ribot, and question whether an organism could continue to be conscious, if its awareness of its environment ceased to matter to it. In any event it is possible that Ribot has overstated his case. We find him saying, for instance, that, "Man, like animals, lends his attention spontaneously only to what concerns and interests him." (2) This view lends itself to the overstatement that man, as well as animal, can only have his attention attracted by something which has an emotional

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 33.

(2) Ibid, pp. 12-13.

significance for him. Indeed Ribot himself says, "spontaneous attention without an anterior emotional state would be an effect without a cause." (1) The danger in this position is, that it becomes true by definition, that if a man or animal spontaneously attends, that which holds the attention must be of concern or interest to that man or animal.

We may therefore agree with Ribot that spontaneous attention is grounded in emotional states, without following him to the point of saying that every instance of spontaneous attention is caused by an emotional state. But would this, as Ribot thinks, be an event without a cause? It would not, for what the emotional state does, is give the organism a propensity to have its attention elicited by changes in the intensity of stimuli. The position as I see it is this. The organism, whether it be man or animal, is not indifferent to its environment. So far I am in agreement with Ribot. But because the environment is of interest and concern, every sign of change in it--any form of novelty--must alert the organism. The organism is alerted when its sense-organs, responding in a quite mechanical fashion, are arrested by the novel stimuli. This can best be understood in terms of one or two examples. We are all familiar with the experience in which a sudden movement, or flash of light, catches the eye. As soon as the movement, or light, is seen, the eye is held by the novel stimulus. The eye comes to rest on the moving or flashing object before it is recognised, or there is time for its relevance to be evaluated. As we say, the object has caught our attention. A similar experience occurs when an unexpected sound strikes the ear. The sound itself excites our attention, in advance of any inter-

(1) Ibid. p. 13.

pretation of its significance for us. In other words the response of the sense-organ to a novel stimulus is very much like a reflex action, and an unconditioned reflex at that.

The objection that many quite startling stimuli do not arrest the attention of the sense-organ concerned, can be quite easily disposed of. To a newly born organism every stimulus is novel and startling. As the organism accommodates itself to its environment it finds progressively fewer stimuli novel. Stimuli which startle the newborn organism because of their novelty, cease to do so after a number of repetitions of the stimuli are found to have no consequences for the organism. Thus, a newborn lamb may be frightened by a clap of thunder while its mother takes no notice. As the organism matures, it learns to inhibit the reflex-like response of the sense-organs to certain types of stimuli. But what is inhibited cannot be the initial arrest of the sense-organ--the stimulus is still "picked up." The sheep undoubtedly hears the thunderclap. What is inhibited is any further reaction beyond that point such as the assumption of a posture of attention.

I have suggested this alternative to Ribot's theory, because it seems to me the only way to make intelligible, facts which on Ribot's theory remain a mystery. He tells us that only an organism with an emotional involvement in its environment can exhibit attention, but he does not explain how the environment is to have a repercussion on the organism in the first instance. This my alternative attempts to clarify.

The dispute between Ribot and myself has certain interesting implications. It is one of his basic contentions that the normal state of an organism is one of non-attention, and it follows that attention is for him an exceptional phenomenon. As he explains,

> Attention . . . is an exceptional, abnormal state, which cannot last a long time, for the reason that it is in contradiction to the basic condition of psychic life; namely, change. Attention is a state that is fixed. If it is prolonged beyond a reasonable time, particularly under unfavourable conditions, everybody knows from individual experience, that there results a constantly increasing cloudiness of the mind, finally a kind of intellectual vacuity, frequently accompanied by vertigo. These light, transient perturbations denote the radical antagonism of attention and the normal psychical life. The progress toward unity of consciousness, which is the very basis of attention, manifests itself still better in clearly morbid cases, which we shall study later under their chronic form, namely, the "fixed idea," and in their acute form, which is ecstasy. (1)

In contrast to this theory, I have been arguing that without an inbuilt tendency to have their attention caught by stimuli, the sense-organs cannot do their proper job. That is to say, if we accept Ribot's theory that change is a necessary condition of consciousness, then there must be some inbuilt mechanism which attracts the sense-organs to the stimuli through which change is presented. In other words, if it is natural for our sense-organs to perform a scanning function by being more or less always moved about, it is as natural for them to be arrested by certain sorts of stimuli: i.e., those stimuli which are still novel to the organism. Those stimuli, as I have said, which do not arrest the movement of the sense-organ, have been inhibited from so doing. The arrest of the movement of the sense-organ, which I shall call "sense-organ attention," is therefore, contrary to what Ribot says, an entirely normal feature of consciousness.

The difference between my position and Ribot's is not as great as would appear, and with a little qualification the two can be brought into harmony. What we need to realize is that in the above passage Ribot is clearly referring to maximal attention. Now I would

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, pp. 8-9.

certainly be prepared to follow him in his claim that maximal attention is an abnormal state, which cannot be sustained for very long periods, but this is a far cry from the claim that even minimal attention is abnormal. I think it is true to say that Ribot was misled, in just the way that James was misled, by thinking exclusively of maximal attention, and assuming that what is true of maximal attention is true of all attention. He in fact points out at the very beginning of his study, that he intends to confine himself to cases of attention that are "marked and typical."

> It is a matter of much greater difficulty to know at what point attention begins, and where it ends; for it embraces all degrees from the transient instant accorded to the buzzing of a fly, to the state of complete absorption. It will be conformable to the rule of sound method only to study cases that are marked and typical; that is to say, those which present at least one of the following two characteristics: intensity and duration. (1)

It is evident that whereas my discussion of a pure sensuous consciousness concentrates on the end of the scale at which attention is minimal, Ribot is concerned with the end of the scale at which attention is maximal. Moreover, Ribot, who distinguishes two forms of attention, spontaneous attention and voluntary attention, (2) makes it equally true of both forms of attention that they are "antagonistic" to the "normal psychical life." This, I shall try to show, is an error even on Ribot's own theory.

We are now in a position to understand why it is that in a state of non-attention, consciousness is nevertheless structured into a part which is in the foreground, and a remainder which fills the background. My example of a person lying on the beach sunbathing

(1) Ibid. p. 7.

(2) I have deliberately avoided discussing the question of the different forms of attention until this became unavoidable. My intention is to avoid obscuring the argument by introducing too many considerations at once. The subject is discussed in secs. 7-9.

probably comes as close as is possible in normal conditions to a person having a pure sensuous consciousness (assuming as my example made clear that the sunbather would later claim that his mind was a blank). I maintained, on introspective grounds, that there would always be some sense experience in the foreground of the sunbather's consciousness. Why this should be so, can now be explained in terms of what I have called sense-organ attention. As I explained, our sense-organs are always arrested by the most novel stimulus in the environment. Thus if the increasing intensity of the heat of the sun on his back, is the most novel feature of the environment for the sunbather, the sensation in his back will spontaneously occupy the foreground of his consciousness. This it will continue to do, unless another stimulus occurs which is now more novel than the sensation of heat. It might be the sudden break of a wave, or the shrill call of a seagull. Attention will then spontaneously transfer to the sound, and the sound will take the place of the previous sensation, and itself occupy the foremost position in consciousness. As the sound is usually a transitory stimulus, after it has ceased, the next relatively most novel stimulus will arrest the sense-organs and so place yet another element in the foreground. It may be that a cloud hides the sun, and then immediately even with eyes closed, the sudden darkening sensation to the sunbather's eyes leaps to the foreground of consciousness. The fact therefore that consciousness seems always to be differentiated into a foreground and a background, even in the condition of non-attention, must be attributed to the way our sense-organs function in relation to changes in stimuli. If what Ward means when he contends that attention is exhibited in all consciousness, is that consciousness is always differentiated into a foreground and a background, we have found good reason to agree with him.

6. The examination of a pure sensuous consciousness has shown that it is indeed a form of consciousness manifesting a structure which can be described as taking the form of some of its elements appearing in the foreground relative to which others are in the background. Furthermore I attempted to offer an explanation of this structure in terms of sense-organ attention. I come now to the second form of consciousness with which I wish to test the hypothesis that all consciousness is thus structured. This is the state of reverie: sometimes described as "being in a Brown study." In such a condition the mind wanders from one thought to another in a course dictated by the purely accidental association of ideas. Thoughts are interrupted by perceptions, and perceptions are in turn interrupted by thoughts. Our minds seem to be free-wheeling.

Writers like William James and Ribot clearly regard such a condition of consciousness as a paradigm case of the absence of attention. Ribot, for instance, referring to scatter-brained people, gives a description of their condition which applies equally to reverie generally.

> We call "distracted" people whose intelligence is unable to fix itself with any degree of persistence, and who pass incessantly from one idea to another, at the mercy of their most transient whims, or of any trifling events in their surroundings. It is a perpetual state of mobility and dispersion, which is the very reverse of attention. It is frequently met with in children and women. (1)

We may note, before continuing, that Ribot cannot mean that these "distracted" people are unable to attend spontaneously in the way in which he says animals attend to their sense experiences in the struggle for survival. They must at least be capable of what he has called "spontaneous attention," and yet in this passage we are led to believe that

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 78.

"distracted people" are incapable of any attention whatever. He must mean that they are incapable of what he has called "voluntary attention."

Once again we see Ribot saying of attention as such, things that are true only of a particular form of attention. This is the penalty he pays for generalizing unqualifiedly from instances of attention which are "marked and typical." Nevertheless, apart from a theoretical description of the matter, Ribot is undoubtedly staying close to ordinary usage when he describes "distracted" people as people incapable of attention. And it is certainly the case that a person in a state of reverie would ordinarily be described as a person in a state of non-attention. Ribot's own words fit such a state perfectly: "It is a perpetual state of mobility and dispersion, which is the very reverse of attention."

Now insofar as some of the elements of consciousness found in a state of reverie will correspond with those belonging to a pure sensuous consciousness, they have already been shown to fall into the pattern of foreground and background. This leaves the other elements comprising a state of reverie: viz. recollections, mental images, and thoughts. Probably no one would dispute the testimony of introspection, which supports the claim that consciousness exhibits the typical structure of foreground and background in the state of reverie. In reverie there is always some element in the centre of consciousness. Nevertheless there is no need to rely on introspection alone. The very expressions we use to describe reverie tell the same story. We speak of a succession of ideas crossing the mind, and I do not think it would be going too far to say that we imagine them crossing in single file. We certainly are unlikely to think of the ideas crossing the mind in regimental formation. We also use the expression "a train of thought" and in reverie the train of thought would be described

as aimless. Whether we speak of ideas "crossing" the mind, or a "train" of ideas, in each case the metaphor suggests that at any one time some idea must be in the middle of its passage, and that idea is then said to be "before" the mind. Now it will be recalled that I have argued that a total temporary state of consciousness will normally reveal the presence of a plurality of elements. It must follow that if one element in a total temporary state has the position we describe as being "before" the mind, there will be other elements in the state of which this is not true. We may conclude from these premisses that when in reverie some idea is before the mind, it is not the only element existing in consciousness at the time. This state of affairs can be described without misrepresentation as one in which the element in question occupies the foreground to a consciousness which must also have other elements in the background.

It is possible for a person to interrupt a state of reverie, and try to recall all the ideas that have passed before his mind. The task will not be easy, because it is difficult to remember events which one is not attending to, and a state of reverie is a state of diminished attention; if not a state of absolute non-attention. Nevertheless, because of the propinquity of the ideas to be recalled, we can expect a fair measure of success. Now it is not necessary to my argument that we be able to recall with any great fidelity what transpired in an immediately preceding state of reverie. All I require is the concession that some of the state be recalled. A description of what is recalled will take the form of mentioning one idea, which gives rise to another, suggests a third, recalls a fourth, and so on. In other words the description will suggest a linear pattern in which we advance from one idea to the next. No matter how fragmentary each individual thought is, it will for a fleeting second occupy the focal

position in consciousness, and it is for this reason that it should seem entirely fitting for a description of what happens, to mention one idea after another. In other words, we do not protest that language cannot capture the true nature of reverie owing to the fact that in language we are forced to describe ideas one at a time, whereas in reverie there is no such linear pattern. Quite the contrary. The sequential nature of description of ideas in language accurately captures the impression of their order in the mind. The position is very different from the one we meet when we describe a visual scene for instance. For there we see a number of things at once, but have to describe them one after the other.

This point can best be substantiated by quoting a piece of writing describing a state of reverie. In James Joyce's Ulysses we find Bloom in a carriage on the way to a funeral, lost in reverie:

> BRONZE BY GOLD HEARD THE HOOFIRONS, STEELY.
> rining
> Imperthnthn thnthnthn.
> Chips, picking chips off rocky thumbnail, chips.
> Horrid ! And gold flushed more.
> A husky fifenote blew.
> Blew. Blue bloom is on the
> Gold pinnacled hair.
> A jumping rose on satiny breasts of satin, rose of Castille.
> Trilling, trilling: Idolores.
> Peep ! Who's in the . . . peepofgold ?
> Tink cried to bronze in pity.
> And a call, pure, long and throbbing. Longindying call.
> Decoy. Soft word. But look ! The bright stars fade. O rose !
> Notes chirruping answer. Castille. The morn is breaking.
> Jingle jingle jaunted jingling.
> Coin rang. Clock clacked.
> Avowal. Sonnez. I could. Rebound of garter, Not leave thee.
> Smack. La cloche ! Thigh smack. Avowal. Warm.
> Sweetheart, goodbye.
> Jingle. Bloo.
> Boomed crashing chords. When love absorbs. War ! War !
> The tympanum.
> A sail ! A veil awave upon the waves.
> Lost. Throstle fluted. All is lost now.
> Horn. Hawhorn.

When first he saw. Alas!
Full tup. Full throb.
Warbling. Ah, lure! Alluring.
Martha! Come!
Clapclop. Clipclap. Clappyclap.
Goodgod heneverheard inall.
Deaf bald Pat brought pad knife took up.
A moonlight nightcall: far: far.
I feel so sad. P.S. So lonely blooming.
Listen !
The spiked and winding cold seahorn. Have you the ? Each
and for other plash and silent roar.
Pearls: when she. Liszt's rhapsodies. Hisss. (1)

Bloom's musings consist of a jumble of ideas which mostly originate in experiences he had earlier in the day, held together in a mental dance of the mind's own making. What is of particular interest from my point of view is the literary form Joyce gives to Bloom's stream of thoughts: short; abbreviated; consecutive. Each one seems to stand by itself--isolated. By laying out the words one below another Joyce conveys the idea of the thoughts coming one after another.

For the fleeting moment each thought lives, it is in the forefront of consciousness. The mind is drawn towards it; it has our attention. The pattern of consciousness here, in reverie, is no different from its pattern in pure sensuous consciousness: it is articulated as foreground against background.

It is particularly true of the thoughts we have, as opposed to our sensuous elements of consciousness, that they insist on having pride of place in the foreground. I concede that we do sometimes say of a thought "It has been in the back of my mind," but any such reference to a thought seems to imply that the back of the mind is not the natural place for thoughts to reside. It is often the cause of frustration that a thought is in the back of the mind, just as it is frustrating to have something on the tip of the tongue. In a state of pure reverie, no thoughts will be in the back of the mind, just as

(1) James Joyce, Ulysses (Hamburg, 1935), I, 264.

in the same state we have no words on the tips of our tongue.

In arguing that consciousness is structured even in conditions of non-attention, I have deliberately described the form this structuring takes, in the vaguest possible way, in terms of foreground and background. The minimum possible claim was all my argument needed. Nevertheless it might be helpful if I were to give some more definite idea of the manner in which I conceive a thought or an element of consciousness to occupy the foreground of consciousness. This can only be done by analogy. When speaking to another person about an object which is in the vicinity, it is usually possible to point out the object which one is referring to. The visual field, the auditory field, or whatever sense-field it is, then organises itself about the object of reference. It is then the centre of our attention. Very much a parallel situation is found, I suggest, in consciousness generally (it must not be overlooked that the example of the object just given, is also an example drawn from consciousness). When I have a thought, for instance, the thought becomes the cognitive referent around which consciousness organizes itself. It is as though, when I had a thought, I had to point out to myself which thought I was having. Now of course I do no such thing. But it is as if the reason I do not need to point it out to myself, is that it already occupies precisely the position it would have, had I pointed it out. In this way it presents itself.

The point can perhaps be grasped by comparing the situation with an imaginary game. In this game there is a table which is called "the referring table." Participants are not allowed to refer to an object, unless it is on the referring table, and only one object is allowed on the table at a time. In this game the very idea of referring to an object which is not on the table is without sense:

it is not a move in the game. On the other hand no reference ever need be made to the object one is speaking about. It is uniquely identified by the fact that it lies on the referring table. The participants are free to make what remarks they like, but all the remarks are understood to apply to what is at the time on the table. It is a meaningless move in the game to suggest that they apply to something else. (If this game sounds far-fetched, let me suggest that it is not so very unlike what happens at an auction of valuables). Now, to draw the analogy, consciousness is the game itself, only this time there is only one player. The referring table is the foreground to consciousness, and the object lying on the table is the thought; the cognitive referent. The thought is the focal point of the foreground. Just as the object on the table is a referent although there is no question of the possibility of misidentification, so too the thought, or the state of consciousness, in the foreground of consciousness is, as it were, the referent of consciousness, although there is no question of misidentification, or therefore of the need to identify.

7. I have found reason to agree with Ward that some degree of attention is to be found in even the most distracted conditions of consciousness, whether it be pure sensuous consciousness or a state of reverie. In both forms of consciousness the need was found to differentiate consciousness into a foreground and background. Provided this feature of consciousness is recognised, it matters little whether it is called a rudimentary form of attention, or whether the word "attention" is reserved for a less distracted condition of consciousness; for what James and Hamilton call "consciousness concentrated." If a feature of attention, which seems intrinsic to its "marked and typical" forms, is also found to be present in non-

attentive consciousness, this is worth pointing out. It might after all provide the link between non-attentive consciousness and fully attentive consciousness, and this in turn might explain how a condition of inattention could pass into a state of full attention. It is a quite proper theoretical procedure to extend the scope of a concept to a phenomenon not previously falling under it, in order to uncover a resemblance between such a phenomenon and the phenomena to which the concept was previously restricted. This, it seems to me, is what Ward has done when he alleges that some degree of attention is to be found even in conditions of consciousness normally believed to be antipathetic to its existence. If we have succeeded in tracing attention back to its earliest beginnings in consciousness, it would be churlish to object to our describing what we have found, as "rudimentary attention."

If we consent to follow Ward in talking of degrees of attention, there is no reason why we should not take a leaf out of Mill's book, and claim that attention may differ in quality as well as in quantity. I shall now take up this idea, and consider the question of whether there are different kinds of attention. Of course, in a sense, an affirmative answer has already been conceded as soon as it is agreed that "rudimentary attention" is found in states of distraction. Ribot too, as we have noticed in passing, makes a clear-cut distinction between two different forms of attention, which he calls spontaneous attention, and voluntary attention. The discussion has, however, so far, been restricted to cases which would fall under the heading of spontaneous attention. It is now time to investigate these distinctions, discover their basis, and explore their extent.

Ribot sets out the contrast between spontaneous attention and voluntary attention, as he sees it, as follows:

> There are two well-defined forms of attention the one spontaneous, natural; the other voluntary, artificial. The former--neglected by most psychologists--is the true, primitive, and fundamental form of attention. The second--the only one investigated by most psychologists--is but an imitation, a result of education, of training, and of impulsion. Precarious and vacillating in nature, it derives its whole being from spontaneous attention, and finds only in the latter a point of support. It is merely an apparatus formed by cultivation, and a product of civilization. (1)

I have already drawn attention to Ribot's view that attention is an abnormal phenomenon which cannot be prolonged too long, "for the reason that it is in contradiction to the basic condition of psychic life." This point of view is strongly evident in what he here says about voluntary attention. A further distinction between the two forms, which he takes to be quite definitive, is that spontaneous attention is entirely effortless, while on the other hand voluntary attention is always an effort.

William James shares Ribot's views, as is evident from the following passage:

> Voluntary attention is always derived; we never make an effort to attend to an object except for the sake of some remote interest which the effort will serve. (2)

Ribot would endorse that statement without qualification. And the next statement of James's is also one which would fit in with Ribot's position:

> There is no such thing as voluntary attention sustained for more than a few seconds at a time. (3)

James's contention is that if we seem to be voluntarily attending for more than a few seconds this is only because there is in fact "a repetition of successive efforts which bring back the topic to the mind."

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 8.

(2) William James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 416.

(3) Ibid. p. 416.

There is no doubt a distinction to be made between what Ribot calls spontaneous attention and voluntary attention, but it cannot be said that he has clarified it. In the first place if we suppose that all attention which is <u>learned</u> attention, is voluntary attention--and this seems to be Ribot's criterion for voluntary attention--there is no reason to believe that learned attention will always be accompanied by a feeling of effort. Ribot himself states that in people who have been successfully taught, attention of the sort in question ultimately becomes a habit. Now surely it must be conceded that when we do something out of habit, we do it without feeling any effort in what we are doing? We can go a step further and affirm that when something has become a habit, we are frequently unaware of having acted on the habit until the act has been completed. Bearing this in mind, I can only suggest that Ribot has convinced himself of the ubiquity of the sense of effort in voluntary attention, because he has confined himself to the learning-situation. If a child is being taught to pay attention, he is being taught to do something he cannot yet do, and this must inevitably cost him an effort. But once the task is learned, it can be performed without any conscious sense of effort. From this point of view the sense of effort can be seen as incidental to the learning process, and not as intrinsic to the nature of voluntary attention. Secondly, we frequently meet with the experience in which an initial attempt to attend to a subject costs a great deal of effort, but that after a while, the subject begins to engross us, we become absorbed, and all sense of effort disappears. In the light of these two circumstances Ribot would seem constrained to say that what began as voluntary attention became transformed into spontaneous attention. This would account for the disappearance of the sense of effort.

Unfortunately this move is not open to him, for, on Ribot's own theory, spontaneous attention is by definition unlearned attention, (1) and, neither voluntary attention which has become a habit, nor voluntary attention which has become absorption, can be described as unlearned attention. On the other hand, Ribot could not drop the requirement that a sense of effort always accompanies voluntary attention, without surrendering his claim that there is a felt basis to the distinction between spontaneous and voluntary attention. Manifestly his two-fold distinction is insufficient for his purpose.

William James makes a more comprehensive set of distinctions, (2) but I prefer to turn to Hamilton's views on the subject. Hamilton, like Ribot, denies that all attention is of the voluntary kind. Under the heading Attention possible without an act of free-will, he says,

> I think Reid and Stewart incorrect in asserting that attention is only a voluntary act, meaning, by the expression voluntary, an act of free-will. . .
>
> Attention of three degrees or kinds.--It, therefore, appears to me the more correct doctrine to hold that there is no consciousness without attention,--without concentration,--but that attention is of three degrees or kinds. The first, a mere vital and irresistible act; the second, an act determined by desire, which though involuntary, may be resisted by our will; the third, an act determined by a deliberate volition. An act of attention,--that is, an act of concentration,--seems thus necessary to every exertion of consciousness, as a certain contraction of the pupil is requisite to every exercise of vision. We have formerly noticed, that discrimination is a condition of consciousness; and a discrimination is only possible by a concen-

(1) See, Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, ch. 2. Thus: "Voluntary or artificial attention is a product of art, of education, of direction, and of training. It is grafted, as it were, upon spontaneous or natural attention, and finds in the latter its conditions of existence, as the graft does in the stock, into which it has been inserted." p. 35.

(2) Op cit. I, 416.

> trative act, or act of attention. This, however, which corresponds to the lowest degree,--to the mere vital or automatic act of attention, has been refused the name; and attention, in contradistinction to this mere automatic contraction, given to the two other degrees, of which, however, Reid only recognises the third. (1)

This passage is interesting on a number of counts. Hamilton is in agreement with Ribot in maintaining that voluntary attention is not the only kind of attention. He recognises the existence of what I have referred to as rudimentary attention, even though he refuses it the name. He contends that there is no consciousness without attention. And he offers a more flexible classification than the twofold system adopted by Ribot. It is not possible to identify either of Ribot's two forms of attention with any of Hamilton's threefold schema. Ribot's spontaneous attention is not Hamilton's mere vital attention, because his is based on desire, and the vital attention mentioned by Hamilton is not. It cannot be identified with Hamilton's second variety, because although this is based on desire, it can be suspended by an act of will, which Ribot's spontaneous attention cannot. Finally, Ribot's voluntary attention is not identical with Hamilton's attention determined by deliberate volition, because Hamilton contrasts attention based on volition with attention based on desire, and Ribot does not. As far as Ribot is concerned voluntary attention is as much based on desire, or emotional factors, as he calls them, as is spontaneous attention. Even if we follow Hamilton and subdivide Ribot's "spontaneous attention," we do not arrive at a satisfactory position.

Both thinkers endeavour to distinguish forms of attention through tracing differences in their origins. They thus reduce the issue to one of motivation i.e., to the question of the various

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton pp. 165-6.

possible types of cause of an instance of attention. For instance, spontaneous or vital attention is caused by processes in the organism, a second form of attention is caused by desire, and a third form is caused by an act of volition. In opposition to this approach, I wish to argue that the type of attention is not determined by the circumstances of its motivation. On the contrary I hope to show that each form of attention could equally well be motivated by any of the causes Hamilton has identified. I hold that whether the attention demanded an effort, or not; whether it was spontaneous or enforced; and whether it was voluntary or not, are not factors that are intrinsic to specific types of attention. These considerations are incidental. I shall argue, in other words, that if, for the sake of argument, there are three forms of attention--A, B, and C--it will be true on some occasions that A demanded effort, B was due to an act of will, and C the result of a desire, and it will be equally true on other occasions that A was effortless, B the result of desire, and C due to an act of will. And so on for the other permutations. Where I think it is easy to be misled, and where perhaps Ribot and Hamilton were misled, is in the assumption that if a certain form of attention must originally have had a certain motivation, it must thereafter always retain the same motivation. This assumption commits the genetic fallacy according to which the meaning of a phenomenon is determined entirely by its origin.

This point can best be illustrated in connection with the form of attention Hamilton describes as "mere vital attention." It is evident that the kind of attention he has in mind is identical with what I called "sense-organ" attention, and which I have discussed at some length. Now we have seen that this kind of attention can be attributed to animals, and this makes it seem

entirely reasonable to assume that when it is met with in man, it must operate in the same way as it does in animals. But this ignores the fact that we also ascribe to man "higher" forms of attention, which are not found in animals. Voluntary attention is the obvious example. Once this is admitted the whole picture alters radically. There exists at least the possibility that a man may be able to disengage his "mere vital attention" in virtue of his possession of the abilities intrinsic to his higher forms of attention. But if "mere vital attention" can be disengaged, it has an altogether different significance from--is a different form of attention from--a "mere vital attention" which cannot be disengaged by an act of will. The "higher" forms of attention may conceivably invade the "lower" forms, and completely alter their character. Furthermore, in an organism in which the higher forms of attention are found, it may prove impossible to isolate the lower forms in the purity they possess in those organisms which do not possess the higher forms. Just as in man it is alleged that there are no instances of his behaviour being determined by "pure" motives; all his motives being mixed; so too it may be the case that in man there are no cases of pure instances of a single kind of attention; all attention being a resultant of a number of different kinds.

These, I suggest, are possibilities. It is only necessary to admit that they are possibilities for it to be realized that the assumption that forms of attention are determined by their origins is questionable. On these grounds we would be advised to be extremely wary of quasi-evolutionary accounts of the stages of attention, such as Ribot gives us, and such as is implicit in Hamilton's theory.

8. Let us descend from abstract possibilities to concrete cases, and find out just what does take place. "Mere vital attention" from its very description must be supposed to take place without the attender willing it. It is compulsive in the sense that the attender has no control over its occurrence. Moreover it must also be effortless, since by calling something an effort it is implied that an easier alternative exists, and in the present case there is, by definition, no alternative. An example of such attention would be the case of a sudden movement catching an eye. When that happens one's eyes are drawn to the spot at which the movement was observed, and they fixate it. The event has our attention. This is a common experience. When it happens, often the first thing we know about it is that we have noticed the movement. That is to say, we may have our attention drawn by a movement without realizing that this has happened. It often happens that it is only after we have been attending for some time that we become aware of the fact that our attention is held by something. It may be that what we notice as a result of attending, itself makes us aware of the fact that we have been attending. Another possibility is for us not to realise at all that we are attending. A friend, for example, may say to me, "Don't stare," and until he reprimands me, I most likely have been completely unaware of the fact that I was staring, although I would not be unaware of the person I was staring at. It is important to recognise that it is quite normal in the above sort of situation for a person to desist from giving his "mere vital attention," either as soon as he realizes that he has been giving it, or as soon as he is told to desist. I may find myself staring at a spastic, and after a while it might suddenly dawn on me that I am doing so. I will then immediately look

away, feeling guilty about what I had inadvertently done. The case is even more obvious if someone admonishes me for staring at a spastic. I immediately desist if I have any respect for other people's feelings.

Such experiences are not confined to visual attention. One often has the experience of overhearing someone else's conversation and discovering that one has been listening intently to hear what is being said. The fact that this is often inadvertent is indicated by the fact that we stop ourselves from doing it as soon as we realise this is what we are doing. These very common sorts of case make it quite clear that on many occasions we do actually disengage our "mere vital attention." The fact that such attention begins spontaneously, does not mean that it must end spontaneously. And yet if we allowed ourselves to be guided entirely by the concept of a "mere vital attention" we would conclude that the process was from beginning to end outside the control of the attender. What the examples teach us, is that by our being able to attend to our attending, either through our own realization, or through having our attention drawn to it by someone else, we alter the entire nature of the attention we give to an object. What may begin as "mere vital attention" may in this way end as voluntary attention.

Not all the occasions on which we find ourselves engaging in "mere vital attention" are ones of which we need feel ashamed. We may, therefore, realise that we have been attending, and not on that account feel any obligation to disengage our attention. It is not difficult to think of examples. I may by chance have my attention drawn by a fireworks display, and automatically stop to watch it. After a while the thought occurs to me that I am allowing myself to be distracted from my purpose which was to visit a friend. When

I realise this I may react by deciding to continue to watch the fireworks instead of visiting my friend. In this manner what begins as spontaneous attention may be converted into explicit voluntary attention. I might mention that it costs me no effort to continue watching the fireworks, even though I am now attending voluntarily. The example belies the claim that voluntary attention is always attention accompanied by a sense of effort. In cases such as these, we describe ourselves as having become interested in the object of attention.

The connection between attention and interest has often been noted. William James, for instance, says quite flatly, "The things to which we attend are said to interest us." (1) It does not seem to me, however, that the relation between attention and interest is always understood. It is usually taken for granted that it is necessarily true that if I am giving something my attention, I must have an interest in it. The interest is viewed as the cause of my attention. But the example of watching the fireworks does not bear out this hypothesis. I may stop to watch the fireworks without ever having had an interest in fireworks before, and there would be nothing inconsistent in my announcing that I will never be interested in firework displays again. In other words the interest may neither precede nor outlast the particular occasion of its single manifestation. By describing the object of attention as holding my interest, the idea is conveyed that I could disengage my attention if I wanted to, and it is implied that the reason that I am not disengaging my attention is that I am enjoying the experience I am having. It would be quite wrong, therefore, to associate the interest a man exhibits in some

(1) James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 416. See also A.R. White, Attention (Oxford, 1964), ch. 7.

instances of attention, with the interests a man has when he is said to have certain political or economic interests. The two kinds of interest are quite different.

If we wish to be sensitive to the subtleties of words, it might be pointed out that it would be not quite accurate to describe my attention to the fireworks by saying "I am interested in the fireworks." For this statement carries with it the idea that there is something about the fireworks that I wish to know more about. It suggests that I am bringing to the subject an analytical intelligence, which is not what my example implied. We avoid reading such implications into the situation by describing the attention as enjoyment, as opposed to interest. If I describe myself as enjoying the fireworks, my description does not carry any such intellectual baggage with it. Out of my enjoyment may grow an interest, but if that happens my future attention to firework displays will be on an altogether different level.

So far I have considered a case in which attention to an object begins as a "mere vital attention" and ends up as something different. There is also a different sort of case involving "mere vital attention" and this is the case in which we exercise our "mere vital attention" by a voluntary act. This possibility is still more at variance with the positions of Ribot and Hamilton. For surely, it may be objected, if the attention does not at least start as an automatic process outside our control, in what sense is it "merely vital?" I am thinking of the situation in which a person enjoys the experience of certain sorts of "mere vital attention" and deliberately places himself in surroundings conducive to its exercise: the circus for example. A circus is full of unexpected events all of which we are prepared to have arouse our "mere vital

attention." It is a nice point whether our attention engaged in such circumstances could be described as quite involuntary; something we could not help. If we were not in a deliberately created state of readiness; a state of anticipation, some of the events which evoked our "mere vital attention" would no doubt not have done so.

Most human beings take a delight, at one time or another, in exercising the functions which it is natural for them to have as human beings. We take a delight in various forms of exercise, we take a delight in certain universal experiences, and I suggest, we take a delight in "mere vital attention." An object of attention does not have to be traced back to a desire, an interest, or a problem, in order for us to enjoy the experience of having our attention held. I may enjoy watching waves from a beach, and enjoy their sound as they break, for no other reason than that I find this soothing. To have my attention held in this way is enjoyable in itself. Whether I just happened to be on the beach and had my attention attracted by the waves, or whether I went to the beach specially to be soothed by the waves, does not alter the fact that my enjoyment comes from my abandoning my attention to the lure of the sea.

Of course the more we enjoy such an experience, the more difficult it becomes for us to disengage attention. It is no effort to continue in a state one enjoys, but it is an effort to break away from it. When the effort becomes too strong for us, we are said to be in a state of fascination. Fascination is therefore a form of attention which we are unable to disengage from at will. This should warn us that the word "involuntary" is insufficient to distinguish the variety of cases in which it is true to say "I could not help but attend." The sense of 'involuntary' in which a quite

unintended instance of "mere vital attention" is said to be involuntary, is entirely different from the sense in which an instance of attention which has become fascination, may be said to be involuntary.

There are yet further varieties of attention which we cannot help but give, and which are therefore involuntary, Ribot has most perceptively observed that surprise is a manifestation of attention. (1) And from surprise, we pass through degrees to fright, to shock, and to terror. Attention in all these cases is unavoidable, and they have the further peculiarity that they cannot, logically, be brought under voluntary control. Furthermore, in these cases it would not be appropriate to describe the attention as either demanding effort, or effortless.

What Hamilton has to say about the relation of attention to desire is also open to dispute. "An act determined by desire," he said, "Though involuntary, may be resisted by our will." We can, no doubt, think of cases in which this is true. I may be watching a television programme because I desire to watch it. The programme has my attention as a consequence of my desire to see it. All the same, with sufficient will-power, I can tear myself away from the screen. On the other hand, the desire to attend may be irresistible; in which case it could not be disengaged by an act of will. Plato's story about Leontius may be mentioned to illustrate this state of affairs.

> On his way up from the Piraeus outside the north wall, he noticed the bodies of some criminals lying on the ground, with the executioner standing by them. He wanted to go and look at them, but at the same time he was disgusted and tried to turn away. He struggled for some time and

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 30 ff.

> covered his eyes, but at last the desire was too much for him. Opening his eyes wide, he ran up to the bodies and cried, "There you are, curse you; feast yourselves on this lovely sight!" (1)

There is little doubt that Leontius would have disputed Hamilton's belief that it is always possible by an act of will to disengage attention determined by desire. If we allow that men do experience uncontrollable desires, we must admit the possibility that a desire determining attention could be one of them. If such a possibility were realized, the attention would be compulsive.

This brings me to the last point I wish to make in this connection. Voluntary attention may be defined either as attention someone could have paid if he had chosen, or as attention someone could have avoided paying, if he had chosen. Thus the situation with respect to voluntary attention is analogous to the situation in which we find ourselves as moral agents. If a certain act is my duty, then I am in a sense obliged to do it. I could also say that I was compelled to do it. But this does not mean that my act would cease to be a voluntary one. On the contrary it presupposes that it is voluntary. In the same way I can also be obliged to pay attention, or compelled to pay attention. But this does not mean that my attention is no longer voluntarily given. On the contrary I can be ordered to pay attention only if the attention demanded of me is voluntary. If, for instance, I were ordered to be surprised, I could not carry out the order, because surprise is not a voluntary form of attention. I shall call this form of compulsive attention, which presupposes that it is voluntary, "enforced attention." With it I contrast automatic, spontaneous, and compulsive attention,

(1) Plato, The Republic, Ed. F.M. Cornford (Oxford, 1951), p. 134, (439-440).

all of which imply that the attender could not help attending. When the schoolmaster orders his class to pay attention, and his class obeys, their attention is *enforced attention*. Because the class can be punished for not attending, this form of attention is voluntary.

This survey has shown quite clearly that any attempt to distinguish between different forms of attention in terms of the presence or absence of effort, the presence or absence of automatic processes, the presence or absence of desires, and the presence or absence of acts of will, must fail. The framework within which attention is paid is almost always too complicated to admit of such compartmentalization. It remains true, nonetheless, that if we want to assess the circumstances in which attention is paid to an object on a particular occasion it is essential to go into all the factors I have just been considering.

9. In this section I propose a different way of making a distinction between types of attention, and I show that this alternative is vaguely foreshadowed in the theories of Ribot and Hamilton. In the chapter as a whole the discussion has concentrated on attention as it is exhibited in its most diffuse forms. I am referring, of course, to pure sensuous consciousness, and the state of reverie. Now these forms of consciousness share the characteristic that in them our intelligence seems to be at its least active. Accordingly, in these states our attention is, in a sense, idle. It is not attention directed towards an increase in knowledge. Sometimes, it is true, knowledge is increased in the course of attending in this idle manner, but it would be no misrepresentation

to say in such cases that the acquisition of knowledge was accidental. It could certainly not be regarded as the purpose of the exercise. Now in order to distinguish between those instances of attention which are not directed towards the enlargement of knowledge, and those which are, I shall use a special term. I shall call all those forms of attention, which are not aimed at finding something out, <u>non-interrogative attention</u>; and all those forms of attention which are aimed at finding something out, <u>interrogative attention</u>.

Interrogative attention is the attention of a probing intelligence in search of the answer to some question, or the solution to some problem. It is the attention characteristically exhibited by the knowing mind. (1) Non-interrogative attention, on the other hand, characteristically does not bring an enquiring intelligence to bear on its object. It does not find the object of attention puzzling, challenging, or the source of a question. In respect of the object, the mind seems quite passive and receptive. The presence of the object is no more than noted. No attempt is made to understand the object of attention in its meaningful relation to other objects. If it is to be found anywhere, a purely atomistic consciousness is to be found in a consciousness exhibiting non-interrogative attention.

There are two species of non-interrogative attention. One species, to which I have already alluded, I described as idle attention. The other species is not at all idle. It is best introduced through an example. A tight-rope walker doing a complicated routine on the tight-rope has to give the performance his whole attention if he is

(1) It could be called "cognitive attention," except that even the other variety, non-interrogative attention, is to a certain extent cognitive as well, and for this reason the word "cognitive" is not quite suitable.

to succeed. However, if he knows the routine by heart, he does not have to think out what he is doing. He only has to make sure that every movement is executed with the most sensitive adjustments. Now the attention the tight-rope walker pays to his act involves him in no pursuit of knowledge. He is not primarily trying to find out anything (although in doing his act, he may come across a better way of executing a move. But this is not essential to it). He is not putting the object of attention to question. It would be inappropriate to ask the tight-rope walker "What did you notice while you were giving your attention to your tight-rope act?" If he had noticed anything, it may rightly have been taken as a sign of incomplete concentration. This example makes it clear that there is a form of non-interrogative attention which involves the maximum of concentration, but which is entirely non-propositional in form. Compared with it the other forms of non-interrogative attention are, so to speak, scattered. This is an important point, because it stops us from thinking that non-interrogative attention is essentially attention of a very low degree which may be expected to occur when the mind is at its most disorganised.

Attention may begin by being non-interrogative, and later be transformed into interrogative attention. When this happens our curiosity is said to be aroused. We then view the object of attention in a completely different light. By bringing our understanding to bear on the subject we start noticing aspects of the object of attention which would otherwise have gone unnoticed.

I wish, now to draw attention to the close resemblance between Ribot's spontaneous attention, and non-interrogative attention. The following example given by Ribot makes this apparent.

> Thus we may observe how spontaneous attention is natural and devoid of effort. The idler, who loafs around in the street, will stare with gaping mouth at a procession or passing masquerade, and preserve perfect imperturbability as long as the procession lasts. If at any time effort appears, it is a sign that attention changes in character, that it becomes voluntary, artificial. (1)

As is plain from Ribot's description, the man gawking at the procession, exhibits what I have called non-interrogative attention. The above description would not lead us to expect the "idler" to be asking himself where the procession had come from, what it was all about, how it was organised, or, indeed, any set of questions which displayed an intellectual curiosity. But, as I have indicated, it is possible for non-interrogative attention to turn into interrogative attention, and this it would do as soon as any of the above questions arose for the spectator. This change, however, need not involve any feeling of effort, and there would be no point in calling it voluntary. Nevertheless there is reason to believe that Ribot has in mind the very transition to interrogative attention I have been describing. He speaks of spontaneous attention changing into voluntary attention. Now a typical case of voluntary attention is attention deliberately given; that is, attention we give because there is something the subject has decided to find out about. In other words when we do something because our intelligence has been engaged, it is natural to describe our act as voluntary. When Hamilton refers to voluntary attention, (2) he describes it as an act "determined by deliberate volition." What makes the attention deliberate, I am suggesting, is precisely the fact that the understanding has become engaged in the attention. If understanding is interpreted as the product of a free intelligence, it is reasonable that an act of attention prompted

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 14.

(2) See above, p. 106

by rational considerations should be thought to be a voluntary act, or an act determined by deliberation. From this point of view, attention which is guided by thought--interrogative attention--could easily come to be identified with voluntary attention. Moreover, should a thinker believe attention proper to be attention in the service of thought, he may be expected to deny that any seeming form of attention, which is not in the service of thought, really deserves the name. This, as we saw, was just the opinion Hamilton had about the matter. This makes it reasonable to conclude that when these writers speak of voluntary attention, what they really mean to refer to, is interrogative attention: the attention displayed by a mind in search of knowledge. It will generally be true that while non-interrogative attention is spontaneous and effortless, interrogative attention is voluntary and taxing. But, as I have endeavoured to make clear, the essence of the distinction between the two forms of attention is not dependent on these factors, but on their relation to the cognitive disposition of the attender.

The examination of attention I have undertaken has up to this point concentrated on the object of attention itself. Wherever attention was present, consciousness was seen to divide into a foreground and background. It has been the foreground that I have associated with attention. The background has been left in the background as seemingly irrelevant to the operation of attention. I have deliberately kept it out of the way, so that a number of observations could be made about attention, without the picture being obscured by premature over-complication. The point has now been reached, however, at which a further understanding of attention can only be had by an investigation of the role of the background of

consciousness in attention. Moreover the notion of a background of consciousness is to play a crucial role, not only in the analysis of attention, but also in the view of the self developed in chapter four. An understanding of the significance of the background of consciousness, and in particular an appreciation that it plays an active role in attention, is, accordingly, vital to my whole enterprise. It is the subject of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

1. I give the name "residual consciousness" to those elements of consciousness that together make up the background of consciousness when attention is paid to an object. My aim in this chapter is to discover the relationship between the object of attention and residual consciousness. An initial thought is likely to be that there is no connection between the two. Residual consciousness is then looked upon as a residue: something left over - redundant. My contention is that this is the very opposite of the truth. I shall argue that residual consciousness is as indispensable to the existence of attention as is the existence of the object of attention itself. If attention is one side of the coin, residual consciousness is the other side of the coin. Neither can exist without the other. Furthermore the relation between them will be shown to be dynamic.

Attention is always attention to something or other. It is an absurdity to claim to be attending but not attending to anything. I do not have to know what it is that I am attending to, in order to attend to it, but I do have to know that there is something I am attending to, even if I cannot make out what it is. The question, "What has your attention?" is always a valid question which cannot be answered in the negative, once one has conceded that one is attending. From the fact that I am attending to something, it follows that there are other things which I am not attending to.

To attend, is to attend to this, rather than that.(1) Even if I am spontaneously attending to something, and it is impossible for me to disengage my attention, I must at least know what it means not to be attending to the thing in question, but attending to something else, or perhaps not attending to anything in particular at all.

Attention, as I mentioned earlier, is a term with a contrary, and as such, it only has a meaning when it can meaningfully be contrasted with inattention. If our consciousness were such that we were never aware of anything except the objects of attention, we could not know that we were attending: we would have no contrast between attention and inattention. Let us imagine the possibility of a consciousness the total temporary state of which consisted of but a single element. The question could then be raised whether it would be meaningful to talk of that element of consciousness holding the attention of the person who experienced it. If it could, we should have to be prepared to explain in what respect attending to that element of consciousness differed from simply having it.

Let us suppose that an excruciating toothache constituted an example of a total temporary state containing one element. We should have to imagine the toothache invading the whole of consciousness, thereby blotting out all other elements. If this was possible, it would be an entirely homogeneous consciousness. What

(1) James and Collingwood both describe attention as 'selective'. This description is unfortunate in that it suggests that all attention is deliberate: i.e., consciously selected. But it does convey the idea that I am trying to get across, that there is always more to consciousness than what has my immediate attention. See, James, Principles of Psychology, I, 402, and R.G. Collingwood, The New Leviathan (Oxford, 1947) p. 22.

I wish to point out is that it would be impossible on logical grounds to distinguish between attending to the toothache, and having it, in those circumstances. The sufferer could only distinguish the two possibilities, if attending to the toothache were something over and above having it. This might consist in his belief that the toothache now felt worse than it did a minute ago. But as soon as some feature is specified which is the basis of the distinction between having and attending, the attending entails the presence of some element of consciousness in addition to the toothache: viz., in the present instance, the belief that it is getting worse. This example makes it clear that the normal case is one in which our knowledge that we are attending to A is determined by our concomitant knowledge that we are not attending to B, C, or D. It is in this sense that the existence of elements of consciousness to which we are not attending, provides a foil to those elements to which we are attending. Of course I do not deny that we often have our attention attracted by something, without realizing that we are attending, and then obviously we cannot be said to know that we are attending. Nevertheless, the fact remains, that if we are capable of realizing that we are attending - as we are - we only have this capability in virtue of the fact that we are aware of other things besides the object engrossing our attention.

It is frequently the case that we are first made to realize that our attention has been engrossed by an object, upon being distracted from it by one of the elements of consciousness that erstwhile belonged to residual consciousness. That is to say, we realize we have been attending, as soon as we have ceased to attend to the object in question.

To revert to the example of the homogeneous consciousness, in

which there is by definition no residual consciousness, nothing could correspond to that element's ceasing to receive attention apart from the disappearance of the state of consciousness itself. But where nothing would count as failing to attend, nothing could count as attending. Such circumstances would render the concept of attention vacuous. It would be like claiming that a picture could have a foreground without a background, and this is a manifest absurdity. Residual consciousness is, therefore, not something which could be destroyed without attention, too, being destroyed. It would be quite wrong to think that the existence of a plurality of elements of residual consciousness is quite accidental and irrelevant to the operation of attention.

Attention is a process in which consciousness is polarized into an object of attention and a residual consciousness: described in the last chapter as a foreground and a background. When an element of consciousness becomes the object of attention it is, as it were, detached from residual consciousness (the previous object of attention once more rejoining residual consciousness), and set apart from it. We may use the image of the elements of residual consciousness "receding" into the background; by comparison the object of attention stands out in the foreground. The image of "receding" invokes the idea of a "distance" between residual consciousness and the object of attention, and we may look at the process of polarization as one in which there is a distance separating the object of attention and residual consciousness. If I may elaborate the spatial metaphor, the distance must be conceived in such a way that the object of attention is situated at the closest point, and residual consciousness is located some distance behind it. The opposite way of viewing the matter would completely misrepresent the position:

namely, the one in which the object of attention would be seen at a distance - further away than residual consciousness.

Residual consciousness must not be thought of as a solid unchanging mass of elements. The elements that at the time do not engage our attention, may nevertheless change, or vanish, or be replaced by new ones. If we follow Ribot in taking change to be essential to consciousness, we would expect the elements of residual consciousness to be continually undergoing change. However, the very significant fact can be inferred, that the subject's awareness of the changes taking place in residual consciousness must be minimal. The reason for the lack of awareness of these changes is the fact that, _ex hypothesi_, the elements comprising residual consciousness cannot receive attention. As soon as a change in residual consciousness is noticed, the relevant element is _ipso facto_ detached, and becomes an object of attention.

2. The objection might be made that on the theory being developed I am not entitled to say that _any_ change could be noticed to take place in residual consciousness, for the reason that nothing could be noticed without having received some degree of attention, and the elements of residual consciousness are debarred from receiving any attention. This objection I shall try to meet on two different counts. I shall argue that (a) we are aware of things that have not received our attention, and that (b) the sharp separation between residual consciousness and object of attention, which my account suggests, is only a limiting case, the modification of which will overcome the objection. As far as (b) is concerned, I should say that I am introducing the theory in a very bald and simple form for purposes of exposition. Once the essentials are grasped, complicating

factors will be taken into account.

Are we, then, ever aware of things that have not received our attention? The question is phrased in a way that excludes the possibility that I am aware of X, because I gave it my attention a short time ago. That possibility would be consistent with the claim that we are aware of nothing that has not at some time in the past had our attention. An instance of my having an awareness of something without its having my attention, would be the following. At the time my attention is engrossed in something, I am asked a question. I fail to reply, because the question has not registered. When challenged I realize that I had been asked a question, but cannot tell what it was. In retrospect I seem to have been aware of little more of the episode than that I had heard a voice with a questioning tone to it. Such a case could be described as one in which I notice a change in residual consciousness, from a state in which the sound of a voice was absent, to one in which it was present, in spite of the fact that no attention is paid to the voice. Now of course the retort will be made that the voice must have been given just that degree of attention which was necessary for it to have been recognised to be a voice (or even a questioning voice). My reply to that is: "Why must it have been?" I may deny that my attention was in any way interrupted by the question. I may claim that in retrospect I could remember nothing that corresponded to my giving a small degree of attention to the voice. What is more, even if, for the sake of argument, it is conceded that my attention might have been partially engaged by the voice, the equally baffling question arises: "Why was my attention engaged only just sufficiently for me to be aware that I was being spoken to, but not sufficiently for me to be aware of what the question was?"

It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that every element of consciousness, whether it be the object of attention, or part of residual consciousness, is just that - an element of consciousness. It is all too easy to fall into the way of thinking that elements of consciousness have an independent existence of their own, such that they can exist unexperienced. We must be on our guard against forgetting the fact that their esse is percipi. There is no more an element of consciousness of which we are totally unaware, than there are pains that are totally unfelt. (1)

When a person is said to be lost in thought, he is usually impervious to certain aspects of his surroundings. He may not, as in my example, hear what is said to him. We often use the degree of difficulty we have in attracting the attention of a person, as a measure of the degree of his absorption in what he is doing. Nevertheless, even in these maximal instances of attention, we do not suppose that the attender becomes totally unaware of his surroundings. Provided his eyes are open, we do not believe that the person lost in thought ceases to have any visual experiences, neither do we believe that he ceases to hear any sounds. We know he may fail to respond to these things, but that does not mean he has lost all awareness of them. If the condition of being lost in thought were one in which external awareness was, as it were, completely shut out, it would not be possible to explain how such a person could have his attention

(1) It is strictly speaking an anomaly to talk of being aware of an element of consciousness, because this favours the idea that it is possible to be completely unaware of an element of consciousness. The truth is that an element of consciousness just is an awareness of something.

disturbed. Attention would be completely lacking in any possible source of interference. But as we know only too well our attention is liable to be distracted by our awareness of the things going on round about us. If this state of affairs were taken to mean that each thing that we had some awareness of, must have taken up at least a small degree of attention, there would be no such thing as undivided attention. Attention would in such circumstances be systematically scattered, and it would be difficult to see how attention could be narrowed, focussed, or concentrated.

Unfortunately the occasions on which our attention is fully absorbed by some matter are very infrequent. It is much more usual for our attention to dart hither and thither, encompassing a bewildering number of things in a very short space of time. This fact makes it extremely difficult to substantiate theory by an appeal to experience. In this field the lesson to be learned from experience is open to a number of conflicting interpretations. Given this reservation, let me present an argument for the existence of residual consciousness based on what it would be legitimate to say in certain attending-situations. Let us imagine the following episode. An eye-witness to a crime, after having given his account of what happened, is asked if he can remember any further details about it. He protests that he has described everything that caught his attention. It is then suggested to him that he try to recall anything of which he had been aware that had <u>not</u> held his attention. Eventually he adds that he vaguely remembers having heard the radio on at the time. What the eye-witness has at last recalled, may be something of which he had been aware at the time, but which had not received any attention, or it may have been something which had in fact momentarily caught his attention. It would be impossible to say which was true. But that

is not the point. The point is that the eye-witness would understand what was required of him when he was asked to think back and try to discover anything he was aware of that had not had his attention. The request would not be meaningless. Thus even if he could not do it, he would know what he was being asked to do. And he would only know what he was being asked to do, because he recognised that the possibility put to him was meaningful in terms of his own experience: i.e., he knew what it was, to be aware of things that had not been objects of attention. Thus, if the eye-witness agrees to try to recall elements of consciousness which had not been objects of attention, this entails his belief that such elements exist. It is logically impossible to try to recall something which one knows could not possibly have occurred. Alternatively, it is logically impossible to try to recall something when one does not understand what it is one is being asked to recall. If it makes sense to say to our eye-witness "I know you weren't paying any attention to the man's clothes, but haven't you got some idea of what they were like?" it is presupposed that we are aware of more than we attend to, and this is equivalent to presupposing the existence of residual consciousness.

I shall employ one more brief example to support my thesis that there is such a thing as residual consciousness. Imagine a man with a phenomenally good memory of the elements of his consciousness which had received his attention. Suppose we get him to go through everything he paid attention to within a certain span of time. Let this person be myself. When it was true to say that I had remembered every object that had my attention, it would still not be true to say that I was unaware of anything else. Thus in addition to objects of attention, there must be a residual consciousness.

The argument to this point has concentrated on showing that the

mere existence of a residual consciousness is a sine qua non of attention. But as far as the nature of the residual consciousness is concerned, this has been taken to be irrelevant. As a foil, residual consciousness is merely other; there being no connection at all between the elements belonging to residual consciousness, and the elements of consciousness commanding attention. This assumption must now be investigated.

3. In the last chapter I distinguished two different kinds of attention, which I called non-interrogative attention, and interrogative attention. I also accepted the contention that there were degrees of attention. I now wish to argue that such distinctions within attention are determined by the nature of its relationship with residual consciousness. The different possibilities of relationship between these poles determines, I shall argue, the possible forms attention takes.

The species of non-interrogative attention that I called "sense-organ attention" defines the lower limit of attention. Hamilton, it will be remembered, even doubted whether it deserved the name of attention. It is the attention we bestow when a movement catches our eye for instance. Now it does not need any argument to show that in the case of something catching my eye, the question of which elements make up my residual consciousness at the time would be irrelevant. If my eye being caught by a movement was a pure case of sense-organ attention, it would be explicable without any reference to the particular content of residual consciousness. Sense-organ attention is therefore a form of attention that corresponds to a complete separation between the object of attention and residual consciousness. The elements belonging to residual consciousness

would throw no light on the question of why I came to be paying attention to the movement. Had my residual consciousness been different at the time, this would have made no difference to my eyes being arrested by the movement. It may be added that in such a case as this of casual short-lived attention, although there is a complete absence of connection between residual consciousness and object of attention, the distancing aspect of attention will manifest itself only in a very incipient form. I mean that the object of attention will not stand out so sharply from my awareness of other things to which I am not paying attention. Why this should be so, will become clear when it is seen how the distancing factor operates in cases of attention at the opposite end of the scale from the one we have been considering.

We get a very different picture when we come to interrogative attention. In this form of attention we are always on the *qui vive* for something. Some forms of non-interrogative attention are ones in which attention is idle. Quite the opposite is true of interrogative attention. Whenever it is engaged, it is in the setting of a task to be accomplished. It is attention disciplined and directed by intelligence: attention in the service of intellectual curiosity. Unlike non-interrogative attention, interrogative attention has a natural point of termination. Attention of this sort comes to an end when it has done its job: when the task is accomplished, or curiosity is satisfied. For attention to be interrogative, the attender must have some idea, however vague, of what he is looking for. It is not necessary for him to be able to say, in so many words, just what he is looking for, but even if he cannot do that, he must still be able to recognise what he has been looking for when he comes across it. When this happens he might say "Ah! that is what I was looking for."

Now if we consider the implications of this aspect of interrogative attention, we realize that the attender must have some form of awareness of the purpose of his attention. However, if he were attending to the purpose for which he was attending, he would not be directing his attention to the matter which could satisfy that purpose. The purpose itself could not be the object of attention without frustrating itself. The awareness of the purpose must therefore exhibit itself in residual consciousness. Let us see how this can happen.

It is a familiar fact that our observations are often coloured by our preconceived ideas of what is there to be observed. In consequence of this, an investigator will often completely overlook the most striking of facts. The answer he is searching for might be staring him in the face, but if he does not expect the answer to come from that direction, he will miss it. It is true of many discoveries that they lie waiting to be discovered long before they are made. The discoverer often feels in retrospect that he must have been blind to miss the solution, and is apt to upbraid himself for his stupidity. In reality, this has nothing to do with stupidity, or blindness. We overlook things that are staring us in the face, precisely because we do not expect them to be staring us in the face. We think we are looking for something frightfully obscure, and this thought regulates our attention accordingly. There is no real need for me to draw on examples of important discoveries to bear me out. We come across hundreds of trivial cases in our daily lives. I look for a book on my shelves, and pass it by, because I am looking for a book with a slightly different cover to the one it actually has. Men have a reputation of not being able to find things. When this is true, it is because we manage to convince ourselves even

before we start looking, that we are not going to find what we are looking for. When we give up looking, ten to one the woman in the house will look in the same spot, and find it. "You see," we hear, "It was there all the time." It is as though our attention is pre-tuned, and if it is pre-tuned correctly we find what we are looking for, but if it is pre-tuned to the wrong wave-length, we fail. Examples of this sort make it clear that our attention is determined by our expectations, anticipations, beliefs, and hypotheses; particularly when it is interrogative attention. There may be cases in which we have no knowledge of the fact that an expectation is exerting a controlling influence on our attention, but it is at least as normal for us to be aware of their presence. The latter state of affairs is the one relevant to my argument.

These ideas - whether they be expectations, suggestions, or beliefs - belong to residual consciousness. They are not in the forefront of consciousness. It is not they which we attend to when our attention is conditioned by them. They are not ideas which occurred some time before, and which have since passed out of the mind. They are still "in the back of the mind", and because of this, they are able to determine the direction of attention. The ideas determining the direction of attention can be conceived to have been explicit objects of attention themselves, before they passed into residual consciousness to perform their directing role. For example, I formulate the idea that I am to look for a book with a certain green cover. When it first arises - perhaps as an instruction I give myself - the idea itself is the object of my attention. But as soon as I start looking along the bookshelves, my attention switches to the perceptual task. Nevertheless I do not (unless I am absent-minded) forget the idea that took me to the bookshelf. Neither do I

need continually to recall the idea to keep it alive. The idea is retained in residual consciousness until it has done its job. This process, whereby ideas are first thought of explicitly and then withdrawn into residual consciousness, has its obvious analogue in computer programming. It is as though residual consciousness is programmed to direct attention in a certain way, by the ideas that are permitted to filter through to it. The ideas I have been speaking of determine the composition of residual consciousness. Thus, when the composition of residual consciousness is altered, the programme is altered, and, when the programme is altered, the direction of attention is altered. I maintain, therefore, that in interrogative attention the significance the object of attention has for the attender, it acquires because of its relation to residual consciousness. Thus, when an object of non-interrogative attention is transformed into an object of interrogative attention, it ceases to be the de facto existent it was, and is immediately given a context by residual consciousness. In this way it gains a meaning. It may be inferred that if through sense-organ attention my eyes light upon an object that cannot be related to residual consciousness, it will be completely without significance for me. Such an object must, so to speak, first gain an answering call from residual consciousness, before it becomes meaningful. The object of attention only has a meaning through its connection with other elements of consciousness. When there is such an involvement of residual consciousness in the process of attention, the attention at once becomes meaningful: it becomes interrogative attention.

This conclusion makes it clear why non-interrogative attention is not absolutely non-cognitive, and why a pure sensuous consciousness is an abstraction. Both possibilities entail a complete separation

between residual consciousness and object of attention. They entail, in other words, the existence of experiences completely without meaning. This possibility is inimical to the conditions of consciousness of a being possessing a memory.

I observed that in non-interrogative attention we could detect little of the phenomenon I have called "distancing", in which residual consciousness seems to recede from the object of attention. This phenomenon, I have reason to believe, is confined to interrogative attention, and arises in virtue of the fact that in this mode of attention there is a meaningful relation between the object of attention and residual consciousness. As soon as we deal with the meaningful relationship between things, the question of the relevance of one thing for another comes into operation. One element in residual consciousness may be quite unconnected with the object of attention, while another may be connected with it. From this point of view, those elements belonging to residual consciousness that have no relevance to the instance of attention, will, in virtue of that fact, give the impression of receding into the background. The more the object engrosses attention, the further into the background will the elements recede, that are irrelevant to it. There need be no abrupt ending to this "distancing", and some elements of consciousness may shade off into unconsciousness. On the other hand, those elements that _are_ relevant to the object of attention, will not similarly give the impression of "distancing" themselves from the object. They will be on the borderline between residual consciousness and the object of attention. Their precise position can only be determined after we have sorted out the question of whether there can be two or more objects of attention.

To this subject I will turn next, but before doing so, I would

like to give an example to illustrate some of the points arising out of my analysis. I have in mind Sartre's example of looking in a cafe for a man who isn't there, which, quite apart from its attempt to portray the reality of nothingness, is a remarkable phenomenological analysis of attention.

> I have an appointment with Pierre at four o'clock. I arrive at the café a quarter of an hour late. Pierre is always punctual. Will he have waited for me? I look at the room, the patrons, and I say, "He is not here." Is there an intuition of Pierre's absence, or does negation indeed enter in only with judgement? At first sight it seems absurd to speak here of intuition since to be exact there could not be an intuition of nothing and since the absence of Pierre is this nothing. Popular consciousness, however, bears witness to this intuition. Do we not say, for example, "I suddenly saw that he was not there." Is this just a matter of misplacing the negation? Let us look a little closer.
>
> It is certain that the café by itself with its patrons, its tables, its booths, its mirrors, its light, its smoky atmosphere, and the sounds of voices, rattling saucers, and footsteps which fill it - the café is a fullness of being. And all the intuitions of detail which I can have are filled by these odours, these sounds, these colors, all phenomena which have a transphenomenal being. Similarily Pierre's actual presence in a place which I do not know is also a plenitude of being. We seem to have found fullness everywhere. But we must observe that in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground. No one object, no group of objects is especially designed to be organized as specifically either ground or figure; all depends on the direction of my attention. When I enter this café to search for Pierre, there is formed a synthetic organization of all the objects in the café, on the ground of which Pierre is given as about to appear. This organization of the café as the ground is an original nihilation. Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. For the ground is that which is seen only in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention. Thus the original nihilation of all the figures which appear and are swallowed up in the total neutrality of a <u>ground</u> is the necessary condition for the appearance of the principal figure, which is here the person of Pierre. This nihilation is given to my intuition; I am witness to the successive disappearances of all the objects which I look at - in particular of the faces, which detain me for an instant (Could this be Pierre?) and which as quickly decompose precisely because they "are not" the face of Pierre. Nevertheless if I should finally discover Pierre, my intuition would be filled by a solid element, I should be suddenly

arrested by his face and the whole café would organize itself around him as a discrete presence.

But now Pierre is not here. This does not mean that I discover his absence in some precise spot in the establishment. In fact Pierre is absent from the whole café; his absence fixes the café in its evanescence; the café remains ground; it persists in offering itself as an undifferentiated totality to my only marginal attention; it slips into the background; it pursues its nihilation. Only it makes itself ground for a determined figure; it carries the figure everywhere in front of it, presents the figure everywhere to me. This figure which slips constantly between my look and the solid, real objects of the café is precisely a perpetual disappearance; it is Pierre raising himself as nothingness on the ground of the nihilation of the café. So that what is offered to intuition is a flickering of nothingness; it is the nothingness of the ground, the nihilation of which summons and demands the appearance of the figure, and it is the figure - the nothingness which slips as a nothing to the surface of the ground. It serves as a foundation for the judgment - "Pierre is not here." It is in fact the intuitive apprehension of a double nihilation. To be sure, Pierre's absence supposes an original relation between me and this café; there is an infinity of people who are without any relation with this café for want of a real expectation which establishes their absence. But, to be exact, I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to happen as a real event concerning this café. It is an objective fact at present that I have discovered this absence, and it presents itself as a synthetic relation between Pierre and the setting in which I am looking for him. Pierre absent haunts this café and is the condition of its self-nihilating organization as ground. (1)

This example brings out very well the point that the manner in which Sartre pays attention to the café is determined by his objective, which is to find Pierre. Everything in the cafe assumes the character of a background to a non-existent foreground. Nothing in the café is seen in its own right with a being of its own. How completely different this is from the attention the café scene would have received, had Sartre not been looking for someone. The thought of Pierre lies in residual consciousness, and attention is

(1) Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, tr. H.E. Barnes (London, 1957), pp. 9 - 10.

"directed" by this thought. When Sartre describes the figure of Pierre as a "nothingness", he describes quite precisely the way in which the idea of Pierre is in residual consciousness. The idea of Pierre is not an image of Pierre. If it were, it would not be a "perpetual disappearance". Yet it is a real element in residual consciousness. Sartre's description is a faithful portrayal of the precise nature of the presence (or absence) of Pierre, in residual consciousness. Another point to be noted, is that Sartre's account backs up my contention that it is the nature of attention to polarize consciousness into a foreground and a background. When attention is frustrated, as in the above example, an incipient process of division of the field of consciousness into figure and ground irresistibly occurs, but it breaks up before it forms.

A final point to be noted is the ambiguity of the position occupied by the thought of Pierre. As Sartre observes, it slips constantly between the "look and the solid, real objects of the café". In other words, it seems to hover on the borderline between residual consciousness and the object of attention - the café.

4. I come now to the question of whether it is only possible to attend to one object at a time. We have seen how Hamilton, Ribot, and James agree that the natural tendency of attention is to "narrow" or "concentrate" the area of awareness. It is natural, and acceptable, for a person to excuse his failure to pay attention, on the ground that he was forced to pay attention to too many different things at once. No one could excuse this failure to pay attention, by saying that the reason for the failure was the fact that he had only the one thing to pay attention to. If it were not true that the restriction of attention was vital to its successful

operation, we would not be able to explain how it was possible to have our attention distracted. For if we could equally well increase the number of things we attend to, without our attention to any of the things suffering as a result, we would not be "distracted" by the new things that had been drawn into attention. The facts of the matter seem plain enough, and I shall follow Hamilton in describing the systematization of these facts as "the law of limitation".

> This law is, that the greater the number of objects to which our consciousness is simultaneously extended, the smaller is the intensity with which it is able to consider each, and consequently, the less vivid and distinct will be the information it obtains of the several subjects. (1)

Hamilton's law rests on the assumption that it is possible to pay attention to more than one thing at a time, and this enables a plausible explanation to be given of the existence of degrees of attention: the larger the number of things holding attention which are not connected, the smaller the degree of attention which is given to each. Quite apart from these aspects of the matter, however, Hamilton's law of limitation expresses well the fact that the more restricted, or narrowed, attention is, the more efficient it is. Logically, of course, the limit of such restriction is the case in which only one object has attention at a time. Those philosophers who, like Stewart, have argued that it is not possible to attend to more than one object at a time, have no doubt been impressed by this fact. It has led to the belief that paying attention to a single thing is a paradigmatic case of paying attention. This belief has

(1) Bowen, The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, p. 159.

persuaded Stewart and others that if, in two instances, attention were narrowed down to a single object, the instances could not be concurrent: i.e., it would be impossible, by definition, to attend to both objects at once.

Many examples seem to bear out this contention. There is the well-known experience of trying to follow two separate conversations at once. What happens is that our attention "jumps" from one conversation to the other, and we catch a phrase from this discussion and a point from that. We also find a tendency for attention to settle on one of the conversations at the expense of the other, so that we follow and understand more of the one than the other. Here we have an example of conflicting claims upon attention, and there is no doubt that it is a common occurrence to find claims on attention conflicting with one another in this way. But it is one thing for Stewart and others to be right in claiming that there are some cases of conflict of attention, and quite another matter for them to claim that all cases of attending to more than one thing at once are cases of a conflict of attention.

At first sight it looks as though the controversy could be settled by empirical means. It soon becomes obvious, however, that any counter-examples to the hypothesis that we only attend to one thing at a time, can be nullified by the claim that even though we are not aware of the fact, our attention nevertheless switches (too rapidly to notice), from the one object to the other. The rapidity of the movement from one object to the other, would create the illusion that both objects were receiving continuous simultaneous attention; much as a disc of different coloured segments gives the illusion of having one uniform colour, when spun. As this argument could be brought against any conceivable counter example, it is a

classical case of a conceptual difference being mistaken for an empirical difference.

The dispute is, I believe, a conceptual one, but it is also a sterile dispute. It cannot be settled unless and until we know what it means "to attend to one thing at a time". We need to know what "one thing" is, before we know what the disagreement is about. And, I maintain, as soon as we know what constitutes "one thing" we shall find that there is nothing left to dispute. Let us, therefore, enquire what it means to talk about <u>an</u> object of attention. How do we know that we are attending to one object and not several? The artificiality of this question can be brought out most forceably by considering Sartre's example, in which the object of attention is the interior of a café. We can think of the café as <u>one</u> object, but the café in fact comprises a very large number of isolable objects. As Sartre makes quite explicit, the attender is aware of "its patrons, its tables, its booths, its mirrors, its light, its smoky atmosphere, and the sound of voices, rattling saucers, and footsteps which fill it". Because the attender is paying attention, all these things are "taken in". But in a sense none of them <u>are objects</u> of attention. If, afterwards, the attender were asked to say what had been going on in the café, he might have only a hazy idea. He had been paying attention to the café, but not paying attention to everything he saw or heard in the café. He was not, in fact, paying attention to anything in the café at all! As Sartre correctly observes, it was as though the café scene were a "ground" for a non-existent figure. That is, it is as though attention were in search of its object of attention. Sartre makes this clear too. He says, "if I should finally discover Pierre, my intuition would be filled by a solid element, I should be suddenly arrested by his face and the

whole café would organize itself around him as a discrete presence." Were that to happen, we would be in no doubt as to what the object of attention was - Pierre.

Sartre's statement that everything in the café would "organize around" the object of attention, is most important. Whatever it be that our consciousness "organizes around", is that which we are said to be attending to. But even if Pierre had become the object of attention, what constitutes "Pierre" would be a number of different things. Pierre is still a complex object. Would that preclude him from being the object of attention? Surely it would be quite unrealistic to claim that Pierre could not be an object of attention, on the ground that only the "ultimate simples" of which he is composed (whatever that might mean) could be so regarded. There might be a variety of things I notice about Pierre as soon as I spot him. Are these features, and not Pierre the object of my attention? And if they are, must I have noticed them one after another? We only need raise these questions to see that they presuppose putting a false precision on the whole matter.

A simpler example than Sartre's clinches the argument. Suppose we were asked what our several objects of attention are in relation to the appearance of the printed page before our eyes. Can we attend to several words simultaneously, or are we limited to one word, or perhaps one letter, at a time? If we can take in several words at a glance, would they be our object of attention? If so, would that mean that we had paid attention to only one thing, or several things at once? Or would it mean that we had successively attended to each individual letter? These artificial questions presuppose, I suggest, that there are such things as atomic objects, such that we could make decisions as to what is one object or another, quite irrespective of

the purposes of the attender. We need only remind ourselves, however, how different the situation must appear to an attender who is a proof-reader looking for misprints, from its appearance to the average reader trying to follow the sense of the argument. The proof-reader might treat syllables as the objects of attention, while the ordinary reader might treat meaningful groups of words as objects of attention. Unless we know the purpose behind the attention, we cannot say what should be taken as the object of attention. The object of attention is attender-relative.

Interrogative attention is typically the attention manifested in problem-solving. In a problem-solving context there may be a number of factors that are thought to be relevant to the solution of the problem. When a number of factors demand the attention of the problem-solver, he will not feel that he is distracted from his task if he attends to these factors, provided he believes them to be relevant to the solution of the problem. If what holds his attention seems to him to relate to the purpose for which he is giving his attention according to some scheme of coherence, he will not say that he is distracted. An attender is distracted when his attention is held by some object, which he believes has nothing to do with the task facing him. We are distracted, not when more than one object engages our attention, but when the objects engaging our attention do not belong to the same "meaning system". I use the expression "meaning system" to refer to the set of factors that are judged relevant to the solution of a problem.

I now suggest that when we have a conflict of attention, the reason is that the conflicting objects of attention are not both part of the reigning meaning system. An object of attention <u>may</u> only become such within a particular meaning system. When this

happens, by calling X an object of attention, we tacitly presuppose a certain meaning system. Now if another object of attention Y, presupposes the same meaning system, it may engage attention simultaneously with X. In fact it may be purely a matter of terminology whether we call X and Y separate objects of attention, or X cum Y a single complex object of attention. By contrast if X belongs to one meaning system and Z belongs to another, then attending to X entails excluding the meaning system of Z, and vice versa. To put the point another way, if, when we pay attention to X, consciousness of necessity "organizes around" X, then we can only pay attention to Y, by consciousness "organizing around" Y. But it can only do that by destroying its organization around X. We can see, therefore, that the question whether we can attend to more than one object at a time, will depend entirely on whether or not we define "object of attention" in such a way that each object of attention has its own exclusive meaning system. Whatever we say will be arbitrary, so, to suit ourselves, let us use the expression "object of attention", so as not to entail the proposition that it is impossible to pay attention to more than one object at a time.

I have throughout the discussion made references to the object of attention; taking it for granted that the object of attention was always sharp and distinct. It can now be appreciated that this assumption is an oversimplification. In the case of the search for Pierre, for instance, it is as true to say that the café is the object of attention, as it would be to say of anything else that it was the object of attention. Nevertheless, as I have already observed, if we call the café the object of attention, we still do not imply that our awareness of it stands out sharply and distinctly. If it did, it would not have been correct to describe it as a

"ground". Whether or not the object of attention stands out sharply in hard detail must depend on the nature of the context within which attention is given. We are entitled to say no more than that the object of attention will be _relatively_ dominant and "hard-edged".

These considerations have important implications for the distinction I have drawn between the object of attention on the one hand, and residual consciousness on the other. They reveal that we can never be certain where the object of attention ends and residual consciousness begins. The distinction between the two parts of consciousness is a conceptual one, and not a descriptive or phenomenological one. There will be a penumbra between residual consciousness and object of attention at which the borders cannot be accurately defined. An attempt to do so would necessitate focussing attention on the elements in the penumbra, and _ex hypothesi_ they would no longer be in the penumbra.

In view of the complexity of the relationship between residual consciousness and object of attention in interrogative attention, it is possible to give a more satisfactory interpretation of Hamilton's law of limitation than the one he gives. The degree of intensity of attention must no longer be correlated in simple inverse proportion to the number of objects receiving attention. We must not take it that attention to one object will be _n_ times greater than attention to _n_ objects. The argument of this chapter points to the conclusion that the greater the connectedness between residual consciousness and attention, the greater the degree of attention. Interrogative attention is at its maximum when residual consciousness and object of attention are united within a single meaning system. From this point of view, the complexity of the meaning system is no distraction to attention. On the contrary the greater the coherence between residual

consciousness and object of attention in the meaning system, the greater the concentration of attention. On this interpretation we would expect to find a man's attention most fully absorbed in a single complex issue, in which, as we might say, his whole consciousness has been brought to bear. A man in such a state of absorption will not have his attention drawn by irrelevant states of residual consciousness, precisely because residual consciousness has become so fully engaged in the meaning system holding attention. Irrelevant stimuli in such cases recede so far into the background of residual consciousness that they are unable to distract attention. This is borne out by experience. A man with his attention fully absorbed fails to notice many of the things going on around him, which, if he were not completely engrossed, he would immediately have noticed. It is significant that one of the expressions we use to describe a high degree of interrogative attention is that of having one's whole mind on the subject.

5. If my reasoning is on the right lines, we are in a position to correct a certain weakness in Ribot's theory of attention.(1) He, it will be remembered, held that attention was a condition inimical to the normal life of consciousness. The reason for his belief is not far to seek. He identifies normal consciousness with polyideism - plurality of states of consciousness. By contrast, he identifies attention with "unity of consciousness" - monoideism. In attention, Ribot believes, the plurality of elements is narrowed down to a single element of consciousness. But the existence of a consciousness with but a single element in it contradicts his picture

(1) See above, p. 92 ff.

of consciousness: viz., its dependence upon change. Accordingly, attention must be thought of as an interruption to the continuity of change, and if carried on too long it must threaten the survival of consciousness. As against this position I have been arguing that attention has nothing to do with reducing consciousness to a single element. On the contrary, in maximal attention there is a great diversity of elements of consciousness. These diverse elements however, become, under maximal attention, united in so far as they become coherent elements of a single meaning system. But this does not mean that change must be suspended. A meaning system may in fact operate through changes in the elements of consciousness. From this point of view there is no danger that by paying attention all change is suspended. On the contrary, if it were possible for change to be suspended, it might well turn out that we would want to say "X has ceased to pay attention".

Ribot in fact made a qualification to his theory, which showed his unease about maintaining that attention was a state of monoideism, and this qualification is certainly in the direction favouring the position I have suggested. "Is attention a reduction to a sole and single state of consciousness?" he asks,

> No; for inward observation teaches us, that it is only a <u>relative</u> monoideism; that is, it supposes the existence of a master-idea, drawing to itself all that relates to it, and nothing else, allowing associations to produce themselves only within very narrow limits, and on condition that they converge toward a common point. It drains for its own use - at least in the proportion possible - the entire cerebral activity. (1)

This passage exhibits in embryonic form the relation between residual consciousness and object of attention that I have called a meaning

(1) Ribot, <u>The Psychology of Attention</u>, p. 10.

system. But I cannot see that it has anything to do with reducing the number of states of consciousness. It is neither monoideism nor relative monoideism.

Possibly Ribot thought that attention did produce a state of monoideism, because he failed to distinguish, as I have done, between a single meaning system, and a single object of attention. I have already shown how easily one can be driven to the conclusion that maximal attention is achieved when only a single object engages attention. I have also argued that we should resist being driven in this direction. Ribot's position nicely illustrates the embarrassments of the position. There is, indeed, a unity of consciousness when attention is engaged, but the unity is the unity of a system, and not the unity of sheer identity, as Ribot seems to believe. The unity is achieved when, as Sartre puts it, consciousness "organizes itself around" the object of attention; or as Ribot himself recognises, when attention is determined by a "master-idea". These two ideas are not merely alternative ways of expressing the same thought. The object of attention around which consciousness organizes itself, is not itself the "master-idea". The position is rather the reverse: the master-idea organizes consciousness around an object of attention. It is evident that the master-idea is none other than that idea in residual consciousness directing the particular instance of interrogative attention, in a way that has already been explained.

This is a natural point at which to stop and summarize the conclusions that have been reached so far. I first used a form of transcendental argument to prove that we could not make sense of any form of attention without presupposing the existence of a residual consciousness that was not itself engaging attention. I then attempted to show that in the non-intellectual forms of attention,

which I have called non-interrogative attention, there is relative separation between residual consciousness and object of attention. By contrast the discussion showed that interrogative attention was characterized by a functional inter-relation between residual consciousness and object of attention. It has been shown that the concept of "an object of attention" must not be thought to have the implications of precision and freedom from vagueness which, in the literature, is taken for granted. In consequence of this I have argued that the boundary between residual consciousness and object(s) of attention can often be drawn only arbitrarily. Finally I have contended that the connectedness or relatedness between the elements comprising residual consciousness and the object of attention, must be looked upon as constituting a meaning-system. Attention is concentrated, on this view, when the elements of consciousness are ordered in a single meaning-system. Attention is diffused when an object cannot be integrated within the reigning meaning-system.

A major implication of the argument is the conclusion that residual consciousness is <u>cognitive</u> as well as sensory. This follows from the assertion that residual consciousness may contain elements which I have referred to as master-ideas, and that in interrogative attention a number of its elements form a meaning system together with the elements forming the object of attention. It can thus be appreciated how wrong it would be to look upon residual consciousness as a residue of unattended sensory experience.

Some of the ideas advanced in this chapter receive support from a passage quoted in James's <u>Principles of Psychology</u>. I quote the passage because it is in harmony with much that I have said.

> At every instant of conscious thought there is a certain sum of perceptions, or reflections, or both together, present, and together constituting one whole state of apprehension.

> Of this some definite portion may be far more distinct than all the rest; and the rest be in consequence proportionably vague, even to the limit of obliteration. But still, within this limit, the most dim shade of perception enters into, and in some infinitesimal degree modifies, the whole existing state. This state, will thus be in some way modified by any sensation or emotion, or act of distinct attention, that may give prominence to any part of it; so that the actual result is capable of the utmost variation, according to the person or the occasion.... To any portion of the entire scope here described there may be a special direction of the attention, and this special direction is recognized as strictly what is <u>recognized</u> as the idea present to the mind. This idea is evidently not commensurate with the entire state of apprehension, and much perplexity has arisen from not observing this fact. However deeply we may suppose the attention to be engaged by any thought, any considerable alteration of the surrounding phenomena would still be perceived; the most abstruse demonstration in this room would not prevent a listener, however absorbed, from noticing the sudden extinction of the lights. Our mental states have always an <u>essential unity</u>, such that each state of apprehension, however variously compounded, is a single whole, of which every component is, therefore, strictly apprehended (so far as it is apprehended) as a part. Such is the elementary basis from which all our intellectual operations commence. (1)

6. In this section I vary my approach, and consider the relationship between residual consciousness and attention from a different direction. I argue that we control the direction of our attention through bodily movements. It is then pointed out that the proper execution of these bodily movements is dependent upon kinaesthetic sensation. I argue that such kinaesthetic sensation must reside in residual consciousness if it is to perform its function properly. In this way I show that the operation of attention itself produces some of the elements comprising residual consciousness. In other words, it is shown that even if there were no independently existing residual consciousness to act as a foil to attention, the operation of attention creates its own residual consciousness. I try to

(1) Jas. Wills, 'Accidental Association', <u>Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy</u>, vol. XXI. part 1 (1846). also quoted in: James, <u>Principles of Psychology</u>, I, 241.

establish this thesis, firstly, in the case of sensorial attention, and secondly, in the case of reflection.

I begin by considering the part muscular activity plays in the mechanism of attention. Ribot raises this question, and it will be convenient to base the discussion on his views. He sets out his position as follows:

> Are the movements of the face, the body, and the limbs, and the respiratory modifications that accompany attention, simply effects, outward marks, as is usually supposed? Or, are they, on the contrary, the necessary conditions, the constituent elements, the indispensable factors of attention? Without hesitation we accept the second thesis. Totally suppress movements, and you totally suppress attention.
>
> . . . .
>
> The fundamental role of the movements in attention is, to maintain the appropriate state of consciousness and to reinforce it. (1)

The muscles perform their function in attention through the mechanism of inhibition. "Attention, accordingly, means concentration and inhibition of movements. Distraction means diffusion of movements."(2) The applicability of this theory will be considered in the course of an investigation into sensorial attention.

Sensorial attention can be either interrogative or non-interrogative. In dealing with this form of attention in the previous chapter I restricted myself to the non-interrogative variety, and, to prevent confusion, I called it "sense-organ" attention, instead of sensorial attention. As there explained, (3), in a non-attentive state, the sense-organs tend to be in a state of movement: a sort of exploratory condition. (A good illustration of this is the way our eyes rove when we are not occupied.) These are characteristic bodily activities, and they occur quite spontaneously,

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 25.
(2) Ibid. p. 53.
(3) See above, p. 93.

without the person making the movements, necessarily having any reason for making them. If I am asked why my eyes are roving, I may be unable to produce any reason for the phenomenon. They just are. Nevertheless if I am asked why my eyes are roving, the question might presuppose that they ought not to be: i.e., I am failing to pay attention. When an infant waves its arms about, or kicks with its legs, we do not ask why it is doing so.

To ask for a reason for such bodily activities presupposes that it is more natural for a creature to be completely inert. But, as Ribot has argued, movement is the basis of consciousness, and from this point of view it is normal for a conscious creature to be engaging in bodily activities. Alexander Bain makes this point emphatically, and calls these bodily activities "spontaneous activities". By calling them "spontaneous" he means that they occur without prior stimulation from sense experience. As he puts it: "Movement precedes sensation, and is at the outset independent of any stimulus from without."(1) There are, then, a number of spontaneous bodily activities through which our sense-organs are brought into operation. Now as soon as the movement of (or muscular activity connected with) a sense-organ is "arrested" and fixates on an object of attention, this spontaneous bodily activity of the sense-organ concerned must of necessity come to a halt: that is what it means for the sense-organ to be fixated. This happens when the muscles hold the sense-organ in a static position. This muscular activity, without which the sense-organ could not remain fixated on the object of attention, is what Ribot refers to as "inhibition". The muscles inhibit the movement which the bodily activities connected with the

(1) A. Bain, The Senses and the Intellect (London, 1855), p. 67.

sense-organs naturally display. Attention, according to Ribot, is therefore, an inhibition of bodily movement.

It is extremely important to realize, in this connection, that muscular energy is expended, not only when a bodily movement occurs, but also when a bodily movement is inhibited. If anyone doubts this, let him try to keep his eyes stationary for several minutes. He will soon become conscious of muscular strain. When Ribot maintains that attention is an unnatural state, we can understand what he is driving at in the case of sense-organ attention. His reasoning is evidently based on the proposition that the natural state for the bodily activities connected with the sense-organs, is one of activation. It is easier to be moving about, to however small an extent, than it is to keep absolutely still. From this point of view the muscular strain involved in suspending bodily movement may be greater than the strain of engaging in mild bodily movements. It follows that the organism is likely to break off attention and return to the "easier" condition of spontaneous bodily activity, when it can. The picture Ribot's theory points to is one in which an organism is in a state of equilibrium when it is engaging in spontaneous bodily movements, and a state of disequilibrium when the organism's movements are suspended by the mechanism of attention. My disagreement with Ribot, on the question of the unnaturalness of attention, prevents me from accepting this picture for attention as a whole, but I agree with Ribot to the extent of accepting its accuracy in the case of non-interrogative sense-organ attention. The question is, of course, whether we are entitled to generalize from this one case.

We certainly cannot disagree with Ribot that muscular activity must of necessity be exhibited in sense-organ attention. We have

seen this in the case of attention to a visual object. What is true of sight is true of all the other sense-organs. This John Stuart Mill recognised, when, in a note to his father's Analysis of the Human Mind, he writes:

> ... In the exercise of the senses,... a muscular element is almost always combined. This is conspicuous in Touch, which is most frequently accompanied with movements of the hand, or other parts touched: it is also the case with Sight, there being six muscles constantly engaged in moving the eye-ball. There is least muscularity in Hearing and Smell, but in neither is it wholly absent. Thus in Hearing, there are certain small muscles for adjusting the tightness of the membrane of the tympanum; apart from which, there are movements of the head in conjunction with hearing. So in Smell; the sniffing action with the breath is muscular.(1)

Even if it is possible to attend to visual objects without furrowed brow, (2), it is not possible to arrest the movement of the eyes without certain other muscles coming into play. We have special concepts to describe visual attention and auditory attention - that is, attention connected with our two most important senses: the long-range ones. When we are looking attentively we are said to be "watching". When we are using our ears attentively we are said to be "listening". Watching entails paying some degree of attention. I cannot be described as "watching" if I am completely inattentive. The same is true of "listening". Listening entails paying some degree of attention. These two concepts are both concepts of attention, and both of them demand the innervation of specific groups of muscles. Hence, even if we wished to maintain, against Ribot, that the use of the facial muscle, the occipitio-frontalis, is quite accidental in visual attention, we could not argue that the use of the muscles

(1) Mill, Analysis of the Human Mind, I, 4.

(2) See above, p. 152.

which kept the eyes fixated on their object, was also dispensable. This is true, _mutatis mutandis_, of hearing, too.

Having established the fact that muscular activity is a necessary condition of sense-organ attention, we can infer from this fact that muscular activity is a necessary condition of all sensorial attention; including interrogative sensorial attention. We can now see what bearing this fact has on the question of the relation between residual consciousness and the object of attention. As we know, muscles themselves have sensations connected with their activation: kinaesthetic sensations. This means, that since in most instances of sensorial attention a combination of many muscles are likely to be activated, sensorial attention will be accompanied by a variety of kinaesthetic sensations. However, these kinaesthetic sensations are, by definition, not the objects of sensorial attention. They must therefore belong to residual consciousness. In sensorial attention we have the very special case that the attentive process itself brings it about that certain elements enter residual consciousness.

This finding has the following significance. The argument has until this point taken it for granted that in sense-organ attention a simple separation existed between residual consciousness and the object of attention. On that assumption the existence of residual consciousness was a _de facto_ state of affairs, which had nothing to do with the other pole of consciousness: the object of attention. I argued that both poles were necessary, but it seemed just a contingent state of affairs that there was a residual consciousness to be a foil to attention. We now see that even if residual consciousness had not existed, sensorial attention would still bring its own residual consciousness along with it. This means that attention not only

produces a residual consciousness by the negative method of excluding certain elements of consciousness from attention, but also produces residual consciousness in a positive manner through the nature of the attentive mechanism itself. Whereas so far the line of dependence has appeared to be running from residual consciousness to attention, we now have evidence of its running in the reverse direction as well - from attending back to residual consciousness. The interdependence of residual consciousness and attention is now complete.

The function of kinaesthetic sensation is to give the organism control over its bodily movements. A telling experiment which illustrates this point consists in anaesthetising a subject's legs, blindfolding him, and asking him to separate his legs so that the space between them is about a foot. The subject does what he is told, but instead of placing his feet approximately the required distance apart, he will separate them to their maximum arc of separation. When the blindfold is removed the subject will be surprised to see where his legs are, not expecting them to be so wide apart.(1) Another illustration of the controlling function of kinaesthetic sensation can be drawn from an experience everyone is familiar with. We have all had the experience of picking up an object that turned out to be lighter than we thought it would. The object shoots up because we exert a greater force than is necessary. Because we have kinaesthetic sensations we are able to adjust the amount of muscular effort we give to what we judge the task to require. Our kinaesthetic sensations "advise us" of the positions of our limbs, without our

(1) Unfortunately I have been unable to trace the source of this experiment, although I know I came across it in a reputable work on psychology.

looking for them. The importance they have in both these respects can be appreciated when we imagine ourselves in the situation of trying to find our way about a strange room in the dark. If we did not possess kinaesthetic sensations, we would be unable to move about the room with any degree of delicacy, and we would be liable to make very forceful contact with obstacles, which, even if we were unable to feel anything, could bring harm to ourselves, and damage to the objects we barge into. Our ability to perform tasks which required fine muscular control would be thrown entirely on visual direction, if we lacked kinaesthetic sensations. Moreover it is doubtful whether we would have control over our eye movements, and we certainly would not have proper control over our head movements, if we lacked kinaesthetic sensations. So even muscle control under visual supervision is unlikely, in the total absence of kinaesthetic sensation.

All of this is important in the present context, because sensorial attention mostly depends on precisely that fine control over muscular activity which we owe to kinaesthetic sensation. All those tasks which require the utmost delicacy of movement would be beyond us, were it not for the existence of kinaesthetic sensation. The sort of attention demanded in the performance of such tasks would, _a fortiori_, be non-existent. It is, however, difficult to conceive of a life devoid of kinaesthetic sensation. As far as our movements are concerned it might be likened to a condition of permanent inebriation. Not only would our delicate movements suffer, but our grosser ones would also be impaired. The relation between kinaesthetic sensation and muscular activity may therefore be viewed as a special case of the influence of residual consciousness on attention, although we are dealing here with a connection between

residual consciousness and attention at a very different level to the one discussed in section 3.

In order to avoid possible confusion, I feel I had better make a few remarks about the physiological aspects of attention in general. The study of attention from the physiological point of view has revealed other bodily changes besides the changes in muscular activity with which I have been dealing. It is claimed, for instance, that during attention the blood supply to the brain increases. It has also been suggested that the mysterious alpha-waves have a connection with attention.(1) Putative changes of this sort must be distinguished from the changes that take place in muscle activity, because the latter sort of changes are subject to voluntary control, while the former are not (except indirectly). Those bodily changes, the occurrence of which are not directly subject to the control of our will, I shall call <u>processes</u>. By contrast the bodily changes that <u>are</u> subject to the control of our will, I shall call <u>activities</u>. It must be appreciated that bodily changes are activities even though they have not been brought about by an act of will. They are activities in virtue of the fact that they <u>can</u> be willed. If not actually willed, they are at least capable of being willed.

A minor difficulty exists in that it can legitimately be claimed that the ability to contract muscles at will is a sophisticated performance, and that what we normally <u>will</u> are movements of our bodies, and not contractions of our muscles. I will that my arm

(1) The EEG record of the electrical activity of the brain reveals a characteristic alpha-rhythm while the subject is not paying attention to anything, but as soon as he attends the alpha-wave disappears. See, W.G. Walter, <u>The Living Brain</u> (Pelican, 1963).

should go up, for instance: I do not will the contraction of the muscles which must occur if my arm is to go up. I, in all probability, do not even know what these muscles are. That is to say, I know how to move parts of my body, but I do not necessarily know how to move the relevant muscles. I know how to move my eyes about, but I need know nothing of the existence of the six muscles by means of which the eye movements are effected. This point can be admitted without further ado.(1) We need only remember that when muscle activity is said to be voluntary, what is meant is that certain movements can be performed at will with the cooperation of the relevant striated muscles. Those muscular changes which cannot be innervated by willing are to be excluded from the class of voluntary muscular activities. The muscles for increasing the tension of the tympanum in the ear, referred to by Mill, belong to this latter category. The "smooth" muscles of the body, and the cardiac muscle are the main types of muscle over which we cannot (normally) exert direct control.

What I call bodily processes are such things as the beat of the heart, digestive action, &c. These processes are governed by the autonomous nervous system, and they go on whether we are conscious of them or not. Although it is possible to exercise some degree of voluntary control over some of these processes, this can only be done indirectly. I can, for instance, make my heart beat faster, but I cannot do it by simply willing my heart to beat faster. I have to use my knowledge that exertion makes the heart beat faster, and first exert myself by making a movement I <u>can</u> will. My heart will then beat faster. The difference between the way I raise my arm on

(1) For an argument to the effect that we will certain muscular movements primarily and not our limbs, see, C.A. Campbell 'Self-Activity and Its Modes', <u>Contemporary British Philosophy</u>, ed. H.D. Lewis (London, 1956).

willing it, and the way I make my heart beat faster, is the measure of the difference between my control over my bodily activities, and my control over bodily processes. What is of philosophical interest is the connection between bodily activity and attention, and this is of interest only because we seem to have discovered a conceptual link between the two. The connection between attention and bodily process, on the other hand, is contingent. We would not be obliged to alter our concept of attention if it were found that there was no increase of blood to the brain during attention, or that alpha waves had nothing to do with it either.

7. Ribot's theory that attention is effected by muscular inhibition is not confined to sensorial attention. He claims that the theory is equally true of the other form of attention - inner directed attention - which he calls "reflection". Now the dependence of sensorial attention on muscular activity has been pretty conclusively established. But the idea of muscular activity being the "indispensable factor" in non-sensorial attention is much more debatable - not to say paradoxical. How, one might ask, is muscular activity going to help a person to think attentively, or recall a name? It might, admittedly, help to lower the superior orbicular muscle (the muscle of reflection), but we would not deny that a person had thought, or recalled a name, on the ground that he had not lowered his brow at the time. After all a man may get into the habit of scratching his head before he thinks, and the point could well be reached at which he is incapable of thinking if he is prevented from scratching his head. Nevertheless we would not on that account assert there to be a necessary connection between thinking and head-scratching. Even if it became universally true that

head-scratching had to precede thinking, we would still concede that it was at least conceivable that a person could think without first having scratched his head. Quite clearly if the theory of the dependence of reflection on muscular activity is to have any respectability, it must have more to offer than the above would suggest.

Of "reflection" Ribot says "Images and ideas constitute its subject matter." What he has to do, therefore, is establish a connection between muscular activity and the occurrence of images and ideas. His method of procedure is to use perception as a "middle term" through which this connection is made. The link between muscular activity and perception has already been established. Ribot's theory hinges, therefore, on the nature of the connection that he tries to establish between perception and ideas and images. It has to be a special kind of connection such that, if perception entails muscular activity, the relation between ideas and images on the one hand and perception on the other, must be of such a nature that the former entails the muscular activity of the latter. An attempt to establish the existence of such a connection was made by Alexander Bain, and Ribot quotes him in support of his position:

> "It does not seem plain, at first," wrote Bain, as early as the year 1855, "that the retention of an idea, an image, in the mind is the work of our voluntary muscles. What are the movements produced, when I conceive to myself a circle, or think of St. Paul's? We can answer this question only by supposing that the mental image occupies in the brain and the other parts of the nervous system the same place as the original sensation. As there is a muscular element in our sensations, particularly in those of the highest order - in touch, sight, and hearing - this element must, in some way or other, find its place in ideal sensation - recollection." Since the time that this passage was written, the question of the nature of images has been closely and profitably studied, and solved exactly as therein indicated. Whereas, to the earlier psychologists, an image or idea was a kind of phantom, without definite seat, existing "within the soul", differing from perception not in degree but in nature, resembling it

> "at most only as a portrait resembles its original", to physiological psychology, on the contrary, there is between perception and image identity of nature, identity of seat, and only a difference of degree. The image is not a photograph but a revival of the sensorial and motory elements that have built up the perception. In proportion as its intensity increases, it approaches more and more to the condition of its origination, and so tends to become an hallucination. (1)

Such a passage clearly invites attack. Its assumption that sensations and images are located in the brain could be challenged; as could the assertion that there is only a difference of degree between perception and image. But that is not the point. The point is whether, in virtue of the alleged connection between mental imagery and perception, muscular activity plays the same part in both. Now in perception, muscular activity is concomitant with the perceiving. If the perception consists in my feeling the quality of a rug by rubbing my hand over it, the muscular activity bringing about the hand movement and the tactile sensations are concomitant. The theory that voluntary attention works through control of our muscular activity only makes sense on the assumption that perception and muscular activity are simultaneous. Unfortunately Ribot has not established that the connection, if any, between mental imagery and muscular activity is likewise simultaneous. To make matters worse the examples he gives suggest that on his view the muscular activity is subsequent to the existence of the image! He cites the examples of "people who plunge head foremost into yawning chasms, through fear of falling into them" and of "people who cut themselves with razors, through the very fear of cutting themselves." Now these seem to me very bad examples indeed, for it can be debated whether

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, pp. 53-4.

any image need be present at all in the case of such fears, and furthermore if a person does throw himself from a height as a result of having the image of throwing himself from a height, the muscular activity bringing about the fall must occur after the image had occurred. Thus even if we grant Ribot his "motory element" in imagery, this by itself does not establish that image and muscular activity are concurrent, and yet this step is crucial to his argument. Unless it can be demonstrated, it cannot be maintained that attention works through muscular activity in reflection, as it does in perception. It must be said that Ribot's argument simply lets us down at this point.

I shall in due course offer an alternative argument to support Ribot's thesis that muscular activity is a necessary condition of the occurrence of imagery. But that is only half the picture. Ribot also has to demonstrate the presence of motor elements in general ideas or concepts. For this purpose he advances an image theory of thinking. The reason for this is obvious. Having to his own satisfaction shown the motory basis of imagery, if ideas themselves can be reduced to images, it must follow that they too have a motory basis. I shall not follow Ribot through his discussion of generic imagery, however, for I believe there is an easier way of making the connection between muscular activity and ideas.

8. I shall begin by contrasting the view I am about to put forward, with another view with which I am in sharp disagreement. It has been argued recently that one of the facts Ryle had overlooked in The Concept of Mind was the existence of thoughts.(1)

(1) W.J. Ginnane, 'Thoughts', Mind, LXIX, 275 (1960).

The writer, Ginnane, first identifies a thought with what we naturally describe when we use such expressions as "it occurred to me", "it crossed my mind", and "it dawned on me that..." Thoughts in this sense are events. They can always be assigned a time and place. Thus far I am in agreement. It is the following contention that I dispute:

> How can we reconcile the fact that thoughts are occurrences with the fact that they do not involve the alteration of any stuff at all, not even shadow-stuff such as mental imagery? The answer is vexing but inevitable: we just have to learn to live with the mystery: thoughts are <u>sui generis</u>. Thoughts just cannot be 'explained' by equating them with something else of a more familiar kind - something we can get our teeth into - and that is all there is to it.(1)

My objection to this view is based on the argument (a) that all the facts mentioned by Ginnane can be adequately explained without its being true that thoughts are <u>sui generis</u>; and (b) that the admittance of <u>sui generis</u> thoughts into consciousness offends against the Law of Parsimony. It is instructive to compare this passage of Ginnane's with the following one from Price's <u>Thinking and Experience</u>.

> In the last two chapters the term 'symbol' has been used in a very wide sense, to mean roughly 'whatever we think with'. It would seem that there is no such thing as pure or naked thinking; or if conceivably there could be, it is beyond the reach of human frailty, even though superhuman intelligences may be capable of it. The human mind, it seems, must always have sensible or quasi-sensible media 'in' which we think.(2)

Now it seems to me that this passage is intended to rule out precisely the sort of view put forward by Ginnane. Thoughts which are <u>sui generis</u>, are "naked" thoughts which only a superhuman intelligence might be capable of. Price goes on to identify the media in which we think:

(1) W.J. Ginnane, 'Thoughts', <u>Mind</u>, LXIX, 388 (1960).

(2) H.H. Price, <u>Thinking and Experience</u> (London, 1953), pp. 237-8.

> In free thinking we think 'in' all sorts of sensible and quasi-sensible particulars, and indeed in principle there is no limit to their variety. We think in words, in images, in gestures or incipient gestures, in pantomimic actions, with models or sketches or other sensible replicas.(1)

The symbols "with" which we think are either particulars that happen to exist and which we just make use of, or particulars that we ourselves produce. In both cases the existence of the symbol may be called an occurrence, and it is this fact, I think, that accounts for the belief that thoughts are occurrences. When Ginnane claims that thoughts are datable as to the time and place of their occurrence, what we really date is the time and place of the occurrence of the symbol by means of which the thought is expressed; whether it be word, image, or gesture.

It must be admitted that after considering this alternative, Ginnane rejects it as "patently false". In fact however he does the Image Theory scant justice, and he would I am sure have taken it far more seriously had he taken into account Price's analysis of the Imagist Theory of Thinking. Ginnane's argument amounts to this: thoughts are not identical with images, therefore the occurrence of thoughts has nothing to do with the occurrence of images:

> This view, though easily refuted, still has its adherents. It is patently false because there is no self-contradiction involved in someone saying that it occurred to him at a particular time that such-and-such, whilst at the same time steadfastly denying that he had any mental images whatsoever at the time in question. In fact not only could such a claim be made without self-contradiction, it could very often be made quite truly. In any case, no collection of images, however complicated, could ever fully correspond to a thought. No images could, of themselves, amount to, or constitute, the thought that I report when I say, for example, "It occurred to me that Peter might drop in today for a drink". The images are equivocal in a way in which the thought is quite definite. Images can never be anything more than illustrations of my thoughts, just as pictures in a book can never be more than illustrations of the text.(2)

(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Ginnane, op. cit. p. 387.

In this argument the premisses are true, but the conclusion is false. It is a <u>non-sequitur</u> from beginning to end. Price has shown quite conclusively that a visual image is usually very much more than an "illustration" of a thought. It is one of the more successful symbols of thoughts. The flaw in Ginnane's argument is his failure to deal with the possibility that on those occasions on which he has a thought without having "any mental images whatsoever at the time", his thought can only occur because it is expressed in some <u>other</u> form of symbol. It cannot be argued that a mental image is never a symbol because it is not always a symbol; but that seems to be the assumption behind Ginnane's conclusion that "images can never be anything more than illustrations of... thoughts." As I shall show this error vitiates his entire position.

Something first needs to be said about the alternative sorts of particular by means of which thoughts can be symbolized. Undue confusion is caused by an ambiguity in the use of the word "image". As Price says,

> The Imagists, we have seen, draw a sharp distinction between image thinking and verbal thinking. But is there not a sense in which some verbal thinking is itself image thinking? Certainly we do often think in or with verbal images - visual, or auditory, or kinaesthetic.
>
> But these are not the sort of images with which the Imagist is concerned, and this sort of thinking is not what he means by 'Image thinking'.(1)

But the Image Theorists are wrong to think that non-verbal visual imagery is the only true source of the symbols in which we think. We can just as well use as symbols the auditory images of the sounds of words, or the kinaesthetic images associated with the articulation of words. In fact we need not use images as symbols at all.

> To placate the Anti-Image philosophers, we now turn to an important point which the Imagists have completely overlooked.

(1) Op. cit. pp. 243-4.

> Although mental images are quasi-instantiative particulars, they are not the only ones. Perfectly good perceptible objects, denizens of the public material world in which the Anti-Imagists feel so much at home, may have this quasi-instantiative function, and may cash our words in absence, or approximate to cashing them, in very much the same way as mental images do.(1)

It can now be appreciated that Ginnane's thesis that thoughts are sui generis, is not established by his denial that thoughts are embodied in mental images. The view he attempts to refute specifies that a thought is embodied in either a visual image, or a non-visual image, or a perceptible object, or a gesture. It can only be refuted if it is shown that a thought could occur which was not embodied in any of these forms. In other words, the refutation must consist in a denial of all the disjuncts. A denial of just one of them is ineffective. It cannot be said that Ginnane even begins to satisfy this condition.

So far from being successful is Ginnane's attempt to refute the view opposing his own, that it undermines the very premiss on which his claim that thoughts are sui generis is based. If we accept Price's account, according to which the symbols "in" which a thought is expressed are drawn either from mental images, or from perceptible objects, we have an argument for denying that thoughts are sui generis. For the symbols mentioned above are themselves particulars. It follows that the occurrence of a thought entails the occurrence of a particular. Thus we already have a datable and locatable particular when a thought is said to occur: namely, the symbol. Consequently there is no need to look elsewhere for something which can be located and dated when a thought occurs. A fortiori there is no need to postulate an ostensibly purely spiritual element of consciousness as the occurrence in question.

(1) Ibid. p. 256.

Image consciousness and perceptual consciousness cover the situation quite adequately.

9. It can now be seen that Ribot had no need to try to show that ideas themselves had to have a "motor element", apart from showing that images had a "motor element". If all ideas have to have their symbols, then the motor element will enter through their symbols. But Ribot has already argued that the motor element is to be found in the two sorts of particular which can be used as symbols: viz., perceptible objects, and images. No separate provision need be made, therefore, for ideas. In this way Ribot can be freed from the necessity of giving an Imagist Theory of Thinking. In fact he does offer us an Imagist Theory of Thinking, but it must be remarked that he emphatically dissents from the view that the only relevant images are non-verbal visual images. On the contrary, as a psychologist, he endorses Galton's work on image thinking, and he lays stress on the fact that many people think in non-visual images. Some are visual imagists, some auditory imagists, some kinaesthetic imagists, &c. If, therefore, the mechanism of attention operates in reflection in the same way that it does in sensorial attention, it must operate through the motor element in mental imagery (that is, when it is not operating directly through sensorial attention, when the symbol of the idea is a perceptible object). We are free now to come back to this question.

My sympathy lies with psychologists such as Ribot and Bain, not to mention philosophers such as Hobbes and Hume, who stress the intimate connection between mental image and perception. Ribot is right, I believe, to reject the idea that the image is "a kind of phantom without definite seat", but it would be wrong to follow him

to the point of claiming that "there is between perception and image identity of nature, identity of seat, and only difference of degree." I shall contrast these two approaches to imagery by calling the former the "phantom approach" and the latter the "sentient approach". (By the sentient approach I mean the view that there is an intimate connection between perception and image, and not Ribot's view that there is identity with difference in degree only.) What I wish to argue is that the sentient approach makes better sense than the phantom approach. It accommodates and renders intelligible the empirical facts in a way the phantom approach cannot match.

The phantom approach is the name I give to the view that it is logically possible that a man may have a visual image, in spite of the fact that he is blind. This view applies _mutatis mutandis_ to the mental images corresponding to the other sense modalities as well. Now if it were logically possible for a blind man to have visual imagery, it would follow that the formation of the image would be completely independent of the muscular activity connected with the organ of sight. On the phantom approach it is a straightforward empirical question whether or not visual sense experience must exist before visual images can make their appearance. It is of course the fundamental tenet of classical Empiricism that all mental imagery is derived from sense experience.(1) It is not at all clear, however, that the relation between visual imagery and visual experience is contingent. First of all when a description is given of a visual image, it is not described _as_ image. What is described is the thing which the image is an image _of_. The description is

(1) An Empiricist like Hume is enmeshed in the difficulties over this tenet which beset Logical Positivists over the Verification Principle. Is it a generalization based on experience that no image occurs in the mind without its

given, in other words, in material-object language. But material-object language presupposes that its user enjoys sense experience. It rests on such concepts as "look", "perspective", "colour" and "shape". Now although a description of a visual image is a description of what the image is an image of, this does not mean that the description bypasses the image altogether. The description of the object images, is still "read off", so to speak, from the image itself. So the description is not merely a description of a material object, but the description of how that material object is imaged.

What I am saying amounts to this. The descriptions we give of our visual images of necessity make use of visual concepts. Now let us suppose that a blind man claims to have a visual image. How can we ascertain whether his claim is true? Suppose we ask him to describe the image. There are two possibilities: (a) he may try but fail to give a description, or (b) he may in fact produce a description making use of visual concepts. If he cannot give a description, it seems to me we have every right to be sceptical about his claim that his image is visual. What, we may ask, makes him call it visual? What does he understand the word "visual" to mean here? If (b) is the case, the position is different. Blind people can come to learn to use visual words correctly. A man blind from birth will use a word like "red" correctly for instance. But correct use of a visual concept does not entail that the user can see. We have no guarantee, therefore, that when a blind man uses a visual concept

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having been preceded by a corresponding impression? If it is, then it is only probably true, and cannot be known to be true. On the other hand if it is known to be true, then it is not an empirical generalization, but an instance of a priori knowledge which is inconsistent with the presuppositions of Empiricism.

to describe his image, it must be a visual image he is describing. For instance it is reported that a blind man likened the colour purple to the sound of a trombone. Of necessity he had to employ auditory, or other kinds of, analogy to cash the concept "purple". But if he had said that his image was of something purple, we would not be inclined to say that he was describing a visual colour image.

The retort might be made that these are no more than difficulties of verification. We know that blind people who have their sight restored cannot at first distinguish one geometrical shape from another by sight, in spite of being able to recognise them by feel. Bearing this in mind, we are not entitled to transfer our doubts about the blind man's description of his image, into doubts about the possibility of his having a visual image. It is theoretically possible, according to this reasoning, for the blind man to have a visual image without he or anyone else knowing that his image is *visual*. Even if this point be conceded, the claim that a blind man could conceivably have a visual image, is much reduced. For it turns out to be an image which no one *knows* to be visual, and that is a different matter altogether. The normal case from which we started was that of a man not only having a visual image, but knowing it to be visual. I feel therefore that my argument still carries some force. This is just one of the considerations to be weighed.

Perceptual concepts such as "seeing" and "hearing", entail the existence of the concepts of "an organ of sight" and "an organ of hearing".(1) Let us continue to confine ourselves to sight. When we look at an object, the object of necessity appears from a certain perspective, determined by the location of our eyes. We see objects in a particular direction, and at a certain distance from our eyes.

(1) See S. Shoemaker, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity*, (Ithaca, 1963) ch. 5, where this point is convincingly argued.

We see only an aspect of the object, visible from our particular perspective. We do not see, as it were, the object "in the round" all at once. In other words we cannot see an object from every perspective at once. These limitations are imposed upon sight because of our unavoidable reliance on one kind of sense-organ. Now it is true also of a visual image, that the description we give of it, is logically similar to the description we give when we are seeing rather than imaging. As I have said, we describe the object of which the image is an image, and that means that we describe the object as though it were being seen. We would describe the object as though it were being seen from a certain perspective, and this entails the object's presenting a certain aspect, and being at a certain distance.(1) Not even in visual imagery can we escape the limitations of perspectival appearance. We cannot, for instance, have an image of every side of a house united in one. Our visual images, therefore, are subject to the same conditions of being an appearance from a position, in a direction, at a distance, as are found in the case of seeing.

The question arises "Can a blind man satisfy these conditions for visual imagery?" Or to put it another way "Would he be able to make sense of them?" He certainly would have no experience of these perspectival characteristics, which visual perception and visual imagery have in common. Nor is it conceivable that a visual image could lack these perspectival characteristics. A visual image that did not present an aspect of the object of which it was an image,

(1) The question of the perspectival quality of the visual image must not be confused with the question of the location of the visual image itself within the visual field. This is a separate question, which I will come to.

would lack precisely the characteristic that makes it essentially visual. It is, of course, a known empirical fact that the blind do not have visual images. The above argument, however, raises a doubt whether this is an empirical matter at all. It suggests that it is logically impossible for the blind to form visual images. Our very concept of a visual image is fashioned out of our experience of seeing objects. If a person were unable to form any idea of what it was like to see an object, he must also be unable to form any idea of what it would be like to have a visual image. We have here another consideration weighing against the phantom approach.

If the phantom approach were true, it would be difficult to understand why there are the same number of forms of mental image as there are forms of sense experience. Why should there not be ten or eleven types of mental image, perhaps including X-ray images, and radio wave images? Furthermore, if the connection between a sense-modality and an image is contingent, why should the image be named after the sense modality? Why should the images be described as visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory, instead of being given some other description, unless the imager believed them to be derived from the sense modalities?

10. There is another respect in which the connection between sense-organ and image is not straightforwardly contingent. From the phenomenological point of view mental images have their "seat" in the appropriate sense-organ. It is not easy to make this clear without seeming to claim altogether more than is intended. Let me begin by pointing out an obviously contingent fact, which we usually take for granted. All our superior sense-organs are clustered

together in our heads. It is for this reason, I suggest, that mental images are often said to be situated in our heads. But it is certainly a contingent fact, although a biologically intelligible one, that our main sense-organs are grouped together. However, let us imagine that they were all placed at opposite extremities from one another: for instance, our eyes on our hands, and our ears on our feet. Let the remaining senses remain where they are. In such circumstances we would without doubt take our visual images to emanate from the region of our hands, and our auditory images to emanate from the region of our feet, as we at present take them to emanate from the region of our eyes and ears, respectively. Now obviously it would be misleading to say that we see our visual images with our eyes, and hear our auditory images with our ears. We do not see or hear images; we have them, or form them. Nevertheless the point I wish to bring out is that just as in seeing and hearing the point of reference is the eyes and the ears, respectively, so too in visual and auditory imagery, the point of reference is the eyes and the ears, respectively. We already have some experience of this. If I have a kinaesthetic, or a tactile image of my toe wagging, the image is not "in" my head, but "in" my toe. If the phantom approach were true, there would be no reason to think that if the sense-organs were banished to the extremities of bodies, the corresponding images would follow them there. On the contrary they could be expected to stay stubbornly at home in the head. If, as I maintain, this is not what we would expect to happen, we have further reasons for thinking the sentient approach more coherent than the phantom approach.

I would like to dwell a little longer on this matter. When I

allege that an image "emanates" from the region in which the sense-organ is situated I am using a metaphor to describe something which it is difficult to describe more directly. Nevertheless I shall make the attempt. Images do not exist in public space, but they do have spatial features. These spatial features are not, however, confined to the "world" of the image; i.e., it is not only the relations of one element of an image to another that can be described in spatial terms. There is, in addition, a seeming spatial relation between the imager himself and his image. This is particularly evident in the case of visual imagery. Psychological subjects have reported on introspective grounds that when their eyes are closed their visual images appear to be about two inches in front of their eyes. The imager, therefore, orientates the image in relation to regions of his body. Thus we could say that auditory images are "in" the ear-drums, olfactory images "in" the nose, gustatory images "in" the mouth, and so on. If I am right about this, when an imager is presented with an image, he will make a spatial distinction between the place he occupies and the place the image "occupies". Moreover he will use the regions of his body as the frame of reference for the location of his images, in his private space. The point can now be made that if his eyes were on his hands, the imager's visual imagery would appear to be projected from his hands. By the same reasoning if the imager's ears were on his feet, the position of his auditory images in private space would be projected from his feet. If we now go back to the phantom approach and consider the possibility of an imager without sense-organs, we can say at once that this emanation of the image from the region of the sense-organ must be absent. There is no sense-organ from which the emanation can take

place. Moreover, if it were suggested that the spatial differentiation between imager and image could still be postulated, and orientated in relation to regions of the body, it would be quite inexplicable why this should be so. Such a suggestion would be in effect an attempt to get the best of both worlds without making any concessions to either. We are left with the position that an imager without the relevant sense-organ would lack the element of spatiality between himself and his image, which I have used the metaphor of an emanation from the sense-organ to describe. But that would mean that his image would lack one of the essential features of images. We would not be able to conceive what such a putative image would be like. I draw the conclusion that not only is it not possible for a person born without the relevant sense-organ to have an image as we understand it, but also that any quasi-image he might have, would be outside our experience.

The intimate connection between the possession of sense-organs and the existence of mental imagery can be shown at a more obvious level. I might just mention the easily overlooked fact that when we form mental images, the related sense-organ "comes into play". When we try to recall the smell of something, we give a sniff, just as we do when we are actually smelling. (As an experiment it is worth trying to form an olfactory image while uniformly exhaling. Just as we cannot smell while exhaling, we cannot have an image of a smell while exhaling.) When we try to form a visual image, our eyes go vacant. When we try to form an image of the taste of something, we tend to draw saliva. In each case the attempt to form an image gives rise to an activation of the corresponding sense-organ. On the phantom approach the assumption would be that this

sense-organ activity was irrelevant to the existence of the image. This assumption is questionable, as I shall show in the case of visual imagery. Ribot quotes two authorities on the existence of eye movements during visual imagery.

> Czermak, and after him Stricker, have pointed out, that if after having inwardly contemplated the image of an object supposed to be very near, we abruptly pass to the mental vision of a very distant object, we will feel a marked change in the state of innervation of the eyes. In real vision, in such a case as this, one must pass from the state of convergence to the state of parallelism of the visual axes, that is, one must innerve the motor muscles of the eye in a different manner. The same operation, though weaker and in a nascent stage, takes place in that internal vision which accompanies reflection.(1)

That we use our eyes in visual imagery can very easily be shown by a simple experiment. The test consists in shutting the eyes, rotating them upwards to their limit, and, keeping them in that position, trying to form an image of what one would see if one were looking down from the top of a tall building. A strain will be felt if one tries to prevent one's eyes from falling. I am in some doubt as to whether in fact the required image can be formed - with one's eyes in the wrong position, so to speak.

But these facts speak of no more than an empirical connection between the use of the eyes and the formation of visual images. And, although the empirical facts should not be dismissed out of hand, the phantom approach can only be shaken by establishing logical connections between visualizing and looking. This I shall now try to do. Ryle has quite rightly pointed out that when we are said to have an image of something, we fancy ourselves to be in the

(1) Ribot, <u>The Psychology of Attention</u>, p. 71.

very situation we would need to be in, if we were not having an image, but actually seeing the imaged scene.(1) When, for instance, I have an image of my house, I imagine myself to be standing in front of the house looking at it. In this way the visual image has the identical perspectival characteristic that the perception itself would have had. Furthermore, if in order to see the whole of the front of the house I would need to scan it with my eyes, I would obtain my image of the full extent of the front of the house by likewise scanning with my eyes. Thus, just as I see the house _from_ my eyes, from a perspectival point of view, so too I project my visual image from my eyes. And _if_ I have to move my eyes to change the visual scene, I also have to move my eyes to change the corresponding image of that visual scene. (Unless, that is, I imagine the scene to be physically displaced for me.) In other words, in the case of visual perception there is a necessary connection between _looking_ and seeing,(2), and if the visual image is the counterpart to seeing, there is also a counterpart to looking. Although the word "visualising" has a wider meaning, it does capture some of the character of this counterpart to looking. The word "imaging" is often used in this context, and although it conveys the idea that this is something we do - an activity - it suggests merely that we _produce_ images. Not being confined to the description of the production of _visual_ imagery, it cannot suggest the involvement of the eyes, in the way "visualising" does. Now

(1) Ryle, _The Concept of Mind_, ch. 8. We may accept Ryle's point about fancying that we are observer-situated when we claim to be having a mental image of an object, without agreeing with him that there is no such thing as a mental image: i.e., that pretending to be present, is all there is to claiming to have an image.

(2) I attempt to substantiate this proposition in detail in ch. 5.

much of our seeing comes about as a result of active looking: scanning, running over things with our eyes, looking out of the corner of the eye, and so forth. It follows that much of our visual imagery must have the stamp of such active looking about it. Thus the image in one case might be one that could only be described in this way: "It is as if my eyes are running over the object." Or in another case: "It is as if I am seeing it out of the corner of my eye." Such images may be called "dynamic" images as opposed to "static" ones. What I wish to stress is that dynamic images will have the same perspectival characteristics in relation to my eyes, that their perceptual counterparts have. Moreover dynamic images can only be described in terms of their perceptual analogues.

My contention is, therefore, that descriptions of dynamic visual images would be quite incomprehensible to blind$_c$ people. They would not be able to understand what was meant by an image that gave the appearance of coming out of the corner of the eye, because they have no experience of seeing things out of the corner of their eyes. Similarly, and for the same reason, they would not be able to understand what it was for an image to have the appearance of being produced by running one's eyes over an object. Having no experience of visual perspective, the blind$_c$ person could have no idea of the meaning of the description of dynamic images in terms of visual perspective. It should be pointed out that although a blind$_c$ person may be able to move his eyes about, such movement of the eyes will be merely <u>physical</u> movement, not perceptual movement. From the conceptual point of view these two movements are of entirely different types. The blind$_c$ man's physical movement of

his eyes would not be related to the quality of any putative visual image, as would the eye movements of a man with sight. For the blind man the relation between eye movement and putative visual image is indeed entirely contingent; for the man with sight it is not.

I conclude that there are logical reasons for denying the validity of the phantom approach. It is not merely a contingent truth that we only have images when we possess the relevant sense-organ. I have tried to show that dynamic visual images would not be what they are, if their relation with the sense-organ were severed. The argument for rejecting the phantom approach is at the same time an argument in favour of the sentient approach, which comes unscathed out of the investigation.

Before considering the implications of the sentient approach I wish to say something about sub-vocal speech. We all know that we have to learn to speak aloud before we can speak silently to ourselves. Next we learn to speak in whispers, and lastly we form words inaudibly. Sub-vocal speech is therefore an instance of muscular inhibition. Sometimes we forget to inhibit this muscular activity, and it is when this happens we can get caught talking to ourselves.

Psychologists have studied the question whether muscular inhibition in sub-vocal speech is complete, and a number have come to the conclusion that we never entirely suppress movements in the glottis. This alleged fact is the basis of William James's famous claim that thinking consists of making glottal movements. Now I am not particularly concerned with whether or not this claim is true. What concerns me is what happens *if* all muscular activity is inhibited. Sub-vocal speech is as real a phenomenon as is the occurrence of mental imagery. The question is, what is it, if it

is not minimal word articulation? The answer is that it must be either kinaesthetic imagery of the kinaesthetic sensations of overt verbal utterance, or visual imagery of the appearance of the written word, or auditory imagery of the sound of the overt spoken word. In other words if sub-vocal speech is not actual glottal articulation, it is itself image formation.

The most likely of these alternatives is that it is either auditory imagery, or kinaesthetic imagery. It is, however, often difficult to tell these two possibilities apart. The reason for this is none other than the spatial proximity of the ear and the vocal chords. If, as was earlier supposed, our ears were situated in our feet, we would very easily be able to tell whether our sub-vocal speech took place in our feet or our heads, and then we would know for certain whether it consisted of auditory imagery or kinaesthetic imagery. We all know of the joke of a man complaining that he can't hear himself think for the noise. This joke has a greater element of truth in it than might be thought. If a person's sub-vocal speech, and consequently his verbal thinking, consists of auditory imagery, it might well be the case that a great amount of external noise smothers his auditory imagery. Our ears have to be tuned to auditory imagery, just as our eyes have to be tuned to be visual imagery. In both cases sensory stimuli are a distraction.

It is not, of course, necessary for sub-vocal speech to utilize only a single type of imagery. There is nothing to stop it consisting of two concordant forms of imagery. When we speak aloud we both produce the sounds and hear them. There is no reason why both the auditory and the kinaesthetic elements should not be reflected in the imagery of which sub-vocal speech consists. As I say, whether

this happens we would be more confident of asserting had our ears not been so closely situated to our vocal chords. For my part, I think my own sub-vocal speech is muscular - and not composed of kinaesthetic imagery of muscular activity - and at the same time is supplemented with auditory imagery. In other words my sub-vocal speech has a distinct auditory feel about it, and yet I do not hear it. It is as if my silent speech echoes in my ears. Sub-vocal speech - thinking to ourselves - if it is not actually a case of glottal movement, depends on imagery of one kind or another. It can therefore be inferred that the connection holding between the sense-organs and mental imagery, must also hold between our thoughts and our organs of sense and speech.

If, as I have argued, the existence of the sense-organ, and the muscular movements belonging to it, is a necessary condition of the existence of the corresponding imagery, a great simplification in the theory of attention can be effected. Ribot, as I said, put forward the theory that attention always works through muscular activity. This was amply demonstrated in the case of sense perception. Ribot sought to show that it was equally true in the case of images and ideas. Unfortunately, he failed to make a satisfactory transition from a description of the function of muscular activity in the case of sensorial attention, to its function in image formation. I have tried to make good this omission in the case of visual imagery, by showing that eye adjustments necessarily take place in visual imagery as they do in ordinary looking. If I have succeeded in establishing the connection between muscular activity and imagery for one key type of image, the probability is strengthened that Ribot's theory may be generalized to cover other forms of mental image as well. The advantage of his theory would be the gain in

simplicity which would accrue from the fact that a single mechanism of attention applied throughout. Moreover, this theory would offer an explanation of how we come to have the ability to voluntarily apply our attention. We accept that we have voluntary control over the muscles of the bodily frame. If it is through this muscular control that we can bestow attention, we are released from the necessity of looking for some other mechanism of control in virtue of which we can voluntarily engage our attention.

On the basis of the theory that sense-organ activity is a necessary condition of the existence of mental imagery, we can deduce the following: (a) Since our private thoughts are conducted through the symbolism of mental imagery, sense-organ activity must be a necessary condition of the occurrence of private thoughts too. (b) Since all sense-organ activity has its attendant kinaesthetic sensation, and since such kinaesthetic sensation has been shown to form a residual consciousness, the occurrence of private thoughts must also have its attendant kinaesthetic sensation which, in turn, forms a residual consciousness for it. We are, however, for the most part unaware of the existence of such kinaesthetic sensation during our attending to an object, but many psychologists have tried to identify them. One of them was James. Speaking of his own experiences, he reports:

> In the first place, the acts of attending, assenting, negating, making an effort, are felt as movements of something in the head. In many cases it is possible to describe these movements quite exactly. In attending to either an idea or a sensation belonging to a particular sense-sphere, the movement is the adjustment of the sense-organ, felt as it occurs. I cannot think in visual terms, for example, without feeling a fluctuating play of pressures, convergencies, divergences, and accommodations in my eyeballs. The direction in which the object is conceived to lie determines the character of these movements, the feeling of which becomes, for my consciousness, identified with the manner in which I make myself ready to

receive the visible thing...(1)

In essence I have been arguing for the view that the functional dependence between sensorial attention and residual consciousness is also to be found between reflection and residual consciousness.

Ribot is not as clear as he might be on the connection between the cognitive aspect of attention and its basis in muscular activity. He describes attention as a "predominant intellectual state" but it is not immediately clear how it can be at once an intellectual state and a muscular activity. My own treatment of the question of the nature of the relation between residual consciousness and attention reveals how these two aspects of Ribot's theory can be reconciled. In section 3 of this chapter I explained the cognitive relationship between residual consciousness and attention. This covers the intellectual aspect. In section 6 I investigated the mechanism of attention, and this investigation showed how at the physical level, residual consciousness is related to attention through the reflection of muscular activity in consciousness in the form of kinaesthetic sensation. It ought to be pointed out that if Ribot is wrong to generalize the function of muscular activity to cover mental images, and I have been wrong to support him in this, the general thesis concerning the relation of residual consciousness to attention is not overthrown. In one area it will operate differently in its details, that is all.

The discussion of the last three chapters forms the groundwork for the direct enquiry into the nature of the knowable self which follows in chapter four. The theory of the self I there advance is

(1) James, Principles of Psychology, I, 300.

an interpretation of the conclusions already reached, and is based on the distinctions for which I have argued. No substantive propositions of major significance are introduced for the first time in the chapters that follow. From this point of view we have reached a natural turning point in the enquiry, and I now proceed to consider the implications of what has gone before, for our understanding of the experiential self.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE KNOWABLE SELF

1. In chapter one I set myself the task of examining consciousness in order to determine its structure. I argued that this was a necessary preliminary to determining whether Hamilton and Ferrier were justified in affirming the "Duality of Consciousness", or whether Hodgson and James were right to deny it. The question of the relationship between consciousness and the self was deliberately left in abeyance until this prior question was settled. We are now in a position to see that Hamilton was right in thinking that consciousness displayed a duality, but wrong in thinking that the duality was a duality between one element lying outside consciousness, and another element lying within consciousness. Both elements in the duality, it has been found, lie within consciousness. The results of the analysis of consciousness show, similarly, that James was right in thinking that there was no duality between an element lying outside consciousness and another lying within it, but wrong in thinking that there was no duality within consciousness itself. James denied that consciousness had an "inner duplicity". We may concede that no evidence has been found of its "duplicity", but much evidence has been assembled pointing to its polarization into opposite spheres.

On the basis of this conclusion, in this chapter I take up the question of the self, and advance a theory that attempts to do justice to the findings of the two preceding chapters. My thesis is that residual consciousness and the self are one and the same thing.

If I am able to sustain this thesis, it will follow that Hamilton was right to interpret the "Duality of Consciousness" as a duality between self and not-self (subject and object), although, once again, he was wrong to identify the self with an entity external to consciousness. On this theory, James, and those who agree with him, are right, too, when they maintain that the self must lie within experience. To put the position more generally, the theory I am proposing overcomes the difficulties that we saw to lie in the way of accepting both the Pure Ego Theory, and the Serial Theory.(1) Unlike those two theories, mine is based on an analysis of experience itself, and is not inferred from an analysis of entities that are not selves. That is to say, the analysis has abided strictly by the caveat that we look for the solution exclusively in terms of what we ourselves are.

Some support for the identification of the self with residual consciousness comes from the analysis of that notion given in the chapter devoted to it. In particular, it will be remembered that I spoke of the phenomenon of "distance", which was found to exist between residual consciousness and the object of attention. This was especially noticeable in the case of interrogative attention. Moreover, it was established that residual consciousness can itself direct the attentive process through a "master idea". That is, residual consciousness can influence the direction of attention. We thus have two ideas - that of distance, and that of directionality - which describe functions of residual consciousness, which have also been associated with descriptions given of the self.

(1) See above, p.13 ff.

The self has been traditionally conceived to lie behind its experiences and apart from them (we have ample evidence of this in views considered in the first chapter), and this feature of the self's behaviour can accurately be described by saying that the self puts a distance between itself and its object of cognition. In addition to this, the self is frequently described as "directing attention" this way and that: precisely as we have found residual consciousness to do. In sum, most of the observations made in the last chapter on the relation between residual consciousness and attention, would stand, if in each case the expression "the self" were substituted for the expression "residual consciousness".

I would like to draw attention to some further characteristics that the self shares with residual consciousness, to add substance to the view that they are identical.

Some theologians maintain that we cannot know God, because to know God would be to make Him an object of our knowledge, and God is essentially a subject and not an object. This argument is based on the premise that a subject cannot be treated as an object without its essential subjecthood being destroyed.(1) The validity of this theological reasoning is not, however, my concern. I mention it to bring out an essential parallel it has with a certain view of the self. This is the view that we cannot have knowledge of the self, because such knowledge would entail treating the self as object, and once it becomes an object, it ceases to be a self. On this view it was in vain for Hume to look into

(1) One of the earliest expressions of this view is to be found in Martin Buber's I and Thou, tr. R.G. Smith (Edinburgh 1937).

himself for some impression of himself, for if by chance he had come across anything with the required specifications, it would be an object and not a subject. If the self is essentially a subject, it cannot - on this line of thinking - be made an object, without losing its essential character as subject: without losing, that is, precisely that characteristic we are searching for. Just as it is logically impossible for God to disclose Himself by allowing Himself to be an object of experience (because whatever was an object of experience could not be God), so too it is logically impossible for the self to be an object of experience for the reason that it ceases to be a subject.

The view that the self is essentially subject, can be traced back to Kant's distinction between the transcendental self and the empirical self. "I have no <u>knowledge</u> of myself as I am," he says, "but merely as I appear to myself."(1) Kant's views on the nature of the transcendental self are obscure, but it is not necessary for us to pursue them in order to appreciate the relevance of his distinction to the approach to the self I am now considering. However, in the very next sentence, he says "The consciousness of self is thus very far from being a knowledge of the self..." suggesting that I know <u>that</u> I am a self, even though I do not know <u>what</u> the self is. The reason Kant gives for our inability to know ourselves as we are, as Kant explains in the footnote to the passage from which I have been quoting, is that

(1) Kant, <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, tr. N. Kemp Smith (London, 1953), B 158. At A 107, Kant says: "Consciousness of self according to the determinations of our state in inner perception is merely empirical, and always changing. No fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances."

any intuition I have of myself as object, must of necessity be subject to the condition under which all appearances are given: namely that they are conditioned by time. In his view this is a sufficient condition of any experience of the self being merely an appearance of the self, and not the real self. But even had Kant not used this particular argument, his view nevertheless lends itself to the idea that the real self can never be met with in experience.(1) In the passage I quoted, Kant describes the empirical self as appearing to myself. This cannot be a reference to the empirical self, but must be a reference to the real self: i.e., the subject of the experience of the empirical self. Now if, as Kant does, one makes the assumption that every experience entails an experiencer, it will follow that whatever experience of a self I have, there must still exist a self which has that experience, which is not itself the object of the experience. It follows that we can never experience the self *qua* subject, because as soon as we attempt to grasp the subject-self we find that another subject-self has taken its place. If therefore the subject-self is identified as the real self, the real self forever lies just behind experience. It is always the experiencer, never the experience itself.

Ryle has referred to this peculiarity of the self in always seeming to be one jump ahead of us in our efforts to experience it,

(1) I use the expression "real self" to stand for what Kant calls "the self as I am", in contrast to "the self as I appear", in order to avoid embroilment in the doctrine of the Transcendental Ego. It must not be thought, however, that I am thinking of "the real self" of later British Idealists.

as "The Systematic Elusiveness of 'I'".(1) He describes the apparent dilemma most evocatively:

> Even if the person is, for special speculative purposes, momentarily concentrating on the Problem of the Self, he has failed and knows that he has failed to catch more than the flying coat-tails of that which he was pursuing. His quarry was the hunter.

In Ryle's view it is logically impossible for the "I" which is the subject of experience to be at the same time its own object. Now, as I suggest, Kant did not himself adopt the position that it was logically impossible for the self to be its own object, although it would not have been difficult for him to have done so. He appears to have thought that another sort of being could conceivably intuit its real self:

> Such an intelligence [as is ours], therefore, can know itself only as it appears to itself in respect of an intuition which is not intellectual and cannot be given by the understanding itself, not as it would know itself if its intuition were intellectual.(2)

But it could be argued that even a being with such a creative intelligence might be forced to admit the distinction between the self that has the intellectual intuition, and the self experienced in the intellectual intuition. If he were, the systematic elusiveness of "I" would recur to plague the creative intelligence as well. In any event the mere concept of a non-discursive intelligence knowing itself through an intellectual intuition does not of itself rule out the distinction in question. I am,

(1) Concept of Mind, ch. VI, sec. 7.

(2) B 159. I might just mention that this is an example of the strategy employed by Kant, referred to on p. 23, above.

therefore, inclined to side with Ryle and against Kant as far as the explanation of the systematic elusiveness of "I" is concerned. To hope to have an experience of the experiencer, if it makes sense at all, sets going an infinite regress. No matter how many manifestations of the self are experienced, there will always be one left over which has not yet been experienced, and that one is the subject of the last experience. Experience of the self, is, in Ryle's words, "logically condemned to eternal penultimacy."

Now in the previous chapter it was explained that residual consciousness could not itself become the object of attention without thereby ceasing to be residual consciousness. In other words, it was shown to be logically impossible for residual consciousness qua residual consciousness to become the object of attention. In this respect residual consciousness refers to that which we experience, but which we cannot experience as object of attention. The attempt to experience as object of attention that which can only be experienced as background is frustrated in the same way, and for the same reason, as is the attempt to make of the subject-self its own object. From this point of view residual consciousness is systematically elusive. It is systematically elusive to attention. There is a parallel with the "I" which, as Ryle has argued, is systematically elusive, too, in the sense that the "I" cannot be objectified by attention.

If we now identify residual consciousness and the self, we explain at once how it happens that they both exhibit the same logical behaviour, and what is more, we provide ourselves with an explanation of the systematic elusiveness of "I". If the self

is residual consciousness, then the self can no more become its own object of attention, than residual consciousness can become its own object of attention, and for the identical reason. Residual consciousness is, by definition, not the object of attention. Nevertheless, there is nothing to stop the elements at any one time forming residual consciousness from becoming at another time objects of attention. If it were possible for all the elements of residual consciousness at one instant to become the whole object of attention at the next instant, we would have a situation in which an empirical self had become the object of attention.(1) But, as I have tried to make clear, there would still have to be a residual consciousness in its place, and that would be the subject-self. We can therefore envisage, as a theoretical possibility, a succession of attempts to objectify the subject-self. Each time a new subject-self takes the place of the one just objectified, becoming its experiencer. The theory I am advocating explains why this must be so, not on the purely formal ground that an experience requires an experiencer, but on the material ground that a self could not be an object of attention unless residual consciousness, with which I have identified the subject-self, existed.

The great attraction of the theory I am proposing can now be explained. In the first place it enables us to resist the logic of the argument according to which the phenomenon of the systematic elusiveness of "I" drives us back to a Pure Ego. A

(1) This possibility will be considered when I come to the question of self-consciousness. See below, sec. 5.

Pure Ego, moreover, that lies outside all experience. According to this logic, if every attempt to grasp the real self in experience fails, this must mean that the self must be something that cannot be experienced. Moreover, it follows that we can gain no knowledge of this self, for such knowledge would imply that we had some experience of it. Therefore, all we know of the self is that it is the subject of every experience. Hence its designation: The Pure Ego. In the second place, and in contrast with this reasoning, I am suggesting that it is indeed true that the subject-self can never itself become an object of experience, but that this has nothing to do with the nature of the self - transcendental or empirical. It is put down to nothing other than the way attention operates. This enables it to be asserted in all consistency, both that the self as subject is experiental, and that it is never presented as an object of experience. Thus, far from it being the case that the self is unknown in itself, it is knowable through experience, and exists as experience.

The theory overcomes the paradox that the self, although knowable by empirical means, is never an object of experience, and in the process removes the main prop holding up The Pure Ego Theory of the Self. The essence of the matter is, on my view, that the self is "experienced" (i.e., is composed of elements of experience), but is never known contemporaneously as an object of knowledge. It is for this reason that the self is regarded as lying behind its experiences, "distancing" itself from them. It also explains why we have such a lively sense of the presence of the self, and are nonplussed by denials of its existence.

2. Further support for the identification of residual consciousness and the self can be drawn from an altogether different quarter. I shall argue that the theory is corroborated by certain of its deductive consequences. These give rise to expectations which appear to be borne out by experience. In the previous chapter I mentioned the logical possibility of a form of consciousness that I described as a homogeneous consciousness. A homogeneous consciousness was said to be one in which a total temporary state of consciousness consisted of one element and one element only. I spoke of such an element invading the whole of consciousness, and blotting out all other elements. In that chapter I did not commit myself on the question whether such a form of consciousness ever actually occurred, and it is not necessary to my argument that I do so now. My argument is based on the fact that people have claimed to experience a homogeneous consciousness. I shall attempt to show that the descriptions that are given of alleged experiences of a homogeneous consciousness are the descriptions we would expect to receive if my theory were true. In other words, they can be deduced from the theory.

A homogeneous consciousness would, by definition, be a consciousness without a residual consciousness, i.e. it would not be polarized, as a normal consciousness is. It follows from the theory that the single element of a homogeneous consciousness could not be the object of attention. It can further be inferred that if there were such a homogeneous consciousness it would be characterized as a form of consciousness from which the presence of the self had entirely vanished. This inference follows logically from the identification of residual consciousness and the self: if no

residual consciousness, then no self. Were such a homogeneous consciousness to exist, its existence could not be reported first-hand at the time, for to report the occurrence of the state would of necessity mean that a self must be aware concurrently of the state, and this would entail the existence of residual consciousness, which, ex hypothesi, does not exist. The only first-hand evidence of the existence of a homogeneous consciousness would come from someone's memory of having passed through such a state.

My theory would lead us to expect such a person to say that he remembered being in a state of consciousness characterized by a lack of any consciousness of being a self. That is, the state of consciousness would be remembered as one in which there was complete loss of self-identity. Now it so happens that Ribot raises the question of the possible existence of a homogeneous consciousness, and concludes that it is realized in some rare types of mystical experience:

> Do there really exist cases of absolute monoideism, in which consciousness is reduced to a sole and single state entirely occupying it, and in which the mechanism of association is totally arrested? In our opinion, this we meet in only a few, very rare cases of ecstasy,...(1)

Furthermore, the example Ribot instances, as a case of such ecstasy, is St Theresa's mystical union with God. He traces the seven stations of prayer, or meditation, through which St Theresa says we must pass before we reach the highest stage of ecstasy, which is union with God, and points out that each stage advances to a greater concentration of consciousness than the preceding

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 10.

stage, until ultimately consciousness reaches a single homogeneous state, which he calls "absolute monoideism". As he says, "God has now descended into the substance of the soul, and become one with it."(1) But it is precisely when the soul has attained this union with God, that mystics claim that all consciousness of self is lost. Indeed some mystics carry their claim to the point of paradox and say that they become God during their mystical encounter.

Ribot points out that such supreme mystical consummations happen extremely rarely. "The greatest mystics alone," he says "have attained, by a still stronger effort, to absolute monoideism." There is reason to believe, therefore, that those instances of mystical experience that reach the state of absolute monoideism are also the ones in which the mystic is likely to claim that his self was annihilated in the encounter. In so far as this result is precisely the one that my theory would lead us to expect, it offers some corroboration of it.

A view similar to the one I am advocating was put forward by Dawes Hicks in an article he wrote in 1913.(2) His three basic ideas are these: (a) Attention is said to operate in all forms of consciousness; (b) It brings about "a certain selection or limitation within the field of what is apprehended of some features and the relative neglect or disregard of the rest." (c) In its higher, voluntary form it is responsible for the distinction

(1) Ribot, The Psychology of Attention, p. 100.
(2) G. Dawes Hicks, 'The Nature and Development of Attention', The British Journal of Psychology, VI, 1, (1913).

between self and not-self. I shall pass over (a) and (b) which do no more than endorse the approach of the earlier chapters. The important consideration is (c), and, referring to the distinctions which attention discloses by operating on its material, Dawes Hicks has this to say:

> One such important distinction - it is not too much to say, the most important distinction - which thus comes gradually to recognition is that indicated by the terms self and not-self. By degrees in the development of intelligence there is effected a definitely recognised separation between the trains of thoughts, sentiments, feelings and sense-presentations which are more or less constant and habitual, and which thus come to be regarded as constituting the prevailing centre or background of individual personality, and the relatively transient presentations and apprehended contents which come and go, and which the subject learns to contrast with and to distinguish from the totality of the former. The contents of our knowledge or experience, or rather certain of them, tend more and more to wear the aspect of an inward possession, and to become the instrument, as it were, by which we apprehend the world of objective fact. So soon as this distinction has attained any prominence in consciousness, it must of necessity influence in a very decided manner the direction, as we may put it metaphorically, of attention. For it will then become possible for the subject to differentiate between the cases where attention comes about through a presented object being connected with the contents of representations or ideas that are not specially included in the consciousness of self, and the cases where the activity of comparing and relating is carried on through means of those ideas and feelings which are included.(1)

There are, of course, certain differences between the position expressed in this passage, and the one I have been developing. Nevertheless Dawes Hicks's account decidedly corroborates the theory I am advancing.

3. As I see it, the theory is at this point faced with three crucial difficulties. Firstly, it seems not to be reconcilable with the view of the self as something persisting in time. A theory of the self must be deemed a failure if it rules out the

(1) G. Dawes Hicks, 'The Nature and Development of Attention', The British Journal of Psychology, VI, 22, (1913).

possibility of my being able to say that I am the same self today that I was yesterday. And yet, it could be suggested, by implication my theory does precisely that. For if the self is identical with residual consciousness, every reconstitution of residual consciousness would entail the existence of a different self. But residual consciousness is reconstituted every time attention shifts to a new object. Therefore every new object of attention entails the existence of a new self. The requirement of persistence is not met. Secondly, to be successful, a theory of the self must be able to offer an intelligible analysis of such sentences as 'I have a pain in my arm'. But if the self is equated with residual consciousness, this would amount to saying that one sphere of consciousness could "have" another sphere of consciousness: i.e., the elements of residual consciousness "have" the pain in the arm. But this is absurd. Consequently the theory fails, since it does not permit us to say that a self "has" experiences, or that they belong to it. Thirdly, the theory is incoherent in that residual consciousness is itself said to be composed of elements, and they too would require a self whose elements they were. But, on the theory, no self exists to which the elements comprising residual consciousness could be "ascribed".

I shall now endeavour to defend the theory against these objections. Philosophers who hold some form of Serial Theory of the Self have primarily been interested in explaining the longitudinal unity of consciousness: i.e., the series of successive total temporary states. If successive states of consciousness belonged to a subject, this would mean that the

subject had to persist through time itself in order for it to function as the subject of such states.

Now it was precisely this idea of an enduring subject that Serialists such as Russell,(1), Ayer,(2), and Grice (3), wished to avoid. They all suggest that when we refer to a self, what we refer to is revealed on proper analysis to be a relation between total temporary states. As Ayer explains,

> We know that a self, if it is not to be treated as a metaphysical entity, must be held to be a logical construction out of the sense-experiences... And, accordingly, if we ask what is the nature of the self, we are asking what is the relationship that must obtain between sense-experiences for them to belong to the sense-history of the same self.(4)

In contradistinction to this approach, it has been pointed out by J.R. Jones that there is still room for a subject of experiences, without such a subject being thought of as a persisting entity.(5) What Jones has in mind are the elements that exist simultaneously in each total temporary state. In other words, he draws attention to that other aspect of consciousness that Serialists have tended to overlook. We are asked to envisage the possibility that each experience has its own subject, and that no two experiences separated in time have the same subject. Such a subject would be transient, since it would not outlast the experience of which it was the owner. As we have seen, this suggestion is reminiscent of the position to which critics have claimed that Descartes is committed.

(1) B. Russell, Analysis of Mind (London, 1933).

(2) A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth, and Logic, 2nd ed. (London, 1953).

(3) H.P. Grice, 'Personal Identity', Mind, 1 (1941).

(4) Op. cit. p. 125.

(5) J.R. Jones, 'The Self in Sensory Cognition', Mind, LVII (1949).

What is of particular interest is the reason Jones gives for wishing to reintroduce this vestigial subject. He points out that it is needlessly paradoxical to deny, as Russell does, that there could be experiences without a subject. Jones recalls the insistence of James Ward that it does not make sense to call something an experience, if there is no one whose experience it is. Similarly, on this argument, there can be no presentation without the presentation presenting itself to a subject. But the main point he makes against Russell's no-subject theory is just that it unnecessarily rules out the possibility of ascribing a single experience to a subject. According to the Serialist position, a statement, such as, "I am seeing this coloured patch", must be analysed in such a way that the statement is really a statement of the relation of the experience of seeing a coloured patch to the experiences which come before and after it. But, Jones's objection is that he finds it meaningful to say "I am seeing this coloured patch" irrespective of whether any other experiences came before or after it. Thus:

> But surely a person never says "I am seeing this coloured patch" or "I am hearing this noise" merely as an expression of the fact that this seeing and this hearing are related to other non-contemporaneous mental events in certain characteristic ways. I at any rate am perfectly certain that there is something contemporaneous with my seeing the coloured patch or my hearing the noise to which I mean to relate these objects when I say that it is "I" who am seeing the coloured patch or hearing the noise... The "I" of which I am thinking seems to be involved in any one of the cognitive events which may be combined in the unity of the same total temporary state.(1)

He proposes, therefore, that we consider the possibility that the "I" in sentences describing such experiences refers to something contemporaneous with the experience, which could then be

(1) Op. cit. p. 43.

said to "have" the experience. Some other contemporaneous mental event (element of consciousness) could be assigned this function. This would have that advantage that, provided that the mental event selected was always present, there would be a sense in which every experience had a subject, irrespective of its relation to experiences that come before or after it. At the same time it would avoid the myth of a substantival ego, which Russell was anxious to repudiate. It would avoid it without running into Russell's paradoxical position in which it is denied that experiences have subjects. Jones develops his theory by proposing that the subject should be identified with a somatic field, which for each subject becomes "this somatic field".

This suggestion he derives from Gallie.(1) Jones does indeed make a minor modification to Gallie's theory, but as the change is not relevant to the present discussion, I shall confine myself to Jones's account of the position. He gives Gallie's definition of the somatic field as,

> A voluminous spatial whole, extended in three dimensions which has, in normal circumstances, a continuous outer surface which can be said to be... coincident with the surface of one's own skin and an internal, though discontinuous, filling... On occasion particular areas on the surface are pervaded or volumes inside are filled, by specific qualities which stand out from the undifferentiated background.(2)

Jones next proceeds to give a summary of Gallie's position, as follows:

> When I say that I am experiencing a certain somatic sensation, for example, that I am having a pain in my arm, the fact I am recording is "simply the fact that some region of this somatic field is pervaded or occupied by a certain sensible quality."(3)

(1) I. Gallie, 'Mental Facts', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, N.S. XXXVII (1936-1937).

(2) Ibid. p. 198.

(3) Op. cit. p. 52.

The somatic field is defined in such a way that it excludes the sense experiences given us by our "outer senses". It thus excludes the visual and the auditory fields. Because of their exclusion from the somatic field, the visual and auditory fields can be said to "belong" to the somatic field to which they are (even if indirectly) spatially related. Neither Jones nor Gallie attempts to make out in any detail the claim that a spatial relation exists between the somatic field and other sense fields, but in view of the lengthy examination of the connection between a sense field and the corresponding sense-organ, given in the last chapter, we may, for the sake of argument, allow that such a connection could be made out. The theory depends on the not unreasonable assumption that provided we are conscious there will be a somatic field. There will therefore always be some mental event contemporaneous with a given experience which can function as the subject of that experience. Now it is a formal consequence of this theory that, while the self can be said to <u>have</u> visual, auditory, and other outer-sense, experiences, the self cannot be said to <u>have</u> somatic experiences. The reason for this is the obvious one that the self is identical with the mass of somatic feelings, and somatic feelings cannot "have" themselves.(1) On this view the statement "This somatic field is my somatic field" is a tautology. But the statement "This visual field is my visual field" is a contingent truth.(2)

4. Let us now compare the theory put forward by Jones with

(1) More will be said about this subject shortly.

(2) See Shoemaker, <u>Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity</u>, p. 112.

the one I have proposed. In the first place it can be seen that my theory satisfies the condition that the self must be identical with something which is contemporaneous with the experience it is said to have, just as does Jones's theory. In this respect they both meet the objection raised by Jones against Serial Theories, that when we refer to the subject of an experience, we are not merely referring to the relation between that experience and those which come before and after it. But it is also true that my theory satisfies this condition more strictly than Jones's does. On Jones's theory it remains a coincidence that there are somatic feelings that exist contemporaneously with a given experience. It is, therefore, purely a contingent fact that there is some mental event (or class of mental events) that could perform the function of being the subject of the experience. By contrast, on my theory this is no coincidence. As I have sought to show, there is a necessary connection between an experience (the object of attention) and residual consciousness. It is not merely a fact that there is something contemporaneous with the experience, which, as it happens, can conveniently perform the function of subject. What appears as an arbitrary assumption on Jones's theory, is on mine a conceptual necessity. In sum, a theory that identifies the self with residual consciousness is a theory that does the same job as one which identifies the self with the somatic field, only it does it better.

But its superiority can be demonstrated in another direction as well. On Jones's theory a self cannot be said to have a <u>somatic</u> field, because the self <u>is</u> a certain somatic field. Now this is certainly a paradox, which if not serious, at least

affords some embarrassment to its proponents. If, on the other hand, the self is identified with residual consciousness, there is in theory no limitation to the type of experience the self may be said to have. In particular the subject will <u>have</u> somatic experiences as well as visual experiences, auditory experiences, etc. An object of attention, no matter what it is, will at the same time be an experience that the self may be described as having.

It will be instructive to find out why Gallie and Jones chose the somatic field as the subject. Could not the visual field have served just as well? This question brings out the arbitrariness about the selection of the somatic field as the "contemporaneous mental event" to a given experience, with which to identify the subject. There are, however, obvious reasons for the choice of the somatic field for this role. First of all the sense-data associated with the other sense fields are intermittent. We have visual experiences when our eyes are open, but we may not have after-images and visual images when they are shut. If, therefore, the visual field were selected to play the rôle of the self, there would arise the state of affairs that a given experience was occurring although no visual experience was occurring concurrently. This would produce the highly paradoxical situation that on some occasions experiences occur that are not the experiences of a self. For the same reason other sense fields are ruled out as well. The somatic field, on the other hand, is exceptional in this respect. It is not intermittent as are the others. As long as we are conscious, somatic sensations will be elements of consciousness. Consequently the identification of

the self with the somatic field escapes the embarrassment just remarked.

But an even more important reason for selecting the somatic field for this purpose comes to light when we take into consideration the longitudinal unity of consciousness (the series of total temporary states). On Jones's theory the subject of one experience will not be identical with the subject of a non-simultaneous experience. The belief that a self persists through time, and because it does so, is one and the same subject of a number of successive experiences, has thus to be explained. Now Jones agrees with the Serialists that this belief cannot be grounded in the truth of the claim that the self <u>is</u> a persisting subject. As he himself puts it:

> Thus, "I" in the analysis of "I see" stands for an event contemporaneous with the event of seeing. As such it may act as the Centre to which this and other contemporaneous events which are differentiations of the same total temporary state are asymmetrically related. But, as a perishing event, it cannot bind together successive total temporary states in the unity of the same biography.(1)

On the view in question, belief in the persistence of the subject is delusory.(2) The Serialists are, therefore, obliged to explain how we come to have this delusion. This they attempt to do by appealing to the fact that two qualitatively indistinguishable experiences following each other are often mistaken for one continuous experience. On this basis the idea is advanced that each self will mistakenly believe that it is identical with the immediately preceding self if it is qualitatively indistinguishable from it. Now this idea has only to be made explicit for its incoherence to be manifest. A self could not discover another

(1) Jones, 'The Self in Sensory Cognition', p. 54.
(2) Ibid., p. 43.

self to be qualitatively indistinguishable from it, without at the same time being aware of the other self as a different self. Nevertheless my purpose is not to be critical of the idea, but to explain how Serialists have come to favour selection of the somatic field to fulfil the function of the self. Accordingly, if we put ourselves in the position of Gallie and Jones, and look for a class of mental event, which satisfies the requirement that it displays the minimum discriminable difference between its successive members, we can understand how, inevitably, they had to select the class of somatic feelings. Of all our sense experiences, our bodily sensations come nearest of all to being a constant in our lives. In normal circumstances these bodily sensations seldom attract attention, and, as a result, our degree of discrimination between them is low. Mostly we find it difficult to tell in what respect the somatic sensations of one moment differ from those of the preceding moment (especially en masse). Bodily sensations are, therefore, uniquely suitable for the role in which they are cast by Gallie and Jones. Jones cites Broad in support of his identification of the self with its somatic field. This is what Broad says:

> I think that the most plausible form of this theory would be to identify the Central Event [i.e. the self] at any moment with a mass of bodily feeling. The longitudinal unity of a self through a period of time would then depend on the fact that there is a mass of bodily feeling which goes on continuously throughout this period and varies in quality not at all or very slowly. At any moment there are many such masses of bodily feeling, which are numerically different however much they may be alike in quality. These form the Centres of a number of different contemporary total states of mind. Each of them is a thin slice of a long and highly uniform strand of bodily feeling; and each of these strands of bodily feeling accounts for the longitudinal unity of one mind.(1)

(1) C.D. Broad, The Mind and Its Place in Nature (London, 1925) p. 566.

Once again, the comparison between the theories proposed by Jones and myself is instructive. On Jones's theory, it is another happy accident that there exists a mass of sensations that are qualitatively uniform, and, as such, possess precisely the characteristic he was looking for. If we turn to the theory that identifies the self with residual consciousness, we recognise that residual consciousness also possesses the characteristic Jones's was looking for. Because residual consciousness is composed of those experiential elements that are outside the field of attention, they too will be relatively undifferentiated. Residual consciousness will also, therefore, give the impression of remaining unchanged amidst the flux of successive experiences. But it will give the impression of remaining unchanged, not because its content is unchanging - as in the case of somatic feelings - but for the formal reason that it is residual consciousness: i.e., it comprises those elements in respect of which we are not looking out for change. Thus it is a deductive consequence of my theory that there will be a qualitative similarity between the subjects of a series of total temporary states; on Jones's theory this is but an ad hoc fact.

However, unlike Jones, I do not rely on the idea of qualitative identity to explain the longitudinal unity of a series of total temporary states. In chapter five I give reason for rejecting the whole notion that the persistence of the self can be explained in terms of some feature of total temporary states, in virtue of which a series of such states can be said to form the biography of one person. All that I am prepared to allow is that the qualitative similarity of residual consciousness from

one moment to the next gives rise to the impression that we have not changed from an earlier moment to a later moment.

A fascinating twist is given to the relation between these two theories, when it is realized that in fact, on my theory, residual consciousness will contain bodily feelings as an important part of its content. It will be remembered that I argued that in respect of sense experience at least, and perhaps also in the case of mental imagery, the presence of certain kinaesthetic sensations in residual consciousness was a prerequisite of certain forms of attention. I tried to show that, in such cases, part of the content of residual consciousness was, necessarily, composed of kinaesthetic sensations. I also pointed out that for kinaesthetic sensation to perform its proper function in the mechanism of attention, it had to remain outside the area of attention itself; in other words, it had to belong to residual consciousness. In view of this, it is no accident that somatic feelings keep themselves in the background, and remain relatively undifferentiated: no accident that they seem to be qualitatively uniform. The successful performance of their proper function depends on their unobtrusiveness. Thus, in this respect too, the theory I advance reveals a greater coherence than Jones's. The lack of differentiation and qualitative uniformity of the mass of bodily feeling is a deductive consequence of my theory, whereas it is one more isolated fact on Jones's theory. Furthermore it provides a rational basis for the belief shared by Broad, Gallie and Jones that the self can more plausibly be identified with the class of bodily sensations, than with any other class of sense elements.

It should be clear, however, that I do not equate residual consciousness with the mass of bodily sensation. Residual consciousness has been shown to comprise much else besides bodily sensations. By identifying the self and residual consciousness, I do not by implication follow Jones in his identification of the self with the somatic field. His position relative to mine is that what he takes to be the whole I take to be a part. This in itself is of considerable importance. If the self is identified with bodily sensations, we create the paradox that bodily sensations are invested with qualities of selfhood - such as, intellectual ability, emotional response, aesthetic and religious attitudes, and personal qualities. The self thinks, wills, enjoys, and suffers. Can bodily sensations do these things? Obviously not. If, however, it is wrong, on Jones's theory, to think of the somatic field as having such human attributes, clearly the theory needs to make clear the relation between the subject (the somatic field) of experience, and the self which is endowed with the above mentioned human qualities. But no mention is made of the existence of this problem, let alone any solution proposed.

One is reminded here of a parallel in the theological field. It is often said that the God of the philosophers, by which is meant the Being who is First Cause, bears no resemblance to the God of Christianity. From this point of view, it is believed that the failure to prove the existence of the God of the philosophers is irrelevant to questions about the God of Biblical Revelation. Now while I do not subscribe to this reasoning, the attempt to drive a wedge between the God of the philosophers and

the God of christians has its parallel in criticisms of theories of the self. Thus, it could be argued, what the philosophers call the self bears no resemblance to what we ordinarily think of as ourselves. To think even of a Pure Ego as sad or happy, or in the grip of a passionate desire, is ludicrous. Clearly it is incumbent on every theory of the self to guard against the possibility of driving a wedge between the conception of the self it presents, and the non-philosophical conception of the self. That is to say, the self identified in the theory must be a fitting subject for the ascription of human qualities.

It is evident that Jones's identification of the self and a sensory field is particularly exposed to the wedge argument. While the enquiry is confined to the abstract level, in which a search is made for a possible subject of experiences, no particular incongruity arises whatever the answer proposed. But if we breathe life into the experience, and think of a concrete experience, instead of experience-in-general, the picture changes completely. An _experience_ might conceivably belong to a somatic field; my feeling of jealousy cannot belong to a somatic field. As long as we take it for granted that the experiences for which we have to find a subject, are sensory experiences, we shield ourselves from the absurdity of our position, taken generally. The self, on Jones's theory, could not be a perceiver, or a knower, or an agent. It is, so to speak, quite dumb. A self lacking in all form of activity, and in any form of cognitive capacity, could not even be the subject of sense experience. It is obvious, I think, that a self cannot be a mere subject, an abstract bearer or owner of sense experiences. And yet this is

just what Jones's self is.

From this point of view, the identification of the self with residual consciousness has an unquestionable advantage over its identification with the somatic field. I have shown the necessity of conceiving residual consciousness as cognitive, and I have shown how, in the operation of attention, it is cognitive. I have, it is true, said that part of its content is bodily sensation. But I have not made the mistake of asserting that it is exclusively composed of bodily sensation. On the contrary I have claimed that it must also exhibit the occurrence of thoughts, and this is the crucial factor placing residual consciousness on an entirely superior plane to the mass of bodily feeling. This does not mean that my theory is immune to the strictures I have brought against Jones's theory - that still has to be shown - but it does mean that it escapes the immediate disqualification which, on the above reasoning, must be the fate of his theory.

There is a final point of comparison I would like to make between Jones's theory and mine. I mentioned the limitation to Jones's theory that it turns the statement "I have bodily feelings" into a tautology. Jones, following Gallie, tries to overcome this difficulty in the following way. He recognises that we make such statements as "I have a pain in my arm", and that in doing so we seem to be attributing the pain to ourselves in just the way we attribute the seeing of a tree to ourselves, when we make the statement "I see a tree". And yet, since the pain in my arm is part of my somatic field, it cannot be owned by the somatic field. He offers this solution: the pain is said to be mine in that it is referred to the vague totality of somatic

experiences. But, argues Jones, the somatic field as a whole cannot be sensed by me. Speaking of individual somatic experiences like the pain in my arm, he says,

> And however many of them I may put forth from myself in a given inspection, in order again to relate to 'myself' as qualities of which I am sensible, there must always be some core of unobjectified somatic content if I am to have a 'self' to which I can relate the ones which I notice as being 'sensed by me'.(1)

In support of his position Jones quotes the following passage from Bradley:

> We are able in our internal mass of feeling to distinguish and to recognise a number of elements; and we are able, on the other side, to decide that our feeling contains beyond these an unexhausted margin.(2)

These two passages approach the thesis I am maintaining, without quite reaching it. Jones, it will be noticed, even goes so far as to talk of "inspecting" a somatic sensation. His line of argument presupposes, in other words, the operation of attention on the mass of somatic feeling. It is also a striking fact that the somatic sensation to be inspected, is described by him as something "put forth" from the self. Here we have the very idea I have been describing, when I said that attention "detaches" an element from residual consciousness, and "distances" the one from the other. Bradley's description, too, is one of a state of affairs in which attention is at work. Gallie and Jones did not realize that the phenomenon they were describing could be put down quite simply to the operation of attention. As a result they were unable to free themselves from the belief that the

(1) Jones, 'The Self in Sensory Cognition', pp. 54-5.

(2) F.H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, 2nd ed. (London, 1925), p. 93.

"core of unobjectified content" could be anything but somatic. It seems to me that Jones's passage cries out for a different interpretation from the one he gives: the pain, or whatever, is the pain of a self, not because it comes from a mass of somatic feeling, but because it has been "put forth" from the self by an instance of attention. This would have been true whatever the composition of the consciousness from which the pain had been "put forth". It is not peculiarly due to the fact that it was put forth from a mass of bodily feeling.

If my reasoning is accepted, this will mean that it is theoretically possible, as Jones argues, to make the totality of somatic experience itself the object of attention, without leaving even a portion of it behind to represent the self. Let us try to envisage what would happen if an attempt were made to turn the whole mass of bodily feeling into an object of attention. As Jones saw, something would have to take its place, otherwise the self itself would disappear. But _ex hypothesi_ it will not be "a core of unobjectified somatic content". There is only one possibility left. The elements of consciousness _normally_ belonging to the object of attention must now pass into residual consciousness. In other words, the direction of attention must be reversed. The elements in question will be those brought into being through the "outer" senses. Thus, when the mass of somatic feeling becomes the object of attention, my visual, auditory, and other outer-sense experiences, become the residual consciousness to the new object of attention - the totality of somatic feeling. It would be very much like turning oneself inside out.

Bradley's thinking is so much in line with this conclusion,

that it is interesting to see what he says.

> Let us now, passing to the other side of both these relations, ask if the not-self contains anything which belongs to it exclusively. It will not be easy to discover many such elements. In the theoretical relation it is quite clear that not everything can be an object, all together and at once. At any one moment that which is in any sense before me must be limited. What are we to say then becomes of that remainder of the not-self which clearly has not, even for the time, passed wholly from my mind? I do not mean those features of the environment to which I fail to attend specially, but which I still go on perceiving as something before me. I refer to the features which have now sunk below this level. These are not even a setting or a fringe to the object of my mind. They have passed lower into the general background of feeling, from which that distinct object with its indistinct setting is detached. But this means that for the time they have passed into the self.(1)

What I am suggesting is that when we make the self the object of attention, this can only be done if the erstwhile not-self passes into the general background of feeling, as Bradley

(1) F.H. Bradley, Appearance and Reality, 2nd ed. (London, 1925), pp. 91-2. Bradley's whole discussion of the subject is highly relevant. The above passage clearly contains the view that the polarization of consciousness into self and not-self is the work of attention. This would make it appear that the theory I am putting forward is identical with Bradley's. This is not the case, however much the above passage may make it seem so. For Bradley the distinction between self and not-self is one that emerges from a more primitive condition of consciousness called "immediate experience". As I understand it, this is a pre-attentive phase of consciousness, and it is certainly a phase devoid of any reference to a self. Bradley's view that immediate experience does not command even a minimal degree of attention is in sharp conflict with the conclusions I reached in the chapter on attention. For Bradley the existence of a self is dependent upon the operation of thought upon experience. For me the existence of experience cannot be independent of the existence of the self that enjoys the experience. In this matter I side with James Ward in his great debate with Bradley on the question. On the other hand Ward propounded a Pure Ego Theory, and I think Bradley was quite right to attack him on that. My position may be viewed as the reconciliation

expresses it, where it becomes a new residual consciousness. Thus, as a theoretical possibility, I am in entire agreement with Bradley, when he says of the elements that compose self and not-self, "The main bulk of the elements on each side is interchangeable."

5. By speaking of the _theoretical_ possibility of making normal residual consciousness the object of attention, I have intimated the existence of practical difficulties in the way of its actualization. I shall now deal with some of these difficulties. The discussion will be more meaningful if the possibility in question is described in more familiar terms. What it amounts to is a form of _self-consciousness_ in which the self posits itself as its own object of attention. Now to become self-conscious in this sense demands of the self that it "put forth" from itself the entire content of what normally belongs to residual consciousness. Such a performance, if accomplished, would constitute a reversal of the normal direction of attention, which is outward from the self. The normal outward direction of attention is sustained even in those cases in which

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overcoming Ward's thesis and Bradley's antithesis. I identify the self with something found within experience, and in this way I escape Bradley's strictures against a Pure Ego. At the same time I escape Ward's strictures against Bradley, by making the self basic to all experience. The adoption of my theory entails the abandonment of the most unacceptable aspects of Bradley's and Ward's positions respectively. See R. Wollheim, _F.H. Bradley_ (London, 1959) p. 132 ff. Had Bradley made the distinction I have elaborated between interrogative and non-interrogative attention, he might have found it possible to have accepted the idea that immediate experience exhibited the presence of non-interrogative attention. This would have removed many of the obstacles to his accepting the sort of solution I am proposing.

we reflect on our inward states. When I pay heed to a pain, the pain is put forth from me like anything else, and in this way dissociated from myself. Thus even in reflection I am not usually reversing the direction of attention. In such cases the attention is as much directed from myself as in any other: it is not directed to myself as a whole.

Were such reversal of attention to occur it would follow, on the theory being developed, that the attender would have difficulty in recognising his objectified self as himself. The reason for this would be that the usual content of residual consciousness would be displaced in the reversal, and an unfamiliar content would take its place. The implication of this is that the self would not recognise his objectified self as himself on two counts. Firstly, none of the usual elements of residual consciousness, which have become familiar to him and in virtue of which he always "feels himself", remain. They are replaced by elements that do not, as a whole, belong to residual consciousness. From this it can be inferred that the subject-self would feel that he was, in a sense, not himself. To use a metaphor, he would feel that he was looking at himself through the eyes of a stranger. Secondly, the objectified self would consist of the totality of elements, which, as a totality, do not normally occupy the position of the object of attention. When the self apprehends them in this new position, they will seem unfamiliar precisely because they are apprehended in a totally new context. From this point of view, the objectified self will not seem familiar either. We might expect the attender to follow his attempted self-objectification by saying

"That is not me." Thus if such self-consciousness were attainable, it would at the same time be a form of self-estrangement.

These implications of the theory are interesting in that they establish a connection between a philosophical conception of self-consciousness, and an ordinary conception of self-consciousness, since a connection between the two is not usually made. In ordinary discourse a person is often said to be self-conscious, when through shyness or nervousness he shows embarrassment about his performance. In this form of self-consciousness, I suggest, the person gives his attention to precisely those aspects of his performance that he normally takes for granted. But in so doing, he debars himself from performing fluently, when fluent performance depends precisely on his <u>not</u> attending to those aspects of the performance that now hold his attention. Thus when the person performs awkwardly, clumsily, or unsuccessfully, as a result of giving his attention to aspects of his performance he should not be attending to, he is said to be showing self-consciousness.(1) The self-conscious person acts in a way which is strange to himself, and he could excuse his uncharacteristic performance by saying that he was too self-conscious to be himself, or to act like himself.

On the theory I am advocating, the connection between social self-consciousness and the systematic self-consciousness which the philosopher might try to achieve, consists in the fact that social self-consciousness is only a partial form of philosophical self-consciousness. That is, a socially self-

(1) Self-consciousness in this sense corresponds to sense (b) of the senses of "conscious" given by Ryle, and listed on p. 33 above.

conscious person gives his attention to some elements ordinarily belonging to residual consciousness, instead of to the proper object of attention. Now I have shown how necessary it is, if certain forms of attention are to take place, that certain contributing elements remain in residual consciousness. If such elements of residual consciousness distract attention, and themselves become the object of attention, the performance engaging attention is marred. This is what happens, I suggest, when a poor performance is put down to self-consciousness. In such self-consciousness we see the beginning of what in a thorough-going form constitutes the entire self being made the object of attention. When philosophical self-consciousness is attained, it is not merely some of the elements of residual consciousness which are put forth; it is the entire lot.

The theory identifying the self with residual consciousness enables us, not only to see a close connection between one of the philosophical senses of "self-consciousness" and an ordinary sense of "self-consciousness", but in addition it gives us a possible explanation of the phenomenon which I have called "social self-consciousness".

If the theory leads us to expect that we confront ourselves as strangers when we become objects to ourselves, it also suggests to us that we are most truly ourselves when we are least self-conscious: that is, when we are not in any sense an object to ourselves. This state of affairs is realized when we allow ourselves to be totally absorbed by some activity. When a person immerses himself in an activity, he loses all awareness of himself, in the sense that he is not in any way thinking of

himself, or trying to be self-conscious. His self, in this way, recedes out of view. In such circumstances the person is often said to "lose himself". I shall now suggest how these observations tie in with the theory.

It will be remembered that in the discussion of residual consciousness and object of attention, it was argued that these were found to be more or less on the same plane in the case of non-interrogative attention: that is to say, the distancing aspect of attention was not much in evidence. However, in the case of interrogative attention, the differentiation between residual consciousness and object of attention took on the character of an organized system. It was also pointed out that within such a meaning-system some elements of residual consciousness would of necessity be less relevant to the object of attention, than others. I described this state of affairs by saying that such elements could be thought of as receding into the background, and suggested that in this way was created the distancing effect that we recognise to be characteristic of the relation between subject and object. Now in the light of the identification of residual consciousness with the self, it follows that the polarization of consciousness into self and not-self is most pronounced in interrogative attention. Thus the self is in its most differentiated state during interrogative attention. At the same time it is as far as it ever is from itself being the object of attention.

I have been discussing what would happen <u>if</u> the self were made the object of attention, and argued that the results strengthened my case. I now want to suggest that there is

reason to doubt whether we can systematically reverse attention in the way described. The first difficulty to arise is this. Residual consciousness - because it is residual consciousness - is indistinctive. We could not, for instance, enumerate all the elements of which it is composed. If, therefore, I tried to put forth from myself and attend to the content of residual consciousness in its totality, how could I know that I had succeeded in objectifying the totality? How could I know that I had not overlooked some elements, which, as a result, were left behind? I do not see how I could know this, because I could only have this knowledge if I knew of the existence of every single element comprising residual consciousness. But as I tried to make clear in chapter three, residual consciousness, although heterogeneous and diverse, is not composed of discrete, atomistic elements. To claim that we could know that we were attending to the totality would thus depend on our taking residual consciousness to possess precisely that type of aggregative character which we have seen it to lack. We could, therefore, never know that we were making the whole self the object of attention, and, if we tried, we would have every reason to doubt that we were. For this reason we may agree with Bradley when he says,

> In my opinion it is not only possible, but most probable, that in every man there are elements in the internal felt core which are never made objects, and which practically cannot be. There may well be features in our Coenesthesia which lie so deep that we never succeed in detaching them; and these cannot properly be said to be ever our not-self. Even in the past we cannot distinguish their speciality. But I presume that even here the obstacle may be said to be practical, and to consist in the obscurity, and not otherwise in the essence, of these sensations.(1)

The second reason for doubting that we can make of our-

(1) Bradley, Appearance and Reality, pp. 92-3.

selves our own objects of attention in a thorough-going way, I attribute to the nature of residual consciousness itself. The heterogeneous nature of residual consciousness has already been sufficiently stressed. Now if residual consciousness were made the object of attention, it would have to be the object of interrogative, as opposed to non-interrogative, attention. The attention would be directed by the idea that the whole self was to become the object of attention, and such a task is an intellectual exercise of a high order. We do not, for instance, simply catch ourselves attending to ourselves as a whole. The very fact that the direction of attention is reversed in such cases suggests that the process will not occur spontaneously. This is reason enough for maintaining that such self-consciousness could only be the product of interrogative attention. But, as we know, interrogative attention requires of us that we unite elements of consciousness within a single meaning-system, before it is possible for them to be simultaneously attended to.(1) We could not, therefore attend to all our antecedent elements of residual consciousness at once, in their several particularities. Only to the extent that they can be related in one meaning-system can they be jointly attended to.

In this regard, the desire to make oneself the object of attention cannot by itself constitute such a meaning-system. We cannot integrate a number of objects of attention simply by having the desire to attend to them all simultaneously. If we

(1) See above p. 145 f.

could do this, there need never be any limit to the number of objects which we might make objects of our simultaneous attention. Thus, the desire to attend to several things at once is not a sufficient condition of our being able to do so.

Clearly, a meaning-system in a more material sense than this, is required. Now the question arises, "What sort of meaning-system could there be that could integrate the heterogeneous elements found in residual consciousness?" Just to raise this question is sufficient to cast doubt on the feasibility of its receiving a positive answer. If we were to imagine that residual consciousness was made up exclusively of bodily sensation, we might believe some system of coherence capable of uniting them. But we have to remember that residual consciousness has a cognitive side as well, and it is difficult to see how this can be taken into account, without the very complexity of residual consciousness defeating every attempt to incorporate it in some one meaning-system. We are led to conclude that its diversity, its obscurity, and its complexity, stand in the way of residual consciousness becoming a single coherent object of attention. Because of these difficulties, we can say with some confidence that an attempt to make oneself one's own object can meet with but partial success. It is most unlikely that a thoroughgoing self-consciousness can ever be achieved.

There is, finally, a third reason for believing in the impossibility of achieving complete self-objectification. If Ribot is correct in his claim that attention is always effected through muscular activity of the body, then we can deduce that there will be in residual consciousness those kinaesthetic

sensations produced by the particular act of attending. Those kinaesthetic sensations could not themselves be the object of attention at the same time as they were supporting that act of attention. For this would mean that they were in residual consciousness and formed part of the object of attention at one and the same time, which is self-contradictory. There must, if Ribot is right, always remain behind some kinaesthetic sensations in residual consciousness, as a condition of the existence of attention. *A fortiori* some kinaesthetic sensations must remain behind, when an attempt is made to make residual consciousness *en masse* the object of attention. In the very nature of the case, they make it impossible for the totality of residual consciousness to be objectified, and stand as a guarantee that we can only attain partial self-objectification.

This completes the explicit elaboration of the theory. I have argued that by asserting the identity between residual consciousness and the self, we are in a position to explain how it is that a self can at once be experiential itself, and the subject of experiences. Furthermore, I sought to show that the theory offered an intelligible explanation of the fact that the self must be thought of as lying behind its experiences. It was explained, in addition, why the attempt to make of the self its own object appeared to generate an infinite regress. Finally the implications of the theory for self-consciousness have been discussed. I argued that the theory precluded the possibility of total self-objectification. I propose now to deal with certain objections facing the theory, which immediately threaten to overwhelm it.

6. I begin with the objection that it does not make sense to analyse a statement of the form "I have an experience" as "Residual consciousness has an experience." This raises the question of what it means for one thing to have something else. Now in the context of theories of the self, philosophers usually think of "having" in the sense of "owning". The question of the relation between a self and experiences is then expressed in terms of whether experiences have owners, or are ownerless. It must be conceded that we frequently use the word "have" in a way that entails that what we have we own. But this is far from being the only use of the word "have". It hardly needs pointing out that the verb "have" is one of the most general verbs in existence, which, for that very reason, is put to a multitude of uses. It will be helpful if some of these uses are brought out. When I say "I have X" I could mean

(a) I have X in my possession, or on my person. (I have your book.)

(b) I have X by right. (I have the book - I own it.)

(c) X is a constituent of me. (I have eyes.)

(d) I am related to X. (I have a child.)

(e) I am experiencing X. (I have a headache.)

(f) I am undergoing X. (I have a cold.)

No doubt many more uses of "have" could be distinguished, but we have sufficient to go on. The question I wish to raise in respect of these uses of "have" is whether they are all irreducible or whether some of the senses be reduced to others? This question is especially relevant in respect of sense (e) of "have". Difficulties about the relation between a self and its

experiences can arise, I shall argue, either because sense (e) of "have" is reduced to some other sense of "have", or because there is a failure to distinguish between the different senses of "have", and moves that are permissible in respect of some of the senses of "have" are made in the case of other senses of the word, where they are not permissible.

The first point to be noticed about the listed senses of "have", is the rarity with which the move from "I have X" to "X belongs to me" is sanctioned. (I treat the move from "I have X" to "X is mine" as the same move: in other words I take the expressions "X belongs to me" and "X is mine" to be synonymous.) Hart has drawn attention to the fact that sentences like "X belongs to me" and "X is mine" are <u>ascriptive</u> sentences and not descriptive ones: that is to say, their job is not one of describing what is the case, but one of making claims and announcing entitlements.(1) If we take this point into account, and consider in which of the senses of "have", "I have X" entails "X is mine", we find that senses (a), (c), and (f) are at once ruled out. Sense (c) might not seem clearly excluded, but the matter can be clarified if we transpose the sentence from one about a person to one about an object. The statement "The chair has leather upholstery" asserts that the leather upholstery is one of its constituents. If the statement were made "This leather upholstery belongs to that chair", it would only make sense if the upholstery and the chair were separated and there was a question of which upholstery went with which chair. The statement could not mean that the chair owned the

(1) H.L.A. Hart, 'The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights', <u>Logic and Language</u>, Series 1, ed. A.G.N. Flew (Oxford, 1951).

leather upholstery, or was entitled to it.

We are left with senses (b), (d), and (e), of "have". Sense (b) is the paradigmatic sense in which "I have X" entails "X belongs to me", or "X is mine". This means that sense (b) of "have" is an ascriptive sense of "have". Can we pass from "I have X" to "X is mine" in the case of sense (d) of "have"? The answer would seem to be in the affirmative in the case of the sentence "I have a child". We would agree that we can make the step to the sentence "The child belongs to me". But, I suggest, we have here a case in which the move can only be made contingently. When the child comes of age, can I say, "The child belongs to me?" Surely he ought then to belong to no one? If the example were "I have a friend" this would not entail "That friend belongs to me".

We now arrive at the crucial question. Is it true of sense (e) of "have" that "I have X" entails "X is mine"? In other words, do I ever claim that an experience belongs to me, or that I am entitled to it? There is one sort of circumstance in which we might seem to want to say this, but it is not a true case. I may overhear someone relating a nasty experience, and claim that it was I who had had the experience. But here I would be claiming that the <u>description</u> that was given was a description of my experience. I would not be laying claim to the experience itself, but to be <u>the</u> one who had it. That sort of case apart, there are strong reasons for rejecting the claim that in sense (e) of "have", "I have X" entails "X is mine". The first statement, "I have X", is a contingent statement: I may have a headache, and I may equally well not have a headache.

But the statement "X is mine" or "X belongs to me" is not similarly contingent. It makes no sense to say "X is not mine". I cannot say of an experience, "This experience is not mine" without contradicting myself, for this would amount to saying "The experience I am having is not an experience I am having" and this is self-contradictory. If we insist that the entailment holds, therefore, we are committed to asserting that a contingent proposition entails a necessary proposition.

Now, whatever we make of this state of affairs, it has no parallel with the entailment relation between "I have X" and "X is mine" in the case of the other senses of "have" which we have been considering. In the one sense of "have" in which the entailment was always seen to hold - sense (b) - both sentences are contingent. It is a contingent fact that I have a certain book, and it is also a contingent fact that the book is mine. In view of the fact that there is this non-parallelism between the entailment in the case of senses (b) and (e) of "have", the question arises of why we should think of making the step from "I have X" to "X is mine" in the case of sense (e) of "have". The negative point can be made that outside of philosophical discussion no one ever says, mentioning a particular experience, "This experience is mine". We may well ask, therefore, why we should think the entailment works in the case of sense (e) of "have". The possibility exists that we are led to make this move either because we have by implication reduced sense (e) of "have" to sense (b), or because we make the unexamined assumption that an entailment that holds in the case of sense (b) holds also of other senses of "have". In either case we are

misled by a false analogy.

The fact that so many philosophers discuss the connection between the self and its experiences in terms of the experiences "belonging to" the self, or the self "owning" the experiences, makes it difficult to believe that they are not taking sense (b) of "having" as their standard. It is, after all, only true of "having" in its ascriptive sense (sense b) that questions of ownership, and belongingness, necessarily arise. Furthermore, if sense (e) of "having" is similarly interpreted in an ascriptive sense it soon becomes apparent that it is not ascriptive in the straightforward sense in which sense (b) is ascriptive. I can transfer my ownership of a book by giving it to someone else; I cannot transfer my ownership of my headache by giving it to someone else. Philosophers like Strawson show their recognition of the asymmetry between sense (b) and sense (e) of "have", which I have been discussing, by saying of their ascriptive interpretation of sense (e) of "have" that it is a logically non-transferable form of ownership.(1) This it would have to be because any statement of the form "This experience is mine" is not a contingent statement.

A doubt may be raised whether a logically non-transferable form of ownership is a form of ownership at all. It is difficult to see the point of voicing a claim or an entitlement when it is logically impossible to challenge the claim or entitlement. According to the normal circumstances in which it is legitimate to talk of claims and entitlements, an essential feature of the situation is the contestability of the claims and entitlements.

(1) P.F. Strawson, Individuals, p. 97.

I claim that X belongs to me, because my ownership is either explicitly or implicitly contested. When the contestability condition is absent, we may if we wish go on talking about ownership, but then we have ownership in name only; the substance has gone. From this point of view coupling ownership with non-transferability amounts to a concession that sense (e) of "have" has nothing whatever to do with ownership; that it is not an ascriptive use of "have".

We are then free to consider the possibility that sense (e) of "have" has closer logical affinities with some of the other senses of "have" than it has with sense (b) of "have". Sense (c) might appear to be more promising: i.e., one thing may be said to "have" another thing if the latter is a constituent of it. If sense (e) were reduced to sense (c) the position would be that an experience would be interpreted as one of the constituents of consciousness. There would be nothing logically odd in that suggestion. Nevertheless it fails for the following reason. It is not consciousness, but <u>residual</u> consciousness that is to be interpreted as "having" experiences. Now I have already argued that if the subject asserts that he has an experience, the experience is an object of attention for him. To interpret "has" in the sense of "is a constituent of" would have the consequence that an object of attention would be alleged to be a constituent of residual consciousness. But this is inconsistent with the theory. Therefore sense (e) of "have" cannot meaningfully be reduced to sense (c). Sense (d) of "having", the sense of relatedness, comes nearer the mark. Residual consciousness can certainly be described as having

experiences, in the sense of being related to them. It is nevertheless inadequate, both in respect of the fact that the nature of the relation is left unspecified, and in respect of the fact that it fails to make clear that in sense (e) of "have" we imply the existence of an occurrence - an event. In the latter respect, but only in the latter respect, sense (f) of "have" would give a better reflection of the position.

Now from a strictly methodological point of view we are not entitled to conclude that a reductive analysis of sense (e) of "have" cannot be given, until all the possible senses of "have" have been examined. I have only examined five, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that there might be a sixth sense of "have" in the case of which the reductive analysis would be found to be successful. This must be conceded, but it is legitimate to ask whether we are thereby making allowance for a real possibility. It is not without significance that five attempts at a reduction have failed. But there is a more powerful argument than that, for calling in question the possibility that some further sense of "have" (let it be called sense (x) of "have") might be discovered, to which sense (e) could be reduced. If there were such a sense (x) of "have", it, in turn would have to be a _sui generis_ sense of "have". (For, if it were not, it itself could be reduced to one of the existing senses, and _a fortiori_, so could sense (e).) But this would mean denying that sense (e) of "have" was _sui generis_, and following the denial with the assertion that sense (e) could be reduced to sense (x) of "have", which _was sui generis_. Now unless sense (x) of "have" could be identified independently

of being identified as the sense of "have" to which sense (e) could be reduced, we are entitled to apply Occam's razor, and maintain that sense (e) of "have" is itself sui generis. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, therefore, it is most reasonable to conclude that sense (e) of "have" is sui generis. As it happens, there is a concept that has the same meaning as "having" in sense (e), and that concept is "experiencing". Thus, "having" in sense (e) means "experiencing".

I have argued that sense (e) of "have" is irreducible, and that it is not to be identified with the ascriptive sense of "have". This means that the relation between subject and object can be conceived in other terms, than in terms of ownership. More positively, the argument suggests that it should not be conceived of in terms of an ascriptive relationship. Thus the objection, from the ascriptive point of view, that it is senseless to describe residual consciousness as having or owning experiences, can be dismissed. If residual consciousness is described as "having" an experience, this means, not that it owns the experience, but that an irreducible relation obtains between residual consciousness and an object of attention, called "experiencing".

The ascriptive interpretation of "have" may be criticised in the light of Samuel Alexander's view of the relation between experiencer and experience.(1) He discerns two elements in an experience, which he calls "an act of mind" and "the appearance of a thing". Characterizing the two elements further, he says,

(1) S. Alexander, Space, Time, and Deity (London, 1920), p. 11 ff.

"The act of mind is an enjoyment; the object is contemplated." Alternatively, he says that experience can be broken down into an experienc<u>ing</u> and an experienc<u>ed</u>. The relation between these two elements is said to be one of "togetherness" or "compresence". One of Alexander's central ideas is that minds themselves are never contemplated; they are never their own objects of knowledge. In his own words, "Thus my own mind is never an object to myself in the sense in which the tree or table is." However, minds and objects "are distinct and relatively independent existences compresent with each other." Now if we think of minds and their objects as alongside one another, we do so by adopting what Alexander calls "the angel's view". To an angel possessed of intuitive knowledge of other minds, a mind and its object would be seen "as the compresence of two objects". But the angel's view is not open to us, except as an idea. We can have no experience of the external compresence of our minds and their objects.

The relevance of "the angel's view" to the present context, is immediately evident, when the fact is added that Alexander identifies minds with selves. "I am my mind," he states, "And am conscious <u>of</u> the object." Now my purpose in introducing these ideas of Alexander's, is to suggest that the ascriptive interpretation of "have" presupposes the adoption of the angel's view of the relation between the subject and his experiences. The self as <u>owner</u> is considered as one object over against the experience which is another object,which it is said to possess. There can be no doubt that we are tempted to think of the owner of experiences as something apart from them, which can exist independently of them. Nevertheless Alexander is incontrovertibly

right to deny that the angel's view of the relation between our experiences and ourselves is the one we enjoy. We may draw the moral that any description of the relation between residual consciousness and object of attention which carries the implication that they are related as two objects external to each other, is completely misconceived. It follows that any analysis of the idea of a residual consciousness "having" an experience in the sense of owning it, is to be repudiated. In short, we must avoid analysing "having" in sense (e), in a way that presupposes the angel's view.

The next objection with which I wish to deal is contained in the question, "Must not a residual consciousness itself be ascribed to a subject?" Obviously if residual consciousness is identical with a self, it becomes senseless to assert that a self <u>has</u> a residual consciousness.

In chapter one I pointed out that there was a use of the word "my", which I called its dissociative use, in which it was implied that a noun qualified by the word "my" referred to something other than myself. I then maintained that this dissociative use of "my" was not its only use. Consequently if I refer to my mind, this need not be taken to entail the proposition that I am something apart from my mind. The same distinction, I suggest, is called for in the case of the word "have". There is a dissociative use of "have" according to which, what I am said to have, is other than myself. Plainly if I have a new car, I am not myself a new car. On the other hand, I may also say that I have a mind, or a soul, or a residual consciousness, and yet this need not be taken to

entail the proposition that I am something apart from my mind, my soul, or my residual consciousness. It was concluded that if I make a reference to "*my* residual consciousness" it may not be inferred that I am not that residual consciousness. It may likewise be stated that if a person is said to "have" a residual consciousness, it may not be inferred that he is not that residual consciousness. Now the retort might be made that this answer to the objection is more formal than substantial. I shall, therefore, make a further observation in this connection.

It is one thing to have a certain experience, and another thing to make the *statement* "I have such-and-such an experience." When a person asserts that he has an experience he draws attention to the experience. He might either intend to draw his own attention to it, or draw someone else's attention to his experience. Now if his assertion is directed at himself, it will obviously have the effect of directing his attention to the experience. Thus the statement will be a statement about an object of attention. It can also be shown that if the experiencer's intention is to direct someone else's attention to the experiencer's experience, it nevertheless remains true that it will have the experiencer's attention as well. Two reasons may be given in support of this claim. In the first place if the very purpose of a form of words is to direct attention to what they describe, it would be difficult for the person using those words not to be affected by them himself in the calculated manner. Thus it would be difficult for me to make a *bona fide* assertion that I have a headache without giving the headache my attention. In the second place, the person to whom the assertion

was addressed would be entitled to assume that its utterer was himself attending to the matter to which he was directing his attention. For both these reasons I conclude that the statement "I have such-and-such an experience", is an attention-focussing sentence. For this reason it would be misleading for me to describe residual consciousness as something I have. If I say "I have a residual consciousness" and mean by this something specific: i.e., it is this residual consciousness I have, then I have ipso facto objectified it, and I am talking about an object of attention and not my present residual consciousness. Now, if I am right about this, it follows that we can resist the objection that if I have a residual consciousness, I am something existing independently of residual consciousness. The argument has shown that it is incoherent to speak of a self as either having, or not having a residual consciousness.

7. In The Bounds of Sense Strawson makes some remarks which seem to invite the theory I am advocating, and, in conjunction with these remarks, he makes others which seem to preclude the possibility of any theory such as mine succeeding. For this reason it is worth seeing how my theory stand in the light of what he says. Strawson maintains in that work that we can ascribe certain experiences to ourselves (presumably ones which we ascribe to ourselves not on the basis of observation) without invoking any criteria of personal-identity. As he says,

> When a man (a subject of experience) ascribes a current or directly remembered state of consciousness to himself, no use whatever of any criteria of personal identity is required to justify his use of the pronoun "I" to refer to the subject of that experience.(1)

(1) Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, p. 165.

He backs up this statement by drawing attention to the inconceivability of saying for instance, "This feeling is anger; but is it I who am feeling it?" Now I think Strawson is absolutely right when he says we engage in this criterionless self-ascription. It is senseless to maintain that before we can ascribe an experience to ourselves we have to employ a criterion of personal-identity to determine that we are selves. The question of criteria of personal-identity only arises when there is a question whether a particular description of a self fits a particular self. Thus when one's identity is in no way challenged, no question of employing criteria of personal-identity arises. I do not first have to identify myself before I can ascribe an experience to myself. On the contrary, in a self-ascriptive statement I identify an experience, I do not identify myself. Hence it would be odd if I were to invoke criteria of personal-identity. Now Strawson goes on to maintain that such ascriptions really do apply to a subject, despite the absence of criteria of personal-identity, and, from the foregoing, it can be seen that here too I support him. Thus:

> When "I" is thus used, without any need or any possibility of its use being justified by empirical criteria of subject-identity, it does not, however, lose its role of referring to a subject.(1)

On the theory that the subject is residual consciousness the above remarks of Strawson's make perfectly good sense. When an experience is ascribed to a subject without invoking criteria of personal-identity, the experience will be related to a residual consciousness, and it is meaningless to think of invoking criteria for a residual consciousness being my residual

(1) Loc. cit.

consciousness. As I have attempted to argue, as soon as I call residual consciousness my residual consciousness, I automatically, by attending to it, make it an object of attention, and then it is no longer myself.

This leads to an important conclusion. The statement "I have a residual consciousness", or the statement "This residual consciousness is my residual consciousness" describes a residual consciousness objectified by attention. These statements must, therefore, themselves be examples of criterionless self-ascription, in Strawson's sense. Thus the assumption that the subject is identical with residual consciousness both explains how it is possible for there to be criterionless self-ascription, and in addition affords a positive identification of the subject.

It is in connection with the next step in Strawson's argument that I diverge sharply from him. He maintains that it is only possible for me to ascribe an experience to myself without criteria because "The links with those criteria are not in practice severed." He attributes theories of the self which treat the self as an immaterial substance (The Pure Ego theory for instance), to philosophers' overlooking this crucial link. As he explains:

> It is easy to become intensely aware of the immediate character, of the purely inner basis, of such self-ascription while both retaining the sense of ascription to a subject and forgetting that immediate reports of experience have this character of ascriptions to a subject only because of the links I have mentioned with ordinary criteria of personal identity. Thus there arises a certain illusion: the illusion of a purely inner and yet subject-referring use for "I". If we try to abstract this use, to shake off the connection with ordinary criteria of personal identity, to arrive at a kind of subject-reference which is wholly and adequately based

> on nothing but inner experience, what we really do is simply to deprive our use of "I" of any referential force whatever. It will simply express, as Kant would say, "consciousness in general". If we nevertheless continue to think of the "I" as having referential force, as referring to a subject, then, just because we have really nothing left but the bare form of reference, it will appear that the object of this reference must be an object of singular purity and simplicity - a pure, individual, immaterial substance.(1)

In this passage Strawson describes the very programme I have been trying to carry out. And he says that it can end with but one result: that we arrive at a subject which is "A pure, individual, immaterial substance." But that is not the result we have arrived at, at all. The self we have identified in "inner experience" is a self of the greatest diversity and complexity; a self with an ever-changing content. Now in the above passage Strawson speaks of such a self as an illusion. Why? He calls it an illusion, evidently, because there is no evidence for the sort of self he describes (clearly, he is describing a Pure Ego). But if I am right, Strawson is quite right to reject the idea of a Pure Ego. There is, as I have tried to show, no evidence in inner experience of a Pure Ego. If, therefore, the search in inner experience of necessity led to an illusory result, it would be legitimate to describe the search itself as misconceived. This, I suggest, is what Strawson has done.

It is easy to understand why Strawson should have thought that an attempt to identify the self in inner experience could have but one outcome. So many of the notable philosophers who have trod this path have been forced back to the Pure Ego. As we have seen, powerful arguments seem to drive us back to a Pure Ego, as though we were in the grip of some dialectical

(1) Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, p. 166.

necessity. In addition those philosophers who have suggested a different outcome are not sufficiently well-known for their views to present an automatic challenge to the assumption Strawson makes. The best way of challenging Strawson's assumption that all attempts to find a self in inner experience lead to a Pure Ego, is to produce a theory of the self based on inner experience that is not a Pure Ego Theory. This I have attempted to do.

In the first chapter of this study, I remarked that each of us knows what we ourselves are, because we are dealing with the entities we ourselves are. We have first-hand knowledge, I said, of selves, and we could best understand in what sense we are selves by looking to our own cases, and making our deductions from our living experience of being selves. This is the course I have tried to follow, and the theory I have put forward is the outcome. I mentioned MacNabb's remark that we have an experience of the self "more internal than the most personal emotion we feel." I now suggest that this is the sort of remark we would make were the identity between residual consciousness and the self proven. Residual consciousness has the experiential character, and the interiority, which MacNabb's description portrays the self as having. The logical features of residual consciousness also make it understandable that the Augustinian paradox should seem so applicable to the knowledge we each have of ourselves: if no one asks me what I am, I know; if I am asked, I know not.

CHAPTER FIVE

YESTERDAY'S SELF

1. The objection was held over from the previous chapter, that a theory which identifies the self with residual consciousness would fail to account for the fact that selves are believed to endure through time. My primary concern in this chapter is to show that this objection is unfounded. This I hope to do by looking into a theory that specifically aims to solve the difficulty on which the objection is based. The theory in question is The Serial Theory of the Self, and the version of it I wish to deal with, is the one put foward by Grice.(1).

One of the main reasons Grice gives in this paper for advocating a form of Serial Theory is that no other can, in his judgement, give a satisfactory explanation of the continuity of the self. It would be natural to suppose that the Pure Ego Theory would be strongly placed in this regard. A Pure Ego cannot of its very nature be subject to temporal change: Its experiences change, but it has permanence. Thus the identification of the self with a Pure Ego seems to guarantee the persistence of the self through time. Grice argues, however, that even the Pure Ego Theory fails to secure the persistence of the self. His argument is as follows:

> Suppose the P.E. [pure ego] theory to be true; and suppose I know that I had a headache yesterday, and that I had a toothache this morning. Now suppose that I am asked how I know that it is one self which had both experiences, and not two exactly similar selves. On the P.E. theory plus the P.N. [proper name] theory, I don't see that I could give any true answer, except "I just do know." This is, I think, rather unsatisfactory. But on a L.C.T. [logical construction theory] , on the other hand, if I am asked this question, I can answer truly "Because the experiences have to one another the relation R which constitutes 'belonging to the same self as'". For instance I should answer "Because I remember

(1) Grice, 'Personal Identity.'

(or know to have occurred) both experiences, and any experiences I remember (or know to have occurred) must be co-personal". This answer would imply, I think, that the self is a logical construction, and is to be defined in terms of memory.(1).

We see, therefore, that the apparent ability of the Serial Theory to explain how it is that one and the same self can have had a headache yesterday, and a toothache this morning, is taken by Grice to be an important reason for preferring it. As it is this very aspect of the Serial Theory that I wish to challenge, it is evident that Grice's version is a logical one to examine. The view I shall defend is that the objection levelled against the theory I advance, on the ground that it is unable to account for the persistence of the self, is itself based on acceptance of the assumptions of the Serial Theory. I propose to answer the objection, therefore, by arguing that the assumptions concerned are false. In the course of the analysis, an alternative theory will be developed.

Shoemaker makes a telling attack on the assumptions of the Serial Theory - Grice's version included - in his excellent discussion of self-identity and memory.(2). Although I agree with most of the arguments Shoemaker marshals against the Serial Theory, it will be necessary to examine the theory anew, from the particular perspective of the present enquiry.

In order to appreciate Grice's theory it is necessary to envisage the situation assumed by Grice to be the one we face. I shall first outline the envisaged situation, and then give textual support to my claim that it is indeed the situation Grice had in mind. Unless we accept solipsism, we each have to admit that our own experiences are

(1) Grice, 'Personal Identity' p. 340.

(2) Shoemaker, <u>Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity</u>, ch. 4.

not the only ones that occur. There must therefore be a temporal series of experiences, or rather numbers of temporal series of experiences, only some of which belong to me. The problem, then, is to find the link between some of these experiences, in virtue of which that set of experiences is mine. If a set of experiences is to be ascribed to a single self, something must thread that set of experiences together. Grice's theory is an attempt to find the missing link.

Now Grice does realise that every experience is an element in a wider state of consciounsess, and he avoids the mistake of identifying consciousness with single experiences. He maintains that every experience must be taken together with the state of consciousness of which it is an element, and as we saw in chapter four, such a whole he calls a "total temporary state" (t.t.s.). Given this terminology, he states the problem as follows:

> Now since total temporary states may be said to occur at various times, they may be said to form temporal series... What we want to do is to find something which will be true of any series of total temporary states all the members of which are total temporary states of one and the same person; but false of any series of t.t.s., not all the members of which are t.t.s's of one and the same person.(1).

Having set himself the problem of discovering what relates certain total temporary states, such that they form a series of total temporary states of one person, Grice, "as a preliminary shot" suggests the following:

> In a series of total temporary states belonging to one person, every t.t.s. which is a member of that series will contain as an element a memory of some experience which is an element in the temporally preceding member of the series; in a series of total temporary states not belonging to one person this will not be the case.(2).

(1) Op. cit. pp. 341-2

(2) Grice, 'Personal - Identity,' p. 342

That is to say, personal identity is dependent upon memory. But, as Grice hastens to add, it is "an unwarrantably violent assumption that every t.t.s. of mine (except the first) contains as an element a memory of some immediately preceding experience." He accordingly covers this objection by specifying that the memory need only be hypothetical. It is sufficient, maintains Grice, that "every member of the series would, given certain conditions, contain as an element a memory of some experience which is an element in the preceding member."

Now I do not wish to concentrate on Grice's solution - I mention it so that it can be seen what a very theoretical solution it is - but I wish, rather, to concentrate on his setting up of the problem in terms of total temporary states. My aim is to show that a proper analysis of total temporary states makes Grice's solution unnecessary, by precluding the possibility of his problem arising. The first thing to be noted is that Grice wishes to analyse the self in terms of the existence of series of total temporary states. This carries the implication that a single total temporary state cannot, on his view, be said to be the total temporary state of a self (or "someone" in his terminology). Grice is absolutely explicit about this. He argues that if it proved impossible to define "a total temporary state" except by means of the concept of a person, his argument would be circular. Clearly what he is after is a reductive analysis of the self in terms of total temporary states. He gives the following definition of a total temporary state, in the belief that it secures the logical priority of the concept of a total temporary state over the concept of a self (or "someone"):

"A t.t.s. occurs at t" means "experiences occur at t which belong to the same t.t.s."; and "experiences E and E belong to the same t.t.s." means "E and E would, given certain conditions, be known by memory or introspection, to be simultaneous".

It is difficult to feel happy with the claim to non-circularity of this definition. I shall argue shortly that Grice's definition of a t.t.s. commits him to the proposition that as soon as a t.t.s. gains an additional element, it must be a new t.t.s. According to the definition an experience cannot be known to be an element in a t.t.s., except on the basis of memory or introspection. But the memory of the experience, or the introspection of the experience must themselves be elements of t.t.s.'s. Furthermore, on the above supposition, whichever one it is must belong to a different t.t.s. from the one containing the original experience. Thus, two experiences cannot be known to belong to a particular t.t.s., unless it is already presupposed that that t.t.s. is a member of a series of t.t.s.'s. But the definition of a t.t.s. depends on the possibility that two or more experiences can be known to be co-present. Since this can only be known if it is presupposed that the t.t.s. is a member of a series, the definition is circular. For a t.t.s. can only be defined in terms of a series of t.t.s.'s, and a series of t.t.s's cannot be defined until a t.t.s. is defined. Grice's qualification that the memory or the introspection is only forthcoming "given certain conditions" does not save the position. It cannot be known that two experiences ever are co-present unless the conditions are sometimes realised, and then the difficulty remains. As Grice himself admits:

> But I do not think my theory would be in the least plausible if memory-knowledge never did in fact occur; and if my theory is true it certainly would not be possible ever to know that anyone had an experience, unless memory-knowledge sometimes occurred. So I think I am really committed to maintaining that memory-knowledge does occur.(1).

(1) Grice, 'Personal Identity,' p.346

But let us grant, for the sake of argument, that Grice's definition is non-circular. It then follows that a particular total temporary state, in isolation from any other total temporary state, is, by definition, not <u>someone's</u> total temporary state. That is, it is not the total temporary state of a self. If we recollect Jones's argument against Russell's denial of the existence of a Subject,(1), it will at once be recognised that his argument applies with equal force against Grice's position. Jones argued that we are not obliged to deny the existence of a subject of experiences, in order to deny the existence of a persisting subject. He suggested, instead, the possibility that each experience could be assigned a subject, without the need to assume that the subject "outlasted" the experience. This suggestion, if applied to Grice's theory, would mean that each total temporary state of consciousness would belong to a self, independently of any other total temporary state. It could then be held that the self which had one t.t.s. was the same self as a self which had another t.t.s., provided that the two t.t.s's were members of a series of t.t.s's according to the memory criterion laid down in Grice's theory.

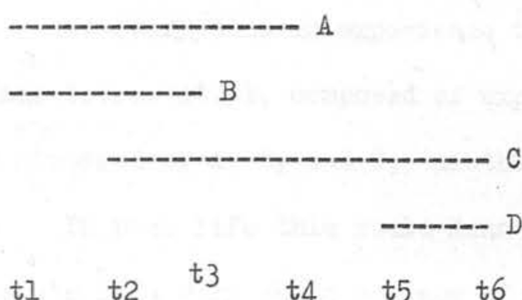
Such an emendation would, I believe, add considerable strength to Grice's theory. Needless to say, it is not my intention to try to shore up a theory which I take to be misconceived. But by attempting to show how Grice's theory could be made sounder, we identify one of its main weaknesses in the process.. If we were to make the suggested change, and maintained that each total temporary state of consciousness by itself had a subject, we would have to question Grice's assumption that a total temporary state was the basic unit of analysis. And it is precisely this assumption that I am most anxious to question. All Serial

(1) See above pp. 203-204.

Theories of the Self have this in common, that they divide consciousness into a succession of basic units which are variously called "perceptions", "experiences", or [sic] "total temporary states". These units are then thought of as a manifold which must somehow be united - the units must be threaded together - and inevitably the unity is thought to lie in some form of relationship, which is believed must exist between the succession of basic units. Grice's theory falls into this category. Taking his theory as representative, in this respect, of the Serial Theory in general, I shall try to show that Grice's basic unit, the total temporary state, is wrongly conceived when it is conceived as a unit member of a series of temporal units that together form the continuing consciousness of a self.

2. What I wish to argue, is that an analysis of the sort Grice offers, is faced with difficulties connected with treating a temporal series as made up of a succession of basic units, similar to those which gave rise to Zeno's Paradox (Achilles and the Tortoise). A total temporary state is, whatever else it is, a temporal unit. The continuing consciousness of a person is, on this view, the product of a succession of such temporal units which together occupy a stretch of time. One is then left with the problem of explaining how such discrete units can form a genuine continuum. From Grice's definition of a t.t.s. we can deduce that t.t.s's must be occurrences of short duration that succeed one another in time. He defines a total temporary state in terms of the simultaneity of the occurrences of two or more experiences. Now this of itself does not entail that a t.t.s. must be of short duration, for of course the two experiences, although simultaneous, might have a prolonged existence. The implications of the notion of simultaneity, in this connection, need to be examined more closely. To make clear

what he means, when he says of two experiences that they are simultaneous, he makes the parenthetical remark, "I use 'simultaneous' to mean whatever would be meant in ordinary speech by 'occurring at the same time'". With the help of a simple diagram it is possible both to bring out an ambiguity in the expression "occurring at the same time", and to reveal how highly artificial and abstract is the identification of a total temporary state.



Let A, B, C, D be four experiences, and t1 - t6 different times. In the case of A and B, both experiences begin at the same time, but they end at different times. At t1 and t2, it would be true to say that A and B occur at the same time. However, at t2 another experience makes its appearance, and so at t2 it can be said that A, B, and C occur at the same time. After experience A terminates, experience D begins and from t5 through t6, experiences C and D occur at the same time. On the other hand, at no time do A and D occur at the same time. Now if by referring to something occurring at the same time as something else, we do not specify that they occur at the same time as a given time, it would follow that A, B, C, and D all occur at the same time. For B occurs at the same time as A, C occurs at the same time as B, and D occurs at the same time as C. But this will not do, since, as we see, A and D do not occur at the same time. This means that "occurring at

the same time as" is an intransitive relation.

We are forced back to the other possibility, which is, that two or more experiences occur at the same time, if and only if they occur at the same time as a given time. In other words, two or more experiences can only be said to be simultaneous, if there is some temporal overlap between all of them at once. If, as we must, we lay down this condition for "occurring at the same time", it then follows that we have a different total temporary state every time an experience begins, and every time an experience terminates. Thus in the diagram we have one t.t.s. at t1, composed of experiences A and B; another t.t.s. at t2 composed of A, B, and C; another at t4 composed of A and C; and so on. In real life this would mean the existence of a great density of t.t.s's in a very short compass of time, in virtue of the fact that experiences are coming and going all the time.(1). I do not see how Grice could deny this. But if this is the situation, it is evident that the normal situation would be for juxtaposed t.t.s's to have elements in common: i.e., experiences which belong to more than one t.t.s.

In view of this, it would seem to be unnecessary to say that what a t.t.s. has in common with an immediately preceding t.t.s., is the possibility of its containing as an element a memory of the immediately preceding t.t.s. Having a common element, is a much stronger connection between two t.t.s's than is the possibility of the later containing a memory element of the earlier. If the relationship between total temporary states is as I have represented it in the diagram, then the unity of consciousness over a period of time - from t1 to t6 - is due

(1) Deciding that a new t.t.s. existed because a new experience had just occurred is vastly complicated by the fact that new experiences do not come ready classified as such. The question of what constitutes one experience and not two will involve principles of classification which are likely to vary with the purpose of classification.

to the fact that there is no period during that time at which there is an absence of overlap of experiences. It should be noted that it is unnecessary to have a single experience enduring throughout the period. Continuity is preserved as long as a later experience can "take over" where an earlier has "left off", by overlapping it. In the diagram, experiences A and C have this function, and it is these two experiences which unite all the t.t.s's between t1 and t6, inclusively. Experiences B and D could not do the job.

To get the picture of consciousness this analysis suggests, we may liken consciousness to a length of rope. In a length of rope none of the strands at one end of the rope are the same as the strands at the other end: It is not one length of rope in virtue of having one or more strands running continuously through it from end to end. The rope is made up of numbers of short strands overlapping each other in a continuous weave. This is true, too, of the composition of consciousness over a length of time.

It is worth considering why Grice did not adopt the solution I have suggested, to his problem of what makes a series of t.t.s's the total temporary states of one person: viz., that all the t.t.s's with some elements (but not necessarily the same elements) in common, are t.t.s's of one and the same person. Although Grice does not actually consider such a solution, it is safe to say that he would have rejected the proposal for the reason that it is not necessarily the case that between two consecutive t.t.s's there will be an element(s) in common. This would be the case if, for instance, my diagram consisted only of experiences B and D. Stating this possibility, Grice says, "Such series may of course contain gaps: there may be times at which no member of a series is occurring, though members have occurred before these times and will occur after them." I would like to say something about this possibility.

It is evident that if a person never slept, and never lost consciousness, the series of t.t.s's of that person would contain no gaps of the sort Grice mentions. Sleep and loss of consciousness are, therefore, the obvious sources of such gaps.

Now before considering these two circumstances, I would like to make a general point. The problem of personal identity is often understood to be the problem of finding criteria for saying that a person at one time is identical with a person at a previous time. Conversely, a person's knowledge of his continuing identity through time is understood to be his knowledge that he has existed for a certain length of time. William James epitomises this knowledge, each of us believes he has, of his continuing identity, in the statement "I am the same self that I was yesterday".(1) Now if I needed criteria of personal identity, such as the criterion of bodily continuity from yesterday to today, or alternatively a memory criterion, it must follow that I need the same criterion on which to make the statement this afternoon "I am the same self that I was this morning." And if I need a criterion of personal identity for that statement, I will yet again need one for judging that "I am the same self that I was an hour ago." If we press the point to its logical conclusion, I must need a criterion for concluding that "I am the same self that I was a moment ago." In other words if we think only of the time factor, there is no difference in principle whether we are dealing with a very small lapse of time, or a big one. In theory, therefore, the problem of personal identity is solved as soon as it is shown that a person is the same self as he was a moment ago.

(1) James, Principles of Psychology, I, 332. Taken literally the statement "I am the same self that I was yesterday" is a tautology, since its contradictory "I am not the same self that I was yesterday" makes no sense. Nevertheless the statement does succeed in conveying the impression we have of our continuing existence through time.

What new principle, then, is involved in putting the time back as far as yesterday in the question "Am I the same self that I was yesterday"? The only new factor that can be presumed is that I was asleep last night. That is, sleep has created a gap in the continuity of my consciousness. (To avoid further complications let us assume that the sleep was dreamless.) Now let us assume for the moment that there _are_ special difficulties created by the fact that consciousness is subject to interruptions, and that we need criteria for saying that the self after the interruption is the same self as the self before the interruption; the point nevertheless remains, that there is no need to suppose that the criteria that are laid down for establishing such an identity, must also be satisfied by a self during a waking period in which there is no interruption of consciousness. I am suggesting, in other words, that we might be able to explain the continuity of a self throughout a waking period, without introducing the criteria that might be found necessary to establish the continuing identity of a self _after_ an interruption of consciousness. Moreover, I also suggest that it is gratuitous to make the assumption that the criteria we may use for deciding that the self that goes to sleep is the same self as the self that wakes up, are criteria we also use to decide that the self from one waking moment to the next is the same self.

3. If it could be shown that personal identity can be established for but the few hours of a single period of waking consciousness, this would already be a considerable achievement. It would mean that we would have an explanation of what it meant, to say of the subject of a present experience that he was identical with a subject of a certain past experience (say one occurring an hour earlier). It would be an

achievement, because the basic philosophical difficulty is to understand how _in principle_ it is possible for a single self to have successive experiences, and if this can be explained even for the limited period of a single period of wakefulness, the difficulty would have been solved _in principle_. Furthermore, once we had solved the problem of how it was possible for a self to persist over several hours, we would then be in a position to proceed to the further problem of how a self could persist through a gap in consciousness.

Unless we have a prior knowledge of what the concept of a self is a concept of, we could not meaningfully raise the question "Can a self survive an interruption of consciousness?" let alone look for criteria of sameness of self. We have to know what selves are, before we can talk of re-identifying selves. If I am right in this, it follows that Grice allowed himself to be side-tracked by the difficulty of the existence of gaps in consciousness. He might have arrived at a less academic account of the self, if he had first asked what a series of total temporary states had in common, in virtue of which they were the total temporary states of one self when there was no gap in the series, and, when he had settled that question (perhaps along the lines I have suggested), he could then have gone on to the difficulty created by "gappy" series.

What I intend to do, is to work over the same ground that Grice has covered, with this difference: that I shall transpose his concepts to mine. In this way I hope to show how the results of adopting my theory differ from the results of adopting Grice's theory, with, I shall argue, the advantages going to the former. When I have done this, it will be agreed, I hope, that I will have completely answered the sceptical objection to my theory that it is unable to account for

the persistence of the self. My treatment of Grice's problem will differ from his, in that I will adopt the course, outlined above, of first dealing with the case of an uninterrupted consciousness, and only then going on to the case of an interrupted consciousness. But before I embark on this project, I would like to make a few observations on the subject of gaps in consciousness. I return then, briefly, to the question of sleep, and loss of consciousness.

The gap created in consciousness by dreamless sleep, concussion, passing out, and anaesthesia is by no means as damaging to the continuity of consciousness as it may sound. A gap in consciousness can, for instance, never be experienced as a gap in consciousness, by the person whose consciousness is affected. A person may have the experience of losing consciousness, but that is a conscious experience. No one can be conscious of being unconscious. All we know is that we have the experience of losing consciousness immediately followed by the experience of regaining consciousness. It is only by inference that we know that we have been unconscious, or by being told of this by someone else. In a sense, therefore, consciousness does not record its own interruptions, but gives the impression of being unbroken, although it is not.

This phenomenon can best be understood in terms of a distinction between objective time and subjective time. By objective time I mean clock time. By subjective time I mean our personal experience of the passage of time.(1). In subjective time, if I happen to be waiting for someone, even five minutes can seem a long time. On the other hand, if I am enjoying myself immensely, two hours can seem to pass in a flash. Now what I suggest is that interruptions to consciousness are only interruptions from the point of view of objective time. From the point

(1) It is of course too large a topic to go into the relation between subjective time and objective time in the present work.

of view of subjective time, consciousness is uninterrupted. If I had been unconscious for a period, I could only find out about it inferentially, or from the testimony of others. The assertion that a certain period of time had elapsed, during which I was unconscious, must have the status of an hypothesis, as far as I am concerned. By contrast, the statement "I've had to wait ages for you," belongs to subjective time, and is not in any sense an hypothesis. It is a direct report of a subjective impression.

Thus when from the point of view of subjective time, I say, "I am the same self that I was yesterday", I think of my consciousness between today and yesterday as continuous. I would make no distinction between yesterday and, for instance, this morning, in this respect. There still remains the difficulty, however, that although a break in consciousness may not be experienced, a break does in fact occur. This would seem to rule out the solution I have put forward, to the effect that it is the overlapping of experiences which gives consciousness its continuity. For if a break occurs, there can of necessity be no such overlap between the separated segments. It may therefore be necessary, after all, to invoke memory at such points as the factor making for continuity, as Grice maintains. Whether this is in fact so, we shall see.

4. My contention against the Serial Theory has been that its proponents cut up consciousness into a temporal succession of units, which they have arrived at by abstraction, and that they then try to offer an explanation of how these artificial units hang together to form a unity. Moreover, these units are often conceived of as ultimate simples: the unanalysable constituents of consciousness. Now it is a merit of Grice's position that his units - total temporary states -

are not thought of in this way as simple units. On the contrary, his definition of a total temporary state makes it quite clear that he recognises their inner complexity. Total temporary states, as Grice understands them, have experiences as their elements. Grice's position, therefore, is in this respect fully in line with the analysis of consciousness given in this work. However, the analysis I have offered goes beyond the one he gives in a most important respect.

Grice takes it for granted that the elements of which total temporary states are composed, are experiences, and he instances such experiences as "thinking of Hitler", "hearing a noise", and "feeling a pain". But specific mention of particular experiences such as these, signify experiences that have been singled out by attention. They are in fact objects of attention. But as I have argued, the existence of objects of attention in consciousness is only one side of the picture. We must also recognise the existence of elements in consciousness that have not received such articulation as a result of the action of attention. We must recognise the existence, in other words, of residual consciousness. This Grice does not do. So we see that although Grice has made an advance by recognising the complexity of his basic unit of analysis, he is still firmly in the tradition of those philosophers who take it for granted that there is no element in consciousness that is not at the time receiving attention.

The criticism may be made of the empiricist tradition in general that whatever is taken by empiricists to be the basic unit of experience, is, without exception, an object of attention. This is true whether the basic unit is an impression, a sense-datum, an appearance, a sensation, a state of consciousness, or an experience. I think it is possible

to understand how empiricists come to identify their basic units with objects of attention, and yet not realise that this is what they are doing. It is incumbent on empiricists to explain how their basic units are arrived at. The logical method for an empiricist to employ, is to define his basic unit ostensively. This he does by drawing the attention of the reader to an item of sense experience, and then giving him directions on how to recognise an instantiation of the basic unit in the situation confronting him. It is obvious that whatever feature of the perceptual situation is singled out by the reader, it will at the time be an object of attention for him. This is clearly the case in the well-known analysis of "seeing a tomato," which Price gives in illustration of an ostensive definition of a sense datum.(1) If we do not actually put a tomato in front of ourselves to help us follow the analysis, we no doubt imagine seeing one. In either case the sense-datum is something which is an object of attention at the time of its identification.

Serial Theorists make the problem of explaining the unity of the self insoluble on two counts. Firstly, their basic unit is by its very nature (as an object of attention) a discrete and independent particular, and as such is not of a character to combine with another unit. Secondly, the basic unit, *qua* object of attention, is, as I have endeavoured to establish, detached from residual consciousness and thereby placed over against the self in opposition to it. These basic units are from this point of view examples of the not-self. Once we realise this, it must strike us as odd in the extreme that it should be thought possible that the self could be a logical construction built up out of such bits of not-self, as Serial Theorists would have us believe. If

(1) H.H. Price, Perception (London, 1954), p.3.

each basic unit is a polar opposite of the self, the same must be true of whole combinations of basic units: it is unintelligible that the units in combination should reverse the characteristics they have singly.

By recognising the existence of residual consciousness, we put a different complexion on the problem formulated by the Serial Theorists. We can at once allocate each basic unit of experience its own subject in the form of the residual consciousness with which that experience is connected. It will be remembered that I suggested that Grice's theory would be strengthened, had he been able to claim that each total temporary state was the total temporary state of a subject, or self. But at the time I did not suggest any means by which this result could be obtained on his theory. We are now in a position to see why this was so. By assuming that a total temporary state was built up out of experiences that were objects of attention, there remained nothing experiental with which a self could be equated. Had Grice not made this assumption, he would have been left with something within experience, with which such a self could be identified. Be that as it may, there is an even more important respect in which recognition of the existence of residual consciousness might have strengthened his theory. I suggested that he might have taken up the idea that one total temporary state was connected with its predecessor, not by a possible memory element, but by an actual element that was common to both total temporary states. My contention is that this solution can be put forward with much greater power than otherwise, in terms of the concept of a residual consciousness.

In the chapter on residual consciousness, I pointed out that although part of its content could be expected to be ceaselessly undergoing change, it was not possible for a person to be aware of the entire content of his residual consciousness. A person could not, on the theory,

make the statement that between t1 and t2 the entire content of his residual consciousness had changed. The relevance of this is the following. If a person had reason to believe that between two consecutive total temporary states there was not even one element of consciousness in common, he could never know this. For he could only know it, if he knew all the elements to his residual consciousness, and knew that none of those belonging to the first t.t.s. was present in the second t.t.s. But, on the theory I am advancing, it is logically impossible for anyone to know this about himself. Not only could he not know this, even assuming such a situation were to arise, but in addition the presumption is all against its ever being the case that the residual consciousness in two consecutive t.t.s's had not a single element in common. (I am here drawing on my earlier remarks on the stable and invariant character of residual consciousness.) We see, therefore, that even if it should turn out that the continuity of consciousness is not preserved by the overlapping of successive experiences, owing to a possible absence of overlap, such experiences are not the only source of the continuity of consciousness. In the absence of an overlap between those experiences that fall under the category of objects of attention, we can rely on an overlap existing between the residual consciousness of one total temporary state and the next. Grice, by having in mind only those experiences that attention has singled out, would have been right to be wary of assuming that there were never total breaks between such experiences.

If, on the other hand, he had taken residual consciousness into account, he would have had a much sounder base on which to put forward the hypothesis that successive total temporary states would be found that had elements in common. As we have seen, it is an implication of Grice's definition of a total temporary state, that total temporary

states follow each other at extremely short intervals of time. This makes it certain that that portion of residual consciousness identified as the mass of somatic feeling, will be largely unchanged (better to say, much of it will be unchanged) from one t.t.s to the next. On this view, therefore, residual consciousness must be regarded as the primary vehicle of the continuity of consciousness.

Certain conclusions follow from admitting residual consciousness into the picture: conclusions that call in question the very way in which Serial Theorists - Grice among them - set up their problem of the self. I said earlier that their problem was misconceived, and we are now in a position to understand the way in which it is misconceived. The basic error common to Serial Theories is the assumption that we can meaningfully speak of a unit of consciousness at a particular instant in time. Once this assumption is made, it is possible to suppose that consciousness must consist of a series of, or a succession of, such units, and that in some sense they form a unity. This is the implication of Grice's belief that every newly discriminable element in consciousness heralds the arrival of a new total temporary state. Of course there is nothing to prevent a philosopher from <u>defining</u> his basic unit of consciousness in this way, but then we are entitled to point out what a procrustean technique this is. A total temporary state is an entirely artificial creation: a useful conceptual device for identifying certain aspects of a complex subject, which it would otherwise be difficult to refer to. It is, however, only too easy to mistake a conceptual device for the reality it is supposed to apply to, and to imagine that one has arrived by analysis at the ultimate constituents of the reality itself.

This, I contend, is the misconception of which Serial Theorists are guilty. We can only correct the misconception by emphasising the

fact that consciousness is continuous through time. When new elements occur, they occur along with elements that are not new, and at the same time that we are aware of the new elements, we are aware of the elements that are not new. There is therefore no reason to be impressed with the dissimilarity of total temporary states one with another, by concentrating on the occurrence of new elements from one moment to the next, rather than to be impressed with the continuity of consciousness from one moment to the next, by concentrating on the survival of the old elements. The sensible course is to take both aspects of consciousness together, in appreciation of the fact that consciousness displays change amidst continuity.

But the main point I wish to stress is that consciousness is nothing if not protracted. This fact has forced itself on those thinkers who claimed that consciousness was confined to the present. As soon as they tried to define the present that was thought to contain consciousness, they were forced to recognise that consciousness could not be so contained. So the concept of a "specious present" was invented to preserve the idea that consciousness occurred in the present. In effect this meant that the present had to be drawn-out in order to accommodate the drawn-out character of consciousness. If I am right about this, it must follow that any attempt to divide consciousness into units must be quite arbitrary and cannot be done without giving a false picture of consciousness.

I think it is also fair to say that if, instead of being overlooked, residual consciousness were included in the analysis of consciousness, it would act as a natural check on the idea that consciousness is built up of a succession of temporal units. If we confine our analysis to those experiences that hold attention, we inevitably arrive at the idea of single separate experiences, complete in themselves. An experience

has a beginning, and an end: it is a single whole. It invites an atomistic conception of consciousness. Residual consciousness, on the other hand, resists any such analysis. If we imagine describing the content of consciousness at a certain instant in time, we might be able to list a number of experiences, but over and above that, we could only say "And then there is residual consciousness." That is to say, we could give only an indeterminate description of it, and one that would not differ, no matter which particular instant of time we chose, from the description of it we would give at any other instant.

5. We have seen reason to reject the assumption of the Serial Theorists that consciousness can be broken down into temporal units. It follows that we must also deny the need for the sort of solutions they offer, to show how such units are combined. An examination of a representative Serial Theory has thus shown that the objection to the theory I am putting forward, namely, that it is unable to account for the persistence of the self, is without foundation. If consciousness is continuous, and its division into temporal units an abstraction, then residual consciousness too must be continuous. The identification of the self with residual consciousness is, therefore, the identification of the self with something that persists through time. We are also at last in a position to appreciate that Jones's supposition, that a self might be a phenomenon purely contemporaneous with a present experience, which perishes when the experience perishes, is a supposition that we need only entertain for the sake of argument. It might be said that if it had come to the worst, and the problem of the persistence of the self had failed of a solution, the supposition would have had its attractions. In the event, having identified a persisting self,

we have no need to fall back on a momentary self.

I shall have more to say about the continuity of consciousness shortly. It will then be approached quite independently of the assumptions of the Serial Theory. Meanwhile this is a suitable point at which to say something about the role of memory in self-identity. In the process I offer some criticisms of Shoemaker's treatment of this subject. As we have seen, Grice advanced the thesis that the self could be defined in terms of memory. This thesis has been put forward by many philosophers besides Grice, beginning with Locke, and numbering Russell and Ayer among its proponents.(1). One of the first of its critics was Butler, who, with Locke clearly in mind, writes:

> But though consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet to say that it makes personal identity, or is necessary to our being the same persons, is to say, that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action, but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute personal identity, any more than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute truth, which it presupposes.(2).

Now I wish to argue that Butler has seen the matter truly, not only on the negative side, which consists of his denial that memory can be the criterion of personal identity, but also on the positive side, when he suggests that memory "ascertain(s) our personal identity to ourselves." Let me take these two points separately. The claim that memory is the criterion of personal-identity is open to the charge of circularity on two counts. In the first place, the memory is itself an experience that must be someone's experience. Memory, in this sense, presupposes a self. In the second place, the experience remembered, might be remembered as an experience of one's own, in which case it is tautologous

(1) See Shoemaker, Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity, Ch.4

(2) J. Butler, 'Of Personal Identity', Butler's Analogy of Religion, ed. A. Barnes (London, 1867) p.194

to assert that the experience remembered is one's own. Now even if we concede that ways may be found of circumventing these objections,(1), it must be acknowledged that this is only necessary for those who believe that the self can be defined in terms of memory. Since I have already argued that such an approach is erroneous, and advocate instead a theory of the self that is not based on memory, I am in consistency already committed to agreeing with Butler on the negative point that memory presupposes personal identity. This brings me to the second point. If personal identity is not dependent on memory, what connection, if any, does memory have with personal identity? Shoemaker has interesting views on this question, and an examination of them will help us considerably.

Shoemaker's principal thesis is that the memory statements we make about our own past are not statements of identity, and for this reason require no criteria of identity for their validation. He states his position in the following passage:

> What I have established so far is that if we can remember past events at all there are first-person past-tense statements that can be known without being grounded on criteria of identity, namely statements to the effect that the speaker was present when certain past events occurred. This is sufficient to refute the claim that all first-person past-tense statements must be grounded on criteria of identity if they are known to be true, and refuting this claim, I think, undermines the plausibility of the view that what appear to be first-person memory statements, e.g., my original statement "I broke the front window yesterday," must really be conclusions drawn from remembered facts in accordance with criteria of personal identity.(2)

Shoemaker's main argument is that memory not only gives me knowledge that certain events occurred in the past, but, crucially, gives me knowledge that I was involved in those past events. Thus:

> Suppose, then, that the statement "I broke the front window yesterday" is made as a memory statement. It will not be the case that the speaker first knows that someone broke the front window yesterday and then discovers that that person was himself. If what he remembers is that he broke the front window, then for him the question "Am I the person who broke the front window?" cannot arise.(3)

(1) See B.A.O. Williams, 'Personal Identity and Individuation,' <u>Proc. Arist. Soc.</u>, LVII (1956 - 57).

(2) Shoemaker, <u>Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity</u>, pp. 139-40.

(3) Ibid. p. 135.

Shoemaker thinks that the reason criteria of identity are thought to be necessary, is that philosophers have made a distinction between a "present" self and a "past" self, and that this gives rise to the question whether the present self which remembers an experience is the same self as the past self which had the experience. Once this possibility arises, criteria become necessary to establish that the present self and a past self are identical. Although Shoemaker rejects this distinction between a present self and a past self, he offers an ingenious explanation of how philosophers have come to be persuaded that the distinction needed to be made.

He argues that it is based on the assumption, explicitly stated by James Mill, that the word "I" primarily refers to the self at the moment of utterance - the present self. This assumption is reinforced if the word "I" is interpreted as a logically proper name, in Russell's sense, since a logically proper name must refer to an object of present acquaintance. But in Shoemaker's judgement, perhaps the most important reason for the belief that "The primary reference of the word "I" is to something present," is the fact that the statement "I did not exist yesterday" is a contingent statement, whereas the statement, "I do not exist now," is, as he says, absurd. According to Shoemaker, recognition of this truth may give rise to the following line of reasoning:

> Clearly, anyone who makes a statement containing the word "I" must exist at the time at which he makes that statement. And since such statements are about the person who makes them, it seems that any such statement, whatever its tense, must assert something about a person who exists at the time at which the statement is made. In James's terminology, any such statement says something about a "present self." (1)

(1) Shoemaker, <u>Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity</u>, p. 126

This means that any first-person statement making references to the past, of the type, "I broke the front window yesterday," seems at once to be making reference to my present self - "I" - and a self that existed yesterday - a past self - and implies that the present self and yesterday's self are identical.

Whilst Shoemaker rejects this line of reasoning, by arguing that first-person statements about the past are not identity statements, there is, I contend, one respect in which the distinction between a present self and a past self has more weight than he allows. Shoemaker remarks,

> Such claims, i.e., first-person statements made solely on the basis of memory, are not judgements of personal identity at all, though they do imply the persistence of a person through time.(1)

Now his discussion is notable for the absence of any examination of the presupposition that a person persists through time. In fact, his examples show that when he speaks of a person's memory of his past actions not being based on any criteria, he takes it for granted that a person does persist through time. But if it is taken for granted that a person must be the same person whether reference is made to the present or the past, naturally there can no longer be any question of the identity of the person who remembers his past action. His identity is presupposed. Nevertheless, what has to be taken into account is, not merely that a person does persist through time, but that he <u>knows</u> that he does.

If we ignore the fact that a person is aware of his continuing identity, we reduce the persistence of a person to the level of the persistence of a material object. At that level there is, it is true, no difference between a present self and its past self. But if we are dealing with a person's memory of what he did yesterday, we certainly

(1) Shoemaker, <u>Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity</u>, p. 124.

presuppose that he is aware of himself as a person at the time of the memory, and also that he is aware of his continuing identity between yesterday and the present. Now what I wish to suggest is that a person's awareness of himself is primarily rooted in the present, and that it is through memory that it is extended to an awareness of himself as persisting from yesterday to today. That is to say, a person's awareness of himself is first and foremost an awareness of his present self, and only secondarily an awareness of himself as a past self.

My awareness of myself as a person is an awareness of myself as I now am. My knowledge of what it is to be a self comes from the experience I am now having of being a self. It is what I am currently living through. Contrariwise my awareness of myself as I was yesterday has none of this "warmth" as James happily calls it. I must rely on memory, and this very reliance on memory must serve to bring home to me the intangibility of my past self as compared with my present self. My awareness of my present self makes no appeal to memory, and by turning to memory to give me an awareness of my past self, I implicitly concede that my awareness of my past self is second best. Moreover, by its very nature, a memory carries me back to the present. It is the self as it is at present that remembers: the reality of the present self cannot be escaped. So important is this living experience of being a self, which must necessarily be felt in the present, that when I come to recollect my past self, I must invest it with all the "warmth" of the present self. In other words, I maintain that when I recollect myself as I was yesterday, I will tend to imaginatively project (more accurately, retroject) my present feeling of being alive - the lived experience of the present self - back to the self I remember yesterday. That is to say, there is no real yesterday's self as far as my awareness

is concerned, there is only the situation I was in yesterday (<u>that</u> is what I remember), and my imagining myself as I now am, in that historical situation.

Even if my memory is of myself in great pain, it is not yesterday's self in pain that I remember. It is my memory of the pain, as applied to myself as I now am, that constitutes the recollection. That is to say, I recall the pain, and imagine it as though I were now feeling it. On this interpretation, when I say, as James thinks we are all prepared to say "I am the same self that I was yesterday," it is not the case that I remember yesterday's self, compare it with my present self, and discover that the memory corresponds with the present reality. On the contrary, I simply attribute yesterday's experience(s), which I remember, to my present self. I have the conviction that these experiences happened to me yesterday, but I also have the conviction that the self they happened to, is the self that I am at present.

It might be objected that the account I have given precludes the possibility of a person remembering his past self to be different from his present self. Moreover it seems to be at odds with the fact that we remember, not only what we did <u>when</u> children, but what we did <u>as</u> children. It seems unrealistic to suggest that we obtain our childhood memories by imagining our present selves doing what we remember doing as children. Nevertheless I do not think that these facts falsify the theory. In the first place I cannot judge the past self to be different from the present self, without also presupposing that the present self and the past self are the same self. From this point of view my argument stands. In the second place, if I can imaginatively retroject myself into the past, I can also in the process imaginatively invest my present

self with qualities it no longer possesses. I can imaginatively assume the form of a small boy. But, "under the skin," I will still be my present self. Lastly, and I believe, conclusively, wedo not actually recapture the experiences of childhood in memory. Our memories of childhood are the memories of an adult mind, and, for this reason, they are memories reinterpreted in the light of later experience. This is precisely what my analysis would lead us to expect.

If my argument is sound, then, our present selves must have primacy in the knowledge we have of our continuing identity. Shoemaker, therefore, is only able to discountenance the primacy of the present self, because he chose not to concern himself with the problem of our knowledge of our persistence as selves. As I have said, this knowledge is simply assumed in his account. But, as I have tried to show, memory not only gives us knowledge of what as persons we did or experienced in the past; it also gives us the idea of ourselves as persons with a past. This is the point I believe Butler to have appreciated, and it is this that I have called the positive side of his view. As he puts it, "Consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves." I propose now to explain how these ideas fit in with the theory of the self I have been developing.

If the self is equated with residual consciousness as I suggest, it follows that the persistence of the self is assured. This I have already argued, by implication, when I argued that residual consciousness has temporal continuity. But the self could persist in this sense, without it having any knowledge of its persistence. The concept of the specious present allows us to affirm that residual consciousness is known to endure for a certain length of time, but such a stretch of time is necessarily very limited, and it can only be extended by memory. Now

the crucial question here is "Memory of what?" Could it be the memory of earlier phases of residual counsciousness? This is not what my account suggests. It is true that the content of residual consciousness will be partially changing from moment to moment. However, in view of the fact that the changes within residual consciousness must, in virtue of its nature, pass without notice, it is unlikely that such changes will be remembered. In any case even if elements of an earlier phase of residual consciousness were remembered, the great bulk of residual consciousness cannot similarily be subject to recollection, and this likewise, for the reason that it cannot become the object of attention. In fact this point may be viewed as an instance of general principle, to the effect that whatever cannot be made an object of attention cannot be recalled either. In any event, I have already argued that we are unable to differentiate residual consciousness from one interval of time to the next. In the light of this it would be surprising if we could remember an earlier phase of residual consciousness as distinct from its present phase. The alternative possibility is that it is through memory of past <u>objects of attention</u> that we come to know of our own persistence through time. (I am thinking of memory in the sense of past episodes recalled, and not memory in any dispositional sense). Thus if what I remember is <u>my</u> doing something yesterday, what I remember is that the action was done by me. I do not need to have any memory of yesterday's residual consciousness to remember that. I do not, in other words, need to remember what it felt like to be a self at the time I performed the act. All I remember is myself doing the action, or having the experience. This is not to deny that the act may be remembered as having a certain experiential aura, but if it does, this is still not a memory of yesterday's self <u>per se</u> . The memory is,

in the first place, attached to the present self as its current object of attention. But if it is not a memory in which a past object of attention is attached to a past phase of residual consciousness (because the past phase of residual consciousness is not itself an object of memory), the most plausible hypothesis is that the past object of attention is attached to the present self (contemporaneous residual consciousness), conceived as though it existed yesterday. In other words, the object of memory is attached to the present self conceived of as retrojected into the past. It is apparent, therefore, that the interpretation of the role of memory I have put forward, is consistent with my theory of the self. It is also in agreement with Shoemaker's claim that memory statements about one's past are not identity statements. If I retroject my present self into the past, no question arises of whether a past self coincides with a present self. The present self must be identical with itself in the case of every such retrojection, and we do not need any criteria to establish that something is identical with itself. One further implication of this view is worth bringing out. What is needed for the purpose of giving a person an idea of his own persistence is the existence of his memory claims. It is not necessary for his memories to be veridical. I gain a knowledge of my persistence, in my memory claim to have done such-and-such yesterday, even if it turns out that I mis-remembered.

6. I proceed now to carry out my undertaking to account for the persistence of the self. I shall introduce a new form of argument for the purpose. Much of the groundwork has already been laid for the analysis which follows, and it will become apparent that this section draws together a number of threads of the work as a whole.

My intention is to show the importance of the perceptual senses for the longitudinal unity of consciousness. It will help my exposition if I am permitted to introduce the word "awareness" as a technical term. In the technical sense I propose, I call my seeing a tree, an awareness. Similarily, I shall call any perception an awareness. Now this use of "awareness" does not correspond with ordinary usage, although it is not all that far removed from it. I may say, "I see the tree," and I may also say, "I am aware of the tree," but in ordinary usage these two statements do not have the same meaning. If I see the tree I must be aware of it, but I can be aware of it without seeing it. It does not follow, either, that I must have seen the tree previously, for after all, a blind man can be aware of a tree.

Mostly, a person would make a statement of the form, "I am aware of X," in order to convey the information that he is taking X into account: that he has not overlooked it, or forgotten it. Thus if I am reversing my car, a friend may say, "Mind the tree," and elicit the reply, "I am aware of the tree:" he will be reassured that I am not going to bump into the tree, although he may realise that from my position I cannot see it. He would not be entitled to reply, "You can't be aware of the tree, since you can't see it." In this sort of case, my saying "I am aware of the tree," means that I know that there is a tree there. In other words, I am aware that a tree is behind me.

When it is possible to translate a sentence of the form, "I am aware of X," as "I am aware that X is the case," without change of meaning, it is an awareness of a fact. That is to say, awareness that is awareness of facts. But it is not only facts of which we are aware. We are aware of objects, people, incidents, sensations, etc. We cannot, however, use a "that" construction of these sorts of awareness. Thus

"I was aware of his presence" cannot be rephrased as "I was aware that he was present," without change of meaning. The first implies that I was there and saw him, the second suggests that I came by this knowledge second-hand. The first statement also contains the nuance that his presence made an impact on me, and this nuance is entirely absent from the second statement. I suggest, therefore, that when we have an "awareness of" construction that cannot without change of meaning be rephrased as an "awareness that" construction, we are using the word "awareness" in a different sense from the one it has, in respect of which rephrasing is allowable.

Now it is <u>awareness of</u> in this unequivocal sense which has most in common with the technical sense I am giving it. In my technical sense an awareness is an element of a person's present state of consciousness. It is, therefore, an occurrence, and it is implied that the awareness can only occur in the presence of the object of awareness. Thus I can only be aware of the tree, if the tree is in my presence and I am observing it. I do not claim that these two features exhaust the ordinary meaning of "awareness of," but they do exhaust the meaning of "awareness" in the technical sense I am specifying. It can thus be seen that my technical sense of "awareness" is part of the meaning of "awareness of," if not the whole of its meaning. All I am doing, therefore, is restricting the meaning of "awareness" to part of what "awareness of" ordinarily means. It follows that what I want to say about "awareness" in this technical sense will be true also of "awareness of" in its ordinary sense. (When I use the word "awareness" in the technical sense, it will be distinguished from its ordinary usages by appearing without accompanying prepositions). It is important to stress that awareness is an occurrence, or an event.

In this respect it may be contrasted with "awareness that" which is dispositional. I am aware that Elizabeth is the present Queen of England, but this does not mean that I must now have the thought of her being the present Queen of England. On the other hand, if I have an awareness of her, she must in some sense be present to me.

My thesis can now be very simply stated. Sense-awareness is sustained by sense-organ activity, and the sense-awareness will last as long as the sustaining sense-organ activity lasts. This means that a particular awareness at a later moment may be said to be the same awareness as that of an earlier moment, provided that the two awarenesses are sustained by uninterrupted sense-organ activity. The position is best explained with the aid of an example. Let it be supposed that I see a tree, and that after a few minutes have elapsed I announce that I still see the tree. The question can be raised: "Have I had an awareness of the tree all the while?" The answer is in the affirmative on the solution I propose, if I can say that I have been looking at the tree uninterruptedly. That is to say, my awareness of the tree at two different times is the same awareness, if it is sustained by a single continuous activity of looking. If, on the other hand, I had looked away, and then looked back, I would have had two different awarenesses, even though they may have been qualitatively indistinguishable. Now the relevance of this thesis is threefold. (a) It will demonstrate the continuity of consciousness, (b) It will reveal the connection between sense awareness and attention, and (c) It will throw light on the relation between the self and its body. These claims will, I hope, be made good in the course of a detailed defense of the thesis I have just outlined.

It is noteworthy that in the case of our two most developed senses we have separate concepts to describe the operation of the sense-organ on the one hand, and the resultant sense experience on the other. Thus the focussing of our eyes is described as "looking" and the resultant visual experiende is described as "seeing." Similarly, when we "focus" our ears we are said to be "listening," and the resultant auditory experience is"hearing." The lesser sense-organs do not possess this conceptual sophistication. Hence we feel "feels," smell smells, and taste tastes. Now it is true of all of the senses under consideration that the deliberate employment of the sense-organ demands attention. Moreover one would not deliberately decide to employ a sense-organ, if not for a purpose, and if one displays sufficient interest in the purpose to make such a decision, it would be inconsistent not to give sufficient attention to the employment of the sense-organ to be sure of succeeding in the purpose. In this way it comes about that we have "sensorial attention."

Now my contention is that the concepts we use for the purpose of describing the employment of our sense-organs, are concepts which presuppose that the employment of the sense-organs is in some degree attentive. If a person is described as engaged in the activity of looking, or listening, or tasting, &c., we rightly assume that his attention is engaged. Indeed one would be at a loss to know what it would mean for a person to look, listen or taste, if he gave no attention at all to those activities. For then, in the case of looking, we should say that he was not looking at all, but that his eyes were wandering, i.e., we would give the classical description of visual inattention - the very reverse of looking. There is, however, no correspondingly negative form of the activities of listening and tasting.

In spite of this the main point remains, that the concepts which describe our employment of our sense-organs presuppose attention, unless it is specifically made clear by the context that this is not the case.

In order to explain this last possibility, it is necessary to go into the relationship between the employment of a sense-organ and the concomitant sense-awareness. We can soon find out this relationship, by enquiring whether the existence of a particular awareness entails the corresponding sense-organ activity. For instance, suppose I am aware of a certain smell, does this entail that I must have smelled it? Obviously the answer is yes. But it must at once be observed that it does not entail my having given any attention to the activity of smelling. I may have simply "come across" the smell, without deliberately having engaged in any activity of smelling (or sniffing). Similarly, I may notice a taste, without having set out to discover the taste of anything. Likewise, I may hear a noise, without this entailing that I had been listening for it.

Seeing, however, is an exception. My seeing something does entail my looking at it. Nevertheless the concept "looking" undergoes a change of meaning when attention is not presupposed. I can, for instance, catch sight of my opponent's cards by accident, but it would be misleading, in that case, to say that I had had a look at them, even though I had seen them. The circumstances of each of these cases makes it clear that the awareness was not due to any deliberately chosen sense-organ activity. The first we know about the matter is the occurrence of the awareness. The other side of the coin is that those cases of awareness that are not due to attentive sense-organ activity, remain outside our control as long as we fail to inititate the required sense-organ activity. Such awarenesses are likely to be fleeting, as when on a walk we catch the faint scent of a flower, without letting it detain us. As soon as we

try to fix the smell of the flower by trying to smell it, we change the situation completely, and we find ourselves engaging in deliberate, attentive, sense-organ activity. Sense-organ activity takes place, therefore, not only in order to procure awarenesses, but also to retain them. THus I may at first have my eye caught by the hand of cards, and follow this up by really looking at them.

IF we now look at the situation from the opposite direction, we again find an asymmetry between the visual sense on the one hand, and all except one of the other senses, on the other. IF I am looking, I must be seeing. (It may be remembered that I argued that a congenitally blind man does not look, although he may move his eyes about). What seems to contradict this, is the possibility of looking and seeing nothing, but this is not in fact a counter-example. When I see nothing I still see many things, but not what I am looking for. Alternatively I may see nothing because it is pitch dark, but then I still have a visual experience: I am visually aware of the darkness. It follows that looking entails seeing, even if what we see is not what we are looking for. But this entailment between the sense-organ activity and the corresponding awareness does not hold for most of the other senses. I may smell and yet smell nothing, listen and hear nothing, taste and taste nothing. Tactual feeling, on the other hand, belongs with looking. I cannot be engaged in the activity of tactually feeling without feeling something, unless I have lost the sense of feel through numbness or anaesthesia. In that casemy activity could no longer be described as the activity of feeling tactually.(1).

This analysis shows that when we have a sense-awareness without

(1) It would have to be redescribed and thereby identified as a different activity such as "trying to feel."

this resulting from an attentive activity, we avoid using the concept which implies that the attentive activity has taken place, or where that is impossible we modify the meaning of the concept, in order to cancel its implication of the presence of the attentive activity. On the other hand, it also shows that when the attentive activity is engaged in, but without the occurrence of the related awareness, the implication of attentiveness is strongly implied in the description of the activity. Thus, if I listen without hearing anything, it is implied that I am trying to hear, and this entails my listening attentively. The same applies to the other sense modalities, in which there is no entailment between the sense-organ activity and the corresponding awareness. In spite of this apparent untidiness in the relationship between concepts describing sense-organ activities on the one hand, and concepts describing the corresponding sense-awareness on the other, there is one constant in their relationship, which is of crucial importance to my analysis. I cannot give a particular sense-awareness my attention, without attentively engaging in the related sense-organ activity. I cannot, for instance, give my attention to what I see, without looking at it attentively. This logical condition of paying attention to an awareness applies to all the sense modalities. It emerges, therefore, that attention establishes for us a logical relation between the activity and its corresponding awareness.

Psychologists have maintained that sense-awareness is intensified when the relevant sense-organ activity is attentively engaged in.(1). Whether this is true or not, although it is important, does not affect my argument, however. I am interested in the significance of a different point; namely that the attentive performance of the sense-organ activity

(1) James, Principles of Psychology, I, 425 ff.

sustains the awareness in consciousness. The sense-organ activity is not, of course, a sufficient condition of the awareness, since the object of awareness may itself disappear quite independently of the activity. Nevertheless, the activity is a condition necessary to the retention of the awareness, given that the object of awareness does not disappear. It is in this way that the activity may be said to sustain the awareness. In other words, I keep the awareness in being through paying attention to it, and this I do by engaging in the requisite attentive sense-organ activity: i.e., I engage in sensorial attention.(1) It may now perhaps be recognised that a sense-awareness is a particular type of object of attention. In the final analysis, attention is responsible for an awareness lasting a certain length of time, and since an awareness is an element of consciousness, it is responsible for the continuity of consciousness through time, as well. If attention has this function, it can only carry it out, if it, too, is continuous. If attention came in flashes, or was made up of a series of discrete "quanta," it would be difficult to see how it could sustain a continuous awareness. It is necessary, therefore, to examine attention from this point of view.

I have spoken of sense-organ activity, implying that it is an attentive activity, and I have argued that this contention is borne out by the concepts we use to describe these activities, which themselves entail the presence of attention. I shall now try to show that <u>activities</u> have precisely the logical features we are looking for. That is to say, an activity displays the continuousness which is necessary for the hypothesis that awareness is sustained by activity. Once this is established, it only needs to be shown that attention itself is an activity, or is parasitic upon activities, for the thesis to be confirmed

(1) See p. 153 above, for the distinction between sensorial attention and sense organ-attention.

that the temporal continuity of consciousness is based on sustaining sense-organ activity. This thesis may be recognised, incidentally, as a formulation at the conceptual level of Ribot's contention that consciousness is dependent on movement (of the body). (1) In order to substantiate the thesis it will be necessary to analyse the concept of an activity in general and ascertain its logical properties. At the same time as I do this, I will also give an analysis of the concept of a state, since the contrast between an activity and a state will play an important rôle in the argument, when the time comes to apply the results of this analysis to the notions of attention and awareness.

7. The word "activity" is a very general word used to describe all sorts of goings on. This would lead one to expect that it did not possess a very strict logic of its own. However, philosophers have recently realised that the word is also used to describe a very specific kind of change, which cannot be described as precisely by means of any other concept.(2) It is activity in this generic sense with which I shall be concerned. This means that my enquiry will not take into account the meaning of the word "activity," when it is used in a loose sense to refer to patterns of behaviour, or sets of actions. I shall not, that is, be concerned with the use of the word "activity" in such sentences as the following: "The activities of the secret society are subversive," "Mountaineering is a challenging activity." In both these sentences a large variety of things people do, are all brought under the

(1) See above, p. 75.

(2) See Z. Vendler, 'Verbs and Times', Philosophical Review Vol. LXVI (1957) A. Kenny, Action, Emotion and Will (London, 1963) Ch. 8, and T.C. Potts and C.C.W. Taylor, 'States, Activities and Performances', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Suppl. Vol., 1965

head of "activities." (1) In contradistinction to its usage in such sentences as these, I hope to identify a sense of the word "activity," in which it is not implied that an activity is composed of a number of pursuits, practices, or actions, which are not themselves activities.(2) In the sense I am after, a definite distinction must be made between an activity and an act. It is with this in mind that I shall henceforth call such activities <u>generic activities</u>. (When in future I refer to an activity I wish it to be understood that I am referring to a generic activity, unless I give an explicit indication to the contrary). Before I am in a position to give a definition of an activity, certain preliminary distinctions have to be made. In the first place, I wish to make use of a distinction made by von Wright, between the <u>result</u> of an act and the <u>consequence</u> of the act.(3) The purpose of this distinction is to bring out two totally different ways in which an act may be connected with the changes effected by it. When the

(1) The sense of "activity" that I am here ruling out is just the sense that Shwayder believes to be the only sense of the word, and which he summarizes thus: "The activities of life are distinguished from acts one might do, possibly when engaged in those activities. The background field of activity engaged in often provides the setting against which we may fix units of action. Also, we may begin to analyse a field of activity by specifying kinds of action necessarily or characteristically done when engaged in that activity." D.S. Shwayder, <u>The Stratification of Behaviour</u> (London, 1965) p. 39 Shwayder also claims that whereas "action is a technical idea," "activity is a commonsense notion." My own position is that while I agree that activity is a commonsense notion, its use is not confined to the one described by Shwayder. I should also add that I am not considering the use of "activity" when it is applied to processes in nature, such as sun-spot activity, or volcanic activity.

(2) The ideas that I shall be developing in this section, have been given more detailed treatment in an article I have written entitled 'States, Activities and Performances'. This article has been accepted for publication in The <u>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</u>, but it is not due to appear until 1968. In it my views on the nature of activities, states and performances are contrasted with those of the philosophers mentioned in footnote 2, p. 282 above.

(3) G.H. von Wright, <u>Norm and Action</u> (London, 1963) p. 39 ff.

connection between the act and the change is intrinsic, or logical, von Wright calls the change the result of the act. When the connection is extrinsic (von Wright regards this extrinsic relation as primarily a causal one), the change is the consequence of the act. For example, if the act is an act of opening the window, it is logically necessary for the window to be opening. The fact of the window's opening is the result of the act. If the window were not opening, the act could not be described as an act of opening the window, but would have to be described in some other way, such as the act of trying to open the window. On the other hand, if the opening of the window caused the door to slam, the slamming of the door would be a consequence of the act of opening the window and not its result. In other words, if the door had not slammed, it would not follow that the act was not an act of opening the window. Von Wright concedes that the distinction between result and consequence is relative to the intentions of the agent. If for instance the agent had meant to have the door slam, then the slamming of the door would be the result of his act, and not its consequence. But this qualification does not upset the validity of the distinction. Von Wright also notices two possible interpretations that may be given to his use of "result," and although he believes it to be a matter of indifference which interpretation we adopt, for my purpose the distinction is important. As von Wright explains:

> By the <u>result</u> of an act we can understand either the change corresponding to this act or, alternatively, the end-state of this change. Thus, by the result of the act of opening a certain window we can understand either the fact that the window is opening (changes from closed to open) or the fact that it is open.(1)

I shall record this distinction in the following way: when the term is interpreted to mean the change corresponding to the act, I shall

(1) Ibid. p. 39.

identify it as "$result_c$," and when it is interpreted to mean the end-state of the change, I shall identify it as "$result_e$." Now when an agent is said to be doing something, we may describe his doing as the bringing about of a certain result. Two possibilities present themselves: the agent may either bring about $result_c$ or $result_e$. We may at once proceed to identify an activity in terms of these possibilities. An agent is engaged in an activity (in the basic, or generic sense) when he brings about a $result_c$ and he does not stop as soon as $result_c$ comes about. A better appreciation of activity is gained by contrasting it with what in the literature has come to be called a "performance." In my terms an agent is engaged in a performance when he brings about a $result_e$ and it takes time for $result_e$ to be produced. To complete the picture, we may identify a third possibility, which is neither an activity nor a performance, but which may be called a "transitory act." An agent performs a transitory act when he brings about a $result_c$ or a $result_e$, but in the first case stops as soon as $result_c$ comes about, and in the second case $result_e$ is produced almost instantaneously.

The contrast between an activity and a performance comes to this. In the case of an activity, the result obtains from the very first moment the activity commences until the moment it ceases. In the case of a performance the result comes into being cumulatively, and is only fully realised at the termination of the performance. Let me illustrate with examples of an activity and a performance, respectively. If I am whistling, then it will be true that I will have whistled from the moment I started, until the moment I stop: the $result_c$ that I have whistled will obtain right from the beginning, and will not be more fully realised after the activity has been going on for some time, that it was after the first moment. On the other hand, if I am making a bookcase, it will not be true that I have made a bookcase, until the

bookcase is produced. The result that I have made a bookcase will only be realised upon completion of the "performance."

Now it will be noted that from a grammatical point of view I use the perfect tense to describe the results of activities and performances. This is important, because it enables us to distinguish between activities and performances on grammatical grounds. Thus, let the verb describing the activity or performance be represented by " ϕ," and the perfect tense of the verb be represented by "has ϕ ed." It is then possible to distinguish between activity and performance as follows: in the case of an activity "A is ϕing" entails "A has ϕed," in the case of a performance "A is ϕing" entails "A had not ϕed." We have already seen that this grammatical distinction operates in the case of the activity of whistling, and the performance of making a bookcase. It will be observed that there is a natural time limit in the case of a performance. The performance continues for as long as it is necessary for the completion of the result. It is possible, therefore, for a performance to be incomplete, or, for instance, half finished. It is for this reason meaningful, in the case of a performance, to raise the question "How long does it take?" In the case of activities, there is no such natural time limit, and it does not make sense to ask of an activity "How long does it take?" Performances are completed; activities just stop. The above analysis also supports Kenny's contention that performances _take_ time, while activities _go on_ for a time.(1)

I have stressed the contrast between activities and performances, not because the distinction is relevant to the present enquiry _per se_, but for the purpose of making the concept of an activity stand out all the clearer. I now come to the contrast between an activity and a state,

(1) Kenny, _Action, Emotion, and Will_, p.176

which for the present thesis is the crucial distinction. Kenny and others have maintained that the distinction could be made in terms of whether or not the verb describing the putative activity or state possesses a continuous present tense. If the verb has no continuous present tense, it describes a state; if it has a continuous present tense, it describes either an activity or a performance. The characteristic function of the continuous present tense of verbs is to describe what an agent is doing at the time he is doing it. It is perfectly reasonable to expect, therefore, that a verb which does not describe something an agent can do, should lack the tense which implies that it does describe something an agent can do.

The fundamental distinction between an activity and a state is, accordingly, that an activity is a sort of doing of an agent, and a state is not a sort of doing at all. A state is, typically, an _unchange_. We talk of the state of a person or thing, or conversely, of a person or thing being in a certain state. Insofar as we speak of _being_ in a state, there is a contrast with _doing_: a person or thing is passive in respect of the state it is in. The concept "state" also implies the idea of its persistence through time. A state which existed for but an instant would less misleadingly be called an event. States, therefore, _last_ for a time. The important characteristic that activities and states have in common, is that they are both continuous through time, but, as we have seen, activities may be said to _go on_ for a time, whereas states _last_ for a time. These descriptions of the manner of their temporal endurance reflects the fact that an activity is a certain sort of doing of an agent, and a state is not. This is as far as we need carry the formal analysis for our purpose. I come now to the application of these distinctions to the concepts of attention and awareness.

8. I maintain that attention has all the logical features of an activity and awareness has all the logical features of a state. Moreover, if the above analysis is sound, we have ascertained that both activities and states have the required temporal continuousness to make it possible, in principle, for attention conceived of as an activity, to sustain awareness conceived of as a state. I shall now try to substantiate this contention. To begin with we notice that the verb "attend" has a continuous present tense - "am attending" - whereas the verb "aware" does not: there is no construction with "am awaring." In spite of the fact that I do not take this point to be logically conclusive, I do believe it to be a useful pointer.

But to approach the problem more directly, it is meaningful to answer the question, "What are you doing?" by saying, "I am attending (i.e. paying attention) to X." It would not be meaningful to reply "I am aware of X." To illustrate further that attention is a sort of doing, we need only consider that it is always legitimate to raise the question "Why are you paying attention to X?" This invites a reply of the form: "I am attending to ... in order to ... " In the chapter on attention, I pointed out that in certain circumstances attention can be voluntary. When we deliberately attend, we can be expected to produce on request the <u>reason</u> for deliberately attending. Not all attention is deliberate, however, and it will be especially true of non-interrogative attention that one may have no reason for attending. We can therefore deny that we have any reason for attending; we can say "There is no reason, I just am attending." The point remains, however, that it is always legitimate to <u>ask</u> for the reason, even when there isn't one. The position is very

different in the case of awareness. "Why are you aware of X?" is not even intelligible, unless it be interpreted elliptically. It follows that the sentence form "I am aware of ... in order to ... " does not make sense. *A fortiori* one does not, strictly speaking, have *reasons* for one's awarenesses.

In sum, awareness is not itself in any sense a sort of *doing*. Nevertheless, the question "For how long were you aware of X ?" is meaningful, and this establishes the fact that awareness *lasts* a certain length of time. This comparison between attention and awareness makes it clear that to attend is to do something, whereas to be aware is not. What, I think, finally clinches this claim, is that one may be ordered to pay attention, while one cannot be ordered to be aware: one can be ordered to *do* something, but not to *be* something (except in a very roundabout sort of way).

I have sought to show that awareness is not a sort of doing, and this entitles us to classify it as a state, in terms of the description of a state, given above. It is not without interest that the expression "a state of awareness," is in use. (Not that too much weight can be attached to such a linguistic fact, for after all we also have the expression "a state of inattention," and yet I would not concede from this that we can infer that attention is a state). By classifying awareness as a state we do express some of the essential features of awareness. The possessor of a state is passive in respect of his state, and a person is passive in respect of his awareness. This aspect of awareness has led philosophers to describe an awareness as that which is *given*, or *presented*. Now in spite of the fact that an awareness has the logical properties of a state, there are further reasons for declining to *call* it a state. These reasons will emerge

shortly. It is enough, for the moment, if we agree that to all intents and purposes awareness is a state.

I turn now to attention. It has been argued that when we are attending we are doing something. It remains to be shown that the sort of doing involved is an activity and not a performance. If attention were a performance it would follow that the statement "A is attending to X" entailed "A has not attended to X." But this is false, so attending is not a performance. On the other hand, a person may have been attending for a length of time, so attending is not a transitory act either. It must therefore be an activity. And indeed attention satisfies the grammatical criterion for an activity in that "A is attending" entails "A has attended." That is to say, having attended is the result$_c$ of attending, and this result is brought about concomitantly with its sustaining activity. On this argument we would appear to be justified in calling attention an activity. However, just as in the case of awareness there is a difficulty about identifying awareness as a state, so too in the case of attention there is a difficulty about identifying attention itself as an activity. Unlike the case of awareness, however, there are no expository reasons to hold up an immediate discussion of the difficulty.

The difficulty arises if we accept Ryle's view of the nature of attention. Ryle's view is neatly summed up in this statement by Place:

> There is no special activity called 'attending', there is only the attentive performance of an activity.(1)

This view may be described as the "adverbial theory of attention," since it finds the paradigmatic examples of attention in our engaging in activities, carefully, or heedfully. The major implication of Ryle's

(1) U.T. Place, 'The Concept of Heed', <u>The British Journal of Psychology</u>, XLV, 4 (1954), reprinted in <u>Essays in Philosophical Psychology</u>, Ed.D.F. Gustafson, (New York, 1964) p. 217

view is that attention is not itself a separate operation or activity, which occurs concomitantly with the act or activity that is said to be engaging one's attention. As Ryle himself says in this connection,

> Even where it is appropriate to speak of acts of attention, the word "act" carries very little of its ordinary luggage. In ordinary contexts we apply very multifarious criteria in determining what constitutes one act. Perhaps making one move in chess is performing one act; perhaps doing enough to warrant prosecution is performing one act; and perhaps getting from the beginning to the end of a speech without being side-tracked is one act. But a person who has, say, hummed a tune from beginning to end, not absent-mindedly but on purpose and with some application, has not performed two acts or accomplished two tasks, one of humming plus one of giving his mind to reproducing the tune; or, at any rate, he has not performed two acts in that sense of "two acts" in which it would make sense to say that he might have done the second but omitted the first. Giving his mind to reproducing the tune is not doing something else, in the way in which a person sawing wood while humming is doing something else besides humming. We should say, rather, that a person who hums a tune with some concentration is humming in a different way from the way in which he hums automatically, for all that the difference might make no audible difference. It makes his humming a different sort of action, not a concomitance of separately performable actions.(1).

There is at least this indisputable basis to Ryle's argument; namely that it is impossible to pay attention without paying attention to something, but it has been convincingly argued by Penelhum that the dependence of attention on other sorts of episodes does not rule out the possibility of its being an episode itself.(2) There is, besides, another respect in which exception may be taken to the way in which Ryle describes attention. In the passage quoted above, Ryle refers to attention as an "act", and one of his arguments in favour of an adverbial view of attention consists in pointing out the logical embarrassment occasioned by the belief that attention is an act. For instance he says,

> Philosophers and psychologists sometimes speak of "acts" of attention.

(1) G. Ryle, 'Pleasure,' <u>Proc. Arist. Soc.</u>, suppl. vol. XXVIII, (1954), reprinted in <u>Essays in Philosophical Psychology</u>, pp. 200-1

(2) T. Penelhum, 'The Logic of Pleasure,' <u>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</u>, XVII, (1956-57) reprinted in <u>Essays in Philosophical Psychology</u>.

> This idiom too is partially appropriate to certain contexts and quite inappropriate to others. When a person is actually bidden by someone else or by himself to attend, there is something which with some effort or reluctance he *does*. Where his attention had been wandering, it now settles; where he had been half-asleep, he is now wide awake; and this change he may bring about with a wrench. But the spectator at an exciting football match does not have to try to fasten or canalise his attention. To the question "How many acts of attention did you perform?", his proper answer would be "None." For no wrenches had occurred. His attention was fixed on the game but he went through no operations of fixing it.(1)

Now it seems to me that the proper answer to Ryle here is to deny that attention is an *act*, and to affirm instead that attention is an *activity*. His failure to distinguish an act from an activity leads him to take for granted that if it is inappropriate to call something an act, it follows that it is not a separable episode. But once it is recognised that we are dealing with the different proposition that attention is an activity (and here it is vital to distinguish between activity in the generic sense and activity in the looser Schwayderian sense in which it is a series of acts), it at once becomes obvious why Ryle's question "How many acts of attention did you perform?" is inappropriate: while an activity is going on, it is continuous, and that is why we cannot count the number of isolable occurrences of attention, or acts of attention. It cannot be denied that an activity is as much an episode while it is going on, as is an act while it is being performed. I conclude that what Ryle says about "acts" of attention tends neither to strengthen nor weaken his adverbial view of attention, but is simply beside the point.

All the same, Ryle's adverbial theory makes a negative point, which he is quite right to insist upon. If attention itself is interpreted as an activity, instead of interpreted as a *manner of engaging in activities*, we seem to imply that attention is some specific mental

(1) Ryle, 'Pleasure', *Essays in Philosophical Psychology*, p.200

operation which we trigger off in conjunction with these other activities, and that it is a parallel process of its own. Now although it seems to me to be logically possible for attention to be a mental activity in its own right, I think Ryle is right to challenge it. The objection to it is that it seems practically impossible to describe this activity in any non-circular way: i.e., as other than simply paying attention. If, therefore, attention can be satisfactorily understood without making any such obscure claims on its behalf, so much the better. Where I tend to disagree with Ryle is that, from what he has written on the subject, he gives the impression that attending is a much simpler operation than it is. He maintains, for instance, that we attend by doing something with care, or heedfully, or, alternatively, by enjoying what we are doing. In each case we are given the picture of an individual act or activity which is done in a certain "style" so to speak, and we are left with the impression that nothing else need be going on in the attender's head at the time.

I do not wish to deny that this may be so in the case of certain forms of attention. What I do want to insist upon is that there are many instances in which we can be sure that there is more going on than the activity receiving attention. That is to say, I am maintaining that in order to engage in one activity attentively, it is sometimes necessary to engage in a further activity at the same time. In other words, there are times when the primary activity cannot engage attention unless a second activity is engaged in. What I have in mind is quite simply this, Often in order to give our attention to what we are doing, we have to think about what we are doing, and often the thinking that is required is not thinking in a dispositional sense, neither is it thinking in the sense of "being-thought-in-action," but

rather thinking in the sense of having overt thoughts directing what one is doing. The thinking in this sense may be openly theoretical and propositional in nature. Now it would be a very tough-minded man indeed who would commit himself to the proposition that the entertaining of propositional thoughts is never a necessary condition of attention of any kind. If we are not to be unreasonable we must admit the possibility that on some occasions engaging in an activity attentively necessitates engaging in the activity of thinking - in the sense of having thoughts - at the same time. What is not implied by this contention, is the idea that such a second activity is itself a sui generis activity of attending. And yet this was the idea Ryle was anxious to deny. He could perfectly properly have denied that, without having to deny that the presence of some other sorts of concomitant activity might be detected.

Provided that this important qualification is made to Ryle's adverbial theory of attention, we may agfee with him that attention is not itself an activity. We can then accept his claim that attention is a "polymorphous" notion, (1), covering a variety of activities whose special characteristic is that they cannot be engaged in at all, unless they are engaged in attentively. Such activities as perceiving, thinking watching, and enjoying belong to this class. They are all "attention-laden" activities. One cannot be said to be listening, for example, if one gives no attention at all to what one hears. The fact that we can be said to listen attentively, does not contradict this thesis, in spite of its implication that it is possible to listen inattentively. Such claims are perfectly compatible with the view that the absence of a minimum degree of attention disqualifies the activity from being

(1) Ryle, 'Pleasure', Essays in Philosophical Psychology p.202

identified as <u>listening</u> . The same is true, <u>mutatis mutandis</u> of all other attention-presupposing activities. On this interpretation, to say that attention <u>is</u> an activity, is an elliptical way of saying that there are activities that entail attending. Once it is realised that this is what is meant, there is no harm in referring to attention as an activity, as a form of short-hand for this position. This I shall do.

Having sided with Ryle on the question of the nature of attention, I must defend him, if I am to defend myself, against the refutation of the adverbial theory, put forward by Place. I must at once confess that I do not really understand Place's argument to the effect that Ryle's case breaks down. According to Place,

> The logical consequence of this theory is that the individual's own activities are the only sorts of things to which attention can be paid.

His objection to this position is as follows:

> If Ryle's theory were correct it should be nonsensical to talk of someone paying attention to anything other than an activity which he himself is performing. In fact, of course, we can speak with perfect propriety of the paying attention to any kind of object, phenomenon or sensation which is visible, audible, tangible, or otherwise perceptible. In such cases there is no activity which is being performed attentively or heedfully.(1)

My difficulty with Place's argument stems from the fact that I can only pay attention to a visible object by looking at it; an audible object by listening to it; and a tangible object by feeling it, and as far as I am concerned "looking," "listening" and "feeling" <u>are</u> activities. (I shall have more to say about this contention presently). But if this is true, I pay attention to such perceptible objects in virtue of engaging in attentive activities: it is as much activities which are attentive in these cases as in the cases of overt actions.

(1) Place, 'The Concept of Heed', <u>Essays in Philosophical Psychology</u> p. 217

Penelhum agrees with Place on this issue. But it is interesting to see that he recognises the existence of the line of defence I have just offered. I shall quote his remarks about this, but I must just point out that Penehlhum is thinking specifically about "enjoyment" rather than "attention" as such. Nevertheless this does not affect the argument, since Penelhum is in agreement with Ryle's view that enjoyment is itself a species of attention. We are therefore, free to make a mental substitution of the word "attention" for the word "enjoyment" in the following passage without violating its intent:

> A possible way out is to insist that what we are enjoying is some activity of our own, viz., that of watching or noticing the actor's performance. But this clearly entails the un-Rylean view that watching and noticing are activities, and therefore occurrences, and although I would not resist this, to hold it in the interest of a dispositional theory of enjoyment would be to construe one heed-concept as episodic and another as dispositional, which is hardly compatible with claiming that both species are of the same genus. What is compatible with this is claiming that all heed-concepts are episodic, and that some form of attention is part of the meaning of the word 'enjoyment.' (1)

In this passage Penelhum mentions the solution I proposed, and then argues that Ryle cannot acopt it. I believe Penelhum is right about this. My response is that if Ryle puts forward a theory of attention that does not square with his general philosophical position, so much the worse for his general philosophical position. All that I am interested in is getting it right about attention, and if I think that Ryle is right on this question, he has my support. I therefore accept Penelhum's way out. It is also evident from my general remarks about consciousness, that, unlike Ryle, I have no wish to avoid "episodic" accounts of such concepts as "perceiving," "thinking" - and "heed-concepts" in general.

(1) Penelhum, 'The Logic of Pleasure', <u>Essays in Philosophical Psychology</u>, pp. 243-4. The one claim in this passage from which I wish to dissociate myself is Penelhum's claim that noticing is an activity. Noticing is disqualified from being an activity because it lacks the verbal form of the continuous present tense. I can't say "I am noticing." Noticing is not something that can go on for a length of time.

9. I now wish to show that the analysis of attention I have been defending, squares with what I said about attention in the chapter on residual consciousness. My belief is that what I said there not only squares with the present analysis, but actually bears it out. Nothing that I said about the effect of attention on consciousness, suggests that attention is itself some unique element in consciousness. On the contrary the gist of the ideas developed in that chapter is that the various forms of attention are but the various ways in which consciousness is structured in possible situations. The nature of these structures was determined by the nature of the relation existing between residual consciousness and object of attention. We found this relationship to pass from one of sheer disconnectedness to one of a high degree of involvement, and each stage in this progression was seen to represent different forms of attention and varying degrees of those forms. We thus passed from "rudimentary" forms of attention such as reverie, and sense-Organ attention, through sensorial attention, to the highest forms of intellectual attention.

This theory does not support the claim that attention is itself some conscious process that is sui generis. On the other hand, it does support my contention against Ryle, that attention may sometimes require the cooperation of several activities, and is not always confined to the manner in which a single activity is engaged in. Interrogative attention is particularly relevant in this connection. In interrogative attention there is a meaningful relation between residual consciousness and the object of attention. A particular instance of this is the existence of a "master idea" in residual consciusness, which directs and determines the sort of attention given and the type of object singled out.(1) Such a master idea itself only comes to be an element in

(1) See above, p. 149.

residual consciousness, however, in virtue of some additional activity - whether it be thinking, or image formation - that produces it. Interrogative attention, therefore, provides a counter-instance to the simple adverbial theory of attention. A reductive analysis of attention in terms of performing a task in a certain manner, covers only some cases. In others, attention can only occur if two or more activities work in harness.

Finally, it will be recalled that I placed considerable importance on the actuation of muscles, in relation to attention. The connection between the two, in the case of sensorial attention, needed no arguing. But I sought to show that Ribot could be supported on the even more radical proposition that muscle-actuation was essential even in purely mental activity, such as the occurrence of thoughts and mental images. If this contention is sound, it gives great weight to the claim that attention always operates through _activity_. For muscle-actuation is activity _par excellence_: viz., "I am actuating such-and-such a muscle," entails "I have actuated such-and-such a muscle." It should be noted that muscle-actuation can occur even though no bodily movement is discernible. Muscle-actuation is required as much to inhibit as to promote bodily movement. Thus it may be seen that the references I made to muscular activity in the chapter on residual consciousness have a new significance in the light of the logical analysis of activity given in the present chapter. We can now better appreciate the nature of the dependence of consciousness on activities involving the use of our bodies.

10. In this section I apply the distinction between an activity and a state to perceptual concepts, in order to make explicit the form

of dependence of states of awareness on attentive activities. In other words, the time has arrived for me to show in detail how attentive activities sustain states of awareness, and by so doing to account for the continuousness of consciousness. I shall argue that in the case of such pairs of concepts as "looking and seeing," "listening and hearing," and "touching and feeling," the first member of each of these pairs of concepts is an activity, and the second, a state brought about through the activity. I shall also argue that we engage in these perceptual activities in order to bring into being states that until then had not existed, or in order to sustain in being an already existing state.

It may be remarked that a conceptual distinction marks these two latter possibilities. We speak of looking <u>for</u>, and listening <u>for</u>, when we wish to bring a state into being; and looking <u>at</u>, and listening <u>to</u>, when we wish to prolong an existing state. We do not possess these conceptual refinements in the case of the inferior senses, but we can contrive to make the same distinctions there, too, using the notion of trying. Thus if I wish to bring about a particular olfactory state, I describe myself as trying to smell something. But if the olfactory state already exists, I sustain it by sustaining my smelling activity.

The account I have just given, at once runs into a complication which has to be sorted out. The account seems to work quite well in the case of looking at an unchanging object such as a building, or listening to an unvarying noise. We can freely think of these cases as states of awareness. The difficulty occurs when what one sees is changing instead of constant, and when what one hears is a succession of different sounds and not one continuous sound. Are we to say in the latter possibility of each of the two cases that a new state arises with each change, or are

we to say that the same state endures in spite of changing elements within it? It seems to me that we could adopt two different points of view. (a) We could describe a visual field as a state in the one case, and an auditory field as a state in the other, and maintain that the states are prolonged for as long as they are sustained by a single episode of continuous activity - of looking, in the one case, and of listening, in the other. This would mean drawing a distinction between the fact _that_ one was seeing, _from what_ one was seeing: form from content. (b) We could hold that the state lasted for as long as some element in the sense field could be identified as the same, provided that the sense field was sustained by a single episode of sense-organ activity. I suggest that (b) is the less artificial position of the two. For this reason it is the one I shall adopt.

My argument is considerably helped by the fact that Barnes has arrived at conclusions very similar to my own, in a paper "On Seeing and Hearing." (1). I shall, therefore, base the discussion on that paper, both for the support it gives to my own position, and for the opportunity it affords me to define my position more precisely by showing the respects in which it diverges from Barnes's position. Moreover, it is Barnes who expresses the reservation about classifying a perceptual awareness as a state, which I mentioned on page 289, and it will be convenient to include that matter in the present discussion.

Although Barnes does not attempt, as I have done, to make explicit the logical characteristics that distinguish activities from states, to all intents and purposes he offers the same analysis of looking and seeing, and, by implication, of listening and hearing, that I

(1) W.H.F. Barnes, 'On Seeing and Hearing', _Contemporary British Philosophy_, ed. H.D. Lewis, (London, 1956)

have given. In the passage that follows he eliminates one possibility by rejecting the idea that seeing and hearing are activities.

> I think there can be little doubt that seeing a tree, hearing a bell, etc., are neither activities nor processes and are only in a partial way states. That they are not activities can be seen from the fact that we do not normally answer questions such as 'What are you doing?' or 'What did you do?' with 'I am seeing the moon rise' and 'I saw the moon rise.' The normal answers would be 'I am watching the moon rise,' and 'I watched the moon rise.' The absence of the continuous present tense seems also to prove that seeing and hearing are not processes.(1)

The remaining possibility would seem to be that seeing and hearing are states, and Barnes shows himself to be well aware that they share with states the feature that they have duration, or <u>last</u> for a time. This is clear from a passage in which looking and seeing are compared with searching and finding.

> While looking for something is like searching for something in referring to an activity, seeing has a dual role, (a) like finding, which refers to the end of an activity and the beginning of a state of affairs, and (b) like possessing, which refers not to an activity but to a state of affairs. In sense (a) I may exclaim 'Ah! I see it now.' In this case it is plausible to say that seeing is 'detecting' or 'spotting.' But if someone asks 'Do you see that tree outside the window?' and I say 'Yes, I see it: I've been looking at it for some time,' I am using <u>see</u> in sense (b) and it does not mean detect here. 'I still see it' and 'I still have it in my sight' are like 'I still have it' and 'I still have it in my possession.' Now although we do not use the continuous tenses of a verb such as <u>possess</u>, this does not mean that the state of possession cannot have any duration. We say 'I had it all the time': and similarly 'I saw you all the time' or 'I could see you all the time'. The state, though it has duration, is complete at each moment of its duration.(2)

We see, therefore, that Barnes agrees with us in finding "seeing" - and by implication "hearing," etc. - to have all the logical features which my analysis has shown a <u>state</u> to have. In spite of this he is unhappy about calling seeing and hearing "states," and his reasons are as follows:

(1) Barnes, 'On Seeing and Hearing,' p. 70.

(2) Ibid. pp. 74-5.

> Are seeing and hearing states? They would have to be states in which people and animals could be. Now I can, of course, be in a certain physical state, e.g., filthy, sick, or in a mental state, e.g. depressed, hilarious, or in a state which it is difficult to classify as exclusively physical or mental, e.g. tense, exhausted. And there is also a looser use of 'state' in which when I have something wrong with a part of me I can be said to be in a certain state, e.g. when I have a headache or nausea. Seeing something is not very much like being in a state in any of these uses. But there is a class of verbs which refer not so much to a state in which I am as to a state of affairs in which I am central, e.g. have, possess, own. The activity or process of buying is followed by the state of having. There seems to be a certain parallel between this sort of verb and verbs such as seeing and hearing. We do not normally use the continuous tense of verbs referring to this kind of state; we do not normally say 'I am having the pencil in my hand.' And these verbs of ownership further resemble verbs such as seeing and hearing in referring not so much to my state as to my situation vis-a-vis something else. But granting these resemblances we should not normally refer to seeing and hearing as states. If they are not activities, processes or states, what are they? The answer, I think, is that they are experiences. (1)

Now these are no doubt solid reasons for refusing to call seeing and hearing states. Moreover, Barnes could have added a further reason making the same point. We tend to think of a thing being in one state at a time, and not in several different states at once. The state of a thing seems to encompass the whole being of the thing, and it is this idea which makes it seem implausible for a thing to be in two or more states at the same time. But we see, hear, feel, etc., at the same time, and if each of these concepts describes a state, we must be in as many states at once as we have awarenesses.

It would seem that this conclusion can only be avoided if we follow Barnes and deny that awarenesses are states. We may concede that it is misleading so to classify them. And yet it cannot be said that Barnes's answer, suggesting that they are experiences, is a happy one. For one thing, his answer can be looked upon as a category mistake. It would be logically objectionable to say, "There are activities, processes, performances, transitory acts, states, events, and experiences."

(1) Barnes, 'On Seeing and Hearing,' pp. 70-1. It is worth remarking how well what Barnes says about the concept "having" fits in with the analysis of "having," given in ch. 4, sec.6 above.

Experiences do not belong in such a categorial list. Experiences are, rather, one of the sorts of thing of which we might ask, "Are they activities, performances, states, etc.?" We must either say that experiences <u>do</u> fall under one of these heads, or that the list of categories is incomplete, and that experiences must fall under some further concept not yet identified. The latter possibility can at once be ruled out, since the as yet undiscovered category would have to possess precisely the logical features possessed by a state. Unless it did, it would not fit Barnes's "experiences," which, as we have seen, have the logical features of states.

Now it seems to me that the answer to this conundrum is to boldly accept the proposition that forms of awareness such as seeing, hearing and feeling, are states. The objections Barnes has raised, and to which I have added, can then be overcome as follows. We can insist that we are using the word "state" as an <u>analytical</u> concept, and that by calling "X" a state we are making a logical distinction between the status of X and the status of something else: for instance, an activity. We do not need to claim that this identification of awareness as a state needs to correspond with what are called "states" in ordinary language. We could suggest that the reason seeing, hearing, etc., are not usually called states, is the simple one that we have more exact concepts already in use, with which to refer to such states, without calling them states. We could instance Barnes's "experiences," my "awarenesses," and indeed the particular concepts "seeing," "hearing," and"feeling" themselves, to substantiate this point.

Barnes's objections only arise on the assumption that when the word "state" is used in ordinary language, it is being used to make the logical distinctions with which we have been concerned, but I see no

reason to make that assumption. It is true that when making the logical distinction we look for a word in common usage that seems to come most close to reflecting the logical features we have in mind, and the word "state" unquestionably does that. Nevertheless we are not entitled to assume that the word "state" has this one fixed meaning in ordinary usage, such that it always reflects the philosophical distinction we have identified. Neither are we entitled to assume that every time we come across a concept describing a state: e.g., seeing; we ought to be able to rephrase a sentence using that concept, with one that leaves it out, and substitutes a phrase using the word "state." And yet much of what Barnes says seems to imply that we ought to be able to do this. Barnes's mistake, it seems to me, is the one of identifying philosophical distinctions with ordinary usage, and without going any further, it can safely be said that the relation between them is not as simple as that. I conclude, therefore, that seeing, hearing, feeling, etc., are _states_ from a philosophical point of view, even though it would not be proper in ordinary usage to _call_ them states. Having said that, let us proceed to Barnes's analysis of _looking_ and _listening_.

In this connection Barnes has this to say:

> Corresponding to the experience verbs _see_, _hear_, _taste_, _smell_, _feel_ are the activity verbs _look_, _listen_, _taste_, _sniff_ (or _smell_), and _feel_. The relationship between the two corresponding verbs is not in all cases the same.

He proceeds to list the differences, but as he makes essentially the same points about their relationships as I had occasion to make earlier in this section, there is no need to repeat them. Barnes does not explicitly make the point, although it is certainly implied in his analysis, that his list of activity verbs identifies activities, because in each case it is true of them that "A is øing" entails "A has øed." That is, if I am

looking, I must have already looked, and similarly for the remaining cases of perceiving. In other words, the result of each of these activities comes into being as soon as the activity commences, <u>lasts</u> for as long as the activity <u>goes on</u>, and perishes the moment the activity ceases. As a matter of fact, Barnes has a concept, which corresponds with my concept of a result$_e$, (1), and this concept he calls an "upshot." He criticises Ryle for not distinguishing between the concept of an achievement, and the concept of an upshot. Every action has, according to Barnes, an upshot, but not every action results in an achievement. Now Barnes does suggest that every activity also has an upshot. Dealing with the activity of walking, he points out that at each moment the walker reaches a certain point, and adds:

> It would be inappropriate, as we have already seen, to refer to this as an achievement. It is a result or upshot. With any kind of movement there is a continuous upshot, consisting in the fact that at every moment what is moving is at a different point in space.(2)

However, Barnes's analysis is bound to result in inconsistency, because in his example of the activity of walking, the "upshot" is of a different sort to the "upshot" produced by an action. In other words, Barnes fails to distinguish two senses of 'upshot', corresponding to the distinction I have made between a result$_c$ and a result$_e$. The inconsistency will emerge shortly.

We come now to the crucial question of the relationship between perceptual activity and perceptual state. Barnes has this to say in connection with the particular case of looking and seeing:

> Looking about is a thing that I can do and it has as its continuous upshot seeing first one thing and then another. Looking at some

(1) See above, p. 283.

(2) Barnes, 'Seeing and Hearing,' p. 73.

> particular thing has as its continuous upshot seeing first one feature of it and then another. Looking for some particular thing, e.g., a gentian, in so far as it involves looking about has as its continuous upshot seeing first one thing and then another: it is crowned by achievement only in so far as it has as an upshot seeing a gentian.(1)

In this passage Barnes gives us an excellent example of an activity sustaining a state. For it is evident that his description of a "continuous upshot" is a description of a state that is dependent on a sustaining activity. A continuous upshot must last as long as the activity of which it is the upshot, itself goes on. This means that the continuousness of the activity is reflected in the continuousness of the state supervening upon the activity.

The significance of this example is that it provides evidence of an activity sustaining a state, in one concrete case. This confirms the thesis for which I have been arguing, in as much as a general thesis is confirmed through its instantiations. Moreover, the example in question is not merely a confirming instance of the thesis. It may be regarded as a paradigm case of an attentive activity sustaining a perceptual state. It is thus a demonstration of the thesis that the continuousness of consciousness is brought about by the continuousness of a sustaining activity.

This conclusion is easily seen to follow, when it is remembered that "looking" has been found, on analysis, to be an attentive <u>activity</u>, and "seeing" has been shown to be a <u>state</u> of awareness. Now since an awareness is an element of consciousness, and an awareness has been shown to be continuous, it can be inferred that the consciousness of which it is an element, must itself be continuous.

11. The argument has come full circle to the position I adopted

(1) Loc. cit.

vis-a-vis. the analysis of consciousness given by Serial Theorists. I objected to their analysis of consciousness into units, such as Grice's total temporary states, on the ground that this destroyed the continuity of consciousness. I suggested instead that we could resist the assumption that consciousness could be broken up into temporal units, if we realised that the elements of consciousness were experiences (awarenesses) which themselves endured through time. On this basis I maintained that consciousness gained its continuity from the overlap of such experiences, much as a rope is made up of the intertwining of a number of shorter strands. This thesis rested on the assumption that experiences themselves possessed the required temporal duration and sameness of identity, without which they could not perform the function allotted to them. In the extended examination of perceptual activities and perceptual awareness, which has just been completed, I attempted to make good this assumption. Although the last details have yet to be added to the thesis, its main burden is now clear.

Its impact can, perhaps, best be appreciated if we return once again to the example I gave when I outlined the thesis initially. I took the example of seeing a tree. (1) If we think of the sight of a tree as the "continuous upshot" - to use Barnes's phrase - of the activity of looking, then we can appreciate that it makes no sense to ask how many "sightings" of the tree the perceiver registers, after, say, half an hour of solidly looking at the tree. We can only ask the perceiver how many times he has seen the tree, if we suppose him to have taken his eyes off it one or more times. He can then reply, for instance, "I've seen it three times now" - having looked at it thrice. But if the hypothesis is adopted that consciousness is

(1) See above, p. 276.

composed of a succession of temporal units, we would have every right to expect an answer to the question "How many visual experiences have you had of the tree since you started looking at it five minutes ago?" This question is not only manifestly absurd, but, more importantly, we can explain why it is absurd. Given that we are describing a continuous upshot - or a result$_c$ on my analysis - we see that we are dealing with something continuous and not with distinct episodes. We cannot, therefore, break up such a continuous upshot into units, without seriously misrepresenting its character.

Certain details remain to be filled in, before this view stands a chance of withstanding criticism. I begin by dealing with what I asserted to be an inconsistency which Barnes's position runs into. It will have been noticed that he instances the relationship between looking and seeing, as an example of the relationship between an activity and a state. He had, however, previously acknowledged that this particular pair of perceptual concepts was atypical, in that looking always entailed seeing, whereas other pairs of perceptual concepts followed the pattern of listening and hearing: i.e., listening does not entail hearing. The difficulty arises for Barnes as soon as he claims that all activities have a continuous upshot, or result: a claim we noticed him to make. If seeing is taken to be the result of looking, it follows that hearing must be the result of listening, smelling the result of sniffing, and so forth. But in the case of listening, and smelling, the activity can occur without the result occurring. It follows that not all perceptual activity has an upshot, or result. But this is <u>ex hypothesi</u> false: hence the inconsistency.

The way in which this inconsistency can be avoided is, I suggest,

the following. We must recognise that the sense in which every perceptual activity has a result, or continuous upshot, cannot be the sense in which perceptual awareness is a result or continuous upshot. In other words we are constrained to distinguish two kinds of continuous upshot; one of which is intrinsic to the occurrence of the activity, and the other which is not. Now, on my analysis, every activity brings about a $result_c$, and this result is described by a statement in which the activity-verb appears in the perfect tense. Thus the $result_c$ of my listening, is that I have listened; the $result_c$ of my looking, is that I have looked; and the $result_c$ of my sniffing, is that I have sniffed. It is in this sense of result, that every activity has a result, and it is plainly of this sense of result that Barnes's remark (quoted on page 305) is true: namely that "With any kind of movement there is a continuous upshot." What Barnes is plainly not entitled to do, is to identify $result_c$ in this sense, with the sense in which "seeing", "hearing," "smelling," etc. are results. Now it would be conceptually very neat if I were able to claim that Barnes had simply overlooked my distinction between $result_c$ and $result_e$, and that perceptual states were results of the latter sort. But this simple way out would be incorrect. A $result_e$ is an end-state, which only comes into being upon completion of a task, and seeing, hearing, etc., are not states of that sort. We have no option but to recognise that seeing, hearing, etc., are a second type of $result_c$ which is not analytically tied to the activity, but is its <u>rationale</u>. Thus, in the case of sensorial attention, we look in order to see, listen in order to hear, sniff in order to smell, and so forth. When our activity is successful the appropriate state of awareness supervenes, and when this happens we have a second type of $result_c$ coming on top of the first

type of result$_c$: another type of continuous upshot altogether.

We can now, finally, understand the circumstances in which a perceptual activity will be responsible for sustaining a state of awareness. I maintained in section 6 that attention establishes a logical link between perceptual activity and its corresponding perceptual state. This it does when the perceiver gives attention to his awareness. It is then a necessary condition of his doing so, that it should be the result$_c$ of his perceptual activity. In this circumstance the state of awareness is of necessity sustained by the perceptual activity, and the continuousness of the seeing, hearing, or feeling, is proven.

I shall bring this chapter to an end with a summary of its findings. My objective was to show that the theory I am advocating could successfully account for the persistence of the self through time. To this end I first tried to show that the special problems that the Serial Theory of the Self was designed to solve, only arise on an improper understanding of consciousness. I suggested that the idea that consciousness could be conceived to be composed of a succession of temporal units, such as Grice's total temporary states, received what plausibility it had, from the fact that their analysis of consciousness failed to take the existence of residual consciousness into account. I argued that it was meaningless to conceive of residual consciousness as made up of a series of temporal units, and concluded that a self equated with residual consciousness would avoid the difficulties confronting the Serial Theory. Finally, leaving aside residual consciousness, I sought to show by a more positive approach that there are circumstances in which we have no option but to understand consciousness as continuous, even when we confine ourselves to

objects of attention (in this case perceptual awarenesses).

On page 276 I claimed three consequences for this examination of perceptual consciousness. (a) That it would demonstrate the continuity of consciousness. If my argument is successful this undertaking has been fulfilled. (b) That it would reveal the connection between sense awareness and attention. Here too it will I hope be agreed that my promise has been fulfilled. (c) That it would throw light on the relation between the self and its body. This undertaking is still unaccomplished. Although the discussion may have produced certain hints, the implications of the analysis for this particular issue have not been brought out. This I endeavour to do in the remaining chapter.

o O o

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

1. In the preceding chapters I have endeavoured to set out a theory of the self that escapes the objections that beset both the Pure Ego Theory and the Serial Theory, and yet one that locates the self within experience. I was concerned to discover the sense in which each person is a self to himself as distinct from the sense in which other selves are taken by us to be selves. In other words my aim was to advance a theory of the self that had as its foundation the fact that our knowledge of selves is a knowledge of what we ourselves are. I have suggested that the self disclosed in inner experience is none other than an aspect of consciousness itself. I have argued that all consciousness is polarized by attention into two distinct spheres and that the sphere I have called residual consciousness possesses uniquely those characteristics we attribute to the "felt" self.

I now wish to consider the equation of the self with residual consciousness in the wider context of the mind-body problem. The theory has this implication, at least at the purely formal level, that the identity of the self would remain intact even if it should transpire that the relation between mind and body was a purely contingent one. That is to say, the idea of the self as residual consciousness would be

feasible even if the self were disembodied. This conclusion follows from the fact that consciousness is common to an embodied self and a disembodied self, and a self located in consciousness would survive loss of its body provided that consciousness survived detachment from its former body. This consequence of my theory is significant, because philosophers such as Strawson (1), and Quinton (2), who are against the idea of the duality of mind and body, nevertheless concede that the idea of survival after death is at least logically conceivable. They refuse, in other words, to be driven to the point of maintaining that the idea of a disembodied self is self-contradictory.(3) The theory I am advocating, therefore, would not be falsified if it were conclusively shown that it was logically possible for a self to exist in a disembodied form. I said, however, that it was only in a formal sense that my theory was compatible with the proposition that the relation between self and body was purely contingent. By this I mean that much of the substance of my analysis of consciousness is in line with the conclusion that we are essentially embodied selves, and consequently that the logical possibility of disembodied existence (if such it is)

(1) Strawson, Individuals, p. 115.

(2) A. Quinton, 'The Idea of the Soul', Philosophical Studies, vol. LXIX, (1960).

(3) Of course survival after death need not necessarily be disembodied survival, but if it is not, the claim of logical independence of a person and his body is weakened, if not withdrawn.

is never realized. I shall explain the considerations which lend weight to this conclusion, and by so doing I hope to discharge my commitment to explain the relation between the self and its body, which I left over from chapter five.

The most radical form of contingency between a self and its body is the one that allows complete separation between a self and its body such that both could exist independently. This is the condition demanded if the self is to be capable of a disembodied existence. A lesser form of contingency is the one in which the connection between a self and a particular body is contingent, although the connection between a self and some body remains a necessary connection. In the latter case I can conceive of waking up tomorrow morning and discovering that I had a completely different body. This would be very different from the former possibility, according to which I could wake up tomorrow morning and discover that I had no body at all. What I have to say against the claim to contingency in the relation between a self and his body will apply to the radical form of contingency and not to the lesser form.

Nothing that I have to say will be found to be incompatible with the idea that we might exchange bodies. But I should point out that my position is incompatible with the theory that would make bodily continuity a sufficient condition of self-identity. For on the bodily criterion of self-identity, if I awoke to find I had a different body, my identity would consist in the identity other people ascribed to the body I now had. But that would entail that all my

memories would be delusive. This state of affairs might be thought to present a logical _impasse_. For whereas _I_ claim that I have someone else's body, _everyone else_ will claim that the person whom they have identified through the body had become schizophrenic and claimed to be someone else. It might even appear that it would be difficult to resist the identification made by other people on the basis of bodily continuity, since it would be a more reasonable hypothesis that I was having hallucinations about my identity, than that everyone else was in error. However the position is not by any means as simple as that. For suppose my claim not to be the person whose body I had, were to be taken seriously. It could then be investigated. Suppose now that my memories of being the person I claim to be were checked and found by relatives of the person I claim to be, to be memories that only the authentic person I claim to be could have had. In that case if my claim is rejected the new problem is created of having to explain how I come to have delusive memories that in fact tally miraculously with the memories the person I claim to be might have been expected to have had, and which contain information that only he could have had.

Faced with this problem it could easily come to seem more credible to agree that I had indeed changed my body and was the person I claim to be, than to insist that I was the person whose body I had, but who had inexplicably acquired memories belonging to someone else's biography. Of course we should be reluctant to take this course if the person I claimed to be was discovered alive, had not thought that he

had suffered bodily change, and also had precisely the same set of memories I claim to have. If I were introduced to such a person, and it had meanwhile been agreed that I was the person I claimed to be, then I would be being introduced to myself. But this is absurd. I, being one man with one body, cannot shake hands with another man and at the same time claim that I am he.

Quite clearly it would be impossible to lay down criteria for self-identity which would work successfully in every logically possible situation. A criterion that ruled out *no* possibilities would be quite useless to help us reach a decision as between possibilities. That is to say unless a criterion of self-identity supplies us with a rule for saying that this man is not the same man as that man, it is *ipso facto* in no sense a criterion of anything. Nevertheless if it did happen that two or more men often seemed to share the same biographical memory, the simplest course for us *might* be to give up our present ideas about the numerical identity of selves, and concede the possibility of one person becoming two people.

But it is not my aim to countenance such far-fetched possibilities as these. I have restricted myself to identifying the selves we ourselves are in the known conditions of human life. Once we move beyond the reach of ordinary experience to consider such imaginary cases, we at the same time forsake the selves we are trying to give an account of. We have no experience of such imaginary selves, and are thus unable to speak authoratitively - because first-hand - about

them. Indeed such imaginary selves are only conceivable by us to the extent that they preserve some links with selves under human conditions. In other words our understanding of imaginary selves is derivative and presupposes our understanding of selves in human conditions.(1) We are entitled, therefore, to offer an account of the selves we ourselves are, without feeling that our account is in any way compromised if it does not cover such imaginary selves. On the contrary, we could argue that the onus is on those who think up imaginary selves to show that their conceptions are intelligible, and their intelligibility must of necessity be measured against what is explicable as possibly happening to the selves we ourselves are. Having said this, let me proceed to draw out the implications of the theory of the self I have put forward, on the question of the relation between the self and its body.

As I pointed out, when any theory of the self locates the self within experience, the presumption is that such a self has no essential dependence upon a body. This presumption may be attributed to the belief in the epistemological autonomy of consciousness. By this I mean the belief that no connection except a contingent one can be established between consciousness and the body (bodily processes). Two types of connection are the ones that largely figure in this belief.

(a) It could be held that the connection between consciousness

(1) Strawson stresses this point when he says that an individual can only think of himself as a disembodied being by thinking of himself as <u>dis</u>embodied, as a <u>former</u> person. <u>Individuals</u>, p. 116.

and associated body is a causal one.(1) On the orthodox Humean view of causality it immediately follows that a causal connection between consciousness and bodily processes is contingent. (b) It could be held that states of consciousness are identical with certain bodily processes. However, those philosophers exploring the Identity Theory explicitly state that the identity they have in mind is only "contingent identity". That is to say, the hypothesis could be either true or false, and it is not implied that by a state of consciousness we <u>mean</u> a brain process.(2) Now the main point I wish to make in connection with such views as these, which assume a contingent relation between consciousness and a body, is that the body is conceived in an overly physical way. It is not in any way distinguished from a straightforward material object, or from an aggregate of purely physical events. In particular it is not conceived of as a body <u>for</u> consciousness. As selves with bodies, we do not think of our bodies as physical objects except when we lose control over them, and even less do we think of them as physical processes or events. Even Strawson, who I am sure would repudiate the

(1) See A.J. Ayer, <u>The Concept of a Person</u>, (London, 1963) p. 116, where he says "I am, however, inclined to think that personal identity depends upon the identity of the body, and that a person's ownership of states of consciousness consists in their standing in a special causal relation to the body by which he is identified."

(2) See U.T. Place, 'Is Consciousness a Brain Process?' and J.J.C. Smart, 'Sensations and Brain Processes' both of which are printed in <u>The Philosophy of Mind</u>, ed. V.C. Chappell, (Prentice Hall, 1962).

suggestion that one's body was merely a material object, does not give an unequivocal lead on this question. By placing such accent on the body's function as an identificatory tag of a person, the central function of the body on Strawson's account is one it can fulfil _qua_ material object. It is my belief that Strawson gives pride of place to the body as a means of identification because for him the problem of personal identity is primarily a question of _other_ people's identity, not one's own. It is notable that although Strawson allows that we have knowledge of certain of our states of consciousness not on the basis of observation,(1), he makes no comparable allowance for the possibility of our knowing our own identity not on the basis of observation (of our bodies). In contra-distinction to these approaches, which downgrade the body to the level of a material object, I intend to stress the significance of the body as it is _for_ consciousness. In other words I want to stress the importance of viewing the body as alive and active. In short I wish to stress the agency of the body.(2)

2. My central contention in support of the claim that the body should be viewed as having a much closer relation to consciousness than Strawson's account suggests, is based on the idea that perceptual activities are themselves purposive

(1) Strawson, _Individuals_, Ch. 3.

(2) The word "body" has in many contexts a passive sense, and this inclines us to think of it as akin to an ordinary physical object.

<u>bodily</u> activities.(1) Looking, listening, sniffing, feeling tactually, and tasting, are each and every one activities in which muscular operations of the body essentially enter. They are all things we <u>do</u> through the agency of our bodies. If I were to say that we use our bodies as instruments for such perceptual activities I would be misrepresenting the position. If one uses something as an instrument it is usually possible to find some other instrument which one could use in its place. But in the case of perceptual activities we could not replace our bodily instrumentality in a similar way. It is not, therefore, that we use our bodies, as a means, in the case of perceptual activities. Perceptual activities are irrevocably bodily. That is, the concepts "looking", "listening", "tasting", etc., are concepts that we can only understand as signifying bodily activities.

This point can best be substantiated by demonstrating the failure of a counter-argument. It might be objected that we can look without knowing that it is with our eyes that we look, sniff without knowing that it is with our nose we sniff, and so forth. In fact this information may be something we learn long after we have learned to look, or sniff, etc. It follows, so the objection runs, that it can be no part of knowing what it is to engage in these activities, that we should know what part of the body they are accomplished with. Now I think this objection can be conceded, and it can be

(1) When I call perceptual activities bodily activities it must not be thought that they are being assimilated with bodily processes. For this distinction see p.160 above.

agreed that we are able to look without knowing that the eye is the organ of sight, the ear the organ of hearing, and so on. But this does not mean that we must also be ignorant of the fact that these activities are bodily. Knowing how to look involves knowing how to make certain movements with our bodies. We cannot be ignorant of that fact and still claim to understand what looking is. I conclude, therefore, that the bodily involvement in perceptual activities can only be made to seem contingent if the nature of the bodily involvement is wrongly described.

An additional consideration is the fact that all these perceptual bodily activities are accompanied by kinaesthetic sensations. Now kinaesthetic sensations are technically so-called, but to the non-expert, kinaesthetic sensations are nothing other than his experiences of moving or controlling certain movements of his body. They are not separated in his mind and treated as signs of bodily activity. The kinaesthetic sensations are what bodily movements are for consciousness. We can appreciate this fact by thinking of forming a mental image of kinaesthetic sensations. We would think of them as sensations as of moving the arm, leg, head or toe, not as disembodied sensations. The experience of amputees bears out my assertion. A man without a leg will claim that he can feel the leg moving: he does not deduce the movement from the sensation. Since, however, he knows that he has no leg, he knows that the experience is delusive, and after a time he will cease to be deceived by it. But the point remains that his mind takes quite a bit of

disabusing, thus revealing how difficult it is to avoid thinking of kinaesthetic sensations as awareness of bodily activity. The importance of this is that it means that we come to think of our kinaesthetic sensations as those elements of consciousness we produce by our bodily activity. It is difficult, as a result, to envisage the connection between kinaesthetic sensations and our bodies as contingent, such that the sensations could occur even though there were no body to be responsible for them.

I have stressed the point that perceptual activities essentially involve the body, not in a passive causal sense, but in an active operational sense. The significance of this is as follows. I have already described what I take to be the connection between perceptual activities such as looking, listening and feeling, and states of awareness such as seeing, hearing, and feeling. By now attempting to establish the intrinsic connection between looking, listening and feeling, on the one hand, and bodily activities on the other, it follows that if both these attempts are successful a necessary connection has been established between certain states of awareness (perceptions) and certain sorts of bodily activity. It must be appreciated that I am not suggesting that there is a necessary connection between all perceptual awareness and bodily activity. It might be possible to envisage cases of perceptual awareness that are not dependent on bodily activity. I am making the lesser claim that there is a necessary connection between perceptual awareness and bodily activity in the special case <u>in which the awareness holds the</u>

<u>attention</u> of the percipient. I am maintaining, in other words, that there are cases of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc., in which it does not make sense to say that one was not conscious of looking, listening, or feeling. If I have deliberately chosen to look in order to see an object, and I achieve my intention by seeing the object, it would be self-contradictory for me to claim that I did not know that I was looking. This is true, <u>mutatis mutandis</u> of listening and feeling.

If my argument is sound, therefore, sense perception of this order would not be intelligible for a disembodied being, since a disembodied being would not even know what constituted "looking", "listening", or "feeling", and would in consequence be unable to enjoy the resultant state of awareness. It may be gathered that I am not ruling out the possibility of seeing without being conscious of looking, hearing without being conscious of listening, and so forth. I therefore do not rule out the possibility of a disembodied being seeing without looking, hearing without listening, and so forth. My argument is that even if we accept such a possibility, we cannot accept the further possibility that a disembodied being is in the position to enjoy that form of perceptual awareness that <u>is</u> the result of engaging in the corresponding perceptual activities. But such awareness forms a very large part of the experience of the selves we are. It follows that a large part of our experience is only meaningful for selves with bodies. We cannot therefore accept the proposition that the connection between ourselves and our bodies is contingent without at the

same time being prepared to concede a radical reduction in the range of experience open to us. In short we cannot admit that our bodies are in a contingent relation to ourselves, without ceasing to refer to the selves we ourselves are.

The emphasis I have placed on looking, listening, etc., as bodily <u>activities</u> in which selves engage is worth contrasting with some points Strawson makes on the relation between perceptual experience and the body. He writes:

> Consider merely some of the ways in which the character of a person's <u>perceptual experience</u> is dependent on facts about his own body. Let us take his visual experience. The dependence is more complicated and many-sided than may at first be obvious. First, there is that group of empirical facts of which the most familiar is that if the eyelids of that body are closed, the person sees nothing. To this group belong all the facts known to ophthalmic surgeons. Second, there is the fact that what falls within his field of vision at any moment depends in part on the <u>orientation</u> of his eyes, i.e. on the direction his head is turned in, and on the <u>orientation</u> of his eyeballs in their sockets. And, third, there is the fact that <u>where he sees from</u> - or what his possible field of vision at any moment is - depends on where his body, and in particular his head, is located.(1)

Strawson goes on to argue, on the basis of these three facts, that although they demand that perceptual experience be dependent on a body, they do not logically demand that it be the <u>same</u> body for each of the three facts. But that argument is not my immediate concern. What I wish to draw attention to is Strawson's assumption that it is <u>facts</u> about a body that are relevant to the dependence of perceptual experience on bodies. He mentions such things as the eyes being open, the <u>direction</u> of the head, the <u>orientation</u> of the eyeballs, and the <u>position</u> seen from. The picture this conjures up is one

(1) Strawson, <u>Individuals</u>, p. 90.

of an inert body, "set up" to face in the appropriate direction. The body is treated as though it were a piece of optical equipment. Given this assumption it makes sense when he goes on to consider the possibility that a perceiver may be dependent on three different bodies, A, B, and C, such that S (the perceiver) sees when A's eyes are open, but whether B and C's eyes are open is irrelevant; sees from the position of C, but not from A and B; sees when B's head and eyes are turned in a certain direction, but not A's and B's.

Now my objection to Strawson's argument is that he makes no mention of seeing as a result of looking, and in particular he makes no mention of seeing as a result of deliberately actuating one's body in the activity of looking. The facts Strawson mentions, about the eyes being open, the head facing a certain direction, etc., are necessary conditions of deliberately looking, but they are not sufficient conditions of the same. A person can have his eyes open, have his head orientated in a certain direction, and so forth, and yet not be looking at anything, or looking in any sense at all. He could be in a hypnotic trance in which he reports that he sees nothing. It is evident that Strawson leaves out of account the idea of the body as active in a more central sense than causally effective. Once we bring in the idea of "looking", and the bodily actuation it involves, Strawson's whole argument collapses.

Let us return to Strawson's example of the perceiver S whose visual perception depends on the cooperation of three bodies. We can at once ask "Which of the three bodies is the percipient S?" The answer must be that whatever choice we

make will be arbitrary. But if we ask "Which of the three is looking?" the position is immediately different. We can find out which of the three is willing the looking: i.e., trying to look at this rather than that, taking steps to prevent an object from being lost sight of, and so forth. The one of which this is true, will be S. Therefore one body will still be uniquely the perceiver's body. If, however, S could directly will the movements of all three bodies, so that if S desired to look at an object, he could do so by willing A's eyes to be open and properly focussed, willing B's appropriate head movements, and willing C's body to be in the right place, then Strawson would have to admit that the whole idea of one person-one body would have to be abandoned. It is evident that Strawson has failed to establish that the "facts" of perception cannot themselves guarantee the uniqueness of a single body for each percipient. His mistake is, I maintain, thinking of the body as material object, instead of the body as perceiver.

I think my argument shows that it is wrong to concentrate on the physical facts if one is to establish a non-contingent connection between sense-experience and the body. To do so presupposes altogether too mechanical a conception of the relationship between the two. I hope I have succeeded in showing that the line I have adopted, of making the connection between sense-experience and the body depend on the connection between sense awareness and bodily activities, is a sounder one.

3. I argued in the chapter on residual consciousness that

not only was sense awareness dependent on bodily activities, but that mental imagery was also dependent on bodily activities. In addition to this I argued that our thoughts receive expression in symbols that are drawn from observable objects or mental images. It follows that thoughts too, on this reasoning, must depend on the bodily activities that bring about the perception of objects, or the mental imagery. If this is indeed the case, all of consciousness might be claimed to be dependent upon bodily activities, and the notion of the contingency of the relation between consciousness and the body would be radically in doubt.

Needless to say the extension of my thesis to mental imagery and thoughts cannot be defended with as much confidence as it is possible to defend the narrower thesis for which I have been arguing in the previous section. I tried to show in the chapter on residual consciousness how such a broadening of the theory might be undertaken, and gave some arguments which pointed in that direction. If the broader thesis could be conclusively established, it would follow that there would be a complete logical dependence of consciousness on bodily activity. All I am in fact asserting is the more modest proposition of a partial logical dependence of some forms of consciousness on bodily activity.

What must not be lost sight of, however, is that on both the narrower and the broader interpretation of the theory, the content of residual consciousness will in large measure consist of elements of consciousness that only exist in virtue of the fact that the selves we are, have bodies. Divorce the self

from the body, and the resulting residual consciousness would be radically altered. On my theory this would mean a radical alteration in the self that experienced such a severing of self from body. Such a self would of necessity be very different from the selves we know first-hand. We would be able to assert with confidence "We are not such selves as that."

It may now be realized that the argument of chapter three to the effect that residual consciousness was partly the result of the existence of sensorial attention, has a significance that I have not until now been ready to bring out: namely the implication that residual consciousness, as there conceived, was based on the existence of the body-as-agency. The equation of residual consciousness and the self thus had the significance that the self was conceived as necessarily having a body. Thus, although in a purely formal sense residual consciousness is not logically dependent on a body, in the material sense implied by our referring to the residual consciousness of human selves, it is logically dependent on our having bodies. That is to say, if we did not have bodies, we would not have the type of residual consciousness we do have: without bodies we would not be the sort of selves that we are with bodies. I am not suggesting that the whole character of residual consciousness is to be attributed to its connection with a body. The dynamic aspect of residual consciousness that is revealed in its function in interrogative attention, remains unaffected by my present argument. However, the conclusions I reached about the significance of kinaesthetic sensation in

the attentive process, are reinforced by the present argument. In retrospect it can be seen that the view of residual consciousness presented in chapter three prepared the way for the position I have been arguing for here, to the effect that we are essentially <u>embodied</u> selves (to use Stout's phrase), and in opposition to the thesis that the self is only contingently related to a body. It should not be forgotten, either, that my attempt to demonstrate the continuity of consciousness, and by implication the persistence of the self, rested on the contention that a necessary connection existed between the body and consciousness via the notion of bodily activities.

I wish to consider one further imaginary self in order to make a final point about the dependence of the self on a body. I have dealt with the case of disembodied survival after death. Now another possibility is some sort of corporeal survival after death. Such would be the Christian conception of the resurrection of the body in a spiritualized form. A similar conception to this is that of the ghost of a dead person. The significance of these conceptions is that they make it perfectly conceivable that such beings should have normal sense perception. We could think of the bodies possessed by such beings as <u>quasi-bodies</u>. It is evident that beings with such quasi-bodies would be able to engage in perceptual activities such as looking, listening, sniffing and so on. This means that my argument establishing the connection between the body and sense experience would apply equally to beings with quasi-bodies.

The lesson we learn from this is that my argument does not assume that the body involved in perception need be a

physical body, or a flesh and blood body. On my argument, therefore, the fact that our bodies are made of flesh and blood is a truly contingent fact, and it is consequently perfectly conceivable that our bodies should be made of some different stuff; perhaps of a more ghostly stuff, perhaps of an even more mechanical stuff - such as the components of computers. That quasi-bodies satisfy the requirements of my theory brings out quite unambiguously one of its aspects I wish to stress. It is that I am dealing with the body essentially from a psychological point of view, or, to be even more precise, from a phenomenological point of view.

From this point of view, the important thing about the body, is not the matter of which it is composed, but the ability it gives us to realize our human potentiality. From the phenomenological point of view the importance of the body is precisely that with it we are able to look, listen, feel, etc., as well as act, register emotion, and communicate with one another - not to mention its use for the purpose of personal identification, on which Strawson has insisted with such effect. Because a quasi-body would answer these purposes just as well, the notion of a quasi-body is perfectly compatible with the position I have been arguing for. The question whether there are beings with quasi-bodies is on this view a purely empirical question. The significance of the conception of a self with a quasi-body is that it does make it clear that the dependence of experience on the body is not a causal dependence: at least not when the body is conceived phenomenologically.

4. I have from time to time in the course of this work contrasted my views with those of Strawson. In this section I argue that his position and mine are basically complementary. I begin by stating the point of greatest divergence between the two positions, and work back to their more fundamental harmony. The one crucial point on which the two positions seem to come into head-on conflict is this. Whereas on Strawson's theory the concept of a person is "logically primitive", on my theory it could be said with equal justice that the concept of consciousness is "logically primitive". The two views seem manifestly to contradict each other.

From a formal point of view the opposition between Strawson and myself reflects the opposition explained in the first chapter between Hamilton and Ferrier on the one hand, and Hodgson and James on the other. But the basis of Strawson's position is, of course, fundamentally different from that of Hamilton and Ferrier. For Strawson, but not for Hamilton or Ferrier, the concept of a person is presupposed, not for ontological reasons, but because the concept is a presupposition of the conceptual scheme we employ. In spite of this I hope to show that when properly viewed, there is no conflict between Strawson's position and my own. For the sake of arguing this point I shall take it for granted that Strawson is correct about the logical primitiveness of persons, and attempt to show that even so there is no inconsistency between us.(1)

(1) Strawson's theory has of course not gone unchallenged. See Ayer, The Concept of a Person, and R.L. Philips, 'Descriptive versus Revisionary Metaphysics, &c.' Philosophy, vol. XLII (1967).

Strawson argues that it is a condition of a person being able to ascribe states of consciousness to himself that he should, or should be prepared to, ascribe states of consciousness to other persons. The implication of this condition is that before I can ascribe states of consciousness to myself I must be able to identify other selves. This opens the way for Strawson's thesis that unless other selves had bodies they could not be identified. It follows that in ascribing states of consciousness to others we must be ascribing states of consciousness to individuals possessing both states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics.(1) Strawson takes it to be evident on his view that since states of consciousness are ascribed to persons in the case of other-ascriptions, when I ascribe a state of consciousness to myself I must also be ascribing it to a person. This means that I too must be an individual possessing both states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics. That is to say, I understand that ascribing a state of consciousness to myself is just a particular instance of ascribing states of consciousness to persons. This proposition seems to me to be the most questionable one of the whole argument, but that is by the way.

Central to Strawson's position is the notion of a self as an ascriber of states of consciousness both to himself and to others. But for a self to ascribe a state of consciousness to himself he must be self-conscious. That is, "self-conscious" in the sense that he has a notion of himself. This is a different sense of "self-conscious" from the one I have some-

(1) Strawson, Individuals, p. 104.

times described as "self-objectification". Now it is obvious that self-objectification of the sort I have been investigating, presupposes that a self has some notion of himself. A self could not attempt to make of himself his object of attention, unless he had a notion of himself in the first place. It can be seen, therefore, that Strawson's attempt to lay down the logical conditions for self-ascription, which are at the same time the logical conditions that have to be satisfied if a self is to have a notion of himself, is something that has to be done, if we are to understand how self-objectification is to be possible (even if only partially possible).

Nevertheless the theory of the self I have advanced does not depend on the assumption that selves are self-ascribers. Only my remarks about self-objectification do so, and it is not a requirement of the theory that self-objectification be attainable. In fact, the theory identifying the self with residual consciousness has been developed without reference to self-ascription. It can now be seen how my theory stands, in relation to Strawson's. I have attempted to make an identification of the self, or, to put it differently, I have tried to discover what selves are. Strawson has concerned himself with what must be true of selves if they are to be capable (as they are) of self-ascription. That is to say, my concern has been to understand what the self is, of which Strawson says that it possesses both states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics.

There is clear evidence that Strawson himself would not wish to rule out the sort of enterprise I have undertaken. At

one point he asks the question "How is the concept of a person possible?", and, in elaboration, part of what he has to say about the question is this:

> For when we have acknowledged the primitiveness of the concept of a person, and, with it, the unique character of P-predicates, we may still want to ask what it is in the natural facts that makes it intelligible that we should have this concept, and to ask this in the hope of a non-trivial answer, i.e., in the hope of an answer which does not _merely_ say: "Well, there are people in the world." I do not pretend to be able to satisfy this demand at all fully. But I may mention two very different things which might count as beginnings or fragments of an answer.
> First, I think a beginning can be made by moving a certain class of P-predicates to a central position in the picture. They are predicates, roughly, which involve doing something, which clearly imply intention or a state of mind or at least consciousness in general, and which indicate a characteristic pattern, or range of patterns of bodily movement, while not indicating at all precisely any very definite sensation or experience.(1)

It would not be claiming too much, I submit, to describe the enquiry I have undertaken as one of discovering what there is "in the natural facts" in virtue of which we are selves, and accordingly, which makes it intelligible that we should have the concept of a person. It is interesting, too, to see what Strawson takes to be a first step in this direction. He suggests moving a certain form of consciousness "to a central position in the picture": namely the consciousness exhibited in action. There are two points of significance here. (a) Strawson is unable to escape according primacy to consciousness, and (b) he selects those forms of consciousness that are connected with bodily movement, as being the most likely to make the concept of a person intelligible. It can thus be seen that the direction in which Strawson looks to an

(1) _Individuals_, p. 111.

answer is remarkably close to the one I have taken. We agree on the position of "consciousness in general", and we agree on the importance of bodily movement. Where we disagree is on the type of bodily movement involved. Strawson has in mind the type found in certain kinds of action. He lists "going for a walk", "coiling a rope", "playing ball", "writing a letter". By contrast I turn to the bodily activities displayed in sense perception. Once again the contrast between action and activity is in evidence.

5. The relation I have sought to establish between bodily activity and state of awareness has relevance in a wider philosophical setting than I have yet considered. I shall conclude this study by touching on some of these wider issues.

In the Philosophy of Mind there is a tradition, which goes back to Brentano at least, according to which there exist mental acts or acts of awareness. Brentano himself tells us,

> Every presentation (Vorstellung) of sensation or imagination offers an example of the mental phenomenon; and here I understand by presentation not that which is presented, but the act of presentation. Thus, hearing a sound, seeing a colored object, sensing warm or cold, and the comparable states of imagination as well, are examples of what I mean.(1)

We find the same view put forward by Moore:

> To begin with, then: I see, I hear, I smell, I taste, etc.; I sometimes feel pains; I sometimes observe my own mental acts; I sometimes remember entities which I have formerly seen or heard, etc.... All these things I do; and there is nothing more certain to me than that

(1) F. Brentano, 'The Distinction between Mental and Physical Phenomena', Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt, vol. I, bk. II, ch. i. Reprinted in Realism and the Background of Phenomenology, ed. R.M. Chisholm, (Illinois, 1960), p. 41.

> I do them all. And because, in a wide sense, they are all of them things which I do, I propose to call them all 'mental acts'. By calling them 'acts' I do not wish to imply that I am always particularily active when I do them. No doubt, I must be active in a sense, whenever I do any of them. But certainly, when I do some of them, I am sometimes very passive.(1)

This view finds adherents right down to the present day. It is a central tenet in the writings of Bergmann.(2) Grossman, too, in a recent book, defends the proposition that there are mental acts. As an example of a mental act he cites "seeing a tree": viz.,

> Consider, for example, the sentence "I see a tree"... The ... sentence seems to mention three things - namely, a person, a tree, and a mental act of seeing.(3)

Russell was one of the early opponents of the doctrine of mental acts. He stated the objection which many philosophers would now bring against it:

> The first criticism I have to make is that the act seems unnecessary and fictitious. The occurrence of the content of a thought constitutes the occurrence of the thought. Empirically, I cannot discover anything corresponding to the supposed act: and theoretically I cannot see that it is indispensable.(4)

While I am in agreement with Russell about this, I think my own analysis both explains why those philosophers in the Brentano tradition came to believe that there had to be such mental acts, and enables us to replace their analysis with a

(1) G.E. Moore, 'The Subject-Matter of Psychology', Proc. Arist. Soc., 1909-10. Reprinted in Body and Mind, ed. G.N.A. Vesey. (London, 1964), p. 237.

(2) Cf. G. Bergmann, Meaning and Existence (Madison, 1960), p. 27 ff., and Logic and Reality (Madison, 1964).

(3) R. Grossmann, The Structure of Mind (Madison & Milwaukee, 1965), p. 39.

(4) B. Russell, The Analysis of Mind (London, 1921), pp. 17-18.

more satisfactory one. It must be obvious that I would deny that seeing, hearing, etc., are in any sense acts. I have classified them as states of awareness, and offered my reasons for so classifying them. I maintain quite categorically that Brentano, Moore, and Grossmann are wrong when they assert that seeing, hearing, etc., are acts. But Moore at least is right when he says that we do do something when we see, hear, or taste. Where he is wrong is in jumping to the conclusion that what we do is perform acts of seeing, hearing, or tasting. What we quite incontrovertibly are normally doing when seeing, hearing, or tasting, is looking, listening, or tasting. It is only when a philosopher concentrates all his attention on consciousness itself that he is led to believe that what he is doing must be found within consciousness itself. The truth of the matter is that what I do when I claim to be doing something when perceiving, is engage in the related bodily activity.

Thus it is true to say that I am doing something when for instance I see a tree: what I am doing is looking at it. However it is not the case either, that these philosophers have simply made the mistake of believing they had found a mental act, when in reality what they had found was a physical act. As I have argued, looking, listening, etc., are not acts but activities.(1) We may well wonder why the obvious source of the sense of agency we have as perceivers, should have been

(1) It must not be forgotten that although physical activities, they are of necessity activities of a conscious self.

missed by these writers. I can only put it down to the fact that it was their chief concern to distinguish the mental from the physical. If the perceiver experienced a sense of agency, therefore, the agency had to be in the category of the mental, if the distinction between the mental and the physical was to be upheld.

Of the passages quoted from Brentano, Moore, and Grossmann, Moore's is the most instructive because he finds himself in some embarrassment over the fact that he cannot say that he is particularly active when he performs these putative mental acts. As he remarks, "When I do some of them, I am sometimes very passive." This admission is most revealing. If Moore's "mental acts" are in reality mental <u>states</u>, they would of necessity appear to be passive.

Now this alleged passivity of the mind in sense perception has been at the centre of the controversy between Idealism and Realism. According to Realism, in perception the mind is in a state of receptivity in which sense impressions are "given" to it. The mind itself is supposed to make one aware of what is given without in any way interfering with the given, or altering it. Idealism on the other hand denies these assertions, and maintains that the idea of a given element in perception which survives the conceptualizing activity of mind is a pure abstraction. Hampshire, in his book <u>Thought and Action</u>, makes an accusation against classical empiricism which Idealists would be only too happy to endorse, when he says,

> The deepest mistake in empiricist theories of perception, descending from Berkeley and Hume, has been the

> representation of human beings as passive observers receiving impressions from 'outside' of the mind, where the 'outside' includes their own bodies.(1)

There is certainly something in this criticism, and this I will discuss shortly. But what I first wish to point out is that empiricists are right in one respect when they stress the passivity of the mind in perception. According to the theory I am advancing, the perceptions themselves have the logical status of states. And, as I have already pointed out, states are just the sort of thing of which we should say that the thing in the state is passive in respect of the state.(2) From this point of view it is quite correct to call perceptual awareness "the given", or "sense-data", or even, "presentations". (We might also mention Kant's "representations".) States of awareness in no sense possess the quality of seeming "mind-made". Realism is right insofar as it is based on this fact that perceptual awarenesses are <u>states</u> of awareness, and in respect of his states of awareness (experiences) the perceiver is passive. But Idealism too is right in maintaining that the perceiver is active in perception. At the same time the Idealist is wrong in believing that the sense in which the perceiver is active is incompatible with the his being passive in the sense I have just explained. Perhaps the Idealists have been misled by the Empiricists. If we follow Hampshire and accept his contention that Empiricists represent perceivers as <u>passive</u> observers, we may excuse Idealists for thinking that they had to deny that

(1) S. Hampshire, <u>Thought and Action</u> (London, 1959) p. 47.

(2) See above, p. 287 f.

observers are passive. Idealists are of course right when they state that observers are active and not passive. But from the fact that observers are active it by no means follows that their perceptual awareness itself is not passively given.

Hampshire's own position is that observers *qua* bodies are active in the sense that their bodies physically impinge on surrounding objects. "In fact," says Hampshire,

> I find myself from the beginning able to act upon objects around me. In this context to act is to move at will my own body, that persisting physical thing, and thereby to bring about perceived movements of other physical things. I not only perceive my body, I also control it; I not only perceive external objects, I also manipulate them.(1)

As I indicated at the end of the last section I would not wish to minimize the importance of the facts Hampshire stresses in this passage, but I would claim that the picture he gives is incomplete. A perceiver may be active in a more fundamental sense than the one described by Hampshire; namely in the sense that he actuates his sense-organs in perceiving. According to Hampshire "I find myself from the beginning able to act upon objects around me." But this may be disputed. If he means that as a self-conscious being I find myself able to act upon objects, then of course he is right. But if he means that human beings are in fact able to act upon objects from the beginning, he is certainly wrong. An infant is to begin with only able to engage in certain activities, not perform acts, and high on the list of the bodily activities it can engage in, is the activity of looking. In fact one of the earliest things a child learns to do, is to attend to what it sees, hears, feels, etc. Thus a human being is an

(1) Hampshire, op. cit., p. 47.

active observer in virtue of his power of sense-organ attention long before he has the manipulative skill of which Hampshire speaks.

The importance of this point is missed by Hampshire. It is that even if the Empiricists were right to think of perceivers as passive observers, in the sense in which Hampshire understands this phrase (i.e., as the antithesis of agents actively manipulating their environment), they would still be active in the more fundamental sense that as perceivers they would of necessity have to engage in bodily activities. In other words, from a logical point of view, the question whether observers are active or passive is quite independent of the question whether observers are or are not agents impinging on their environment. Nevertheless Hampshire is right to attack the assumption, which he attributes to the Empiricists, that observers are identified with minds and their bodies are taken to be "outside" of the mind. My argument all along has been directed against the idea that a body is extrinsic to an observer. The idea arises, I believe, because Empiricists have paid exclusive attention to the actual experience of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc., and neglected the connection between such experiences and the related activities of looking, listening, feeling, etc. Only by ignoring this connection can the observer himself be "internalized" in the manner alleged by Hampshire.

To put their position in a favourable light, it could be said that although the Empiricists rightly sought to draw attention to the passivity of states of awareness, they

wrongly thought that this could only be done by asserting that it was the observer who was passive. After all what better way is there of ensuring the passivity of the observer, than that of shutting him up inside the mind? The true position, I maintain, is that the passivity of states of awareness is a logical feature of awareness, which could not be jeopardized by even the most active of observers.

I believe that the theory that the self is at one and the same time active <u>qua</u> attender, and passive <u>qua</u> subject of awareness, offers a middle course between Idealism and Realism, which does justice to the logical basis of both. I have explained wherein lies the strength of the Realist position. It remains to be seen how the Idealist case is accommodated by the theory I have put forward. In the first place it must be made clear that the Idealist's attempted refutation of the Realist position on the "givenness" of states of awareness, is unacceptable. Idealist suggestions that states of awareness are somehow only products of the mind's own making, receive no support from the analysis I have given. On the other hand the Realist contention that we perceive the world just as it is, has also to be rejected. It is evident that my theory substantiates the Idealist view of an active perceiver, and that the nature of the activity plays its part in determining what we take to be "there" to be perceived.

To put it in general terms my contention is that the activity in question is the activity of attention. If we confine ourselves to sense perception, it is sensorial attention. We not only engage in bodily activities of looking,

listening, feeling, and so forth, but we engage in these activities in different sorts of ways. The difference between looking <u>for</u> and looking <u>at</u>, has already been mentioned, and both may be distinguished from "just looking". Similar sorts of distinction exist in the cases of some of the other sense-organ activities. Now the manner in which we engage our sense-organ activity will have a vital bearing on the resultant state of awareness. What we are aware of, given a "perceptual field", will differ greatly depending, for instance, on whether the attention involved is interrogative or non-interrogative. In this connection I would refer to the discussion in chapter three where I sought to establish that residual consciousness played an essential role in determining what becomes for the percipient a perceptual object. The implication of the position I have developed is that as far as sense perception is concerned the bodily activity involved is directed and controlled by residual consciousness. As a result we determine what our perceptual states will be by choosing what to look at, listen to, taste, and so on for the remaining sense modalities.

We must, therefore, agree with the Idealists concerning the significance of the active involvement of the perceiver in determining what is perceived. But the last word must go to the Realists. Our perceptions are states of awareness which are "given", no matter how active we are in bringing them about.

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