

AN ESSAY ON MEMORY

With Particular Reference to the Role of Imagery

by

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This thesis is my own work written while I was a research scholar in the Philosophy Department of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Smith', written in a cursive style.

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SYNOPSIS

I commence this essay with the question - 'How is it that memory is in fact reliable?' - because, as we all know, memory is, in general, reliable. My first question is therefore, 'Why should any problem arise at all?', and the answer to this question - 'Because sometimes memory does let us down; our deceptive memories seem, on the face of things, to be in no way distinguishable from our correct ones. All memories have at least an initial authority.'

In Chapter I I list and consider the ways in which specific memories can fail us, and show that all these specific failures simply underline the general problem - no memory can ever be self-guaranteed; no single 'kind' of memory is wholly immune from error.

I therefore put forward the suggestion - at this stage very tentatively - that error may arise, when it does, from the interpretation of our memories rather than from our 'actual remembering'.

In Chapter II I show that all attempts to provide rigid definitions of memory must prove fruitless because we are in fact operating with two distinct criteria, neither of which we can reasonably abandon: the present 'memory-experience' and the past state of affairs. I therefore suggest a loose 'neo-ostensive' definition based upon three independent criteria, any one of which qualifies an instance for consideration as memory: (1) 'initial authority', the feeling of belief which accompanies (or forms part of)

the thought; (2) the ability to perform in certain ways which are dependent upon a knowledge of past events or knowledge gained in the past; and (3) the factual truth (as supported by independent evidence) of what is claimed to be remembered. Whether the 'ultimate criterion' of memory is the present experience or the past states of affairs I leave an open question, and I turn my attention to the analysis of memory as defined in this loose 'neo-ostensive' way.

Firstly I make a distinction between distinctions. I call those distinctions which apply to memory but are not peculiar to memory 'primary' and those distinctions which 'lie within' memory 'secondary', and I make the point, important for my subsequent argument, that the disposition/occurrence distinction is of the first (or primary) kind.

In Chapter III I consider the relationships between remembering events, remembering individuals, and remembering qualities of individuals. I attempt to show that these distinctions are dependent upon our points of interest rather than upon anything in the memories themselves; they are distinctions in what we are claiming to remember rather than in what or how we are remembering. I then consider the relationships between remembering propositions and remembering sentences, and the connection of these with the memory of events and of individuals. I go on to make the distinction, central to my subsequent argument, between remembering propositions and remembering in propositions. I raise the question - 'Can we remember without either images or words?' and argue that this must be possible.

Finally, I consider the distinction between recognition and recall and conclude that recognition involves memory but is not strictly a form of memory.

I suggest that to remember an event is something over and above remembering any number of propositions about that event. Therefore the question whether or not some event was remembered correctly cannot rest solely upon the accuracy of the claims made about that event.

In Chapter IV I examine the relationships between (a) the public event which is remembered (b) the perception of that event (c) the 'remembering state of mind' and (d) the memory-claims about the event. I suggest, for consideration, this 'model': Memory-claims refer directly to past public events; they are based upon current memories (the present remembering state of mind) and these memories are of private events - our own past perceptual states.

To forestall a likely objection I argue that even in the case of 'negative memory' (memory that something was not the case) there is a positive element which makes the memory/claim distinction possible.

Wherever there is interpretation there is the possibility of re-interpretation and I claim, therefore, that so long as there exists occurrent memory-imagery, the checking of memory-claims by introspection alone is possible. I then raise the question whether the imagery itself is merely a representative of past perceptual experience or a direct re-presentation to us of the past public event, and I stress the need for some 'physical element' in the memory-experience to justify our confidence in our memories.

In Chapter V I diverge from the main argument to consider the relationship, if any, between remembering events and remembering how to do things. After considering the reasons for claiming that 'how to do things' is one kind of remembering which defies all attempts to reduce it to, or explain it in terms of, occurrent memories of past events, I argue that there is a distinction we all understand between 'remembering how to' and 'being able to' and attempt to show that the former must depend upon occurrent memories. I base my argument upon the analysis of various uses of 'intelligent', seeking to show that the only use of that word which serves to distinguish intelligent performances (instances of 'remembering how to') both from automatic performances and from accidental performances is that use in which it means 'thought-directed' or 'memory-directed'. I also argue that in our performances we actualize both mental dispositions to remember and physical dispositions to act in certain ways, both actualizations being essential to an 'intelligent performance', and that 'remembering an event' need not involve the specific recollection of any instance we should refer to as 'an event' in normal every-day life.

In Chapter VI I argue that the difference between memory-images and imagination-images is one of degree only. There is a basis of memory in all imagination and an element of imagination in a great deal that is accepted as memory. The matter in doubt in any given instance is the extent to which a 'single image' re-presents to us a 'single past occasion', and I suggest three criteria by which we

do in fact decide this: 'firmness' of the imagery, its controllability, and the 'expansion' of the image context.

I next consider the 'organic origins' of imagery, the relationship of imagery to sensation, and the possible 'subjects' of imagery, and conclude that only appearances, as presented to us by the objects we perceive, can be re-presented to us in imagery. Two points, both very important for my argument, emerge from this enquiry: (1) there is no logical reason why the occurrence of any image should exclude the simultaneous occurrence of any other image; and (2) sensations can be distinguished from images by the manner of their presentation alone.

In Chapter VII I put the question - 'What is it to have images?' - and consider the case for the 'entity' view of imagery. I reject this view on the grounds that nothing in our memory-experience in any way demands the existence of any such 'entity'. I then define imagery as our way of remembering past appearances, and challenge the argument to show that recognition could not entail occurrent imagery (an 'infinite regress' argument) by making three distinctions: between recognising images and recognising by means of images; between 'considered recognition' and developed motor-response; and between appearances and relational facts noted about those appearances. I argue that imagery is a prerequisite of certain kinds of recognition or the recognition of certain kinds of 'objects' and claim that, insofar as we are concerned with appearances, the capacity to recognise and the capacity to image are one and the same.

I consider an alternative way of remembering events - by verbal descriptions - and show the limitations of this method. By it we can only ever know 'that A was B'; in imagery we know 'how A was' (or how A appeared to us). I suggest that the denial by some men that they have imagery at all results from a mistaken idea of what imagery is, and I claim that some remembering is possible only in terms of how things appeared - and this is the actual remembering of past events.

I examine 'generic imagery' in the light of my analysis and definition and conclude that it must be either a multiplicity of specific images (or imagings) or a concept (not imagery at all) arising out of, or supported and exemplified by, imagery.

In my final chapter I restate the problem and summarise my arguments and conclusions. I claim that in imagery we are actually presented with a past event in the same way and to the same extent as we are presented with a present event in perception. I support this claim by arguing that the distinction between perceiving, remembering and imagining is one of degree only; that sensation is not a different kind of 'evidence' from imagery for the events which occur - it is simply the ideal limit of 'firm imagery'. And from a consideration of the 'specious present' I argue that only on my view can we account for the continuity which characterises our experience. As a natural outcome of my argument I define 'the past' as simply 'the not-present within the real'.

I then deal with temporal location of remembered events and conclude that in remembering any event, we remember, however indeterminately, a contextual setting which extends up to the present moment.

I conclude that since all memory can be reduced to memory of events, and in imagery we are 'given' the appearances presented by the events themselves, no error in a memory-claim is irredeemable. Perceiving is simply a sub-species of remembering, and therefore our perception-claims are no less fallible than our memory-claims. Certainty about matters of fact is always psychological, not logical, and we rely on our memories for the same reasons, and with the same right, as we rely on our perception of the world about us.

Chapter I

DOUBTING THE AUTHORITY OF OUR MEMORIES

1. The 'sceptical' approach

Nearly every work on 'remembering' introduces us to the 'sceptic' whose task it is to show us not only that memory plays us false, but that our memories, however essential they are to the everyday conduct of our affairs, should never be trusted since nothing can ever conclusively prove that any given memory is not false. We can reply to this sceptic that the same kind of arguments as he uses could equally well be employed to show that we cannot prove conclusively that a given memory is not true, that by seeking logical criteria for what is essentially an empirical question he is setting himself a logically impossible task. I believe therefore that the introduction of this sceptic, whilst it may be a useful device for raising questions, may well be harmful to the enquiry in that it suggests to us that a sceptical or tentative attitude to all of our memories can be a reasonable position to hold. Clearly it is not. We all of us answer questions about our past experiences without any hesitation or doubt, we sit on chairs with the utmost confidence that they will support us, we walk along familiar roads with complete certainty that they will lead us to where we wish to go.

It may be objected that the sceptic does not in fact doubt the authority of all his memories, he only insists that memory is always

logically open to doubt, that though in fact many memories are reliable, and are known to be reliable, it is still logically possible that none of them is. But if this is all he claims he is a poor sort of sceptic, for few if any people would wish to disagree with him. Being sceptical involves rejecting, or holding strong reservations about, some view seriously put forward by its adherents. A man may be sceptical about the virtues of socialism or the truth of the Christian doctrines. In these cases some idea is put forward for his consideration, which has not, or need not have been, previously entertained at all.

But when we first come to consider the credentials of memory we have already tacitly accepted them, have taken memory for granted, trusted it implicitly, and experienced surprise and alarm when it has proved unworthy of that trust. It is not the ordinary function of memory, but its capacity for giving us unpleasant surprises, that first leads us to enquire into its workings. The natural question which presents itself is not 'How is it that memory can be informative?' - but - 'How is it that memory is sometimes misinformative?'. The proper formulation of our problem, therefore, is not - 'why should we trust our memories?' - but - 'Why may we be led sometimes to doubt them?'.

2. The initial authority of memory

I say we are led sometimes to doubt them. It is certain that we do not always, or even often, doubt them. Our memories have an initial authority which usually cannot be gainsaid. Even when evidence

to the contrary is very strong we are inclined to stand by the authority of our own memories. A book is not where I remember leaving it. I ask who has moved it. Everyone assures me that he has not. Yet I am quite confident that somebody must have done so. I find the reply, 'You must have made a mistake' a quite unconvincing answer to my insistence that I remember putting it there.

Perhaps I have made a mistake. Perhaps I came back and moved it myself 'unthinkingly'. Perhaps I left it there yesterday, not today. Certainly, assuming that nobody is lying, somebody is misremembering. The saving fact is that if such a question is pursued long enough, the misrememberer nearly always finds himself out. For other people this 'finding out' will simply amount to the recall of something which had been temporarily forgotten. For the agent it may be a matter of revising or repudiating what he had regarded as his memory of the event.

What I have called the initial authority of memory - the belief about the past which is quite independent of any outside evidence - is inseparable from whatever we accept as remembering. We would not regard ourselves as remembering otherwise. But it is present in varying degrees, so that sometimes it is possible for us to 'back down', to admit that we are probably wrong, not because of any revision or variation of our memories, but simply because we have the experience of misremembering, and in the light of this the degree of confidence we feel in our memories is insufficient to withstand the pressure of

external counter-evidence. But at other times we feel absolutely sure, on the authority of the memory experience alone, that we are not mistaken.

The great difficulty here is deciding what it is to be 'absolutely sure'. Frequently two people claim to be absolutely sure of incompatible things. And which of them has the better right to be sure cannot be decided wholly according to which of them happens in fact to be right. If, for instance, one savage believes the earth to be flat because he has observed that unsupported bodies always fall, whilst another believes it to be globular simply because this seems to him a more satisfactory shape, then the second happens to be right in his belief, but the first seems to have the better right to hold his belief. In the case of direct remembering, however, there seems to be at least a prima-facie case for allowing the one who is in fact right the right to be sure.

But, whilst 'head-on collisions' do sometimes occur between initially authoritative memories, they are comparatively rare. For every irreconcilable 'memory' there are countless others that fit easily and naturally into the general scheme of known fact. Our strongly authoritative memories are rarely challenged, either by the memories of other people or by the facts as presented to us. Our less strongly authoritative memories can usually be made to dovetail with the testimony of other people and with the facts as we find them by minor, and quite 'painless', modifications. Most of our

memories have both 'strong' and 'weak' parts. If I 'remember' coming to work at 9.30 a.m. yesterday, and I am told by my neighbour that he saw me at home at 9.45, I am quite happy to reconsider my 'memory'. Had he claimed that he saw me at home all day my reaction would have been quite different. I remember very definitely that I went to work, but much less definitely that it was at 9.30 a.m.

Nevertheless the whole of the original 'memory' had some degree of initial authority, the weakness of which became apparent only when my claim was challenged. In fact it is generally only when any memory is challenged by presented facts, or by the testimony of other people, or by subsequent memories of one's own, that the question of the degree of its initial authority arises at all. And because it is so easy to say, after a successful challenge - 'No, I wasn't remembering that at all' or 'Of course, that was the day before' or 'It certainly happened; it doesn't much matter where', we are apt to overlook the fact that all our memories come to us in the first place with the same kind, if not the same degree, of initial authority. We are apt to overlook it, that is, until a discrepancy of the 'head-on' kind forces us to wonder just what sort of authority a memory can ever really have.

3. The causes of doubt

The question, 'Wherein does the authority of memory lie?' is not just a 'philosopher's puzzle', it is a problem which must present itself sooner or later to any thinking person. The man who seems to

remember something quite clearly but discovers that he must be mistaken is bound to ask himself - 'What is peculiar about this case? How is it that my memory, usually so reliable, has let me down this time?'. And when the only peculiar thing he can find is that his memory gave him the wrong answer, he must inevitably wonder how many of his memories which happen not to have been challenged have been equally false, and how he can ever know that he is not being deluded.

Moreover, the errors of memory are by no means all of the same kind. There does not seem to be any situation, or group of situations, in which we can say 'Here I must be on my guard against delusion', or 'Here I am completely safe'. Why then are we so confident and unhesitant about our memories? Is it simply a matter of a beneficial stupidity as some pragmatically inclined philosophers have suggested? Or is there a secure and indubitable basis of memory that justifies our belief that whatever errors of remembering we may make, further remembering can eventually set matters right for us; that doubt, though it can exist, cannot go on forever?

It does not seem enough to say that our memories are more often found to be right than wrong, that we are comparatively rarely surprised; this is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for our confidence. Very few people are ever struck by lightning, but in general people are apprehensive of lightning in a quite different way from that in which they are apprehensive of being misled by their own memories. Our memories seem to be 'in our own control' in a way

that lightning is not. We seem to have some ground for assurance more fundamental than the mere averaging of instances. The guarantee that I get with my watch does not ensure that it will not go wrong, only that if it does the makers will replace it with another - and if necessary another again - until I have one which is reliable. They are in a position to give such a guarantee because, in addition to their observation that their watches do not in fact generally go wrong, they have a knowledge of their design and structure which satisfies them that the watches ought not to go wrong. Therefore if one of them does so it must be as the result of some accidental departure from that design and structure. We feel that if we had some analogous insight into the structure of memory itself, we should be able to understand why, and not only how, particular memories are false. We should be able to guarantee our memories in the way that the watchmaker guarantees his watches. But when we turn from the specific failures of memory to the business of remembering in general we find that each specific failure seems to have its counterpart in a general problem. Let us, then, first consider in detail the particular ways in which memory can play us false, and then go on to look at the general doubts which these errors raise about the authority of memory.

a) Specific Errors of memory

i. Errors of Omission

Whatever can be remembered can also, ipso facto, be forgotten. Forgetting, i.e. failing to remember what we are in a position to remember, may be total or partial.

a. Total forgetting. This can take the form of a complete failure to recollect some past experience. Of course, since the fact that I am not now recollecting a certain experience does not entail that I never again shall do so, the only occasions when I can be said to be totally forgetting are those when the temporary total forgetfulness is made apparent; when I am asked what I did on a certain day and am quite unable to answer, or I am asked how I enjoyed the film I saw on the previous evening and I look blank and ask 'What film?'. The question of forgetting can only arise when the assumption is made that something is, or should be, remembered.

Other forms of total forgetting are the failure to recognise and the inability to perform once mastered tasks. A house in which I know that I once lived looks quite unfamiliar to me; a man who appears to be a total stranger shows by his behaviour that I ought to know him; I am surprised to hear that a new coat I have bought is 'exactly like' one I had some years ago. I mount a bicycle after many years of driving a car and fall off because I simply cannot balance; or when I am asked to work out the square root of a number by simple arithmetic I find that I have forgotten where to start. In all these cases, as in the first, the failure of memory is apparent only as the result of other knowledge, not itself direct memory.

b. Partial forgetting. It is the partial 'lapses of memory' which most commonly concern us, because they are continually brought home to us without the aid of any independent authority. I do recognise a

man's face but cannot remember his name; I remember, however, that I have heard it. I distinctly remember a certain cricket match but cannot remember who was wicket keeper, though I remember remarking how good he was. Such omissions of memory we find particularly irritating. For memory tells us enough, as it were, to make us feel that it should tell us more; it supplies the blanks but refuses to fill them.

c. Omission as error. In all these cases we are not so much doing something as not doing something. And it may be felt, therefore, that whilst they are omissions, they are not strictly errors. We do not say that the boy who has not even attempted the examination question has got it wrong, but this boy gets no more marks, and may even get less, than the boy who has attempted it and got it wrong. And consider the case where we are confident that only three people were present at a meeting we attended, not because we did not notice the fourth at the time - we may have spoken to him - but simply because, quite unaccountably, we do not remember him. A three-man conference is clearly a different thing from a four-man conference. Omissions, though not themselves errors of memory, are certainly a source of such errors.

ii. Errors of commission

We now turn to the positive case, less frequent perhaps, but by no means infrequent. I 'remember' locking the door, but when I come home it is not locked. I am asked what colour my friend's car is and I immediately reply 'Blue'. I 'see it quite plainly' - but when he arrives it is brown, and it has not been re-painted. The distressing thing is that, although I must accept the evidence in such

cases, and sometimes am able to say 'Of course - it is Bill's car that is blue', or 'It was yesterday that I locked the door', there are other times when the original 'memory' seems to persist as strongly authoritative as ever, and I must simply allow myself to remain mystified for fear of becoming a bore on the question.

iii. The 'George IV case'.

So called because George IV is alleged to have 'remembered' leading a charge at Waterloo, this type of error is sometimes regarded simply as an extreme case of error of commission. But we may well feel that the difference from the cases cited above is not only one of degree. Those cases seem to rest upon the misplacement rather than the sheer invention of a memory. I have locked doors and have seen blue cars, but George IV never led a charge anywhere. The difference seems parallel in many ways to that between illusion and hallucination: the one has a basis in fact which the other has not. It is true, of course, that there was in fact a Battle of Waterloo which did not include George IV, just as there are elephants which are not pink; even an hallucination must be relatable to actual fact in order to carry the conviction which it does. Nevertheless the distinction between being relatable to fact in this way and being based on fact in the manner of a misplaced memory or misinterpreted visual experience should be quite clear. I shall therefore call such extreme cases 'mnemic hallucinations'. These are not to be confused with memories of hallucinations, memories which may themselves be

perfectly veridical and in no way deceptive. But the somewhat grandiose term 'hallucination' must not mislead us into thinking that something like a charge at Waterloo must be involved. A man is doing the same kind of thing as George IV, though less spectacularly, if, having seen his colleagues at school with boils on their necks, and having vividly imagined how unpleasant such a boil would feel, he subsequently 'remembers' having a boil on his own neck as a boy.

Both ii. and iii. deal with 'remembering' what in fact is not the case, but ii. is the insertion of a memory into the wrong context, iii. is the taking of imagination for memory.¹

iv. Memory not recognised as such

We now consider the reverse position: what is in fact memory is sometimes taken to be mere imagination. A man awakes in the morning after a wild night out, quite dispassionately he contemplates the picture of his friends and himself climbing lampposts, breaking windows, being apprehended by the police - and suddenly he realises that it all really happened. We might say here that his drunken state had given a dream-like quality to his experiences so that the recall of them felt at first more like imagining than remembering. But there is no reason why this same error should not occur under perfectly normal conditions, and ample evidence that it sometimes does. A composer may be dismayed to hear played on the radio the very melody which he

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At this stage I am simply setting out the apparent 'kinds of error'. In ch. VI I shall argue against any rigid distinction here.

himself had just 'composed', and realise that he must have been remembering, not imagining, as he wrote. It is very hard to be certain of the complete originality of one's own work. I have, for instance, a shrewd suspicion that my example of the boil on the neck in the preceding paragraph is something I read once, though I cannot say where or when. Nor is this error confined to what we might call 'creative activity'. A friend of mine recently showed surprise at finding a full packet of cigarettes in his pocket. I asked him if he did not remember buying them and he replied that he 'supposed he did'. He had been aware, he said, in some way, of having gone into the shop for them, but he had not thought it had really happened.

v. Unexplained familiarity - déjà vu.

Most of us have at some time experienced the rather uncanny feeling that some incident, some view, some group of words or sounds, was familiar to us, so that, although this strange familiarity is felt after the event (or is noted by us after the event) it seems as if from the first instant we could have predicted exactly what would follow; the feeling of familiarity is like the feeling we have when watching a film for the second time. We do not generally think of these experiences as remembering. Rather we should be inclined to describe them as 'as if we were remembering', and to suspect that the odd experience is caused by some unplaced or 'unconscious' memory of a very similar incident. The worrying thing is that if we ask why it feels as if we are remembering, the only answer possible seems to be that we have a

sense of familiarity. But, since this also seems to be all we can say when we are asked what it is like to recognise something, and since some epistemologists have regarded this same sense of familiarity as the feature which distinguishes memory from imagination, when something feels familiar we like to know why it feels familiar. If, in the déjà vu case, we can have a sense of familiarity for no reason that we or anybody else can discover, what right have we to regard this same sense of familiarity as the hallmark of recognition and recollection?

vi. Conflicting memory

Perhaps the greatest confidence shaker of all is the conflict which arises between our own memories. I am describing some event I have experienced - 'Last Saturday afternoon - no, morning - I'm sorry, Sunday morning, a fellow got out of a black car - no, it was a green utility - and walked straight into a puddle without looking, - wait, I remember now, he did see it but...' and so on. A fairly normal reconstruction, we may say, by the time-honoured method of trial and error. But why the error; why the need for trial? Why did the wrong answers come up in the first place? And if one correction is necessary how do we know another is not - and another? For these changes are not always simply modifications or elaborations, they are often downright contradictions.

The extent of the problem is seen more clearly when the contradictions are spaced out, as it were, in time, when we remember both the event and our earlier 'remembering' of it, and find that

they do not tally. We are frequently obliged to correct one memory-claim in the light of another later memory of the same event. There is the further difficulty that even when one memory-version has given place to another, this does not mean that it is vanquished for all time. When we are climbing hills, it often happens that just before we reach what we have been taking to be the peak another 'peak' comes into view. This can happen many times in the same climb. But when we do reach the real peak there can be no further doubt about it. Conflicting memories are not like this; there is no simple set of fixed criteria for distinguishing the true from the false.

Each of the specific failures of memory brings its own contribution to our suspicion about the validity of memory as a whole - not just an empty suspicion that 'it could always be otherwise', but a real suspicion that 'it always may be otherwise'. We now turn to the more general difficulties which seem to confirm this suspicion.

b) General problems of memory

i. Unaccountability

It seems wholly natural to think of memory, rightly or wrongly, as being closely akin to perception. Yet on examination the analogy soon runs into difficulties. We see things by looking with our eyes, hear things by listening with our ears, and the things we see and hear and there for anybody to see and hear. But memories seem almost to come and go of their own accord; all we can say is that we are aware of them, or aware of something because of them. A man can lose his

memory just as he can lose his eyesight, but whereas in the latter case we can tell by physically examining him that he is incapable of seeing, in the former case all we can know is that he does not in fact remember anything prior to a certain time. Or, with a different kind of loss or failure of memory, we know that he is very poor at remembering things. Seeing and hearing and smelling and tasting and touching are all in some way like each other; there is a uniformity about them; we can in certain enquiries predict discoveries about one from the observation of another. But memory does not seem to be like anything else. We seem driven to allow that our ability to remember things is a quite unaccountable 'brute fact' which defies any attempt at 'structural analysis'.

ii. The independence of knowledge of the past

We might say that even if memory is totally unlike perception from a physiological or organic standpoint, at least it is like it from a functional standpoint; memory provides us with knowledge of the past just as perception provides us with the knowledge of the present. But this will not do. Whilst it might well help to convey to a child how the word 'remember' is used, it can cast no light upon what remembering is, nor is it strictly true. Both perception and memory are needed for our knowledge of both the past and the present. That we could not know the past without memory is true only because we could not know anything without memory, in the ordinary sense of 'know'. That I know about some past event is no proof that I remember the event in question; I could be reading about

it in a book. And, because this is so, the fact that I am able to relate some incident that I did in fact witness is no proof that I am actually remembering it at the time. My inability to relate an incident may prove that I am not remembering it (allowing that I have no language difficulty), but my ability to relate it is no more than a fair indication that I am remembering. It is sometimes very hard indeed to sort out our actual memories from knowledge acquired by other means. This is amply illustrated by what Von Leyden has called 'the childhood test case'.¹

iii. The 'childhood test case' - its general applicability

This is, in effect, the general problem arising out of errors of commission as such, and 'mnemic hallucinations' in particular. Most of us have some favourite memories of our own childhood: our first visit to the seaside; or the time we climbed on to the back of the pony and were thrown off. Not uncommonly such memories are accompanied by quite vivid visual imagery. It is alarming, therefore, when we discover, on revisiting the seaside place, that it is simply nothing like our 'memory' of it, or we learn from a visiting uncle that it was not ourselves at all but our brothers who were thrown from the pony. On reflection we realise that we were, in any case, far too young to remember so clearly. We guess, rightly no doubt, that our images were built up in our imaginations by stories we heard our

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'Remembering', p.38ff.

parents and their friends tell, and that these images became so familiar to us that they felt like memories - and still do feel like memories. In a sense, perhaps they are; they are the memories of our earlier imaginings. But this is not what we took them to be.

We may then begin to wonder how many more of our childhood memories are memories only in this derivative sense. The real problem is not those that are plainly false but those that are substantially true. After all, if our uncle had confirmed instead of denying that we were thrown by the pony, we should still think we remembered the incident itself though our 'memory' would not be one whit different. And why only childhood memories? If there is nothing save counter evidence to show us the difference between our remembered experiences and our remembered imaginings, and if we are capable - as clearly we are - of imagining situations involving ourselves as they are reported to us, then how can we ever know what we are really remembering and what we only seem to be remembering?

iv. The 'subjective element' in factual memory

Closely allied to this is another difficulty arising out of the free play of our imaginations. When we remember a state of affairs we remember it as it appeared to us. This is quite natural, right and proper, so long as we always remain capable of distinguishing the state of affairs from our own attitudes towards it. But do we always? I remember very little about a certain Latin master except that he was a great villain with a cruel smile and a rasping

voice. If I were to meet him again it is not improbable that I should find him a charming gentleman. I remember the annual fair on Gretham village green as a much more grand affair than any such local fairs are nowadays, yet it seems unlikely that it really was so. Everyone can supply examples of this kind of distortion from his own experience. Some time ago the name of a lad I was at school with came up in conversation and I immediately had a clear visual image of him. But on reflection I realised that the image was of a man my own age, not of a boy at all, almost as if the memory had grown up with me. Because I had always thought of him as my contemporary I remembered him as my contemporary.

Now, suppose I make an ordinary perceptual error; I think that it is Black and not White that has won the race I am watching. I then see my error and know that the winner is White. Notwithstanding this there is no small chance that I will subsequently 'remember' seeing Black win. I have quite genuinely thought this, seen what I took to be this, why should I not remember this? Samuel Alexander may perhaps have overstated the case when he wrote: 'Though we do not often attend to our past mental states, we never remember a past object without some consciousness however faint of the past state',¹ but there can be little doubt that our feelings and attitudes and interpretations frequently do intrude into our recollections of past

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'Space, Time and Deity', Vol. I, p.125.

events we have witnessed, and that, within the memory, the event and the attitude (the subjective colouration of it) are very hard to separate.

v. No memory can guarantee its own permanence

When we ask 'Do you remember the night the bomb fell?' we may be told 'Yes - and I'm not likely to forget it', or even 'Yes, I shall never forget it'. But this last is a somewhat reckless claim; 'permanent memories', like permanent waves, are not always permanent. There is no intrinsic difference between those memories which last a lifetime and those which soon disappear forever. Even the fact that I remember having 'remembered' something every day for the past year, cannot guarantee that I shall ever remember it again. Nor can it guarantee that, if I do remember it again, I shall not misremember it in some way. We may say with some justification that the fact that I have remembered it correctly many times in the past makes it inductively probable that I shall remember it correctly again, but this is to assume that my remembering of my previous memory is accurate. And it always is a matter of assuming; the only checking available to us is to think again. This brings me to the last and greatest difficulty.

vi. The problem of confirming memories

It may be protested that remembering again is not the only way we have of confirming memories. If what I remember is that I have bought milk each day this month the account from the milkman surely

confirms this. And my memory that I have promised to take my wife to the theatre is surely confirmed by the fact that she has just entered dressed in her best clothes. Certainly these occurrences do not specifically establish that the events I claim to remember did occur, but when the initial authority of my memories has already provided the hypotheses all that is required is that these be strengthened.

All this is true. Indeed it would be a bad look-out for us if it were not. But there are a number of reasons why it can only relieve, cannot solve, the problem we are faced with.

a. Adequate cause/effect evidence is not always available. At best cause/effect evidence tells in favour of this or that memory. If it always told in favour no problem would arise. But, as we have seen, all too often the evidence points to our having misremembered. The successful confirmation of one memory, therefore, does not necessarily increase the probability of the truth of another. I grant that we may discover from experience that we tend to remember more reliably in dealing with one type of question than in dealing with another type. But the value of such a discovery rests upon our ability to 'classify' questions, and can never be more than a useful rule of thumb. Each individual memory may stand or fall quite independently of any others without detriment to such a 'rule'. The point is that it is not always obvious how we can confirm a memory in the way that it is obvious how we must verify a perception. If it were obvious the cross-questioning of witnesses would be a waste of time. For instance, I

may remember very clearly that I saw a man pedal down the road on a bicycle at 5 a.m., but how could I possibly prove it, even to myself?

Even if independent supporting evidence were always available, it would be quite impossible in practice to confirm every memory by it; there simply would not be time. Only when we have already cause to doubt do we seek confirmation to allay that doubt. We seek it in further memories, in the testimony of other people, and in present conditions as we perceive them. What evidence we are able to find is an empirical question, dependent upon the circumstances of the case. And whether or not it does in fact allay our doubts is ultimately a psychological question. The expression 'reasonable doubt' may be used in the law. But what constitutes reasonable doubt cannot be laid down by the law or by any other source of decisions.

b. 'Cause/effect' is dependent upon memory. Even when independent evidence does support a particular memory, such evidence can never be conclusive. For, no matter what form it takes, it always presupposes the accuracy of some other memory or memories. If I remember that the vicar called, and then support this memory by remembering that my wife remarked how shabby his coat was and that my daughter spilled tea over his trousers, I may well be satisfied that my original memory is correct. But it is hanging, so to speak, by a sky-hook; the supporting memories are not themselves independently supported. If I rely on the testimony of other people - the neighbours agree that

the vicar did call that day - then I am only adding their memories to my own to give it extra weight. If I find his hat left in the hall I must remember that it is his hat, and even if it has his calling card inside it marked with the date of his visit, I can take this as conclusive evidence of his visit only on the assumption that such objects do not materialise in such places of their own accord. And this assumption, arising as it does out of our ability to associate observed instances with similar previously observed instances, presupposes the validity of memory. Furthermore, even when the assumption has become an accepted maxim it can be retained, as a maxim, only by memory. Even an established inductive rule can be forgotten. Under strong emotional stress men have been known to try to walk through walls, and children are notoriously capable of forgetting that eggs break when dropped on the floor.

c. The impossibility of direct comparison. Memory is concerned with the past - and simply because the past is past it cannot therefore be held up for present comparison. It is as if some object lay on the other side of a high wall and we could see it only with the aid of a mirror held aloft. We may complain that the mirror reverses what we see, and overcome this difficulty by using two mirrors periscope fashion. We may suspect that part of what we see is a fault in the mirror itself and demand a better mirror, or a whole battery of mirrors to enable us to compare the reflections. But if we ask how we can know that the mirrors do in fact show us what is on the other side of the wall, no amount of improved mirrors will help us.

Now, suppose all the mirrors were slightly distorted and each showed a slightly different picture; and suppose also that they were flexible and liable therefore to change the nature of their distortions when directed to a new object, thus making it impossible to check them by comparing the reflections they showed with any visible object.

We might well feel then that we could never know exactly how the thing on the other side of the wall looked. The only really satisfactory course would be to climb the wall and see for ourselves the thing as it actually is. But the 'wall' we are concerned with is time, and this by its nature can be 'climbed' only from one side.

d. The need to remember the remembering. There is a further difficulty which is not always fully realised. Not only is it impossible to compare our memories with the events of which they are the memories; but because the present is, as it were, always slipping away from us into the past we cannot even compare our memories with what purport to be the effects of the original events (or, more properly, with our inferences from those 'effects'). For what I am comparing must always be, not the memory itself, by my memory of that memory.

Suppose that today I remember building, a short while ago, a castle in the sand. Tomorrow I go to the beach and there it is. I say, 'Yes, just as I remembered it yesterday'. But how do I then know it is just as I remembered it yesterday? The sight of the sand castle itself may well influence my memory of my previous remembering. Again, suppose I 'hear' for my children a poem they are committing to

memory and notice that they make a number of errors and omissions. When they are finished I say nothing; I just hand the book back to them and they read it again for themselves. They may well be quite satisfied that they got it exactly right. Of course, if they had written the poem instead of just saying it their errors would have been there to be seen, and in any case they generally believe me when I assure them that they did say this or that wrong. But in most cases when we wish to confirm a memory we have neither record of, nor independent witness to, our actual 'act of remembering'.

vii. The apparent impossibility of 'credentials'.

It seems that at every stage a further question can be asked, a further doubt raised. It is not merely that no memory carries within itself its own credentials; it does not even seem possible to know what such credentials would be like.

What if a true memory always felt different from a false one? But then there would just not be any false ones. Nothing could then count as a 'false memory' since, being false, it would be seen not to be a memory. (We can, of course, distinguish remembering from imagining - however hard it may be to describe the difference in terms of experience itself - but do we want to call imagining false remembering? And what would have to count as one memory? How could we separate the true part from the false part if, say, I remembered a pair of black brogue shoes instead of a pair of brown brogue shoes.

The only sort of 'feeling different' we seem able to conceive is in our own degree of confidence - the initial authority of the memory itself. And this, as we have seen, far from preventing errors of memory, is the very thing which promotes them.

4. Being unable to doubt a memory

Nevertheless, we say, there must be some memories which we simply cannot doubt; the sceptic, after all, is just a device, not a real man. Our task now is to discover what, in view of all that we have said, this inability to doubt can amount to. Initially there are two quite distinct possibilities: 'I cannot doubt' could refer simply to an empirical or psychological fact, or it could mean that it would be logically self-contradictory to doubt.

a) Psychological indubitability

It is simply a matter of fact that I cannot seriously doubt, (which means that I cannot doubt), that I am now in Canberra, that I had bacon and eggs and tomatoes for lunch today, that I have a wife and two children. I could be misremembering - I could be dreaming - but I happen to know that I am not. These are plain facts, and, however hard they may be to reconcile with some philosophical theories, to deny them is to be guilty either of frivolity or of blatant falsehood. Nor do I need to justify, in any ordinary sense of that word, these and other similarly certain beliefs.

But our concern is not to justify particular memories but to examine memory itself in the hope of discovering why certain memories

are self-justifying. And if we reject the 'beneficial stupidity' thesis, we seem bound to allow that the psychological certainty we are aware of must rest in some way upon logical certainty or at least strong logical probability - else what can 'rational grounds for believing' mean?

b) Logical indubitability

We may say that it is logically demonstrable that some memories are true - for otherwise the question of the truth of falsity of any given memory could not arise at all. Our only grounds for doubting one memory are, or at least include, our assumption of the reliability of others. Here it may be protested that the incompatibility of two 'memories' proves only that at least one is false - not that the other is true. But the very notion of incompatibility can derive only from the assumption that memory is reliable. If our experience were other than it is we should not hold the same pairs of instances incompatible, but when we say that our experience is such and such we are presupposing that we remember it (in general) correctly.¹

But it is not enough to establish that there are true memories; we must also be able to identify them, to distinguish them from false ones as they arise. And, as we have seen, every attempt to achieve

¹ H.H. Price makes this point at length in his contribution to the Symposium: Memory-Knowledge - ARISTOTELIAN SOCIETY Supplementary Volume XV - 'What can Philosophy Determine' - 1936, p.16ff. I am only claiming, however, that the truth of some memories is presupposed by our questioning the authority of memory. I make no claim that the infallibility of any memory is presupposed.

this distinction by logical demonstration must fail since the demonstration always assumes part of what it seeks to prove.

There is, however, another possibility. To say that in the case of a particular class of memories it is logically indubitable that what I remember actually occurred may mean that this particular class of memories is of the wrong logical type for doubt to apply to.

I cannot climb Everest; I am neither trained nor fit enough. I cannot at once both climb and descend (except perhaps by walking up the 'down' escalator); this is logically contradictory. And I cannot climb the floor; this is simply inapplicable - floors are not things to be climbed. Now, propositions, judgments and inferences are the sort of things it makes sense to doubt. Events, entities, qualities, are not the sort of things it makes sense to doubt; we can only doubt something about them. The categorical difference between those things we can doubt, in the normal sense of that word, and those things we simply cannot, may be made plainer by the following distinction.

When we say a proposition is false we are saying something about the proposition itself. But, when we apply the term 'false', as in common speech we often do, to such things as teeth and hair and the bottoms of suitcases, we are really saying that these things are designed (or simply happen) to make us think that they are something other than they are and so lead us to formulate false propositions, to make false inferences; we are saying that they are, in some way, misleading. Now, nothing is intrinsically misleading. Whether and

to what extent anything is misleading is a contingent empirical question - whether and to what extent it does in fact mislead somebody. It is important also to realise that a thing is not necessarily misleading because it is false. The message on the old man's placard - 'The end of the world is at hand', is almost certainly false; but it is misleading only if somebody takes it seriously and starts repenting.

There is another way in which this could be misleading and that is if the natural inference that the old man bearing it is a religious crank is in fact not true - he may be a spy or a detective. The placard is then a sign for most of us of something which is not the case - it is a misleading sign. And, conversely, a true statement at the literal level can be grossly misleading, as Macbeth discovered to his cost.¹ If I say 'I didn't give the chocolate to the baby' when in fact I had put it on the table and watched him take it, then I am being both truthful and misleading at the same time. This is why inflections play so large a part in everyday speech.

The importance of this distinction is that, whereas what is false is simply false and that is all there is to it, that anything is misleading is contingent upon someone's being misled by it. A sign is always of something for somebody. It is always possible therefore that some other person will be 'rightly led' by the same sign, or that

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'And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.'

Act V, Sc. VIII

the one originally misled will correct his error although the object which operated as a sign remains unaltered. Examination may show that a great deal of what we call 'remembering' lies at the sub-inferential level. Therein we may find the warrant we are looking for to justify the psychological certainty we do in fact achieve about most of our memories. Our task now is to discover what kinds or parts of memory, if any, can be properly said to be true or false, and what kinds or parts, if any, can properly be said, at worst, to be misleading.

Chapter II

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'REMEMBERING'?

1. Various attempts to frame a definition

Before going any further we must try to decide just what is to count as memory. We must remember, however, that we are discovering, not legislating about, what memory is, and give an equal hearing, therefore, to every claimant that seems to be an instance of remembering. Various 'definitions of memory' have been advanced by philosophers but they all seem to be either too restrictive, begging the point at issue by an arbitrary dismissal of inconvenient facts and awkward experiences, or too wide, embracing a good deal that does not even seem to be memory - and thus failing to define.

a) The standard restrictive definition

William James defines¹ 'memory' thus: 'It is the knowledge of an event or fact, of which meantime we have not been thinking, with the additional consciousness that we have thought or experienced it before'. He is very definite in his view that the mere occurrence of an image in the mind without this additional consciousness does not constitute a memory, even though the image may be a faithful representation of some previous experience. 'Such a revival is obviously not a memory, whatever else it may be; it is simply a duplicate, a second event,

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Principles of Psychology, Vol. 1, p.648. (His italics).

having absolutely no connection with the first event except that it happens to resemble it.' The same view - that to be remembering we must know we are remembering - seems to be implicit in Bertrand Russell's claim:¹ 'If we are to know - as it is supposed we do - that images are "copies", accurate or inaccurate, of past events, something more than the mere occurrence of images must go to constitute this knowledge. For the mere occurrence, by itself, would not suggest any connection with anything that had happened before'. The idea that to remember is always to refer back, consciously, to the past commends itself to common sense and seems generally to accord with common usage. But it raises certain difficulties.

i. 'Memories' and 'remembering'

I feel that we must distinguish the memories which we have from the remembering which we do. If I speak of a memory I am having then clearly I must be consciously aware of some happening as belonging to the past. Yet it does make sense, I believe, to say of some other man that he is remembering certain past events even though that man is not then conscious of these events as past. It is enough that he is able to relate, recognise, perform or verify because he has in fact had a certain experience in the past, whether or not he is aware at the time of the connection between that past experience and his present activity. Thus James' definition, whilst it may well be applicable to those

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The Analysis of Mind, p.160.

particulars we call memories, cannot be applied to remembering as an activity. We can speak, quite properly and normally, after the event of having remembered, even though the particular memories in question were not recognised as such. I may, for instance, make an assertion of fact and, when I am asked how I know, reply, after some consideration, that I remember it. Under these circumstances it would seem very odd to say that I started to remember it only when replying to the question - especially as my reply shows that, since my knowledge is based upon my own past experience, I must have been remembering it already.

ii. The assumption of reflexiveness

Prima-facie, remembering is one way of knowing things. It has been strenuously denied by some writers¹ that remembering is a way of getting to know things, but it would seem simply perverse to deny that it is a way of actually knowing something here and now.

Now, if I could not know that a bird is sitting on that chimney pot without also knowing that I know that a bird is sitting there, then I could not know this without knowing that I know it - and so on ad infinitum. It follows that I need not be (though I may be) aware that I know something in order to know it.

And if the 'knowing' in question is remembering, whereas I might know that I am remembering a certain event, I could remember it perfectly well without any 'additional consciousness' at all. Russell

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E.g. G. Ryle - Cf. The Concept of Mind, p.274ff.

is quite right when he says that something more than the mere occurrence of an image is necessary; it is also necessary that we recognise it, that is, see it as something. But it is a further, and usually quite unnecessary, step to see ourselves as seeing it as something.

iii. Real memory - imagined imagining

One of the problems we considered in chapter I¹ is simply ruled out by the present definition. If to remember is to know that we remember, we could not remember something and think ourselves to be only imagining it. To preserve the definition we should have to say that remembering commences only when we realise that we are remembering, notwithstanding that nothing else is changed thereby. And if, as is certainly possible, we never do realise this, we should never have remembered the event at all. We should have imagined it, even though every detail is in fact a representation to us of our own past experience.

iv. Intermediate stages of remembering and 'discarded candidates'

Whether we are deliberately trying to remember something or simply allowing our memories to 'wander', the arrival at a particular piece of remembered information may be the culmination of quite a long process, involving, as we saw in the previous chapter,² the consideration and rejection of various propositions and images. Suppose, for example, that

¹ See p.11.

² See pp.13 and 14.

an old wartime colleague telephones to say that he is in Canberra and asks me to meet him. As I try to remember his appearance a number of images arise in my mind. Each one is quickly replaced by another - I know that they are not of the man in question - until at last I have an image which I know immediately is the one I want.

But who are these other gentlemen in Naval uniform whose images appeared to me? They are not the man I was 'looking for', so I did not stop to enquire - yet it seems highly likely that each was a real person, not just a figment of my imagination and, if so, can we say anything but that I must have been remembering them? The same thing applies when we remember the face but not the name; the names which suggest themselves to us are usually real names, names we have actually encountered, though not the name we want. And if, instead of simply discarding the 'unsuccessful applicants', we take the trouble to try to identify them, we are often successful. It is when we are interested only in who they are not, rather than in who they are, that they must remain anonymous. I do not need to maintain that we can always identify or 'place' these 'intermediate stages of memory'. If we can sometimes do so this shows that those 'identified' are in fact memory-images; but they are made memory-images, according to this definition, only by our stopping to consider them. And there is every reason to suppose that most of such passing images are in fact identifiable if we pause to consider them. The definition seems to demand a third group of experiences, neither memory nor imagination

yet in some way of the same 'kind' as these, a sort of 'potential memory', and I can see no justification for the postulation of such an additional class. If we wanted to call anything 'potential memory' surely it would be those experiences we have had and might remember.

Now, I have been talking as if these 'discarded candidates' were something quite extraneous to, and in no way connected with, the event or individual finally remembered, but this is not so. These images may play a vital part in the remembering of that event. The man whose image occurs to me probably served in the same ship as my friend, or performed the same duties at another time, or looked rather like him, or was his close associate. The image, although it is itself the wrong one for my present purpose, somehow helps to produce the right one. I may perhaps pause in my pursuit to say - 'No, that's old Jim. He joined us later' - but my doing does not seem to make any difference to the fact that it is old Jim, and that I am remembering him.

b) Knowledge of the past

We have found our first 'definition' too narrow. We now consider one which is also too wide. It is tempting to define 'memory' as 'Our knowledge of the past', or, less incautiously, 'Our knowledge of our own past experience', because this seems to be straightforward and clear-cut and to embrace everything we might want to call memory. But as a definition it fails on both counts.

i. It is too wide

As we saw in chapter I,¹ knowing the past is not necessarily the same thing as remembering the past, even when the past in question is our own. It may be suggested, therefore, that in order to make the 'definition' function as a definition we rephrase it as - Direct knowledge of our own past experience. But what does the word 'direct' mean here? We cannot say 'intuitive'. This would not make it any clearer and would put memory on a par with clairvoyance, which we certainly do not want. It must be knowledge of the past in a particular though quite ordinary way. But the only description we can give of this particular and ordinary way is - remembering.

Perhaps we can give a negative definition: Remembering is being certain about past facts without the aid of testimony and inference. This is, in effect, the position adopted by Sir Roy Harrod. 'A memory', he says, 'is an imaginative structure to which the truth symbol adheres without there being any apparent grounds for the adherence. Memories, in fine, are members of the class of wholly irrational beliefs recognised as such (definition)'.² He argues that the irrationality of the beliefs does not render it irrational to hold them. But even if we accept this argument the definition is hardly satisfactory. It is difficult to see how it can exclude articles of faith and mere

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p.15ff.

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Foundations of Inductive Logic, p.187.

prejudices. We might extend the definition to exclude these specifically but then I cannot but feel that we would be defining memory by what it is not - making it a mere residue after the more specific kinds of belief have been extracted.

There is also a more formal objection. The definition accepts as memory whatever commends itself to us as memory, and it makes no provision for memory which is not recognised as such, memory to which the 'truth symbol' does not adhere. Unless, that is, we take the 'truth symbol' to be nothing more than our failure to judge 'this is false'.

ii. It is too narrow

As a definition 'Knowledge of our past experience' is at once too wide and too narrow. By adhering to the factual criterion it abandons the psychological criterion altogether. If it isn't true it isn't remembered. This may be a quite reasonable stand (though, as we shall see shortly, it involves serious difficulties). But this is not all. 'Knowledge of my past' is not the same thing as 'knowledge that this is my past' yet how are we to make clear the distinction and so avoid the charge of the assumption of reflexiveness made against the first definition? We seem obliged to resurrect the distinction between factual knowledge and mere acquaintance, so that we can deal with those cases where I in fact remember my past experience without registering that it is my past experience by saying that I am acquainted with my past. We would then reformulate the definition as 'Acquaintance with

our own past experience'. But the knowledge/acquaintance distinction is a very shaky one to say the least. Whether, and if so how, it can properly be made we shall consider later in the essay. In any case 'acquaintance with our own past' seems to serve as a description rather than as a definition of memory. For there is about it a strong suspicion of circularity.

If we define 'remembering' as 'knowing the past' how do we define 'the past'? The Concise Oxford Dictionary gives 'gone by in time'. But our concept of temporal sequence seems, prima-facie at least, to rest heavily upon our ability to distinguish the perception of events from the memory of events by the natures of the experiences involved. There have been several different attempts to free the concept of the past from that of remembering, some of which we shall be examining in the final chapter of this essay, but unless and until this is convincingly achieved our present definition is useless. In order to make the 'pastness' of the event contemplated the criterion of our remembering that event, we must first show how our concept of the past is derived without reference to any 'memory-experience'.

iii. 'Memory' and 'knowledge'

There is obviously a strong case for insisting that 'remember', like 'know', should apply only to what is in fact the case (or was the case). And it may seem that we are tacitly following this rule whenever we say 'I seem to remember'. For it may be argued that there would be no point in saying 'seem' unless we felt that something over

and above the present experience itself were needed to qualify the event as a memory. Thus 'seem to remember' may stand to 'remember' much as 'believe' stands to 'know'.

But at what point, then, would we be justified in dropping the 'seem to'? Only when 'independent evidence' is produced? 'I seem to remember' usually denotes a low degree of 'initial authority' -- 'Don't put too much weight upon this recollection, it may be wrong'. Certainly there is not the same *prima-facie* absurdity in saying 'I seem to remember it clearly, yet it could not have happened' as there is in saying 'I believe it, but it is not so'. The two cases are not really parallel. For when I say 'I know' I am saying 'I believe and I have adequate grounds for believing', but when I say 'I remember' am I saying 'I seem to remember and...' and what? Does it make sense to talk of adequate grounds for seeming to remember? This is a question which must come up again when we consider the relation of memories to claims,¹ but it is certainly not a question to which we can provide a quick answer. 'Knowledge of our past' provides us with neither an exclusive definition of memory nor an effective criterion by which we can identify instances of memory when they occur. All the examples in the previous chapter show very clearly that no memory has 'its truth stamped upon its face'. So that our only means of establishing that some event did in fact occur is by more remembering of the same

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Chapter IV.

kind. Therefore, to say that a seeming memory is really a memory only if it is true, though it tells us something about how we normally use the word 'memory', provides no means of identifying our memories as such.

c) Learnt and not forgotten

A fairly recent attempt to cut away the aura of mystery from memory is the claim that 'remembered' means simply 'learnt and not forgotten'.¹ The advantage of this move is that it seems to give clear rules for deciding what is remembered and what is not: - Did I learn this by instruction, perception, practice? Have I retained what I learnt, i.e. am I now capable of relating, recalling, performing, properly? - Then I remember. And if it be objected that I may not be remembering that I ever learnt the thing, the advocates of this view are generally prepared to say that this is of no importance, that it is sufficient that it is the kind of thing which would have to be learnt. The only valid test for memory is the ability to perform appropriately when called upon to do so.

This definition, like the previous one, limits memory to 'true memory' and must encounter the same difficulties. I may consider that I am performing appropriately, i.e. according to what I have learnt, whilst someone else considers that I am not. How could the issue be decided except by reference to the learning process remembered in

¹ Principally associated with G. Ryle - Cf. The Concept of Mind, p.272ff.

some other way? But, as a definition, it suffers from the more serious defect that it attempts to define the 'genus' in terms of the 'differentia'. This is apparent when we consider the assertion 'I remember his face'. I certainly never 'learnt his face'. And though I may perhaps have learnt to describe his face, a moment's reflection will show that 'I remember his face' not only is not equivalent to 'I can describe his face', it does not even entail that I have even attempted (let alone learnt) to do so. The failure of the definition is even more evident when we ask two pertinent questions:

i. What does 'learnt' mean?

We know well enough what we are doing when we are learning something - a part in a play, or how to swim, or the order of colours in the rainbow, or our twelve-times tables - we are committing something to memory, or, if you prefer, acquiring a skill. But when we ask what it is for that something to have been learnt, what can we say but that, as a result of past efforts, we can do, or do know, the something in question? Learning is one kind of remembering: remembering directed to the acquisition of some particular talent. For, when we consider how we learn anything, what the 'efforts' in question amount to, we find that, insofar as they effect the issue at all, these efforts are themselves simply 'little rememberings'. The observation of anyone learning a part in a play, or going through the early stages of learning to drive, will show this very clearly. What

could learning be except piecemeal remembering?¹ I can see a rainbow a thousand times but unless I remember which colour joins which I shall never learn the order of the colours. Learning entails remembering - having learnt entails having remembered, and going on remembering. Now, what of not forgetting?

ii. What is the criterion for 'not forgotten'?

It is notorious that things we cannot remember today may come back to us as clear as ever tomorrow. Sometimes events from long ago come back to us with surprising clarity, and some psychologists believe that nothing we have experienced is ever totally lost to us, a belief which is supported in some measure by the 'unearthing' of lost memories under hypnosis. At what stage, then, can we say we have forgotten something? I often enough do say this, but all that I mean is that at this moment I am unable to recall it. If the matter is important I may be urged to try harder to remember, and I may be successful. Or I may adopt the technique of thinking about something else in the hope that the recollection will 'come to me of its own accord'.

Clearly the only meaning of 'forgotten' which permits verification is 'not recalled or recognised now'. Asking which memories are 'quite forgotten' is like asking which of the young men at the university will live to be octogenarians. The only possible answer is 'Wait and see'.

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Or the 'drilling' of the physical faculties in some set way. This is discussed more fully in chapter V.

Wittgenstein asks the question¹ - If I knew something yesterday but do not know it today, at what time did I stop knowing it? - There just does not seem to be any answer.

Thus if I say 'I have not forgotten what I once learned' it is not entirely clear what I am claiming. If I simply mean 'I am now doing something which I once learnt how to do' then this is certainly good evidence that I remember something - something which, as we have seen, is itself a complex of earlier rememberings. But this only instantiates the concept of remembering, it cannot serve to define it. In the same way 'I see the meadow as a green expanse' shows that I have colour vision but does not provide a definition of the concept of colour.

d) 'Neo-ostensive definition' - how the term is used

i. 'Open-texture', closed, and vague concepts

Friedrich Waismann attributed much of the misunderstanding in philosophy to - 'something of great significance, the fact, namely, that language is never complete for the expression of all ideas, on the contrary, that it has an essential openness'.² And he introduces the term 'open texture concept' in his article 'Verifiability' for those of our empirical concepts which are elastic in their coverage. 'Open texture is a very fundamental characteristic of most, though not of all,

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'Philosophical Investigations', pt.1, para. 182ff, p.73eff.

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Analytic and Synthetic. Pt. vi. Analysis. March 1953, p.82.

empirical concepts, and it is this texture which prevents us from verifying conclusively most of our empirical statements'.¹ The distinction between 'closed' and 'open texture' is fairly straightforward. Whereas there are exact rules for determining whether or not a given poem is a sonnet, there are no such exact rules for determining on every occasion whether a given animal is a cat. If the poem has one line too many or one rhyme out of place it is not a sonnet. But the cat may have no tail, or have three legs, or bark like a dog; the point at which we stop calling it a cat is a matter of decision. A term may be introduced into the language to refer to a closed concept - closed in the sense that all possibilities are already catered for; but when a term is evolved to refer to a group of similar instances even though no exact rules are laid down for its use, we have an open-texture concept. In the first case we have a set of absolute rules, in the second a set of descriptions which must be met with to a substantial degree.

We can safely assert that memory is a 'natural' rather than a 'formal' concept. We have applied the name to certain known experiences, not created it as a technical term to assist us in discussing those experiences. By the criteria given above, therefore, it is an open-texture concept. It does not follow, however, that it is also a vague concept. To use Waismann's examples, 'heap' and 'pink'

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Reprinted in *Logic and Language*, 1951 (A.G.N. Flew), p.120.

are vague terms whereas 'gold' is a quite precise term, notwithstanding that if some novel material were to be found which met almost, though not quite, all the tests for gold, we should be obliged to decide whether to call it gold or to invent some new name for it.

It is just a fortunate fact that such novel experiences occur comparatively rarely. In the case of most 'natural kinds' ostensive and formal definitions do in fact coincide in practice. Therefore when 'novel experiences' do occur we are in a position to deal with them.

Now, if it were the case that some definition could be formed to embrace every instance that we in fact accept as memory, and exclude every instance that we do not, then the inadequacy of such a definition to deal with a totally novel experience which might occur need cause us no more distress than does the inadequacy of the definition of 'horse' to meet such an eventuality. 'Memory' would be an open-texture, but not a vague, concept. But the various attempts at definition we have considered seem to demonstrate that this is not the case. Our problem, then, is not simply that our definition may have to be revised at some future date, but that no single definition can meet our present needs, can provide us with an effective criterion for all occasions.

ii. Is there a common factor in all uses of the term?

We may still hope, however, to find some essential characteristic which 'binds together' all our uses of the term. 'Game' is decidedly

an open texture concept, and may fairly be regarded as a vague one, yet we may well feel that our application of the term to some new instance that we encounter occurs because we attribute to this new instance some feature that we have found common to all instances of games - even if we are not quite clear what it is. Similarly, there is a family resemblance between all the instances we call 'remembering'. Perhaps it is possible that we can be aware of similarities without being able to tell exactly in what respect things are similar, and that when we think of some performance as one of remembering this is because we recognise in it some such 'unspecified common feature'.

But a family resemblance is quite compatible with one member of the family bearing no obvious resemblance to some other member. It is only when we meet the rest of the family that we see the 'connecting links'; as the appearance of a child will often 'connect' the appearance of his two brothers. So that the fact that it is reasonable and intelligible to apply a single term to all instances of the concept does not entail the existence of any single 'essential characteristic', identified or otherwise.

iii. The three criteria

Perhaps the ideal memory, the perfect exemplar, to use H.H. Price's term,¹ is that which both feels like a memory to ourselves and 'behaves' like a memory to other people. I remember that Aston

¹

Cf. Thinking and Experience, p.20.

Villa won the football match: I have a visual image of the winning goal being scored and I remember being delighted by the victory. I am able to tell everyone quite confidently who won and how they won, and to check my pools coupon. The people I speak to saw me go into the stadium and come away from it after the game was over. They also saw others coming away with Villa rosettes and happy smiles. Here is a memory which nobody but a professional sceptic would ever query.

Three distinct characteristics are involved:

- a. The experience has the initial authority of memory - the feeling of belief about a past event.
- b. There is strong independent evidence that: (i) what is claimed did in fact happen and (ii) I was in a position to perceive its happening and subsequently remember it.
- c. I am able, as the result of my memory, to proceed with certain activities dependent for their execution upon a knowledge of the past event.

Where any of these conditions holds we are inclined to speak of remembering. To my mind, however, by far the most persistent factor is the 'initial authority'. Since this is often referred to as a feeling of familiarity it may be well, at this juncture, to consider briefly what might be meant by this expression.

iv. Familiarity

Hume held memories to be subjectively distinguishable from mere imaginings because they are more vivid. But Hume himself was forced

to admit that on occasions mere imaginings may be more vivid, in any ordinary sense of that term, than memory-images. To preserve the notion of an intrinsic memory-indicator - the truth-symbol as Harrod calls it - empiricists have cast about for some other description which is not open to this objection. William James was perhaps the first to speak of a feeling of familiarity which accompanies, or arises out of, the memory, and obliges us to accept it as an account of our own past experience. Unfortunately however, although the term 'familiar', largely through the writings of Bertrand Russell, has become almost a standard expression, it is, like the term 'vivid', something of a makeshift. As R.F. Holland has pointed out,¹ a thing normally becomes familiar through long usage, and there is therefore no reason why our imaginings, since they may be repeatedly entertained by us, should not become more familiar than actual experiences we have had only once.

I hope that as we proceed we shall discover what it is that makes a memory 'feel familiar'. But for the present all that I mean by 'initial authority', whatever the explanation of it may be, is the feeling of belief manifested in our readiness to base our expectations, reasonings and testimony on the memory in question.

v. Truth-status an open question

Any attempt at rigid definition forces us to decide between a psychological, and private, criterion and a factual, and public,

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The Empiricist Theory of Memory. MIND, Vol. LXIII, 1954, p.466ff.

one.¹ Our alternatives are to treat remembering as we treat knowing, making our criterion what was the case, and basing it upon the way we generally use the word 'remember' in discourse, or to treat it as we treat believing, making our criterion a particular state of mind, and basing it upon the experience we refer to when we speak of remembering. If we were to take past fact as our sole criterion, then we would have to include many instances where there is no 'memory-feeling' at all, and which we, therefore, may not wish to call memories. Nor would we be able to distinguish between memory-knowledge and knowledge about the past from other sources. If we were to take the present belief about the past as our sole criterion, then we would have to include beliefs which are in fact unjustified, and which, therefore, we would not wish to call memories. Furthermore, we would be obliged to maintain that no independent evidence about the past, however well established, could overthrow a memory-claim provided the belief were strongly held. We would be obliged to admit 'mnemic hallucinations' as memories.

Of course, what we want to say is that remembering is holding a true belief about the past as a result of having experienced the past in question. But we must recognise that we know it to be 'as a result of past experience' only by virtue of the present memory-experience, and that in most cases we do in fact know the belief to

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Cf. 'Remembering' chapter IV - Von Leyden distinguishes what he calls the 'present approach' and the 'past approach' to memory.

be true by virtue of that 'memory-experience' alone. We must, therefore, consider, not the thing, but the things, we mean by 'remember', must recognise that the term is quite properly used in different ways, and concentrate on discovering the relationship between these. First, however, we must decide what these different ways are.

2. Remembering: distinctions and classifications

a) Memories and remembering

The first distinction which springs to my mind within the field of memory is the one I have made some use of already - between the memories we have and the remembering we perform. We may well feel that a totally different classificatory system must apply to what we remember from that which applies to how we remember. It may seem comparable with the way in which different classificatory systems would apply if we were asked 'What did you run? The hundred yards, the egg and spoon race, or the all-Australia championship?' and if we were asked 'How did you run? Fast, bowlegged, or with increasing pace? Certainly there are differences in the grammar which is applicable to memory and to remembering. I can remember quickly, or efficiently, or effortlessly, but I cannot have quick or efficient or effortless memories. On the other hand I can remember clearly, and this is having a clear memory of some event.

We must allow then, that there are things we can say about remembering that we cannot say about memories, but are they, from our

point of view, the important things? To preserve the analogy with running the subjects of memory would have to be such things as 'that farm', 'the man next door', 'yesterday's breakfast'; or perhaps, farms, people, breakfasts. But these are not the 'kinds' we are interested in. Rather we are interested in distinguishing between memories of: things, skills, states of mind, appearances, propositions. The more pertinent analogy would therefore be with running a race or running a lottery or running for Parliament - where what we do and how we do it are closely interwoven. Thus:

Remembering the appearance or the sound or the smell of something seems simply to be imaging. Perhaps it is not; perhaps I can remember exactly how something looked or felt without any image at all and perhaps I can have images without remembering at all. I shall dispute these possibilities in a later chapter¹ but for the present we must allow it. Nevertheless, to say that my memory takes the form of images seems to say as much about what I am remembering as about how I am remembering. It is very hard to imagine, for instance, how I could have an image of a proposition.

Remembering a skill, i.e. how to do something, may simply be doing it. Whether this 'really is' remembering or not need not concern us here.² All that is relevant is that, insofar as we do treat it as

¹ Chapter VII.

² This question is taken up in Chapter V.

remembering, our reason for saying that what is remembered is a skill is that our manner of remembering is a skilled performance.

Again we must be careful not to prejudge the issue. It may prove that remembering is quite distinct from performing, but it is evident that there is a strong connection.

It could perhaps be held that the remembering of a factual relationship could only be the stating of a proposition. This is at least arguable. And it seems to be analytic to say that when the mode of remembering is the stating of a proposition (assuming that there be such a mode of remembering), the subject of the memory must be a certain relationship which held, or is claimed to have held, between certain events, or proceedings, or situations.

We cannot remember without remembering something. I am suggesting further that we cannot remember in this or that way without remembering something of this or that kind. If this is a mere tautology then it is one which has frequently been overlooked by those who have sought to treat what we remember and how we remember as two distinct categories. On the other hand it would be confusing and misleading to ignore completely, as some philosophers have done, the differences between what can appropriately be said of remembering (as an activity) and what can appropriately be said only of memories (as the 'products' of that activity). In the next chapter I propose to avoid both dangers by approaching the classification of memory from the viewpoints of memories and remembering alternately. But first I want to make an

initial distinction, a distinction we might say, between distinctions.

b) Primary and secondary distinctions

i. Descriptions and sub-divisions

We have, on the one hand, the different sorts of things we can say about remembering because it is one kind of activity, and on the other hand, the different kinds of things that count as memories. An analogy may help to make the distinction clear. Discussing a colour we can say that it is bright or dull, clear or opaque, cheerful or gloomy, and we can argue as to whether it 'belongs' to the surface of an object or is 'dependent' upon a mind. Or quite differently, we can classify it as green or red or blue or orangey-red or bluey-green. Whilst the first list is of real enough distinctions, and these clearly are applicable to colours, they are also equally applicable to other things as well. The weather can be bright or dull, the fireside can be cheerful or gloomy, and the arguments about ontological status can be carried on about sounds or flavours. But the second list of alternatives lies within colour itself; it is the possible classes into which colours, and only colours, can fall. For convenience I shall call these primary and secondary distinctions respectively, and the two important points to note are:

The 'primary distinctions' are applicable irrespective of the 'kind' (the 'secondary' classification) in question.

'Secondary distinctions' apply only within the class under consideration. Primary distinctions apply to members of that and other classes.

An example of a primary distinction is that given in Section 1 of this chapter, between memories which are specifically believed and memories which are merely accepted in passing. This distinction, though applicable to memory, is by no means peculiar to memory; it applies equally to perception and prediction as well.

ii. Retention and recall

In the case of memory one primary distinction is of the utmost importance, that between dispositional memory and memory occurrence. As we shall need to be conscious of this distinction at every stage of our enquiry I propose to make a preliminary investigation of it before going on to consider the 'kinds of memory' - the secondary distinctions.

Whilst we can talk of remembering something either in the dispositional sense of being able to remember, or in the occurrent sense of actually remembering now, our being entitled to talk of remembering a given event in either sense entails that, on some occasions, we must be entitled to talk of remembering that event in the other sense. The fact that an event occurred yesterday and I recall it today is all the proof needed that I have retained that event in my memory. Furthermore it is the only proof possible that I have done so. A memory disposition can be known to exist only because memory occurrences actualise it.¹

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This does not mean that it can be known not to exist if no memory occurrence is actualising it. Cf. p.42 above.

Thus, whilst 'Do you remember...?' is a different kind of question from 'Are you remembering...?', it does not need a different kind of experience to enable us to answer it. Asking a man on his Golden Wedding day 'Do you remember your wedding day?' is quite different in intention from asking him 'Are you remembering your wedding day?'. But though he may answer 'Yes' to the first question and 'No' to the second, there is an obvious sense in which he must, to be entitled to answer 'Yes' to the first question, be fulfilling at least some of the conditions required for answering 'Yes' to the second question also. A memory disposition or capacity can be claimed only on the evidence of some memory occurrence, and justly claimed only on the evidence of a memory-occurrence directly related to the event claimed as remembered. This is the fact which people overlook when they claim to remember some event they have in fact long since forgotten. What they remember is simply the fact that they did once remember it, as when an old man starts to relate some incident from his youth and finds, to his astonishment, that he is unable to do so. Memory dispositions or capacities are not personal characteristics like the colour of hair. Nor do we carry them about with us like the watch which must still be in my pocket because I put it there and have not taken it out.

'Does he remember this?', then, means 'Has he ever remembered this and can he be expected to remember it again?'. And 'Do you remember this?' generally means 'Can you remember this?' and is often used to

ask us to try to remember. Or, if the object be particularly complicated - like a proof in geometry for instance - the question may mean 'Can you remember ever remembering this and if so could you do so again if you tried?'.

There is, however, a problem here, one which gives some plausibility to our third definition, 'Learnt and not forgotten'. It is very hard to deny that quite often we seem to know things without thinking about them at all. We take the right action, give the right answer, select the right book, without experiencing anything that feels like an occurrent memory. Often these performances are quite complex; they are the kind of things we should say need to be remembered. It may be possible to explain such spontaneous right actions wholly in terms of physiological conditioning. There seems no doubt that a great deal of spontaneous action must be so explained. But there is also another possibility at least worthy of consideration.

What we discover by perception is retained by memory. Ten seconds after an event there seems no doubt that we are remembering not perceiving. The question of how and when this change occurs, if indeed there be any actual change, will exercise us in my final chapter.

But, even allowing that such a change has occurred, the memory we now have is not, properly speaking, a recollection. It has not been recalled into consciousness, for it has never left consciousness. Suppose I see a quite perfect rose and this makes such a strong impression upon me that when I turn away its beauty remains in my mind - in the

popular phrase 'it is still clearly before me'. I may have a continuous image of that rose for five minutes following my actually seeing it, during which time I may appear to be giving my full attention to a host of other matters. So there does not seem to be any logical reason why we could not continually remember something (without ever recollecting it in the ordinary sense of that word) for an indefinite period.

Thus, whilst the disposition/occurrence distinction is possible only where there are in fact periodical occurrences, and we might therefore say that a memory disposition is 'nothing more than' its occurrences, there could be cases of remembering where the distinction simply does not apply. There may be some memories which are constantly, as people say, at the back of our minds. And in such cases we could equally well regard the memory as occurrent or as dispositional. It would be a mistake, I think, to draw too rigid a distinction between what is and what is not being specifically remembered at any given moment.

iii. Secondary distinctions

We now turn our attention to the secondary distinctions. Immediately a host of questions spring to mind. Must events be remembered either in words or in images? What is the connection between a remembered event, a remembered fact, and the proposition in which the memories are expressed? Can we simply remember a proposition? How is this different from remembering a sentence? How is remembering a person or place

connected with remembering the qualities of that person or place?
 Can remembering how to do something be in imagery? What is the
 relation between habit and memory? Is recognition a kind of recall?
 Or is recall a kind of recognition?

These are the kind of questions we now have to consider. From them emerge various candidates for consideration as 'kinds of remembering' or 'classes of memories'. Images, remembering sense experience, remembering in words and propositions, remembered events, remembered qualities, remembering how to, remembered facts, recognition - all these have their places, their particular functions, in the general scheme of what we call memory. Our task is to decide what these particular functions are.

Something else emerges from our list of questions, the fact that the 'kinds' are not simple alternatives. I can contrast remembering how to swim with remembering that I had eggs for breakfast or remembering what my home looks like; but in each case the remembering may take the form of, or include, uttering words, framing propositions, or having images. I can contrast remembering a man's behaviour with remembering his appearance; but the remembering in either case may take the form of either recall or recognition. A memory-image seems to be a totally different sort of thing from a remembered proposition, though both may be means of remembering the same event. And recognising something in front of us seems quite different from recalling something from another time and place. Yet it seems to make sense to talk of recognising an image.

The upshot of all this is that before we can start to answer the question 'What kind of memory is this?' we have to ask 'What kind of question is this?'. Just as when I am asked 'What kind of soldier is he?' the question could mean 'Is he a Corporal or a Colonel?', or 'Is he an infantryman or a cavalryman?', or simply 'Is he a good soldier or a bad one?'. (The last is a primary distinction but the first two are secondary). Of course, in practice, I should avoid this difficulty by replying 'He's an infantry Corporal and a very good one'. It does no harm to throw in a little gratuitous information. But with memory this manoeuvre is not so easy. We know well enough that 'cavalryman' excludes 'infantryman', and 'Corporal' excludes 'Colonel'. But which 'kind of memory' excludes which other kind seems to vary with the point of view of the question, and it is quite vital therefore to know what the questioner is 'getting at'. For instance I might ask a man who is describing his friend to me, 'Do you have a visual image of him, or do you simply remember a number of facts about what he looks like?'. The question seems reasonable enough but it could be that to him the 'alternatives' may seem to amount to exactly the same thing, for he may be thinking only in terms of what he can state, and not, like myself, in terms of the mode of remembering which enables him to state it. And I cannot point out an image to him as I could point out a Corporal.

Nevertheless, for most of us such questions as these do make sense: 'Do you actually remember how he looked or just that he looked

like Napoleon?' and 'When you say you remember how to drive are you saying that you remember what you did on some previous occasion, or that you can now think through the rules of driving, or simply that given a car you could drive it?' and 'Is the actual group of words the subject of your memory, or simply the way of expressing it'?. They make sense once we are in tune, as it were, with our questioner. It is only because this is so that we are able to talk intelligibly of kinds of memories at all. There are genuine alternatives within certain contexts of enquiry, and I hope that in the course of the next chapter it will become clearer what these contexts are, and what are the alternatives appropriate to them.

Chapter III

KINDS OF MEMORY

1. Classification by subjects of memory
- a) Memories of events and memories of individuals
- i. Broad's distinction and reduction

To claim 'I remember my grandfather' may be to claim more or less than to claim 'I remember my grandfather visiting us in Birmingham'. I could remember the man without remembering the visit. And I could remember the visit, in the sense of remembering things about it, without actually remembering the man at all. I could, for instance, recall certain outings at which someone, presumably my grandfather, was present. I might perhaps say 'I remember my grandfather' and mean nothing more than 'I could recognise a portrait of my grandfather if I saw one', but this would be a rather extended use of 'remember'; it is natural to feel that to remember someone must always be to be able to recall something about him, and to recall it from personal experience. My ability to recognise his portrait could hardly constitute remembering him if he had died before I was born. My claim to remember my grandfather would be very hollow indeed if I were unable from direct memory, to relate a single incident which involved him, or to give any description of him. In this case all that I would be entitled to say is that I remember certain events that occurred at a time when (so I am told) my grandfather was visiting.

Such considerations led C.D. Broad¹ to reduce the memory of individuals to one way of talking about the memory of events. 'All perceptual situations' he says 'refer beyond themselves to physical things: if we confine ourselves to saying that we perceive a certain physical event we simply leave the further reference more vague than when we say that we perceive a certain physical thing. Now the same is true of perceptual memory. I say that I remember the Master of Trinity, and I say that I remember dining with him. But, on the one hand, I remember him only insofar as I remember the events in which he was concerned. And, on the other hand, when I remember any physical event I, ipso-facto, remember to some extent the thing in which I believe this to have occurred'.

ii. Remembering classifications and descriptions

But is it true that I can remember an individual only in remembering some event in which he was concerned? I have agreed that it would be hollow for me to claim to remember my grandfather if I were unable to relate anything about him; but surely I could describe him from memory without remembering any event in which he was concerned. Perhaps Broad includes in 'events' such things as 'having white whiskers'; it is noticeable that he says 'the thing in which I believe this to have occurred', not 'to which'. But once we allow the traditional distinction between internal and external properties - and the

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'The Mind and Its Place in Nature', p.224.

question of remembering individuals could hardly arise at all if we do not allow it - then 'having white whiskers' does not refer to an event in the way that 'coming to dinner on Christmas Day 1936' refers to an event. There seems no reason why I could not remember him by means of memories of the former kind without any assistance from memories of the latter kind. Nor need my memory of him be in the form of an image. I could remember that he had blue eyes and white whiskers and a Scottish accent without any image of him at all. But I can remember this kind of detail about people who I certainly do not remember - Oliver Cromwell for instance - and if this were all that constituted my memory of my grandfather, then, when I was asked 'Do you remember your grandfather?' I would be inclined to reply 'No, not really'. For I would have neither a mental picture of him (unless it were a purely imaginative one built up from verbal descriptions) nor any direct memory of his actions. The ability to describe and classify a person does not, of itself, constitute a memory of that person, though clearly, it does constitute a memory of something.

The claim 'I remember grandfather' is justified then if:

- a. I remember events in which grandfather was personally involved in such a way that the memories of those events would have been quite different had he not been present; or
- b. I have certain images (usually visual though not necessarily so) of him which I know to originate from my actual past perception of him; or

c. I remember certain facts about his personal appearance or his doings which are directly traceable to judgments made in his presence, i.e., I can remember the occasions of making the judgments in question.

Since c. would be merely a case of remembering propositions about him (as in the Oliver Cromwell case) unless I in fact remembered some event in which he was involved, we can regard a. and b. as the only real alternatives. As a rule both these conditions hold, but either will suffice. I can have clear memories of people's participation in certain events, their doings and their sayings, and the way I felt about them at the time, without any imagery of those people. Thus even my failure to recognise a man does not entail that I do not remember him. Failing to recognise people we do in fact remember, in the other sense of the term, is quite a common experience. And, on the other hand, I can have a clear image which I know to be the image of a particular individual, and know to originate from my perception of that individual, without being aware that I am remembering any particular event. Nevertheless, the fact that I can be sure that the imagery derives from my own past perception shows that I am in fact remembering an event (or number of events) whether I am conscious of this or not. To this extent we must allow that Broad is right. The distinction between events and individuals is only within what I regard myself as remembering.

iii. Remembering qualities as qualities

It may be suggested that, when we remember an individual as distinct from remembering an event, what we are actually remembering

is the group of sensible characteristics which for us make up the appearance of the individual in question. And in a sense this is quite correct; we are attributing a continuity and an identity to a group of sensible characteristics. In the same sense as we see a group of such characteristics as an individual we remember a group of them as an individual. But this does not mean that what we 'really see' is not a man at all but just a pattern of colours; as the English language is used what we see, and what we remember, is a particular individual. I can see no objection, however, to saying that I see a man because a pattern of colours is presented to my sight. And, at a particular time when our attention is focussed on the colours themselves, as a painter's might be, it is quite possible to see the colours and shapes as such. I could, for instance, observe the white patch which is an old man's moustache without otherwise noticing the old man at all. And, if I can notice a sensible quality without noticing the individual whose quality it is, then I can also remember it as so distinct.

To remember an individual by way of imagery, then, is to remember a group of sensible qualities; but it is to do more than this, it is to remember that group of sensible qualities as that individual. Nor is the memory-image of an individual necessarily derived from any single perceptual occasion; it may have been developed throughout a series of different perceptual experiences with a consequent vagueness of detail. If you think of someone you know well; and then, after you

are satisfied that you have a clear visual memory-image of his appearance, you ask yourself whether he is wearing a waistcoat or not, the chances are that you will be quite unable to say. Yet the image did not seem to be incomplete in the way that a picture which did not include such details would certainly be incomplete. If the man or his photograph were before you instead of just 'before your memory' such vagueness would hardly be possible.

iv. Remembering the unnoticed

This distinction between remembering individuals as such and remembering their sensible qualities, i.e., their sensed appearances, carries with it a corresponding distinction in the ways in which individuals and events can be remembered. In the strict sense we can remember only those events which occurred within our own experience - this seems to be unquestionable. But it is often assumed that experiencing an event means perceiving it to be an event of a particular description, the description we finally decide to give of it, and this assumption is not justified. Suppose, for example, that I ask my son 'Do you remember the coalman delivering today?' and he replies 'No', but later adds 'I do remember hearing a big truck and a lot of crashing downstairs, and shortly after that I saw a very dusty man go past the window, though I did not, at the time, connect the two things'. Are we to say that he does, or does not, remember the event describable as the coal's being delivered? He cannot remember thinking 'That is the coal being delivered' because he never thought it, but

are we concerned with his past thoughts or with a past physical event? From his memories alone it is possible for him to reclassify the event, to think 'That was the coalman' where he earlier failed to think 'That is the coalman'. And since he could have made this reconstruction even if his attention had not been specifically drawn to the question, there seems to be every reason to allow that he is remembering the event itself.

Now, a similar reconstruction is possible at a quite different level: not from events into other events, but from 'remembered appearances' into events and things. I have claimed that we see events and things because we 'see' certain sensible qualities in certain relationships. Sometimes, however, we fail at the time to notice certain of the relationships, though these may subsequently prove to be very important ones. And sometimes we do notice the relationships without noticing what sensible qualities are related by them. For example, in a strange town I may look at the Town Hall clock, observe the time correctly, and yet be quite unable to say whether the hands of the clock were thick or thin, black or white. All I looked for, and all I saw, was the relative positions of the hands. And at other times I have been so foolish as to look up from my work to see the time, return to my work and then realise that I have not noticed the time. I have seen the clock, including the hands and numbers upon it, but I have seen them only as a certain pattern of coloured shapes, and have failed to take note of those particular relationships between

these coloured shapes which indicate the time to me. Yet when the circumstances are such that I cannot look again - perhaps I have just driven past the clock in the car - then sometimes I can read the time from my memory of the clock just as I should have read it from the clock itself. Notice how often an absent-minded clock-looker, when he is asked 'Well, what is it?', will pause a moment as if gathering his thoughts and then give the time quite correctly without looking again. What is happening is that he is remembering a group of sensible qualities which he recalls as related in a certain way - once it occurs to him to pay attention to that relationship.

Now, in most of our perceptions we observe both the 'clock' and the 'time', more or less exactly, and accordingly our memories of an event include both imagery and understanding of that event. But the memories of those events where only the 'time' is observed must necessarily be imageless (unless images are supplied subsequently by imagination). For we could not have a visual image of the clock-face and yet not know what it looked like. And the memories of those events where only the 'clock' is observed must remain a kind of uninterpreted imagery until such time as an interpretation is made from the imagery itself.

v. The augmentation and refinement of memories

These, however, would be extreme cases. Such performances as 'telling the time from a memory-image' are by no means frequent. It is in 'filling out' the memory of an event, supplying and correcting

details, that memories of appearances play their main part. Suppose, for instance, that I have been involved in a road accident. I remember the event - how could I forget it? - but I was too agitated at the time to take in much of what was going on. So that later, when I am questioned, in addition to my propositional memories - that this happened and that I saw so-and-so - I must rely on my memories of the appearances presented to me by the event. I find that things which did not mean anything to me at the time begin to make sense. I realise that the visual image I have is 'of' the tray of a lorry projecting through the front window column of my car, and that the auditory image I have is 'of' the squeal of skidding tyres. Thus I am able to conclude that I must have braked hard and run into the tail of a lorry.

I do not wish to give the impression that I think of images as 'inspectables' which we produce to look at or listen to, like photographs and gramophone records. In a later chapter¹ I hope to show why the function of memory-images I have described here does not entail the existence of any such 'inspectables'.

vi. Placing in time

It is apparent that the relationships between remembered events, remembered individuals and remembered qualities are extremely complicated, and some light may be shed upon these relationships by our considering certain temporal features of events, individuals and qualities.

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See chapter VII.

- a. Events. Although we speak of the 'same thing' occurring on successive occasions, any event is necessarily located at some specific time; anything occurring at a different time is a different event. Nevertheless I can remember an event very clearly and wonder when it happened. Remembering when an event occurred seems to be a quite separate achievement from remembering that event. But the important point here is that it always does make sense to wonder when it occurred
- b. Individuals. I have claimed that we can remember an individual either as a participant in some remembered event, or by imagery, which could be either precise imagery arising from one particular perception, or vague imagery arising from a series of perceptions.

The event in which the individual participated occurred at some specific time, and may be remembered as doing so. But, when what we regard ourselves as remembering is the individual and not the event, no specific temporal location seems applicable. And frequently individuals are remembered as participants in, not one event, but a series of events, the whole series giving rise to the memory of the one individual. The essential feature of any memory of an individual is the assumption that there is a single continuous identity. Even in remembering an axeman I saw from a passing car, I make the implicit assumption that he may have gone on to chop other trees after I passed by.

It is possible, however, for an individual to be bounded, as it were, by one single event. The particularly striking pattern once made

for me by a kaleidoscope is, as a particular pattern of coloured chips, an individual entity to which a proper name could be attached, just as military operations and tornadoes are frequently known by proper names nowadays, but it has neither a past nor a future. In this case the individual has no being outside of one single event, and to remember that individual is, therefore, always to remember a particular event which occurred at a particular time.

We now consider the image-memories. The subject of a vague image based upon a series of perceptions can have no fixed temporal location except insofar as the series itself has 'outer limits'. Even with this kind of image we can say 'This is as he appeared between the wars, as distinct from the way he has appeared since the last war'. But in such cases our right to say this may well depend upon the comparison of the image with another image of the same individual on a known occasion, or upon remembered propositions about him which have specific time-reference. It is difficult to see how else we could make such judgments.¹

When an image derives from one particular occurrence in an individual's life, the subject of that image is, ipso-facto, locatable in time. The question 'When was this?' would always be appropriate. It might be argued that a series of visual presentations which were very closely similar could give rise to an image which, so far as its

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This question is taken up at length in chapter VIII. See p. 303ff.

intrinsic properties were concerned, could equally well be of any one of those visual presentations or all of them. I might, for instance, always park my car in the same place and have an image of it so parked. But whether I can ascribe a particular date to the subject imaged must then depend upon such minor details as whether the windows are up or down or whether there is a bicycle propped alongside. If such details form an essential part of the image, then what is being remembered is a particular instance which occurred at a particular time; if they do not then what is being remembered is simply the continuous existent, my car.

c. Qualities. I have claimed¹ that we can remember qualities as distinct from remembering the things they are the qualities of. This may suggest that to remember a quality is always to abstract, that the subject of the memory is always a universal. But this would be quite wrong. I could remember the particular blue shade of a certain evening sky simply as a shade of blue, and yet, in fact, my image would have arisen from the particular occasion when I noticed that particular evening sky. If we agree with Hume (and here I cannot disagree with him) that every image must have its origin in an impression or a number of impressions, then it seems possible, in principle at least, to locate in time the particular impression or impressions from which each image derives. If we avoid the term

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See p. 65.

'quality', a term suggestive of abstractions and universals, and talk instead of appearance, then it is plainly not only possible but necessary that the subject of the memory should be locatable in time. We can remember an appearance simply as an appearance, and this is, in effect, to remember a group of related sensible qualities. The possibility of our becoming aware, when we remember, of the relationship between these qualities, i.e., seeing them for the first time as some thing, rests upon their being the particular group that they are with the particular relationship that they have. There is an obvious sense, then, in which the appearance in question is an event, the occurrence of a particular group of coloured shapes and/or particular sounds, smells, and so on, in a particular relationship to each other from a given standpoint, and as such it is locatable in time like any other event.¹

b) Memories of events and memories of propositions

i. Do we remember facts?

Such claims as 'The world is the totality of facts' suggest to us that a fact is in some way substantial, the same sort of thing as an event. We use expressions like 'physical fact' when what we really mean is a fact about physical entities. We cannot point to facts, we can only assert them.² The fact itself is neither physical nor mental. Neither can it be true or false; though the assertion

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The 'remembered appearance' is in effect what Russell calls a 'perspective'. See 'Our Knowledge of the External World', p.94 ff.

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I can assert that a man is running and draw attention to this fact by pointing at the man. But I am not thereby pointing at the fact that he is running any more than I am now sitting on a fact because it is a fact that there is a chair under me.

of it is ipso-facto true. A fact is simply whatever is asserted by a true proposition. If yesterday it rained and tomorrow it will be fine, then it is now a fact that yesterday, 6th December, it rained and tomorrow, 8th December, it will be fine. And six months hence I shall still be correct in saying 'It is a fact that on 6th December it rained and on 8th December it was fine. Particular facts are timeless, notwithstanding that a specific temporal location may be built into the relationship which constitutes the fact. 'It is a fact that the sun is shining now' means 'It is a fact that the sun is shining at 11 a.m. on 7th December 1961', and this must remain a fact for all time.

Since a fact is timeless it cannot be past, and cannot, therefore, be remembered. We do not need to go into the difficult question of whether all facts are necessarily particular or whether there are universal facts. For if, for example, 'Lying is immoral' is a fact and not simply a directive for the use of English words, then no variation of the occasion of uttering 'Lying is immoral' can effect the truth of the assertion. I feel, therefore, that it would be better not to speak of remembering facts. We may remember the events which gave rise to our knowing these facts, and we may also remember that we knew certain facts at some past time, but this is to remember events, not facts. Our previous knowledge of the facts was itself an event, though it was a separate mental event, not the physical event which gave rise to our knowledge of the fact in

question. And, lest it be objected here that we may not recall any occasion of such awareness, I hasten to point out that, as I have argued above,¹ the temporal location of an event is not an essential part of remembering that event.

ii. Facts and Propositions

But though facts are not the kind of things we can remember, we can and do know them because we remember; and usually what we remember are propositions. By remembering propositions we can remember a great deal about events without actually recalling the events themselves. I may be asked 'Do you recall your first day at school?' and reply 'No, but I remember that it was raining'. It is here beside the point how I came to know that it was raining. We shall assume that it is a fact that it was raining. The point we are concerned with here is that my present knowledge of the fact may simply be my present memory of the proposition 'On my first day at school it rained'. In this case I might have known the fact by other means, I might have remembered the event itself, but our knowledge of facts concerning events we did not experience must depend upon remembered propositions. When I remember that Brutus stabbed Caesar I am not remembering Brutus or Caesar or the event; I am remembering the proposition 'Brutus stabbed Caesar', and possibly, though not necessarily, the occasion on which I learned this fact.

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See p. 70 of this chapter.

iii. Inference from events

Frequently, when we assert facts, or alleged facts, i.e., when we frame propositions to ourselves or to other people, we are making inferences from what we perceive. I assert 'The Professor is leaving' because I see what I take to be the event, the Professor driving away, though in fact all that I see is his car disappearing. And many different inferences can be made from the same perceptual experience, some forming part of that experience itself, some occurring later from the memory of that experience.

When we perceive we always, to some extent, go beyond 'presented appearances'. I visually sense a patch of reddish colour, but I see a chimney pot, with three dimensions, a hard surface, and a definite function. So that when I remember this experience I can remember both the appearance presented to me and the perceptual judgments I made when that appearance was presented to me. In this way a memory is frequently a mixture of images and propositions, though, as pointed out earlier (the 'clock' and the 'time'), it need not be so.

We not uncommonly change our minds about what we saw, even though the 'presented appearance' remains the same. What we took to be a menacing figure we later see as merely a bush at the road side. And to change our minds in this way it is not essential that we have another look at the object. The change may be made 'from memory'. Suppose, for example, that I remember a police patrolman waiting at the side of the road to pounce on speeding motorists. But, even in my

memory of him, there is something stiff about this policeman. And when, a little further on, I see another exactly similar police patrolman and, looking closer, I see that it is only a plywood dummy put out by the authorities to frighten motorists into obeying the law, I realise that my earlier perceptual judgment was wrong - the first 'policeman' was also only a dummy. And since I was able to make this correction on the strength of the memory I had of my earlier perceptual experience, I might have made it even if I had never encountered the second dummy. The point I am making is that the remembered propositions are separable from the remembered event. I can still remember the proposition 'There is a policeman' but I now realise that it was a conclusion to which I 'jumped', and, as it turned out, a wrong conclusion. But it is possible for me to realise this only because something else, the appearance actually presented to me, is separately and correctly remembered. The fact that the second 'policeman' was a dummy does not, of itself, show that the first was a dummy also.

iv. The relationship of proposition to event

If my memory of an event were wholly dependent upon the memories of propositions I formed at the time of witnessing that event, then nothing in my own memory of that event could prompt me to correct or modify those propositions. Therefore we must be careful to distinguish between propositions which are themselves remembered and propositions made subsequently about what is remembered, bearing in mind that the latter may themselves be remembered as propositions on a subsequent

occasion. If yesterday afternoon I saw Jones shake his fist menacingly at Jenkins, then the event I remember is simply Jones shaking his fist at Jenkins - whether I saw it as a threat or as a piece of play-acting. I may remember the proposition (and report the event accordingly) either that Jones threatened Jenkins or that Jones joked with Jenkins. At least one of these propositions would be false, but, as we have just seen, remembering a false proposition which reports, or claims to report, an event is not necessarily mis-remembering that event. The 'lesser claim' - 'Jones shook his fist at Jenkins' - is still, as it were, included in the remembered proposition, and is still correct.

But here we strike a real difficulty. If we say that remembering an event just is having an image - remembering an uninterpreted sensory intake - and all other, propositional, memory is in some way incidental, not memory of the event itself, then we must explain how anything wholly uninterpreted could constitute the memory of an event for us. The only alternative is to allow that some proposition, some inference, is an essential part of the memory of the event. And then the problem is: where can we draw the line? For it might well be objected at this point: why stop at whether or not the fist-shaking was a threat? That what Jones shook was his fist is itself an assumption I made from my observation of certain coloured shapes in a certain relationship. Does it not follow that no error, however gross, in the reporting of an event can ever prove that the event itself is not correctly remembered? Once we separate the remembering of propositions from the remembering

of events which they purport to be about, we can always attribute the error to the proposition. Logically no amount of error in reporting a past event can prove that the actual memory of that event is inaccurate.¹

In practice, however, there are perfectly adequate ways of deciding in any given case the point at which we must stand firm. For, though I may have the clearest possible memory of Jones shaking his fist at Jenkins, unless this is augmented by some additional knowledge of, say, a long standing dispute between them, it is still reasonable for me to say 'Perhaps he was not really angry, only pretending'. Whereas, only if my memory were very vague indeed - perhaps a memory of something witnessed in the half-light - would it be reasonable to say 'Perhaps it was not his fist at all, it only looked like it'.

If it is allowed, as surely it must be, that a physical event always involves physical things, not qualities or appearances, then those who insist on regarding the naming and classifying of all appearances as inferences are driven to also allow that no event can be witnessed in the full sense of that word until some inference has been made. I do not wish to suggest that there are two different kinds of inference, nor yet two rigid 'levels of inference'; clearly there are not. We could come to recognise anger behaviour before being able to recognise fists. What I do suggest is that we are all aware

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Compare the 'sceptic's argument' in the first paragraph of chapter I.

of a difference, on any given occasion, between the things and events we 'see straight off', even though we realise that logically we could be mistaken in these, and the things and events we infer from those we 'see straight off'. Both may be framed in propositions which, when later remembered, may be regarded by us as belonging to our memory of the event. But, whilst we are at liberty to abandon the inferences without also abandoning our claims to remember the event, we cannot so abandon the initial assumptions from which those inferences were made. For instance, in one case I could say 'Yes, I do remember him shaking his fist, but I realise now that it was only in fun'. But in the other case I would have to say 'I thought I remembered him shaking his fist, but apparently he did not do so, and so I must have imagined it'.

v. Propositions and sentences

It is important, at this point, to make it clear that remembering a proposition is not the same thing as remembering a sentence. A sentence which could be used to express a proposition might in fact be used to express nothing at all. Children often learn and remember poems without having the remotest idea what they are about; my daughter would recite poems in French (which she certainly did not understand) when she was five years old. And it may well be that even in later life, in the case of much of the remembering that is manifested only in the ability to make appropriate verbal responses, what is being remembered is neither the event itself, nor a proposition made about it, but simply a sentence, a group of words.

On the other hand the same proposition can be remembered in a variety of sentences. 'My father's brother gave me the price of a bicycle on my tenth birthday' and 'My Uncle Jim gave me five pounds the day I turned ten years old' may well express exactly the same proposition, that is, they may well refer to the same remembered event and report that event quite correctly - though, clearly, they could refer to two quite separate events. We shall consider later¹ the question whether propositions are necessarily in language, but whether they are or not, they are certainly not necessarily in any particular phrasing of language. Those European-born Australians who have forgotten how to use their native tongues have not thereby forgotten the propositions they formulated in those tongues - but now they remember them in English.

vi. What is being remembered?

It is not easy to decide, however, on every occasion, what it is we are remembering: the events themselves, propositions about those events, or sentences previously used to express those propositions. I now remember, together with appropriate images, an event I once witnessed, a lion-taming act. Suppose I utter the proposition 'One lion jumped over the trainer's back whilst the other remained on the stool'. How is it possible for me to know whether this is a judgment I am making now based upon my memory-image, or a memory

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See p.88 of this chapter.

I am having now of a judgment I made at the time of the event? We might be tempted to say that if the details described are actually being imaged the former is the case, and if they are not the latter is the case. But this will not do. There is no reason why I should not remember correctly both the propositions I formed and the appearance presented to me. Furthermore, if my imagination is fertile and I am a 'good visualizer', then the memory of the proposition may well prompt me to form an image of the lion jumping over the trainer even though I do not have an actual memory-image of the event.

And when we recite to ourselves 'Thirty days hath September...' are we remembering a sentence or a proposition or both? It is such problems as these which make introspection so suspect as a means of investigating memory. Yet, if we are not satisfied with a purely behaviourist account, it is the only means we have, or ever can have. Even though introspection may not show us on every occasion whether what we are remembering is an event or a proposition or a sentence, or all of these, it can and does show us that these are all things we can remember, and that the remembering of each of them is in principle distinguishable.

2. Classification by modes of remembering

a) Images, thoughts and words

We have considered what it is that we remember; we must now consider how it is that we remember it. If I say that I am remembering the prizegiving and I am asked what form my memory of it takes, I may reply that I am having images of it, or that I am 'telling myself

about it', or simply that I am thinking about it. These seem to be the three possible ways of remembering an event: in imagery, in words, or in concepts. But this is altogether too tidy. Apart from the fact that remembering an event will most probably involve a combination of all three 'modes', the term 'words', as we have seen, can refer either to propositions or to sentences; and it may be felt that the term 'concepts' refers to either words or images, rather than that it is an alternative 'mode' to them. We must, therefore, examine the relationships between these 'alternative modes' more closely.

i. Words as images

We have decided that when we remember in words we may be remembering propositions or we may simply be remembering particular expressions.

If what we remember is the proposition - as when I remember the proposition that my grandfather had white whiskers - it seems that we are remembering a certain factual relationship perceived in the past, but now free, as it were, of the particular perceptual experience in which our knowledge of it originated. The memory that my grandfather had white whiskers, though quite correct, does not of itself enable me to draw a picture of those whiskers. What we are remembering is simply a judgment we once made; and we are remembering it in words, though not necessarily the same words as we employed to make the original judgment.

But if we are not remembering propositions as such, but forming propositions about what we remember, then although the remembering is conducted in words, there must be some kind of occurrent memory for those words to refer to (or be stimulated by); and since this occurrent memory is not of propositions, the only remaining candidates seem to be images or imageless, wordless concepts. Anyone who argues that the words refer to, or are stimulated by, simply the remembered physical event itself, must explain how it is that sometimes what I saw as A I subsequently remember as B,¹ how it is possible for me to revise or modify assertions made from memory without the intervention of any 'additional evidence'.

When what we remember is simply the words themselves, at least one of two things must be happening. Either we are simply having images of words, or we are making appropriate physical responses to a given stimulus. The second possibility I shall consider shortly.² Here I shall try only to substantiate the claim that remembering a sentence as such, if it is anything more than a physiological response to a stimulus, must be in imagery.

Any symbol must have some sensible characteristics of its own. To function as a symbol it has to be something visible or audible or otherwise experientiable through the senses. Thus to remember symbols,

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This question is taken up at length in chapter IV.

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See p. 91ff.

as distinct from remembering their significance, is to remember sights, sounds, bodily feelings and so forth. So to remember words is either to have visual or auditory or kinaesthetic images, or else to remember propositions about the words themselves. This last is possible. We could, for instance, remember that the word 'place' begins with the same sound as the word 'please' and ends with the same sound as the word 'race'. There is little doubt that linguists often do remember words in this way, but such memories can be of use to them only if they do have some memory-images of words, the words they are using for comparison. Unless, of course, they always spoke these words out loud to themselves. But we could not reasonably suggest that a child reciting a poem or a man giving an immediate verbal response to a question is remembering words in this way. It is true that often, having once uttered words, we are immediately aware of their usual meanings, as when a child 'parrots' the answer to a question asked him, and then realises what the words he has used actually mean. But in this case the words, as such, have already been remembered. We understand them in the same way as we would have done if they had been uttered by somebody else.

ii. Images and concepts

There is a danger that such words as 'concept', 'thought' and 'idea' came to mean whatever we want them to mean. Hume used the word 'idea' as though it were synonymous with 'image', but he allowed it to 'spread' so as to take in relational properties which are clearly not

imageable in the ordinary sense. In this way he was able to sidestep the problem of 'something in the mind which was not previously in the senses'. Others have maintained that to have a concept is simply to be able to use the concept word properly. Abstract ideas have been a constant source of embarrassment to philosophers who, whilst paying lip-service to Berkeley's dictum that any idea must be the idea of something specific, have been uncomfortably aware that we just do know what 'above' and 'after' and 'greater than' mean in a way that is something more than just being able to put them in the right places in sentences, when there is no instance of them before us, and without the necessity of specifically remembering any such instance.

Once it is allowed that it is possible to have a concept without also having an occurrent image, the question arises: Are images just one kind of concept; or is remembering and imagining in images an alternative to remembering and imagining in concepts?

Let us take the ability to recognise instances as coming under a particular concept, not as a definition, but simply as a test, of the possession of the concept. Then, since by virtue of having an image of a wombat I can recognise a wombat when I visit the zoo, the possession of an image does seem to meet the test for the possession of a concept. But the image itself is not the concept - for I can recognise a wombat by virtue of the image I have only if I can also frame the proposition about it 'This is an image of a wombat'. We might say then that to have an image and identify it as the image of something is to have a concept of that thing.

But it would not follow that the possession of a concept must always involve the identification of an image. For we also have concepts of relationships - above, below, greater and so on - but we cannot have images which could be identified as of these, only images which exemplify them, provided we already have the concepts. I can have an image of a red patch above a blue patch, but not an image of aboveness. Aboveness is not even an ingredient of the image in the way that the red and blue patches may be said to be.

Further, to possess a concept is at least to be able to recognise instances of it. Even if we speak of the concept of a particular individual we can do so only because we treat the individual as a continuous existent and assert that various manifestations at different times are instances of a single concept. Thus a concept must always extend beyond any particular instance, involving thereby at least one relationship, similarity or continuity, which is itself not even exemplified by the image. That is why the judgment 'This is an image of a wombat' is required to provide a concept (or establish the existence of the concept) where there is already an image. Thus, whereas an image may exemplify a concept, and the existence of an image may be a prerequisite for a certain kind of concept,¹ an image, as such is neither an alternative to, nor a kind of, concept. Simply having an image is not a cognitive act.

¹ E.g. particular shades of colour. This question is taken up in chapter VII.

iii. Remembering without words or images

We must now consider the possibility of remembering without either imagery or language, a possibility which has often been denied by members of both Behaviourist and Empiricist schools. I suggest that we might in fact be doing this in any of three cases: when we are remembering 'by doing', as when my remembering the way home is manifested simply in my going home; when we recognise a presented instance without naming it to ourselves, as when I return a greeting though I am deep in conversation; and when we classify instances in memory, i.e., remember similarities, without the help of either names or images. To my mind the three cases are so strongly connected that to accept one of them is to be committed to accepting them at all. Behaviourists must accept the first, and most Empiricists would, I think, accept the second. This being so, I shall try to show that they have no justification for rejecting the third.

a. Remembering by doing. When I simply 'go straight home' this is prima-facie evidence that I remember the way, but it is most unlikely that I have any images of the route, re-presenting to me previous journeys home, or that I formulate propositions to myself about what I am doing. Nevertheless going straight home is not a wholly automatic performance; I could not do it blindfolded without the aid of images and/or remembered propositions. It is essential at least that I recognise the route I am following. 'Remembering by doing' thus seems to reduce to recognising, that is, to one special case of our second possibility, recognising presented instances.

b. Recognition of particulars and recognition of kinds. Firstly I would make the point that it is immaterial to our present argument whether the recognition is of kinds or of individuals. Recognition always is, or involves, the noting of a similarity. When the similarity is sufficiently great and we are also prepared to assume spatio-temporal continuity then we speak of 'identity'; but this spatio-temporal continuity is always assumed, not observed, or there could be no question of recognition. The streets I walk through on my way home are the same streets, but they are the same streets at different times, and the appearances they present are unlikely to be exactly the same on each occasion. Thus the recognition of individuals is simply the recognition of kinds with the additional assumption of continuity, and it is in no essential way different from that employed by a craftsman, a book-binder say, in plying his craft. He also remembers what to do without the aid of words or images, though the materials he works with are certainly not numerically the same on different occasions, nor are they always qualitatively the same. Unless we are prepared to say that his skill is only the exercise of a physiologically conditioned reflex, we seem obliged to say either that he must be having images or forming propositions or else that he does recognise kinds, register the similarities of past and present instances, without the aid of words or images.¹

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This is not to discount the possibility that his action could be purely automatic. See also chapter V, p.176, and chapter VIII, p.235.

c. Remembering concepts. If it is possible to recognise instances of a concept without the aid of language, and without images for comparison, then, insofar as any classification presupposes the comparison of present and absent instances, we must have the concept in order to recognise the instance. The onus is upon those who deny the existence of unnamed concepts to show how classification is possible without comparison. I find it difficult to take seriously the current view that thinking just is using language. The sponsors of this view have never really faced up to the question 'How could we ever come to relate concept words to experienced instances unless we already had the concepts which these words signify?'. Talk about words and concepts evolving 'hand in hand' is more poetic than informative. Nor yet have they explained how it is that dumb animals (and deaf and dumb people) appear to think and remember in the normal sense of those terms.

If it is possible to have concepts without names for them, then there is no reason why we should not remember having such nameless concepts, and also remember in nameless concepts. The refusal to admit, and take account of, wordless thinking and remembering is, I believe, one of the greatest sources of confusion in the consideration of memory. All of us are sometimes unable to express ourselves; we fumble for words when we 'know very well what it is we want to say'. How could we know this unless we were already in possession of the concept we seek to name? Even the most fluent language users occasionally find

that their thoughts have got ahead of their command of language. We would not need the aid of a vocabulary to feel surprise at the sight of a man walking on the ceiling - but we would need a concept of human behaviour.

b) Public and private remembering

i. Overt performances

There are occasions when I have memories which I can, if I wish, 'keep to myself', and there seem also to be occasions when other people could point out to me that I am remembering something though I might not myself have realised this fact. In the first case I may avow 'I remember - ' because I feel myself competent to relate some event, describe some past situation or thing, or perform some task; in the second case I may be told that I am remembering because I am in fact relating some event, describing some past situation or thing, or performing some task, in a way that indicates that I must be remembering.

But to say that I must be remembering is to suggest that my overt performance is really a clue to something else, to the presence of some kind of mental act, and that it is the occurrence of this act which entitles me to say 'I remember'. But I do not always say, or even think, 'I remember'; this mental act may be inferred, but it is by no means always experienced. Why then should an onlooker say 'You must be remembering because you are performing learned tasks or relating past experiences'? If it is assumed that what is going on

is an exercise of memory, then, since all that is going on is there for him to see, is he not entitled to say 'This (your present performance or speech) is your remembering'? Now it should be clear from my earlier arguments that I do not hold the extreme view that all remembering either is public or could be public, in the sense that its privacy is the result only of our talking to ourselves instead of out loud. But though remembering can be private, it does not follow that all remembering must be private. If my only reason for saying 'I remember Jones' were the fact that I found myself describing him, or my only reason for saying that I remember how to navigate were the fact that I found myself using a sextant efficiently,¹ then there would be at least a prima-facie case for holding that remembering need not be private, that the onlooker is sometimes entitled to attest to my memory at the same time, and by the same authority, as I am myself.

ii. Habit and memory

There is a tendency to write off a great deal of what I have called 'public remembering' as mere habit, or habit-memory. We come in time to give certain overt performances seemingly quite automatically. In general, we do not want to say that we remember how to walk, and we do want to say that we remember how to cycle. Yet the child who 'lives on a bicycle' is probably no more conscious of his actions when he is cycling than when he is walking. The rationale for the

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In chapter V, I give reasons for denying this possibility.

distinction seems to rest only in the fact that to the question 'Can you cycle?', but not to the question 'Can you walk?', it seems reasonable to reply 'I used to be able to once - but now I may not remember how to'. But a man who has been laid up in hospital for a year could make this reply to the question about walking. It may be dangerous, therefore, to attribute any performance which might be called 'skilled' to 'pure habit'.

At the same time, what we are here calling habit may well be a factor in nearly all our performances. Even in a more complicated case like navigation, gripping the sextant correctly and opening the Nautical Almanac at exactly the right page are 'habitual' actions. And the vocal cords, no less than the hands, are susceptible to 'habit'. The child reciting a nursery rhyme may be going through the same kind of performance in this sense as the habitual cyclist. In the case of these vocal performances the distinction I have made between remembering propositions and remembering sentences is plainly important. But we cannot simply equate the former with memory-knowledge and the latter with habit. As we have seen, remembering sentences is, in many cases, simply having images. Whereas when we remember propositions it could be held that we are remembering past mental events, the fact that our reporting of an event is always in propositions does not prove that there is any additional mental process going on. The ability to use words meaningfully may be itself 'habitual'.

iii. Is habit ever a cause?

The fundamental objection to the whole notion of 'habit-memory' is the extreme slipperiness of the term 'habit'. There is a constant temptation to equate 'habit' with 'automatic response' whilst still using such phrases as 'he was in the habit of choosing his clothes very carefully' which suggest that habit is simply characteristic behaviour, the often repeated.

If I were to part my hair on opposite sides on alternate days, then in the course of a year I should have parted it one hundred and eighty-two times on the left side. But that I am in the habit of parting my hair on the left side is exactly what we would not say under these circumstances. We would say that I am in the habit of alternating my parting. The assertion that an act is habitual is more often taken to report the way it is performed than the number of times it is performed. Yet we must be careful not to allow 'habitual' to become identified with 'automatic' or 'easy'. There is something very unsatisfactory about the way that Broad simply identifies habit-memory with ease of remembering. He says: 'Repetition is not essential, though it is helpful, for the establishment of a habit-memory-power. A man, like Lord Macaulay, with a very quick and retentive verbal memory, may be able to repeat sentences or sets of nonsense syllables which he has met with only once'.¹ Surely if this man's memory of

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'The Mind and Its Place in Nature', p.225.

these sentences is not, in the first place, dependent upon repetition, then there is no reason why it should be classed as a 'habit-memory-power' however often it may be repeated.

The same problems apply to performances which are not overt, imaging for example. The fact that I now have an image of my father as I saw him eighteen months ago does not entail that I have had a similar image at any time during the intervening period; nor need we suppose that the image in question would be any different if I had. Yet if I had the same image regularly we might well say that I am in the habit of having it. Now, when I have a certain image habitually, is the latest occurrence of it causally dependent in some way upon the original perceptual experience, or upon the previous occurrence of it, or upon the whole series of occurrences of it to date? I do not see what grounds we could possibly have for answering this question one way or another. I am an habitual smoker in that I smoke cigarettes at very short intervals, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the fact that I have done so for many years will increase the likelihood of my continuing to do so. Similarly I may assume that my having a series of images of a particular appearance of my father may make it more likely that I shall have that image again. But surely this only means that I have reason to believe that whatever it is that prompts me to have that image is a persistent factor, just as whatever it is that prompts me to smoke is presumably a persistent factor. To the question 'Why do you smoke?' the answer 'Because it is a habit' is just one way of saying

'I don't know'; an habitual smoker is simply one who smokes often and regularly. Thus 'I smoke because it is a habit' reduces to 'I smoke because I smoke'.

To say that something is done from habit is not wholly uninformative in certain contexts. We may be saying in effect 'There is no special or peculiar reason in this case - it is just what I always do'. But any attempt to give a causal explanation in terms of habit is bound to be circular. I could say that it is my habit to have a certain image on receiving a stimulus of a certain kind. But the cause of the image is the stimulus, not the habit.

What I have said of imaging seems to be equally true of remembering in general. I may remember the same event in the same way any number of times, so that I can fairly be said to be in the habit of remembering that event. But this seems to have no effect upon the way I remember it. We are particularly prone to think of many of our overt skilled performances as 'habit-memories' simply because we assume them to be the kind of automatic responses which could only arise out of long repetition. But if the assumption is correct here, then the proper way to explain them is in terms, not of habits, but of motor-responses to physiological stimuli. And this raises the question whether they should be regarded as memories. It is much safer, therefore, to avoid the term 'habit-memory' altogether, and concentrate on the question whether, and to what extent, overt skilled performances are mere motor-responses, physiological rather than intelligent performances.

We are then faced with such questions as whether, when we 'remember how to swim' by actually swimming, as opposed, say, to rehearsing the movements on land, we are in fact remembering at all. We may be simply allowing our bodies to react to a physical stimulus. But this question we must defer to a later chapter.¹

c) Recall and recognition

i. Remembering in presence and remembering in absence

We shall now consider the distinction between recognition and recall, a distinction which H.H. Price has treated as fundamental to the whole analysis of memory.² When I recall an individual or an event, that individual or event was experienced by me at some earlier time, and its only representative, as it were, in the present experience is my memory of it. When I recognise something, that something is actually present to me; so that I cannot truly be said to be remembering it, for I am actually experiencing it. Therefore what I remember must be something about it. Thus there is a sense in which to recognise is always to classify.

When I recognise a No.18 bus I am classifying what is before me as one of those buses which take such and such a route, and when I recognise my dog I am classifying what is before me as an episode, if I may so put it, in the life of a particular creature. But I do not generally

¹ Chapter V.

² See 'Thinking and Experience' chapters II and III.

seem to be remembering specifically any other members of the class of No.18 buses or other episodes in my dog's life. At most I seem to be remembering that there were such other buses and episodes.

ii. Recognition as 'public remembering'

I might think to myself 'Here is the No.18 bus', but on the other hand I might simply board the bus 'without thinking at all'. And when I reach out to take a book from the shelf I do not always seem to be consciously selecting the one I want; sometimes my hand just 'goes out to it'. Yet, in some sense, I must have associated the bus with other similarly routed buses, the book with other uses of it - otherwise why do I not constantly board wrong buses and select wrong books? 'The right bus', we might say, simply means 'the one that goes the same way as that one went', 'the right book' simply means 'the one that I used last time'. I grant that I do not go through life saying to myself such things as 'There is my wife; these are my feet; those are the stairs; here is the bannister', each utterance being accompanied by a set of memories of former experiences. I simply grasp the bannister and run downstairs to where my wife is waiting. Yet I can do this only because I do, in some way, recognise all these things for what they are - and know, therefore, what to expect of them. So that although my behaviour may be the only indication, even to myself, that I am recognising things, there would be something misleading about saying that the recognition is identical with the behaviour. There is still a difference between doing things intentionally and simply doing them by chance.

iii. Kinds of recognition

There are, of course, different kinds of recognition, but it is important to remember that the differences are only of what I have called the 'primary' kind. The main distinction is that between what is 'consciously known' and what is merely 'accepted in passing'. Recognition is recognition always by virtue of the same feature: the acceptance of a presented instance as a member of some particular class (which may be the class of appearances of a particular individual). We cannot, therefore make 'secondary distinctions' in how we recognise, only in what we recognise on different occasions.

To recognise a particular person, place or thing is to accept what is presented as a manifestation of, or phase in, a particular continuous identity. Usually it is to identify the present experience with a series of past experiences. For me to recognise my desk is for me to accept it as the same desk I have used on a number of previous occasions, though these previous occasions need not be separately specified in my recognition. It is sometimes claimed that we can recognise individuals we have never seen before. For example, I might say 'I recognised you immediately from your father's description' or 'I recognised the boat from the picture in the brochure'. But what may actually be recognised in such cases is a particular shape or a particular 'look' which has been seen, or imagined, before. Where I simply accept something is the thing which has been described to me, this is not recognition of that thing in any ordinary sense.

Sometimes what we recognise is simply a particular quality in a thing. When I look at a passing car and see that it is blue I am recognising the colour of that car. Probably I do not recognise the car itself - I may have never seen it before - but later I can describe the car only because I did recognise certain of its qualities. We do not generally speak of recognising qualities, only of noticing them. Yet we must do more than notice them - we must notice what they are, i.e., classify them (and generally, though not necessarily, name them); and this is recognition. In ordinary speech we are inclined to say such things as 'I noticed that the car was blue - and recognised the shade as arctic blue'. But this is only because being arctic blue seems to be the sort of thing we need to recognise (recognition having somehow a suggestion of deliberation about it), whilst being blue does not; it is too familiar to us.

Clearly there is no fixed 'line of distinction' between qualities we recognise and qualities we simply notice. The principle difference in our use of the two terms is that 'notice' does not necessarily imply that the object has been seen before. Nevertheless, as soon as we name the object noticed, there is an implied assumption that at least some of its characteristics are being recognised.

Recognition need not be of particular objects or qualities. I can recognise the approaching creature as my dog or simply as a dog, and in both cases I am noting similarities; in the one case between what I regard as episodes in the history of a single individual, in the other

case between what I regard as a series of different individuals. It might be felt that recognising my dog is always a more specific recognition - that it must already be recognised as a dog before it can be specified as my dog. But this is really not so. An infant can often recognise his own dog before he even knows of the existence of other dogs.

We also can, and often do, recognise the rules which govern our behaviour, though simply to obey such rules it not, of itself, to recognise them; there seems no reason to believe that brutes ever reflect upon the rules according to which they behave. It is when we wish to give a causal explanation of any event that we must recognise, not only the cause and the effect, but also the cause/effect sequence. My claim that the china cup smashed because it fell on the stone floor rests upon my recognition of the china cup, the stone floor, and also the usual effect upon china cups of being dropped on stone floors.

As I claimed earlier,¹ 'remembering by doing' involves recognition. But, in this case, not only do we have to recognise individuals, rules, qualities and kinds, we need also to recognise our performances as those leading to certain desired ends. Here also, we are recognising a rule, but it is a rule which involves our own intentional behaviour. We must, in the popular phrase, know what we are doing.

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See p. 88 of this chapter.

iv. Can there be recognition in absence?

I said earlier that the essential difference between recall and recognition is that the subject recalled belongs to some former time, whilst the subject recognised is actually present to us. But, although the thing we recognise is present to us, the recognition must refer always beyond the present experience. As I put it in reference to the recognition of qualities, we must notice what it is. To recognise is to note a similarity, so that, although what I recognise is the thing now before me, my recognising it is my noting of its similarity to other things not now before me. The question arises, therefore, 'How does seeing an object and judging "That is my dog" differ from remembering an object and judging "That was my dog"?'. Do I recognise what is 'before my mind' in the same way as I recognise what is before my eyes?

We can, if we wish, simply decide that the term 'recognition' shall stand for only one type of classification: the classification of present events, things, qualities and relations, and that any other use of the term is metaphorical. Such a decision is in any case wise in that it avoids possible misunderstandings. But this does not answer the questions, it simply avoids them. The real point at issue is whether it makes sense at all to talk of recognising objects 'before the mind'.

Certainly my present state of mind is something I am now experiencing and can, therefore, recognise in the ordinary sense - assuming

that it is classifiable and that I have experienced similar states of mind before. I can, for instance, usually recognise misery when I experience it. And it might be argued that my state of mind when I am remembering an event includes the event remembered. But the belief which I hold about some thing does not include that thing in any ordinary sense. Clem Atlee is not included in my belief that he is a great statesman in the way that he was included in the British War Cabinet, nor yet in the way that he is included in the denotation of 'British Prime Ministers'. And if I remember Clem Atlee my memory does not include him. It is of him or about him, and this is quite different.

The sense in which, and the extent to which, we may be recognising events and individuals when we are remembering them seem to depend upon two questions: whether the event actually remembered is the physical event which occurred or the mental event which was our perception of it, a question we shall take up in the next chapter, and whether memory-images are in some sense 'before us' in a way that permits us to scrutinise, and recognise or fail to recognise, them. This question we shall deal with in chapter VII.

Chapter IV

MEMORIES AND MEMORY-CLAIMS

1. The distinction between remembering and claiming to remember

a) The public use of 'memory'

We have seen that it is quite possible to have and to express knowledge of a past event which is not dependent upon any actual memory of the event in question. I now want to make the point that, even when the knowledge is dependent upon an actual memory of the event, the claim to that knowledge, the proposition purporting to relate that event, is distinguishable from the memory by virtue of which I make that claim. My memory-claim 'I had fish for lunch' may be made because of certain images I now have of my lunch and/or my remembering certain propositions such as 'This is good fish', and clearly it would be quite possible for us to have those images and to remember those propositions without, so to speak, advancing from them to this particular memory-claim, 'I had fish for lunch'. Nevertheless, as Wittgenstein has pointed out,¹ a word in a public language must have a public meaning, and the established usage of the words 'memory' and 'remember' arises therefore from our memory-claims rather than from any private states or happenings in our minds.

¹ 'Investigations', Pt.1, para.242ff, p.88e. See also para.257ff, p.92e. But note that I am not committed to, nor do I in fact support, Wittgenstein's general view that all languages are necessarily public.

Thus, the public use of the words 'memory' and 'remembering' must rest upon the memory-claims we make rather than upon what we might call private remembering. By 'private' here I mean essentially private in the sense of being below the level of communication, not simply in fact not communicated; my assertion about a past occurrence is as much a memory-claim if it is made to myself as if it is made out loud to an audience. It is by memory-claims that we often plan our conduct and explain our conduct to ourselves. Suppose that I enter a bar and, recognising a man I dislike, I avoid meeting him. My action may be no more considered than my avoiding walking into the gatepost as I leave my house. But if I say to myself 'That chap cornered me last week and bored me stiff' then I am making a definite memory-claim. It could have been made to anybody and would have conveyed the same information.

b) What does a memory-claim refer to?

Does my memory-claim refer to a present mental state, a past mental state, a past public event, or a combination of all of these - my present mental state as related to past events? Before we answer 'all of these' it is as well to consider that, unless I am deliberately introspecting for the purpose of examining my own 'remembering procedure', there seems to be no reason whatever why I should make a claim about anything but the past physical event itself. This is what interests either myself or my listener if there be one. Neither my listener nor myself need be concerned about my mental states in order to understand the claim.

Certainly if I were to say to a friend 'There was a riot here last week' he might be interested to know whether I in fact remembered this event or had simply been told about it. To this extent 'I remember the riot here last week' gives him more information than does 'There was a riot here last week'. But it is information not directly connected with the actual event - the first statement does not usually give me (the speaker) any information that the second does not. It may be protested here that neither assertion can give me any information since I am the one who is making it. But in making the claim I may be, so to speak, drawing together a group of otherwise disconnected recollections, not in order to draw a conclusion - I most probably drew the conclusion when I witnessed the event - but to provide premises from which to draw further conclusions. And for this purpose the addition of 'I remember' is quite superfluous. We can fairly conclude, then, that memory-claims refer, in normal cases, to the event remembered, not to the particular mental state which is the remembering of it. And since it is our memory-claims that are of public interest, the reliability of our memories must be judged by the accuracy with which our memory-claims report past events.

2. The accuracy of memories and memory-claims

a) The relationship between memory and claim

I have maintained that a memory-claim is a report about a past event, dependent upon a present mental event, or mental state. But

what is this relationship of dependence? It clearly cannot be logical dependence since there is no reason why a true memory-claim should not occur without any 'act of remembering' at all, so long as we regard the memory-claims simply as a proposition. It must, therefore, be causal dependence. But even here we can say only that the memory is a causally necessary condition of the memory-claim; it is not both necessary and sufficient since the memory-claim may not be made at all, or it may be made wrongly. Nevertheless, when a true memory-claim is made there are causal (though not logical) grounds for supposing that there exists a memory or a group of memories which is itself in some sense 'correct'. We must, therefore, consider what sense of 'correct' is applicable to the actual memories.

It would be a gross mistake to assume that, because my memory-claim refers directly to a past event, my present mental state is not relevant to it. It is according to historical facts that a memory-claim is finally accepted or rejected, but it is by virtue of a present mental state that it is made at all. My present memory-claim that the film I saw was about Don Quixote refers to that film, not to the images and propositions now forming in my mind. Yet I do in fact make that claim only because those images and propositions are now in my mind. A remembered proposition is something quite distinct from any particular form of words which might express it. And an image cannot be expressed in words, only at best described by

however small its scope, is in fact complete is very difficult, if not impossible, to decide. Furlong draws an analogy with the exact focussing of a telescope and says¹ 'But do we ever reach a term in the series [of increasingly detailed memories] that will correspond to the clearly focussed object...? I do not think we do. Will anyone claim that he has ever had a memory which he could not conceive of being more vivid and realistic?' We may feel that there must be some level of particularity at which memories are 'complete' - it is hard, for instance, to think what it would be like to have an incomplete memory of the colour of my car (it happens to be black), yet even here, we may claim that there are different 'shades of black' in different lights, and, be this as it may, to be 'complete' is not necessarily to be adequate.

iii. Adequacy of a memory for some specific purpose

If I were to claim that I have a complete memory of my dog this would surely amount to my claiming the ability to give a complete or full description of my dog by virtue of the memory - and what could possibly count as a full description? It is safer, therefore, to assess our memories solely in terms of their adequacy for some specific purposes. To decide whether my dog was a bull terrier or a fox terrier the sketchiest memory of it may serve my purpose, whereas if I am trying to decide whether it is my dog or my neighbour's that

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'A Study in Memory', p.25.

the postman is complaining about a most detailed memory of my dog may prove inadequate. The adequacy of memory is something quite distinct from its completeness, its degree of detail.

This does not mean, however, that it is indifferent to the degree of detail. The memory, however vague it may be as compared with some other memory of the same event, must at least be detailed and precise enough to support the memory-claim made.

iv. Vague memories and faint memories

We must be careful not to confuse what I am calling a vague memory with what might be called a faint memory. A memory, like a picture or a description, is more or less precise, less or more vague, according to the extent that it includes or lacks detail. An outline sketch of a building is more vague than a detailed sketch or a photograph of the same building - though it may serve as well, or even better, to identify the building. An outline sketch of the Tower of Pisa, for instance, may direct our attention immediately to those features by which we have come to recognise it, whilst the detail included in a photograph may draw our attention away from them. In the same way a wealth of detail in the memory of an event may distract our attention from the very feature of the event with which we are most concerned. In his book 'Defeat Into Victory' Field Marshall Sir William Slim relates how, by having in his mind the sketchiest possible map of the area under his command, he was able to conduct his campaign in Burma unfettered by trifling

detail and to keep his appraisal of the situation constantly in perspective.

It is important to note that vagueness (which is in any case a matter of degree) is not essentially correlated with faintness. The figure in a brightly lit room is more vague seen through frosted glass than seen through clear glass, but it is not necessarily more faint. In the case of clear and faint memories the analogy which naturally springs to mind is with things seen in good and bad lights, but we must be careful not to take this too literally. We do not see memories in general though we do sometimes talk of seeing memory-images. It may be better, to describe faint memories as those which are elusive in the sense that we cannot fix them. They seem to flicker through our minds and remain just 'beyond our grasp', as when I have a name 'on the tip of my tongue'. But the elusiveness of such memories does not prevent their being detailed and precise. The image I now have of a childhood friend and which I have such difficulty in 'holding' seems to be, in itself, a most comprehensive image.

v. Vagueness and inaccuracy

I want now to consider the relevance of vagueness of memories and of memory-claims respectively to the accuracy of memory-claims. On this question Bertrand Russell has some most interesting things to say. He points out that a memory is no less precise because it is in fact wrong - 'provided some very definite occurrence would have

been required to make it true'.¹ And allowing the distinction I have made, what he says is equally true of both actual memories and memory-claims. He continues 'It follows from what has been said that a vague thought has more likelihood of being true than a precise one. To try to hit an object with a vague thought is like trying to hit a bullseye with a lump of putty: when the putty reaches the target it flattens out all over it, and probably covers the bullseye along with the rest. To try to hit an object with a precise thought is like trying to hit a bullseye with a bullet.' This is a good analogy; it brings out very well the inverse relationship between precision, or wealth of detail, and probable accuracy. But it is important to note that for the purposes of our first question - the effect of vagueness or precision in the actual memory itself upon the memory-claim - we are (to adhere to his analogy) throwing the target at the putty, not the putty at the target. At this level we are not concerned with whether the memory-claim is in fact true or false, only with whether or not it truly reports the 'remembering state of mind'. There is a greater danger of error in reporting a complex and highly detailed 'remembering state of mind' than in reporting a vague and sketchy one. The danger is that some of the details, possibly important and relevant refinements, will be left out of the memory claim or misreported as a result of its complexity.

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'The Analysis of Mind', p.182.

On the other hand, whilst a vague memory properly reported is comparatively immune from the risk of error, it may well be that such a memory is inadequate for the claim I want to make i.e. for the premiss I need for my current train of thinking. And when this happens there is an obvious tendency to supply the missing detail from imagination. This gives rise to the quite different point - the point which Russell is in fact making in the passage quoted above (though he does not use the expression 'memory-claim') - that the degree of precision of a memory-claim is inversely proportionate to the likelihood of its own factual accuracy.

Thus we have two quite distinct 'risks' here: (1) that the memory-claim will fail to report properly the remembering state of mind because of the detailed complexity of that state of mind, and (2) that the memory-claim will misreport the actual event due to the poverty of detail in the memory itself. However, although we can separate these two 'risks' in principle we must consider them together. For the 'actual memory' is not inspectable, only at best introspectable; the only discrepancy we can demonstrate is that between the actual event and the memory-claim about it. Let us regard this as the 'total area of possible error' and try to find and eliminate the specific points of possible breakdown within it. As this enquiry must hinge very largely on the question of vagueness and precision, our first task is to consider in greater detail just what it is for a memory to be vague.

b) Determinateness of memories¹

Any memory-claim, whether publicly or privately made, tends to give rise to further questions. I claim to remember entering a public bar and talking to a man there. I am then asked, or 'ask myself' 'Which public house? What kind of man?', and so on. Now, it may be that I am unable to supply answers to these questions at all. In this case my memory is comparatively indeterminate and my memory-claim cannot (legitimately) be augmented. But if I am able to reply - 'He was a tall chap with a foreign accent in the King's Arms' further questions will arise: 'What kind of foreign accent? What did you talk about? What did he actually say?'. It is always possible to ask for more precise details which a more detailed memory of the actual experience could furnish, and sooner or later we must find ourselves unable to reply. Whatever may be the position at a 'retention' or 'dispositional' level - this is a question for psychologists and physiologists to decide - it seems certain that, as far as occurrent memory goes, we never can remember every detail of every experience. As Stout has said,² 'How is it that I can recall in a few minutes experiences which occupied twelve hours? Only by omission. We simply make an outline sketch, in which the salient characteristics of things and events and actions appear, without their individualising

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I am using the term 'determinate' throughout in the manner exemplified by H.H. Price in 'Thinking and Experience,' chapter 1.

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'A Manual of Psychology', p.143.

details. Mere forgetfulness in part helps to make this possible...'. And it is important to note that the omissions are not generally of 'whole incidents' so much as of precise detail from all the incidents.

It must be borne in mind, of course, that something at least analogous occurs in direct perception. We cannot notice every detail and we are obliged, even with what is actually before us, to schematise and classify comparatively indeterminately. What I see as simply a group of people is in fact ten men, four women and eight children. But the point here is that the omissions of memory are further imposed, as it were, upon the perceptual experience; we cannot remember what we did not in some sense notice, but also do not remember a great deal that we did notice. So that, although the memory of some small specific event, some particular action or a person's appearance, may be highly determinate; every memory will tend to fall short to some extent of what in the physical circumstances it could have been.

Now, any memory-claim which is more determinate than the claim on which it is based is in obvious danger of being false. Suppose for example that a man claims to remember meeting three Norwegians in the pub when in fact he had met three Danes. There are several possible explanations: (1) he actually remembers meeting three Scandinavians and says 'three Norwegians' simply from carelessness or for the sake of simplicity, (2) he actually has a memory of meeting three Scandinavians but at the time of making his memory-claim he took his memory to be one of meeting three Norwegians, or (3) at the

time of the encounter he judged them (wrongly) to be Norwegians, and correctly remembered this false judgment.

Whichever of these explanations applies these facts are the same: he actually had a meeting with three big blond men with foreign accents, whom he rightly took to be Scandinavians, and at some stage he has increased the determinateness of his claim by moving from 'Scandinavian' to 'Norwegian' - as it happens, wrongly.

There is an obvious similarity here to my earlier example¹ of the boy who remembered an event without realising that he remembered it. This I held to be possible because every physical event can be described, correctly, in an almost limitless number of different ways. In that case the noises the boy heard were in fact made by an event which could have been described as the delivery of the coal, though, as it happened, he gave a description which was less determinate within the frame of reference in question. Remembering loud noises is less determinate than remembering coal-delivery noises - the latter is a sub-species of the former. I say 'within the frame of reference' because for a different purpose or from a different viewpoint quite different considerations could apply. Remembering the exact number of bumps, for instance, is more determinate than simply remembering a bumping noise, but for the question in hand it happens to be irrelevant. In the case we considered the memory-claim

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See p. 66.

'I heard the coal being delivered' would have been justified if it had been made because the noises would have been correctly identified as members of the more determinate class, coal delivery noises. Yet the only difference between this and the 'Norwegians' case is that in the latter the determination of the 'tall blond men with Scandinavian accents' as 'Norwegians' is not justified by the facts.

It is true that we could ask ourselves 'What else could they have been?' But, by the same token we could ask ourselves what else the coal-noises could have been - and could find alternative answers. The difference between the two cases seems to be simply in the facts, and if we always had independent evidence of the facts we should not need to trouble ourselves about justifying memory-claims at all. As it is the determination of our memory-claims must be justified, on most occasions, by the nature of the memories themselves. The question is 'What degree of probability can ever justify a greater determination in our memory-claims than in our actual memories or our original perceptual judgments, and in what sense justify it? Now, this would be an idle question if such over-determination were in any case both illicit and unnecessary. But if it is found to be necessary the question of its being illicit simply cannot arise - and consideration shows that it is necessary. We are constantly obliged by mere pressure of time and the conduct of our affairs to 'take a chance' to some extent, in the choice of classification words in both our perception and our memory claims. I pass in the street a man wearing

a grey airforce-ish uniform with what looks like a Polish insignia, and later, when I am trying to recall what sort of people were about, I claim to remember passing a Polish Airman. I wake in the morning and I hear twittering noises outside my window. Later, when I am trying to remember what sort of morning it was, I claim to remember that there were birds twittering outside my window. And my memory-claims would be the same whether or not I had said to myself at the time 'This is a Polish Airman' or 'There are birds about'. When we 'take a chance' in determining any experience we usually do so in the light of what we might reasonably expect to be the case. My identification of the twitterings as bird noises arises very largely from my awareness of the likelihood of there being birds about. Probably our man's assumption that the Scandinavians were Norwegians arose from his knowledge that there were Norwegians in that town. And just as the Scandinavians were in fact Danes, the twitterings could have come from a squeaky mangle and the uniformed man could have been an elaborately dressed taxi-driver. Yet how hard it would be to protect ourselves against these possibilities of error in our memory-claims. If, at every stage, we confined our reports to what we actually were remembering - the sounds, the sights, the judgments made on the spot - the effect would be quite stultifying; we could never make any effective pronouncement without a full-blown enquiry beforehand.

But the saving factor - and this is terribly important - is that it is always open to us on any given occasion to say 'Wait - what am I actually remembering?' We can then exercise the care necessary to avoid over-determining the memory-claim, by focussing our attention upon the points at which it is likely to be over-determined and, therefore, in need of further supporting evidence.

3. Public and private objects of memory

a) States of mind and states of affairs

The question asked in the preceding section, 'What am I actually remembering?', would include in its answer, as we saw, 'judgments made on the spot' - but what if these judgments were in any case wrong? Is there no way of getting past them, as it were, to the event itself? And so we come to the question, foreshadowed in the previous chapter, whether the event we remember is the actual physical event itself or the mental event which was our perception of that physical event - whether we recall the state of affairs or the state of mind engendered by that state of affairs. We have already decided that the memory-claim normally refers to a past event, not to the present remembering of it. And, except in those cases where the subject of memory is specifically a state of mind, e.g. 'I remember feeling depressed yesterday', it refers to a past physical event - a state of affairs. But this decision arose out of the distinction between memory and memory-claim. It does not follow, therefore, that the memory itself is of the state of affairs. It may well be that when

I claim 'There was a riot here last week' what I am actually remembering is my own past perceptions of certain people, my judgments about those perceptions, and my feelings of apprehension.

This question is raised by Von Leyden who seems to be in no doubt that the 'real object' of a memory of an event is what we could broadly call our state of mind on perceiving that event. He says 'In the case of memory we can never even attempt to recall anything but the way in which we happened to perceive an event in the past; and by the time we remember our past perception of the event it has become something incorrigible, final and irrevocable'.¹ Now, I have argued at length in chapter III that such judgments are neither final nor irrevocable, the fact is that we frequently do amend in memory the errors made in perception. But this does not alter the fact that nothing can recur to our minds that has not previously entered our minds. I have heard it argued that there is an equally good case for claiming that what we perceive is always a state of our own minds,² but this argument overlooks the 'second event' nature of memory. Our perceiving it is a state of our own minds, that is, a mental event, but what we perceive is there before us. To put it rather crudely:

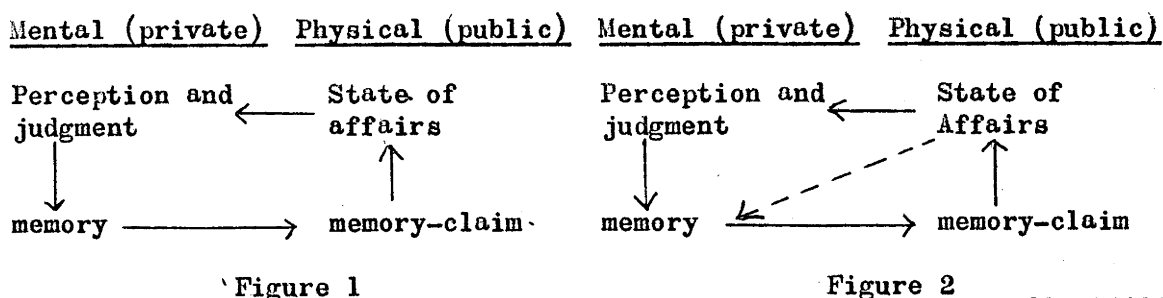
1

'Remembering', p.61 - Von Leyden is not, however, wholly consistent in his position. He says, e.g. (p.36) 'For instance we can remember one event resembling another event without having been previously aware of their resemblance'.

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E.g. This argument is put forward by M. Deutscher in his review of 'Remembering' in MIND Vol. LXXI, 1962, p.278.

if we allow that there are minds and there is a physical reality known to them, then perception is a relationship between the mind and that physical reality. But, that relationship having once been established at a present level, remembering can then occur as a relationship between past and present mental events. The present mental event (the remembering) is connected to the past physical event through the agency of the directly remembered past mental event which was the perception of it. Certainly it is difficult to see what remembering an event could be other than remembering our perceiving that event. And, since the memory-claim refers always to the public event, there is a relationship between claim and physical event parallel to that between memory and mental event. We could set this out in a simple diagram (figure 1).



It may well be objected here that, despite Von Leyden's assertion to the contrary, we can and do revise our perceptual judgments, as shown in Chapter III, and that there must therefore be at least some direct connection between the physical events themselves and our memories, there must be some part of those memories untainted by attitudes or judgments. How else, it may be asked, can we justify

such revisions, even to ourselves? Surely the diagram ought to be modified as shown in figure 2.

But, whilst I shall in fact argue for such a modification, this objection, as it stands, is not conclusive. We can make any number of judgments about the same event, some of which may be found at the memory level to be incompatible with each other in the light of facts we know otherwise (i.e. of other remembered propositions). Suppose, for example, that on passing a football ground I make, inter-alia, the following observations: This is Old St. School football ground; two teams are playing each other; one side is wearing black and yellow jerseys; the other side is wearing red and blue jerseys; black and yellow are the New St. School colours. Old St. School is playing New St. School at football. And subsequently I make the memory-claim 'I saw Old St. playing New St. at football on Old St. ground'. But it only then occurs to me that Old St. School wear green football jerseys. I must therefore amend my claim to the less determinate one 'I saw New St. School playing another team on Old St. School ground'. My reason here for amending a remembered judgment is simply my remembering a set of other judgments.

Von Leyden's view would commit us, nevertheless, to a conclusion, which is very hard to accept. For if he is right, then even apart from the possibility of misremembering, we could never be sure that a memory-claim is a true report of an actual past event. The certainty we feel about our perceptions arises very largely from the fact that,

though we can and do make mistakes, we can always look again. The very similar certainty I feel about my considered memories suggests very strongly that in memory also, I can 'look again' at least at some element or feature of the remembered event; that within the memory, or as part of the remembering, there can be re-manifested some element of this physical event itself, something below the level of interpretation, to provide a basis of actual contact with the past 'state of affairs'. I shall argue later that this 'physical element' is our 'brute sensory intake' as retained and reproduced in imagery. But I think we must allow that, insofar as what is remembered is a perceptual judgment, however indeterminate it may be, the direct object of a memory is a mental, not a physical, event.

b) Mental and Physical referents of memory

i. Propositions about facts and propositions about attitudes

It should, of course, be kept in mind that the events which are the proper subjects of memory-claims - let us call them the referents of memories - though usually physical, public events, may in many cases include - and quite properly so - much that was mental and private. If what is being recalled is actually a past state of mind then clearly not only the perception of past physical events, but also attitudes towards them and conjectures about them must enter into the memory. I could, for instance, make the memory-claim 'When I realised what had happened I was just horrified'.

Consider these passages from Furlong: 'When I compare these two events, the original event and the remembering of it, what strikes me is not the difference but rather the resemblance. My state of mind when remembering is extraordinarily like the state of mind I am recalling'.¹ And a little later, 'On the occasion of recall, there is the sensory, or quasi-sensory, element, but there is also, and this is the important point, the propositional element. I am aware of imaged watchface, and I respond to this datum by thinking, That was my watch. The proposition is there, though its tense has changed. Similarly as I recall the ticking, I also recall that I wondered whether cleaning was needed. In other words, when we remember a past occasion we do not merely reproduce the sensory data in imaged form, we reproduce or image, more or less completely, our whole state of mind on the remembered occasion'.²

These passages draw attention to what we might call the subjective element within the remembered state of mind, but they do not make clear the quite important difference between propositions about states of affairs in the world, such as 'This is my watch', and propositions about mental states, such as 'I wonder if it needs cleaning'. Both propositions may belong, as it were, to the state of mind, but, as propositions, they are concerned with quite different sorts of things.

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'A Study in Memory', p.74.

2

'A Study in Memory', p.75 (his italics).

ii. Memory-images and imagination images

A simple way of differentiating remembered propositions which purport to refer to physical events from remembered propositions which do not so purport is to consider whether what is claimed is imageable in the ordinary sense; whether or not it is in fact imaged does not matter. I could have an image of a watch held in my hand, but I do not know what it would be like to have an image of wondering whether it needs cleaning - nor yet of thinking it a handsome watch. Furlong's rather odd phrase 'Image the whole state of mind' obscures this distinction.

But this 'imageability test' will not serve to distinguish a proposition which correctly reports the physical event from one which reports a mere assumption made about it. Suppose I see a group of men enter a public meeting, perceive (quite correctly) that they look like ruffians, and conjecture that their intention is to break up the meeting. This conjecture may in fact be quite wrong; these men may be supporters of the speaker; but, assuming that I leave the meeting without learning this fact, I may well subsequently claim to remember that a group of ruffians came in to heckle and break up the meeting. And the proposition 'There were hecklers present' lends itself just as well to imagery as the proposition 'There were rough-looking men present'. The fact that in the latter case the images would (or could) be memory-images whereas in the former they must be imagination images can help us only if we have some way of distinguishing between

these. Even assuming that we have such a means, quite apart from the fact that we have now shifted from 'imageability' to 'memory-imageability', the test could never be conclusive. For there could well be propositions which were in fact formed according to the event as actually presented to us, but which, when remembered, were accompanied by imagination images - or were not accompanied by images at all.

At this stage, then, we must be content to distinguish those remembered propositions which purport to refer to physical events from those concerned with other matters, such as how we felt and what we wondered. By subjecting the former group to a careful scrutiny in the light of what we take to be our memory-images and the coherence of the remembered propositions themselves, we can achieve at least some measure of security against confusing remembered conjectures with remembered perceptions.

iii. Applicability to non-event memories

Before leaving this question it should be pointed out that what I have said applies equally to memories of individuals and of qualities. I may 'remember' the presence of Jones at a particular gathering because in fact I supposed at the time that he was there. And the decision I made that a car standing under a greenish street lamp would look pale blue in normal daylight can all too easily be remembered subsequently as my seeing the car to look pale blue. Those parts of the remembered state of mind concerned with what

things were like, can as easily give rise to this type of error in the memory-claim as those parts of the remembered state of mind concerned with how things were behaving. If I had to give a name to the error of remembering conjectures as perceptual judgments, I would call it 'subjective half-truth/objective falsity'. Whilst the memory-claim is false, the memory itself is at least partially true; what is remembered was part of the earlier state of mind, but it was conjecture, not conclusion, about the perceived event. And it is necessary to distinguish this case from those cases where a genuine perceptual error is perpetuated in memory, and which we might call 'subjective truth/objective falsity' of memory. Both 'subjective truth', and 'subjective half-truth' kinds of error seem to be always possible in the memory-claim relating to an event. In section 5 I shall consider how, and to what extent, they can be guarded against. But it is as well to note at this point that these errors are simply not applicable to memory-imagery as such. Only when a judgment or classification has been made can there be a mistaken judgment or misclassification.

4. Negative remembering or remembering by default

a) The difficulty of separating memory from claim

I now want to consider a class of memories in which, on the face of it at least, the memory seems to be identical with the memory-claim. A memory-claim is not simply a claim to be remembering something; it is a claim to know something through the agency of memory

alone. The memory-claim refers to a past state of affairs, not a present state of mind. I am therefore making a memory-claim when I attend an identification parade and claim 'The man I saw yesterday is not here'. Perhaps I am remembering the man I saw yesterday, but this does not seem to be necessary. All I need know to make the claim is that he is not any of these people before me. Thus my memory seems to just be my claim 'He is not here'.

Again, if someone asserts 'Fred's house had a green roof' I may deny this either because I in fact remember that it had a red roof or because I simply remember that whatever colour roof it may have had, it did not have a green one. My memory-claim may be the same in both cases - 'It was not green' - but in one case it is supported by an actual memory, the memory of a red roof on Fred's house, in the other case it does not seem to be supported at all; the remembering seems to consist wholly in the framing of the proposition which is the memory-claim.

b) Remembering what is not the case

i. As recognition

The 'identification parade' situation is perhaps the commonest case of negative remembering, and it might be felt that this is simply a case of recognising what is present as other than what we are seeking. Yet, to recognise that something is not the one we want, either we must actually recognise the presented article, as when I identify and reject my wife's comb in searching for my own, or we

remember the sought article, and fail to find it amongst those offered, as when I reject a number of nondescript and unfamiliar combs in searching for my own. There does not seem to be anything we could properly call 'negative recognition'. On the one hand there is positive recognition, on the other hand failure to recognise. If I wanted to return to a house I had once seen but about which I could recollect little or nothing, I may well walk along the street hoping that when I did come to the right house I could recognise it. But if I were successful this would surely mean only that on seeing the house I then recollected things I had earlier failed to recollect. So long as something is actually presented for our perception either it is, or it is not, recognised as what it is.

ii. As recollection

In recollection of the past, however, the question is much more difficult. Nothing is being 'presented to us' independently of our own minds. What I am remembering as not the case is in some way an idea in my own mind; but where does it arise from and what kind of idea can it be? How can I remember that Fred's roof is not green or that I did not go to the theatre last Saturday unless I remember what colour Fred's roof is and what I did do last Saturday? In some way I must be entertaining the idea and rejecting it, but it is by no means easy to see how I entertain it nor why I reject it. Perhaps I am able to 'picture' Fred's house and 'try out' a green roof in my 'picture'. But I may be quite competent to make the memory-claim,

'Fred's roof is not green', without being able to 'picture' Fred's house at all. And even if I can 'picture' it, there are lots of different greens; how can I be sure that I have 'tried out' all of them? In the 'theatre' case this difficulty is even more obvious. I might be able to 'picture' a visit to the theatre, though I do not quite know what this would be like. But it would be quite hopeless to try to run through 'pictures' of all the possible variations of such a visit.

In some cases, of course, we may simply be remembering a negative judgment made in the past. I might for instance observe that the Regal cinema is not showing 'Hell's Angels' without observing what it is showing, and subsequently make the memory-claim 'The Regal was not showing "Hell's Angels" last night'. But I do not think we can account for all our negative memories this way. I do not go around making such judgments as 'That roof is not green' except in very rare circumstances.

We seem, then, to have two problems with negative recollection:

- (1) Except in an 'identification parade' situation, where we are deliberately trying to render an indeterminate memory more determinate, where do memories of 'what is not the case' arise from?
- (2) How can we assert 'This was not the case' except on the authority of a memory of what was the case?

c) The positive element in negative memories

i. The presentation of the hypothesis

To the first question the only answer I can give is that negative memories do not arise except in some kind of 'identification parade' situation. I am satisfied that when we make a negative memory-claim this is always in the course of attempting to answer some positive question, even though we may not consciously have posed that question to ourselves. Always something has reminded us of a past situation and sent our memories in search of details of it.

It may be unwise, however, to be too precise about just how this occurs. Bertrand Russell considers the well-known case of entering a familiar room where a new picture has been hung on the wall and being conscious of a sense of unfamiliarity. He says¹ 'In this case it is fairly clear what happens. The other objects in the room are associated, through the former occasion, with a blank space on the wall where now there is a picture. They call up an image of a blank wall which clashes with the perception of the picture'. Whilst this account is no doubt feasible, I am afraid I find it far from convincing. There is something rather odd in the suggestion that the objects in the room 'call up an image of a blank wall' and I personally have never been conscious of such an image on such an occasion. The simpler explanation is that the picture itself is unfamiliar to us

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¹'The Analysis of Mind', p.178.

whereas the rest of the room is not, and we are therefore surprised by our failure to recognise it.

I think Russell's explanation would be more plausible if the room had simply been rearranged and the picture moved. For then the separate items of furniture would all be equally familiar and the sense of unfamiliarity could attach only to the room as a whole, and we might well feel that some image or memory of the room as it had been must exist to account for the sense of unfamiliarity. But, even here, it could be maintained that no separate memory of the past situation is needed. The recognition of the individual items is not accompanied by the recognition of the room as a whole, and once more there is a clash of the familiar and the unfamiliar. Our recognition of what was and still is the case, the appearance of the individual items of furniture, forces our attention to what was not the case, the present appearance of the whole room. We then speculate in a vague sort of way about how the furniture used to be arranged, and in doing so set up a series of hypotheses which we can accept or reject.

Or to take a quite different case: suppose I am reminded by an overheard conversation both of the way people talk in South Wales and of the way a former colleague of mine talked. What could be more natural under these circumstances than to remember that my former colleague was not a Welshman, whether I do remember where he came from or not? Our thoughts of things and events experienced in

the past are usually stimulated by present perceptions or by present trains of thought. It is quite natural, therefore, that these thoughts should include some hypotheses which are disconfirmed, as well as those that are confirmed, by memory. I think it is safe to say that on those occasions (if there be any) when a memory comes to us completely out of the blue, it must be a positive memory.

ii. The right of rejection

The second question - How we are able to reject these hypotheses?' - is already partially answered. In remembering that my colleague was not a Welshman I am not necessarily remembering what nationality he was, but I am certainly remembering him in some way. And similarly within the memory-claim 'Fred's house did not have a green roof' is the covert memory-claim that Fred did have a house, and the implication that, in some way, I am remembering Fred's house.

It is apparent, therefore, that negative memory situations can be explained very largely in terms of levels of determinations. The negative memory-claim arises because we are seeking to further determine our memories. The relatively undetermined memory provides the basis for the 'identification parade'; the 'probabilities' arising from our current perceptions and their associations provide the 'candidates'. Thus, even when no successful candidate is forthcoming, there is some positive remembering, however, indeterminate, which enables us to say 'No, it was not like that'.

Thus whenever I am remembering how or what a thing was not, I am also remembering, at a lower level of determinateness, how or what it was. And so, even in the case of negative remembering, the memory-claim is not wholly unsupported by an existent 'remembering state of mind'. My memory-claims about what was not the case, refer, like any other memory-claims, to the actual event, what was the case.

5. Testing memory-claims

a) The possibility of testing by introspection

In this chapter I have claimed that: (1) Whether what is being remembered is an event, an individual or a characteristic of an individual, a distinction can be made between the memory-claim and the memory occurrence on which it is based, and (2) It is the memory-claim which establishes the knowledge of past occurrences which enables us to pursue our remembering and reasoning; these develop, as it were, according to the statements we make to ourselves, not according to our evidence for making those statements. Our chief concern, therefore, is how the truth of memory-claims can be established - what is to count for and against them.

It must be emphasised here that I am speaking of claims arising from current remembering. Dispositional claims, e.g., that I can remember a poem, or remember how to tie a clovehitch, do not entail that I am remembering anything except the propositions, 'I can recite...' or 'I can tie a clovehitch'. In these cases I am simply claiming to have a certain dispositional ability; that my having it

is rendered possible by memory is an additional, and for our present purposes irrelevant, assumption.

Let us consider a memory-claim - 'There was a rose growing beside the door'. Clearly the simplest and most obvious test of this is to actually perceive the door and the rose. But if there has been a lapse of time the rose may have withered away or been pulled up; so its absence from the doorway will not falsify the claim. And if there has not been a lapse of time the question hardly arises. We do not trouble about remembering what is still there to be perceived unless we are playing some sort of memory game.¹

It does not follow from this, however, that memory-claims can be tested, confirmed, or disconfirmed, only in very rare cases. A memory-claim refers to a past public event, and even though the subject of the claim may have perished we can find evidence for its having existed both in what we can reasonably assume to be its physical effects - a bomb crater is pretty fair confirmation of the memory-claim that a bomb fell - and in the testimony of other people who also experienced it.

But this is not enough. In many cases our memory-claims simply do not admit of any such external confirmation yet it is still vital to us to be quite sure that they are true. My memory-claim 'I arranged to meet the professor at ten o'clock' may be extremely

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Like 'Kim's Game', which used to be popular in the Boy Scouts.

important to me, but, since I do not keep a diary it is doubtful whether I can check it by anything but a careful reconsideration of the memories which support it. The fact that memory-claims refer directly to public events does not mean that they can be checked only by public events. We can and do satisfy ourselves that our memory-claims are correct simply by reference to our memories. We saw that one way of confirming memory-claims is by discovering the present events which we believe to be probable effects of the remembered events. And physical events may have non-physical effects. There is an obvious sense in which my judgments about an event are effects of that event - the judgments could not have occurred without the event - and in which my memories are effects of those judgments. This being so, my claim to remember any event is at least prima-facie evidence that it did occur. And it is evidence which I can accept confidently once I have satisfied myself of three things: (1) that my original judgments were well made, i.e. accorded with what any careful observer could have perceived. (2) That my present remembering represents faithfully my judgments and perceptions at the time of the event. (3) That the present memory is adequate to support the claim made.

We must now consider how we might go about satisfying ourselves of these conditions.

b) Checking our memory-claims

i. Memory-claims about events

Let us take a concrete case. I make the following memory-claims:

On my way to work today I was attacked by a magpie. Now, suppose that this claim is challenged by a bird-lover who is opposing a scheme to get rid of these creatures. It becomes necessary for me, if not to substantiate my claim (this may not be possible), at least to be very sure in my own mind that it is a true account of a past event. We shall assume that there were no witnesses, that I was not in fact injured, and that my only means of checking my claim is by introspection. I therefore ask myself:

a. What am I actually remembering? Is my 'remembering state of mind' in full accord with, i.e. ample warrant for, the claim made, according to the normal usage of the words and sentences employed in that claim? Perhaps I can satisfy myself that I am actually remembering the following judgments made at the time of the occurrence: 'Something whizzed past my head from behind; there was a snapping noise close to my ear; there it is, it's a magpie; the snapping noise must have been its beak; it deliberately attacked me. I may also be actually remembering the fright I got and the apprehension I felt at the time.

In this case, notwithstanding the comparative weakness of the 'must have been', I can reasonably assure myself that no error has occurred between the 'remembering state of mind' and the memory-claim. But I would not have felt so sure had I discovered that my actual remembering included only being frightened by something flying past me with a snapping noise as it passed, and that I had worked out later that it must have been a magpie attacking me.

However, so far so good; I am satisfied that my memory-claim is in accordance with my remembered judgments. I must now consider those judgments themselves.

b. On what evidence did I make the judgments I remember? Consider these questions: (1) How did I know it was a magpie? (2) How did I know it was the same bird that had flown past my head? (3) Why did I assume it was attacking me? To answer these questions I must dig further into my memory to find supporting judgments, or memory-images of the event itself.

If I am able quite sincerely to answer thus: (1) It was a large black and white bird of the kind I call 'magpie', and I am (and was at the time) good at identifying such birds (2) Its direction and speed when I saw it correlated well with the direction and speed of whatever passed my head (3) It is notorious that magpies are vicious at this time of year and I have been attacked before and recognised the snap of a beak as it passed, then I believe that the more I consider the memory the more certain I shall become that the memory-claim was in fact true. If, on the other hand, my actual memory is found to consist solely in propositions, the original evidence for which is quite lost, then the more I think about it the greater will my doubts become - even though the memory-claim may in fact be quite true.

In practice, of course, we do not hold long courts of enquiry on our memory-claims. We become very adept at singling out the

vital features of our recollections which justify those claims, and we merely say 'Yes, I am quite certain that I was attacked by a magpie - go ahead and shoot them'. But 'I am certain' is significant only if I know what it is like to be uncertain. My confidence is justified only by my realisation that a careful reconsideration of my memory-claim could have shown me that I had assumed more in my perceptual judgments than the evidence of my senses could reasonably justify.

ii. Non-event memory-claims

The case we have considered is a straightforward 'memory of an event'. Now, I have claimed that the memory/claim distinction can be made whether the memory is of an event, an individual, a quality or even a skill. But in the case of 'remembering qualities as such' and 'remembering skills as such' it does not seem possible to differentiate between error in making the original judgment and error in making the memory-claim. When I make the claim 'I remember his face was flushed', it is important that what I am actually remembering justifies the normal usage of the word 'flushed'. The claim may well be misleading, for instance, if it were made about someone who simply happens always to have a red face. But, as the memory of a quality, the redness of the face - not of an event, the reddening of the face, there does not seem to be anything which could constitute the actual memory except a memory-image. And with images either we have them or we do not. The only explanations we can give of them are causal.

The question 'What was the evidence which gave rise to the memory-image?' cannot be asked. The imagery is the evidence.

When we consider remembering a skill as such the case may be further complicated by a doubt as to whether what is claimed is that we are remembering something or simply that we possess a dispositional ability to perform something. Let us assume that my claim 'I remember how to make paper boats' is actually based upon some specific occurrent memory. Simply taking up a piece of paper and making a boat of it certainly confirms the dispositional claim. But does it prove anything about occurrent memories? Now, clearly there is a sense in which we can be remembering how to do something without actually doing it, but it is hard to see how we could confirm this kind of memory except by actually imaging every stage of the proceedings. The mere ability to remember a series of propositions - rules for the successful performance of a task - does not of itself provide any very great assurance that we can in fact perform that task, as those of us who have waited outside examination rooms know. Of course, even my having a complete set of images of the stages involved in making a paper boat does not guarantee that I shall succeed in making one when I try. My fingers may be too stiff and awkward. But this fact accounts for the perfectly intelligible difference between remembering how to do something and being able to do it.¹

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This distinction is dealt with at length in chapter V.

c) The intention of memory-claims

Considerable doubt may be felt, not without justification, about my use of the expression 'normal usage of the terms employed in memory-claims'. What constitutes 'normal usage' is itself always somewhat arbitrary and indecisive. I must therefore make it clear that by 'normal usage' I mean only non-misleading usage within a particular context and for a particular purpose.² We must also bear in mind that what I am calling a memory-claim is not simply, or even primarily, a claim for the edification of other people. It is primarily a claim about the past made to myself in words - because I do in fact think in words - and used as the basis of further remembering and reasoning. Part of my reason, then, for checking my memory-claim against my actual occurrent memory is to prevent myself from making a tacit assumption that I actually remember more than I do in fact remember as a result of ambiguities in the words I am using. I am not concerned, therefore, with normal usage in any formal or 'dictionary' sense, but with the appropriateness of the terms in the memory-claim to report my memory within my current train of thought and reasoning. To take a very simple example: I may remember a play I once saw and 'sum up' my memory of it in the claim 'It was thrilling'. This claim may, henceforward, 'stand in for' my memory. If my sole purpose in remembering is to decide whether or

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I frankly admit here that I am committed to the view that words do not mean things; people mean things when they use words.

not to go to see another play by the same writer for an evening's entertainment, then the memory-claim 'It was thrilling' is a good enough guide for me. If, on the other hand, I am making a study of melodrama as a dramatic form, the claim 'It was thrilling' could well be misleading without some augmentation by actual memories to show wherein and how it was thrilling. It is always possible for the dispositional memory of a proposition to be replaced, in the course of time, by a dispositional memory of mere words, and for those mere words, when remembered, to be 'taken for' the original proposition.

d) The actual remembering

I have specified three potential 'breakdown points' between the event and the memory-claim. And I have shown how introspective checking, by securing us against the first and the last of these, can narrow the field of possible error. But to eliminate the field of possible error we must have some means of guarding against the second 'breakdown point', the fallibility of memory itself. We are back once more with the basic problem with which I commenced this essay. And, as we discovered then, introspections cannot help at this point. If we are to give an adequate explanation of the certainty we in fact feel about our memory beliefs, an explanation which fully justifies that certainty, then we must show that, in some way, there is within the memory an actual recurrence of some element of the remembered event itself. Since this would not admit of error, it could serve as a basis for checking all our remembered judgments. It is

noticeable that in all our attempts to find greater security in our memories of events, of individuals and their characteristics, and even of skills, we have come back sooner or later to memory-images. These have always represented the terminal point of checking. There is a strong suggestion, therefore, that the 'physical element in memory' will be found, if at all, in our imagery, and it is my intention now to consider in detail the nature of imagery and the role which it plays in our memories of events.

First, however, because so much recent writing has centered upon them, I shall consider that class of memories which I have been referring to as 'remembering skills' and have found to be a somewhat confusing mixture of remembering in images and propositions, recognition, and mere dispositional capacities. I hope to show that when, and insofar as, public performances are remembering at all, they are simply one variety of memory of events and, hence, subject to the same analysis.

Chapter V

REMEMBERING HOW TO

1. The case against the existence of a 'mental directive'

It is commonly thought, by quite unsophisticated people as well as by 'traditional philosophers', that when we perform some skilled action which we have learnt to perform we are in fact doing two distinct things: making certain effective physical movements, and remembering past experiences in a way that enables us to make those movements effectively. It is commonly thought that exercising a skill is making our bodies follow the dictates of a mental directive composed very largely of memories of past events and performances. But strong arguments have been produced to challenge this belief both on empirical and on rational grounds, and we must now consider these arguments.

a) The dispensibility of recollections

i. Skill and lack of skill

When we say that someone performs a task well or skilfully, we generally mean that he can be relied upon to achieve what we take to be his desired end smoothly, efficiently, without hesitation or deliberation, as though it were an automatic process. In fact, the more closely our overt behaviour assimilates that of a well-regulated machine, the further it gets from the fumbings and ponderings we associate with learning, the greater is our skill held to be. As

A.J. Ayer puts it,¹ 'Remembering how to swim or how to write, remembering how to set a compass or add up a column of figures, is in every case a matter of being able to do these things, more or less efficiently, when the need arises. It can indeed happen in cases of this sort, that people are assisted by actually recalling some previous occasion on which they did the thing in question, or saw it done, but it is by no means necessary that they should be. On the contrary, the better they remember, the less likely is it that they will have any such events in mind: it is only when one is in difficulties that one tries as it were to use one's recollections as a manual. To have learnt a thing properly is to be able to dispense with them'.

Certainly it would be very strange to say that the man who dives into the pool and swims faultlessly to the other side does not remember how to swim - simply because his mind throughout the performance is wholly occupied with what he intends to have for dinner. In due course we must consider whether it is equally strange to say that he is not remembering how to swim.

ii. Knowing what we are doing - and 'catching ourselves'

We might say that he is certainly aware - whatever else may be occupying his thoughts - that he is swimming; and that to be aware of what we are doing is, in a sense, to be remembering previous

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'The Problem of Knowledge' p.150.

occasions since it is to classify this (the present performance) with that (some past performance or group of performances).

But, though we can be fairly certain that our swimmer knows that he is swimming, we cannot be so certain that he knows that he is swimming sidestroke. We frequently 'catch ourselves' performing tasks quite efficiently, and a swimmer may be surprised to discover that he is swimming sidestroke after he has been doing so for quite some time. But, assuming that he has just learnt the stroke, his performance seems to qualify just as well as an example of remembering how¹ as it would have done if he had been giving it his undivided attention. We may wish to deny that a fish remembers how to swim, but a human swimmer is not a fish; he had to learn the skill he is now exhibiting. It could be claimed, therefore, that whether or not he is concentrating upon what he is doing is quite irrelevant. His exercise of that skill is his remembering how to swim sidestroke.

iii. Acting at will

Against this we may argue that such efficient actions are simply things we do, things which, because their successful completion is dependent upon our having had some past experience, are analogous to remembering. But they are not, we may claim, a species of remembering, any more than boxing is a species of ballet because it happens to involve considerable grace of movement. I do not want simply to

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Throughout this chapter 'remembering how' will mean 'remembering how to do something' not 'remembering how a thing looked, felt, etc.'.

dismiss this argument. Indeed, subject to some modifications, I intend ultimately to support it. But, at this stage we must not blind ourselves to the fact that swimming, when we have learnt to swim, is much more like remembering an event, when we have witnessed that event, than boxing is like ballet. In one case there is a superficial resemblance in the performance itself; in the other case there is a formal resemblance in the relationship of past and present events and the application of the retention of past events to our present requirements.

In 'The Mind and Its Place in Nature' C.D. Broad writes 'We may¹ acquire by practice the power of performing at will certain characteristic sets of bodily movements, such as those that are used in swimming. If we find that we can still swim when we get into the water after an interval, we should commonly say that we "remember how to swim" or "remember the movements of swimming". There is nothing cognitive about "memory" in this sense. To say we remember how to swim is merely to state (a) that we can perform the proper movements after an interval, and (b) that we believe, or the speaker who observes us believes, that this is due to our having performed them in the past. It would be better to call memory in this sense, "retention of an acquired motor-capacity".'

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'The Mind and Its Place in Nature', p.269.

But even allowing that our arms and legs can, as it were, look after themselves, they do so as the result of prior training and in a way that is conducive to the end we seek. There is a sense in which we are both deliberately setting in motion and deliberately keeping in motion the performance in question when clearly it is open to us, as intelligent beings, to behave otherwise. If a fish is dropped into water it simply commences swimming; we do not think of it as deciding to swim, how to swim, or where to swim to. If a man is suddenly dropped into water (assuming that he can swim) he may to some extent react in the same way as the fish - simply commence swimming. Yet in adapting this mode of swimming to the condition of the water and directing his course to the nearest safe landing place his reactions (if 'reactions' is the right word here) are quite different from those of the fish. His first struggle to the surface may well be governed solely by motor-response, but thereafter his performance is always to some extent deliberate and purposeful and preconceived. To what extent will vary from man to man.

iv. The apparent absence of recollection

The question is - How are we to characterise this deliberateness and purposefulness in our skilled performance? In most cases they do not seem to be accompanied by any mental events of the kind we normally call remembering. When I swim across a pool I do not generally recollect any previous occasion of swimming nor yet any propositions or maxims about how to swim, nor am I generally aware of

any images of what my arms and legs should be doing. And on such occasions as I do have recollections - perhaps I am reminded of some previous occasion of swimming - those recollections are more distraction from than directive to my present performance. Normally, so far as I am conscious of anything to do with my present performance it is of what I am doing now - and, when I 'know what I am doing', what I am doing now just happens to be what I have done many times before.

Yet, as I pointed out in chapter II,¹ although we do not seem to be remembering anything on these occasions, our performances are of the kind we feel would have to be remembered, which suggests that in some way we have a constant memory-disposition always, so to speak, directing our activities so that no specific recollection, either of event or of proposition, is needed for the successful completion of the task. It is something of this sort, I believe, that philosophers have had in mind when they have spoken of memories as 'present in power' though not in fact. They have been driven to making such mystical-sounding assertions because although we are able to discover retrospectively that we were in fact performing in accord with certain learnt skills and performing to some specific end, after the initial learning period we rarely seem to be conscious in performing of any recollections of events or rules with

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See p.56.

which we compare, or any directives by which we guide, our performance. Although the performance seems to exemplify 'remembering how' - clearly it is intentional, skilled, and in some way dependent upon past mental as well as physical performances - those past performances, mental or physical, do not seem to be specifically recalled or in any way 'presented to us' as directives of our present efforts.

b) Some supporting arguments

We have considered the empirical grounds for holding that to be remembering how to do something is simply to be performing appropriately. Now we turn to certain arguments designed to show that it must be so, that remembering how could not be reduced to a variety or aspect of remembering that.

i. The time factor

If, in every instance, the performance of a skilled act were dependent upon the prior remembering of how to perform it, our lives would be a series of alternate thinkings and doings; before making each move we should have to pause to remember how to make it. In actual fact the occasions when we do proceed in this manner, as, for instance, when we work out very carefully the moves to be made in a game of chess, contrast very sharply with the ordinary conduct of our affairs where we are constantly putting into practice learnt skills of various sorts with never a pause. If we all paused to remember how to perform each operation whilst we were driving a car in heavy traffic (as indeed a novice driver often does have to) the result might well be catastrophic.

Suppose we suggest that remembering how does always take place (as a mental preliminary to action), but is very swift, hardly noticeable at all, always just a fraction ahead of the action itself. This could hardly be disproved on empirical grounds. During the learning stages of any skill we are in fact conscious of such 'mental preliminaries' and it is always open to us to say that if we introspected more carefully we would catch ourselves mentally rehearsing even when we are fully competent. Furthermore, as we shall consider later in this chapter,¹ it is by no means easy to say when a skill is perfect, nor what constitutes a particular skill. But to show that something cannot be disproved is one thing; to prove it is quite another. And there are specific objections to this 'solution' which must be considered.

a. The object of attention. According to this view, since the overt performance is continuous, our minds would need to be attending always to what we were just about to do, to be concentrating upon how to make the next move - never upon the move we were then making. Thus by virtue of remembering how to perform we would be precluded from giving any attention to how we were in fact performing. However 'swift' the decision, there would always be a further decision to be made as soon as it was completed.

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See p.159ff.

b. The infinite regress argument. There have also been attempts to demonstrate logically that no prior mental directive can be entailed by the skilled performance of any action. The argument usually runs thus: Remembering and planning are activities which, like any other activities, can be done well or badly. If no skilled performance can be given until a prior remembering has occurred, then that remembering cannot occur until a prior remembering has occurred, and so on ad infinitum. Thus we could never even commence the overt performance itself.

I do not, however, attach great importance to this argument as it begs the point at issue. Unless we are already agreed that remembering is a skilled performance of the same kind as swimming or driving motor-cars the argument does not hold. And if we were agreed upon this the demonstration would be redundant. Further, as I shall argue in section 3 of this chapter, doing a thing well or badly has nothing to do with doing it intelligently in the sense of that word which is relevant to remembering.

ii. 'How to' is not recallable

In 'The Concept of Mind' Ryle produces two closely connected arguments designed to show that 'remembering how' and 'remembering that' are different in a way which would make it impossible to reduce the former to a mere sub-species of the latter.

a. The applicability of 'partial knowledge'. 'We¹ never speak of a person having a partial knowledge of a fact or truth, save in

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'The Concept of Mind', p.59.

the special sense of his having knowledge of a part of a body of facts or truths.... On the other hand, it is proper and normal to speak of a person knowing in part how to do something, i.e. of his having a particular capacity in a limited degree'. And Ryle claims that this means only that the person knows how to do the thing fairly well, i.e. that he performs fairly well - not that he is conversant with only some of the maxims governing its successful performance. 'Remembering that' is necessarily a closed affair - either we remember or we do not. 'Remembering how' is always an open affair - we can perform the task in question with a greater or lesser degree of skill.

b. When does knowing how commence? Remembering that A was B is always traceable, in principle, to discovering that A was B at some exact time, whereas remembering how to perform some task can never be traced to an exact moment when we knew how for the first time. 'Learning¹ how or improving an ability is not like learning that or acquiring information. Truths can be imparted, procedures can only be inculcated, and while inculcation is a gradual process, imparting is relatively sudden. It makes sense to ask at what moment someone became apprised of a truth, but not to ask at what moment someone acquired a skill'. It is noticeable that Ryle does not explain how we can improve an ability unless we have already acquired it, i.e. learnt how.

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'The Concept of Mind', p.59.

The importance of Ryle's claims is that, if they are true, then it simply does not make sense to talk of remembering how to do something except as being able to do it more or less effectively. And the test of 'being able' is the performance on demand of the task in question. On the other hand, if it can be shown that it does make sense to talk of remembering how as distinct from the giving of public performances, then it follows that these claims, however convincing they may seem, simply cannot be true. We shall now consider some arguments which might lead us to deny that remembering how just is performing appropriately.

2. Causes for reservations

a) Knowing and doing

i. Performing and rehearsing

If I am asked 'Do you remember how to drive a motor cycle?' I may well reply 'Yes' notwithstanding that there is no motor cycle for me to drive. On what authority do I make this reply? It could be that I recall some occasion on which I drove a motor cycle and I assume that I could do so again. Or it could be that what I recall is not any specific occasion, but simply the proposition, formed at some time in the past (when does not matter) 'I can drive a motor cycle'. In these cases the claim 'I am now remembering how to drive a motor cycle' would not be justified. What I am remembering is, in the one case a certain event, and in the other case, a certain proposition from which I am inferring that, given opportunity, I could drive a motor cycle.

But suppose I am remembering, not a single event, nor the single proposition 'I can drive a motor cycle', but a set of propositions which constitute the rules for driving a motor cycle. And suppose also that I have clear kinaesthetic images of balancing and directing a motor cycle. Could we then deny that I am remembering how to drive one? The point is that we frequently do feel justified in claiming to remember how to do something as distinct from claiming that we are able to do it - or even that we ever have done it. No doubt there are many old-world Japanese who remember how to commit Hari-Kiri.

Consider the question 'Do you remember how to play tennis?' addressed to a man now confined to a wheelchair. Must he reply 'No' simply because he is incapable of getting up and demonstrating? If a man is asked 'Do you remember how to swim the crawl?' when he is sitting at home he may rehearse in his mind the movements involved and consider images of performances he has seen and answer 'Yes, I do', whereas, if the same question is addressed to him when he is in the swimming pool he may simply execute a few strokes by way of reply. The two ways of answering the question are quite different; but it is the same question which is being answered. The effective difference between the answers is that the one given in the water tells us more than we asked. By his demonstration our man is showing us not only that he remembers how to swim the crawl but also that he can swim it, whereas the verbal reply would still be

justified if he remembered how only in the sense that the man in the wheelchair remembers how to play tennis, e.g. he could instruct other people. It is worth noting that many dramatic producers are very unsatisfactory actors - but we should hardly say that this is because they do not know how to act.

ii. The need for a criterion

Now, why do we say that the man showed us both that he can swim and that he remembers how? If a small boy picks up a stone and hurls it into a pond this is evidence enough that he can perform this 'task'. But it is surely not evidence that he is remembering how to do anything. The boy could be doing something quite clever, throwing a stone in a particular way that he has been practising. But, equally, he could be acting quite carelessly and thoughtlessly and have never thrown a stone before. Our swimmer's performance counts as an affirmative answer to our question only because (a) it follows the asking of the question and (b) we presume it is the application of a skill he has learnt. We accept it as an example of remembering how only on the assumption that he is aware that his demonstration provides the answer to our question, i.e. that his present performance has certain essential resemblances to an indefinite number of past performances which have been classified as swimming the crawl. We are in fact assuming, as the condition of our granting that he is remembering how, some association by him of his present performance with other performances he has given or witnessed. Part of what we

are attributing to him is the ability, should he make a wrong stroke, to realise that it is a wrong stroke and correct it. But how can he realise that this is a wrong stroke unless he has some present idea of what constitutes the right stroke? To argue here that it simply 'feels wrong' is simply to make this into a 'negative memory situation'. And, as I have argued,¹ such situations have always a basis of positive remembering. In his claim to be remembering how the man in the water is adopting at least some of the same criteria as the man on the land.

iii. Automatic and 'quasi-automatic' performances

It may be instructive to compare the extents to which conscious activity is involved in (a) breathing (b) walking (c) riding a bicycle and (d) playing Bridge.

(a) Breathing (though not deep-breathing) is something we just do - we do not need to be conscious at all.

(b) To walk we usually need to be conscious - but not conscious of our walking. Although it is something we have had to learn, and is to that extent a skill, it has become almost as automatic as breathing. The difference is principally that we can and do decide to start and to stop walking. But only if we have not walked for a very long time do we need to pay attention to the performance itself.

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See p.130ff.

(c) In contrast to this, riding a bicycle does require a lot of attention. We can think of other things while we are riding, but unless we are aware to some extent of what we are doing and how we are doing it we shall soon meet with disaster.

(d) In playing Bridge we are constantly 'telling ourselves' what to do next. Our minds do the 'real work', our hands and lips are just the labourers on the job. Here there is generally very little about our performances that we would call automatic - only such things as the actual holding and handling of the cards.

Let us allow, for the sake of argument, that walking (notwithstanding that we once learnt how) is for most of us a wholly automatic affair, and that playing Bridge is a wholly intelligent affair. Riding a bicycle, which is a fairly standard example of remembering how, might then be called a quasi-automatic affair since it patently includes a great deal of conscious (deliberate) and a great deal of unconscious (motor-responsive) behaviour. In the preceding section I described the 'conscious part' of 'remembering how' as the association of what we are now doing with - and its guidance by - what we have done or witnessed in the past. The question we must now consider is how we are to regard the unconscious part of the performance, and what if anything this has to do with remembering.

iv. The ability to forget

One maxim that may fairly go unchallenged is that whatever we can remember we can forget. What does forgetting how to do something amount to? Suppose we say it amounts to not being able to do

it any more. But (regarding walking as a wholly automatic performance) if I quite suddenly could not walk we would not normally say that I had forgotten how to walk. Even if no physical defect could be discovered to account for my inability we should be more inclined to assume some undiscovered physical defect than to attribute it to a breakdown of memory. I have forgotten if I do not know something I previously knew - and what in this case did I know previously that I do not know now? We cannot really say I knew how to walk; I simply walked - there was no knowing how to about it. And this would surely be true of the automatic part of any performance. One of the things we mean by calling a performance automatic is that it does not make sense to say we have forgotten how to do it, though we might for other reasons cease to perform it. And, if remembering how to ride a bicycle were simply being able to ride a bicycle, what could forgetting how to ride a bicycle be but not being able to ride one? But this would be no proof of having forgotten. It would be quite reasonable, if I could, nonetheless, state things about how a bicycle should be ridden, to say 'I remember well enough how to ride a bicycle, but nowadays my legs are not strong enough to do it'.

There is naturally a close association in our minds between remembering how and being able, so close that we often treat the concepts as interchangeable. But the vitally important point is that, whilst the exemplifications of the two concepts so frequently overlap in practice, there is no necessity for them to do so. A child

told to draw a picture entitled 'Earthquake' would almost certainly draw a scene of devastation - but this does not mean that the concepts 'earthquake' and 'devastation' are identical. It is our ability to differentiate 'remembering how' from 'being able' if and when the occasion arises that has led to the use of the expression 'remembering how' even if it is not always used in a way that makes the distinction obvious.

b) What constitutes a skilled performance?

Since 'remembering how' is so evidently connected with the exercise of acquired skills, it is strange that so little attention has been paid by writers on memory to two crucial questions: (i) what constitutes a particular skill? and (ii) By what criteria is a performance judged to be skilful?

i. The determination of a skill

Suppose I mount my bicycle after many years of driving cars and promptly fall off. Does this show that I have forgotten how to ride a bicycle - or only that I have forgotten how to balance a bicycle? I may still remember how to do a great many other things which come under the general heading of riding a bicycle. Let us look again at Ryle's argument in which it was claimed that knowing in part how to do something is not a matter of being conversant with only some of the maxims governing its successful performance.¹ It certainly does seem

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See p.152.

possible to maintain that, just as balancing is part though not the whole of riding, so other activities, sub-skills let us call them, are parts of balancing; that every 'imperfect performance' may contain within it many 'perfect' ones. Now, I am not going to suggest that every such 'sub-skill' could necessarily be contained in a verbal maxim so that if each maxim is followed the balancing (the 'major skill') must be successful. On the contrary the point I am making is that there is no such thing as a 'basic unit' of skill; there are simply greater or lesser sets of effective activities, and it is perfectly legitimate to regard any of these as a skill which could be the object of a maxim. As I argued in chapter II, we remember a great many 'propositions' without words at all, and some of these could well be concerned with muscular feelings in our bodies. I grant that by the time we are competent cyclists balancing a bicycle has become a wholly automatic affair. But there seems nothing absurd about the suggestion that, at the learning stage when we are in fact remembering how to balance, balancing should not be regarded as one single skill but as a complex mass of skills, each with its own corresponding memory-directive.

Under this analysis, 'improving a skill', as Ryle calls it, becomes a matter of developing from lesser skills to greater skills. And the fact that 'a skill' is developed over a long period of time no more proves that its exercise is not dependent upon 'remembering that' (or a complex of 'remembering thats') than the fact that a

complicated piece of information is gleaned over a long period of time proves that the remembering of it is not a case of 'remembering that'.

ii. What makes a performance skilled?

I have argued that we should talk of remembering only such things as it makes sense to talk of forgetting. The skill that we remember is, therefore, something that it is possible to forget. It is in some sense an intelligent performance. This, so far as I know, nobody has openly denied. But there is a tendency in recent philosophy to slide from statements attempting to reconcile this fact with the apparent absence of 'mental directive' in the exercise of skills, to statements which, though similar-sounding, pay lip-service to the 'intelligence' of skilled performances while in fact rendering impossible any intelligible analysis of them. Compare, for example, these two short passages from 'The Concept of Mind'. Ryle allows that there is a difference we are all aware of between an action done accidentally or automatically and one done deliberately and carefully, and he writes:

(a)¹ 'But such differences of description do not consist in the absence or presence of an implicit reference to some shadow-action covertly prefacing the overt action. They consist, on the contrary, in the absence or presence of certain sorts of testable explanatory-cum-predictive assertions'.

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'The Concept of Mind', p.25.

(b)¹ 'But to admit, as we must, that there may be no visible or audible difference between a tactful or witty act and a tactless or humourless one is not to admit that the difference is constituted by the performance or non-performance of some extra secret acts'.

Assertion (a) says in effect that although something is going on in the mind in accompaniment to what is going on in the body, it is not in the form of a rehearsal prefacing the actual performance, but rather of attention to that performance, its nature and purpose. With this we may very well agree - and still go on to consider what constitutes the difference between attending to our performance simply as to any object of observation and attending to it as our means of achieving certain desired ends.

But assertion (b) goes much further. It not only denies the existence of any prior mental directive of the action, it denies in effect that there is a distinguishable mental element involved at all. I feel that Ryle has deliberately selected words which evoke a certain emotional reaction: 'extra' suggests 'extraneous' and 'secret' suggests 'kept secret', and we may well wish to deny the existence of any such entities. If we substitute the more neutral expression 'additional private factor' we shall be able approach the question much more dispassionately. Now, it may be protested that I have no right to substitute the neutral word 'factor' for

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'The Concept of Mind', p.32.

'act'. A mere 'mental existent' is no more a 'mental act', it may be claimed, than a physical existent is a physical act. But, whereas, in considering the physical there is a clear distinction - we can all say which physical factors are acts and which are entities - there is no such obvious distinction when we consider the mental. Any terminology which suggests that 'mental acts' are distinguishable from 'mental entities' in the way that physical acts and entities are distinguishable is bound to be misleading.

Now, if there is no 'additional private factor' in the skilled performance, wherein can the difference between it and the automatic or accidental performance lie? It has been conceded that we are all aware of the distinction and that there is no visible or audible difference, so any factor present in one performance and not in the other must be private in the sense of being knowable only to the agent. It may be argued that the distinction is simply a matter of whether or not the performance can be repeated. But what does 'can be repeated' mean unless it is repeated? And surely we do not have to perform everything twice in order to know that the first occasion was an exercise of skill. Apart from which an overt act done once accidentally may well be repeated intentionally.

The problem is precisely to know what doing something intentionally is. Ryle speaks of acts done 'on purpose' but he seems to suggest that the agent may not know what he does on purpose and what he does 'not on purpose'. I would say that I am doing something on purpose

when I am aware as I do it of my aims and intentions, and because of this it is reasonable for me to take it that you are doing something on purpose when you express your intentions before or during the activity or when your activity has every appearance of being intelligently directed to what I believe to be a reasonable goal for you.

It is true that people are sometimes accused of doing things 'on purpose' - and perhaps rightly so - when they have not been 'aware of their intentions'. But such cases (which are in the province of experimental psychology rather than of epistemology) show only that a pre-determined action has been taken by the agent to be an accidental or automatic action. They do not set up a separate group of deliberate acts which are not pre-determined. When children slide along the floor and fall down on their bottoms we have to ask them whether they did it on purpose or not. We mean - was it an accident or did they decide to do it? The choice remains the same whether they are able to tell us or not. Because 'on purpose' is contrasted with 'accidental' there is an obvious sense in which a lizard catches flies on purpose, simply in that it does not do so accidentally. But plainly this sense of 'on purpose' is too limited to make the distinction Ryle does in fact allow to exist. Assuming that the lizard does not decide to catch the fly, his catching it is a purely automatic response.

c) Remembering how in terms of remembering that

i. Our viewpoint or point of interest

The claim, by Ryle and others, that 'remembering how' cannot be reduced to or explained in terms of 'remembering that' seems to contradict the assumptions that most of us make, apparently quite successfully, whenever we give instructions. When my little boy calls to me that he cannot remember how to do up his football boots, I call back to him that the laces must go through the eyelets in such and such order, that they then go through the loops at the sides and back, and so on. It is true that there are elements of most performances which we may find difficult, if not impossible, to describe in propositions of this kind. But this seems to reflect the limitations of our existing language rather than any mysterious inexplicability of those elements themselves. There is also (as we shall presently consider) in every performance some motor-responsive behaviour which, though it forms an essential part of the 'remembered performance', is not itself remembered in the ordinary sense of that word.

If we are employing someone to do a job for us then clearly our only concern is that the job be done. We are pleased to concede (that is, we have no wish to deny) that he 'remembers how' so long as the job is done properly. In such a case we can fully endorse Ryle's assertion¹ 'Our enquiry is not into causes (and a fortiori

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'The Concept of Mind', p.45.

not into occult causes), but into capacities, skills, habits, liabilities and bents'. It is when, not as employers but as epistemological enquirers, we turn our attention to what his remembering how amounts to that we seem obliged to attribute to him all sorts of 'memories that'. It is one thing to observe skill and quite another to attribute skill. We observe the 'skill' of the lizard which never misses the fly it aims for, but our attributing skill to a marksman who repeatedly scores bull's eyes (though not to a child who lets off a rifle and just happens to hit the bull's eye) seems to rest upon our ability to explain his repeated success in terms of his knowing that the sights must be in such and such a position, that his breathing must be controlled in such and such a way, and so on. It is more natural to say 'I remember how to hit the bull's eye' than to say 'I remember that bullets hit bull's eyes when the sights of the rifle are so and so, and my finger squeezes so and so, and allowance is made for the wind' - and etc., mainly because it is so much more economical of words, and because, as I pointed out above, we do not always have the words to express everything we would need to say. Nevertheless 'he remembers how to' must 'stand for' all these unexpressed, and perhaps unexpressable, assertions. The lizard can catch flies all day but we do not want to say it remembers how to. The marksman need display his prowess once only and we grant immediately that he remembers how to hit bull's eyes.

ii. When do we ask 'do you remember how to?'

It may be helpful to consider under what circumstances I would ever ask myself whether I remember how to do something, or, for that matter, ask anyone else whether he remembers how to do something. Not, surely, while he is actually doing it. But, if 'remembering how' is in fact quite distinct from being able, why is it unreasonable to ask the man performing the task whether he remembers how?

The answer is that it is not unreasonable; it is simply an odd and confusing way of putting the question. We could, for instance, ask such a man whether he was exercising a learnt skill or attempting the task for the first time. But we would have to make it quite clear what 'task' we were referring to; as pointed out above, even if he is experimenting in the 'major task' he is almost certainly exercising his learnt ability to perform certain 'sub-tasks'.

In fact we do not generally ask the question in these circumstances, not because it would be absurd but simply because it would be uninteresting to us. What does interest us is whether he can carry on - whether he can master the next stage in the performance with the same apparent ease. 'Do you remember how -?' is always in some sense appropriate - but it is in fact asked only when the performance in question is not being given - though it may be pending. And if the reply is, as it may well be, 'I'm not sure - but I dare say I would remember if I had to' this need not mean that the man we have asked is identifying remembering how with being able. The

assumption behind the reply could be that under the stimulus of actually attempting the task the 'memories that' which now elude him would come back to him.

iii. Recollection as directive knowledge

It is sometimes held that we cannot know how to do certain things because we remember certain events and propositions, since remembering is never a source of knowledge. Now, there is a sense in which this may well be true - but is completely trivial. Assuming that I cannot remember anything until I have already known it, I must come to know it in the first place by some means other than memory.

But, quite apart from the possibility (discussed at length in chapters III and IV) of making factual discoveries from the re-interpretation of our memories, there is a very real sense in which memory is the source of practically all our knowledge. In the dispositional sense I know a great many things which I am not at present thinking about; but the existence of any disposition presupposes the periodical occurrences which actualise it, and I am now knowing only those things which I am now thinking about. Since I was not thinking about them half an hour ago I am now knowing them because I remember them, unless, of course, I am presently perceiving them.

It is interesting that Ryle, in discussing the question of the allocation of praise and blame, decides that a boy is

blameworthy if 'knowing how to tie the knot, he still did not tie it correctly'.¹ There is no suggestion that the boy deliberately tied the knot wrongly. We must assume therefore that by 'knowing how to tie the knot' Ryle means knowing in the dispositional sense. Most of us would say here 'He could have remembered how to do it but he didn't bother'. And what he did not bother about could only be knowing (or remembering) in the occurrent sense. And if it be protested that knowing how in the occurrent sense just is tying it correctly, I once more point out that the lizard just does catch flies correctly. And the boy could tie the knot correctly entirely by accident.

3. Intelligence and intelligent behaviour

We may say that in doing something we remember how to do we are giving an intelligent performance, but we must be quite clear what we mean by this. For we feel a certain natural reluctance to say that the child who deliberately falls on his bottom is giving an intelligent performance. I believe that a great deal of the difficulty in the question, what constitutes remembering how, arises from the confusion of quite different senses of the word 'intelligent'. We want to say that remembering how to do something is always an exercise of intelligence (whether the remembering is 'public' or 'private'), but the word 'intelligent' is commonly used as a term of

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'The Concept of Mind', p.71.

approval, and at other times as the contrary of 'automatic' or 'motor-responsive', and the two uses are by no means the same - even though both frequently apply to the same instance. It is most important that we see clearly in which sense of the word remembering how to do something is always an intelligent performance.

a) Intelligence and effectiveness

i. Paying heed

Some recent philosophers, most notably Ryle, have made great use of the concept of paying heed. We are paying heed when we are fully aware of what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why we are doing it. But none of these guarantee that our activity will be effective. The boy who is busily misapplying a mathematical formula is paying heed to what he is doing, but he will not get the answer right.¹ On the other hand the man who is thinking about anything and everything but what he is doing while he climbs a ladder will still get to the top if he carries on as he is going. Now, clearly we regard the performance of the boy as ineffective and that of the man as effective if we believe that their respective aims are answering the problem and surmounting the ladder. But, if we equate intelligence with attention, or 'paying heed', then the boy is giving an intelligent performance whilst the man is not, for the boy is heeding what he is doing. We shall be forced into the position of claiming,

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Note H.H. Price's observation that the mark of intelligence is the ability to make mistakes - 'Thinking and Experience', p.87.

paradoxical though it may seem, that a dull man is exercising more intelligence when he is puzzling over the completion of an operation than a bright man who achieves the required end with a minimum of mental effort.

ii. Conscious and unconscious repetition

Here you may well object that the second man is obviously the more intelligent man simply because he does not need to puzzle over the task. But already you have shifted to another (and, I grant, more common, though perhaps derivative) use of 'intelligent'. What we are now speaking of is a capacity for effective behaviour. Indeed the building up of such a capacity is an excellent thing, but with it comes a lessening, not an increase, of intelligence in our conduct in the only sense of that term in which intelligence could be used as the mark of 'remembering how'.

For, as allowed at the outset of this chapter, the better we get at doing anything the less we need to think about it. Exercising any acquired skill is largely a matter of repetition. In the early stages it may be conscious repetition; in the later stages it will tend to become unconscious repetition. But, to an observer, this difference shows up simply as an improvement in effectiveness. We must never forget, however, that a well-regulated machine may be a greater improvement still - unless and until it breaks down.

Ryle cites the case of a chess-player developing this kind of competence.¹ 'Very soon he comes to observe the rules without thinking of them. He makes the permitted moves and avoids the forbidden ones; he notices and protests when his opponent breaks the rules. But he no longer cites to himself or to the room the formulae in which the bans and prohibitions are declared. It has become second nature to him to do what is allowed and avoid what is forbidden. At this stage he might even have lost his former ability to cite the rules'. But 'second nature' is a very vague sort of term, suggestive somehow of being aware in a non-occurrent kind of way of the thing to do, a situation much easier to suggest than to analyse. Playing chess is not the most fortunate example since it involves both the formal rules which constitute the game itself and also what we might call the 'informal rules' which constitute good playing, and it is not altogether clear to which Ryle is referring. But either way, if the player really had lost the ability to cite the rules by which he was in fact playing,² would it not be fairer to say that he had reached a stage of physiological conditioning which enabled him to carry on by motor-responses alone - that he had in fact become a kind of human chess machine? This need not, of course, be to his

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'The Concept of Mind', p.41.

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We are concerned here with the propositions - not just the forms of words.

discredit. A human chess machine, like a real chess machine, may play a very effective game of chess. The point I am making is that if ever this stage were reached it would not be a case of 'remembering how' so well that he need no longer bother about 'mental states'. On the contrary, it would be a case of reaching a stage of physiological conditioning where he need no longer bother to remember how.

b) Intelligence and stupidity

We have already encountered the use of 'intelligent' in which it is applied to persons and contrasted with 'stupid'. Although this is not the sense of the word in which remembering how is an intelligent performance (we can remember how to do stupid things as well as clever ones) some further consideration of it may nevertheless throw light upon the relationship between remembering how and remembering that. Intelligence in the laudatory sense is not measured by our ability to remember things but rather by our ability to make good use of the things we remember. Indeed we often contrast intelligence with the mere possession of a good memory. But, as H.H. Price has pointed out, we must be careful not to push the 'contrast' too far.¹

'Without memory' he says 'there would be no primary recognition; without primary recognition, no abstraction, and therefore no basic concepts; and without basic concepts there would be no derivative

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'Thinking and Experience', p.59.

concepts, which are acquired by intellectual operations directed upon these basic ones'. Inventiveness is the mark of the intelligent man. As Ryle says¹ 'He has to meet new objections, interpret new evidence and make connections between elements in the situation which had not previously been co-ordinated. In short he has to innovate...'. But it is his memories which provide the basis for his inventiveness - and indeed it may well be that much of the 'inventiveness' is itself simply the reapplication of certain kinds of memories, the recognition of similarities which are not obvious to less lively minds.

ii. Remembering rules

Insofar as we do work out how to achieve some end, whether this 'working out' be a slow, deliberate performance or a spontaneous realisation which seems to occur along with the action itself, we must in some way classify the situation before us and predict the outcome of our actions accordingly. This, I presume, is what Ryle means by 'the presence of certain sorts of explanatory-cum-predictive assertions'.² And these classifications and predictions certainly involve operations of memory; the recognition of kinds and the memory of cause-effect sequences. Thus discovering how is in part a matter of remembering how - which in this case is very clearly a matter of

¹ 'The Concept of Mind', p.47.

² 'The Concept of Mind', p.25. See also p. 161 (of this essay).

remembering that certain kinds of things behave in certain ways in certain kinds of situations. Our 'inventiveness' rests upon our ability to observe relational similarities in past and present situations and so make predictions about the achievement of our present needs, and the more extensive our memories the greater opportunity we have to make such observations. If we remembered, and appreciated the full predictive implications of, every cause/effect sequence we had ever witnessed we should indeed be well equipped to tackle any problems which confronted us.

I agree with Ryle's assertion¹ 'Often we deplore a person's ignorance of some fact only because we deplore the stupidity of which his ignorance is a consequence'. But, as we have seen, what we praise and what we deplore is a totally different question from what we do and do not consider to be instances of remembering how.

The reason for our disgust is that we are assuming that the person remembers certain facts which constitute premises and yet is incapable of moving from these to an obvious conclusion. As we saw in the previous paragraph, classification and prediction cannot operate without memory; thus we can hold the man to be stupid only on the assumption that his memory is sound. If he were proved to be suffering from amnesia (and therefore ignorant of the 'premises' in question) we should not then think him stupid. Even in normal

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'The Concept of Mind', p.28.

conditions 'I forgot' is often the best defence against a charge of stupidity.

c) Intelligence and ignorance

It would undoubtedly be wrong, a misunderstanding of the language, to equate lack of intelligence with lack of knowledge. A man is not unintelligent because he does not know something he has had no opportunity to learn - nor yet because he has forgotten something he once knew. On the other hand it would be equally wrong to overlook the very real connection, for the purpose of the question we are considering, between intelligent behaviour and knowledge of facts, for the current awareness of, and guidance by, certain facts - those proposed in our 'explanatory-cum-predictive assertions' - is the only factor we have been able to find to differentiate intelligent performances from both automatic and accidental ones.

i. Remembering how as recognition

In chapter III we discovered that 'remembering by doing' involved at least the recognition of our present situation as similar in some vital respect to some past situation. It is not enough that a situation 'looks familiar'; it must look familiar in a particular, informative way. We cannot expel 'remembering that' from the situation simply by concentrating our attention upon the present perception. Thus when my remembering how to go home is manifest simply in my going home, insofar as it is remembering how and not just 'sleep-walking', it is in part dependent upon my knowing,

i.e. remembering, a great many facts of the kind 'this is the street which has led me to such a place - the turning I took on those occasions is just past the gasworks', whether I recite these propositions to myself or not. Intelligence, as it is involved in remembering how, is not a matter of knowing a great many facts, but its exercise is wholly dependent upon knowing the relevant facts.

ii. 'Remember' is transitive

Whilst we do not hold a man to be ignorant because of the things he cannot do, we may be justified in suspecting that he cannot do them because he is ignorant. If a man cannot write down the English for a passage of Greek prose this is more likely to be because of his ignorance of Greek or English than because of an inability to manipulate a pen. And although it might well happen that a man could recite every instruction a good teacher had given him but still not be able to ride a bicycle, his failure could be the result of his ignorance of certain facts which his teacher had been unable to express in words. There are elements in most performances which defy description, at least within the framework of our existing language, but this does not mean that they are in principle indescribable in language. We do use public words for many of our private experiences. (For instance, how else could we separate, as we do, the concepts of misery and melancholy?)

It is a point we should always bear in mind that 'remember' is a transitive verb; when we remember we always remember something.

And when the something we remember is 'how to cycle' the quotation marks must always be implied even if they are not shown. Unless we use 'remember how' simply as a synonym for 'be able' - and this, if my arguments are sound, would render impossible the distinction between intelligent and non-intelligent performances - then it is hard to see what remembering how to do something could amount to unless it involved the occurrent remembering of at least some of the rules, maxims and propositions which may be held to constitute 'how to do it'. How else could we characterise the distinction we are all aware of between 'remembering how' and 'being able'?

4. Conclusions

There should be no further danger of confusion between 'intelligent behaviour' and commendable behaviour (the behaviour of 'intelligent people') and so we can return to the real problem which is:

We are satisfied that many of our performances are intelligently directed towards some specific end in the light of our experience of similar performances in the past. We therefore view them as instances of remembering how. Yet, in performing, we do not generally seem to be relying for guidance upon any memories of past events. We can appreciate the difference between purely automatic responses and intelligent performances, and also between accidental and intentional performances, yet we cannot find by introspection that series of directive memories which is the only differentiating factor we can conceive between them.

The solution to the problem lies, I believe, in: (a) the realisation that every performance includes a great deal of automatic motor-response whether or not the performance counts as an instance of 'remembering how'; (b) a considerable broadening of our view as to what constitutes remembering events.

a) Dispositions to perform and dispositions to remember

i. General applicability of the disposition/occurrence distinction

The point I made in chapter II, that the distinction between disposition and occurrence, though applicable to memory, is not peculiar to memory, is here very important. We develop dispositions (how we do so is the concern of physiologists) both to remember certain experiences and to give certain bodily performances when stimulated in the appropriate ways. In the dispositional sense, therefore, it is possible that I both can perform the bodily activities which are essential to my driving a car and do remember those rules, maxims and propositions which may be classified as 'how to drive a car'.

ii. Joint actualisation of dispositions

While I am sitting at my desk, I may run through in my mind all these rules, maxims and propositions. To do this would be to actualise my disposition to remember how to drive a car. On the other hand I may, on a long, straight, lonely road, sit back at the wheel of a car allowing my mind to wander while my hands and feet respond automatically to the feel of the car beneath me and

the sight of the road ahead, and then I would be actualising my dispositional ability to make the efficient physical manoeuvres which constitute the overt performance.

But, when I am driving through the town, easing the clutch, touching the brake, marking to whom I must give way and who must give way to me, making signals, anticipating traffic jams and avoiding one-way streets (all of which operations come under the general heading of 'driving a car') then, unless I am an extremely practised driver, I am actualising both dispositions together. My performance still includes much that is purely automatic; but it also includes much that is planned and considered, the conscious application of those rules and maxims which constitute 'how to drive'. There is no harm, of course, in our speaking of a single disposition to drive carefully - provided that we bear in mind that driving carefully includes both remembering how and being able, just as working happily includes both working and being happy about it.

When we appreciate that the body can retain the capacity for effective activity just as the mind can retain acquired knowledge, and further, that with the continued repetition of any task what we might call the 'motor-response dispositions' become adequate to account for an ever increasing part of the efficient performance of that task, there is no longer any mystery about those performances which we feel to be both wholly effective and completely 'unconscious'.

There is no reason why they should not be both. What makes these performances seem mysterious is only our insistence upon calling them 'remembering'. And we do this simply because there was once a time when similar performances were remembering, and also, because as overt performances (even when the observer is also the performer), they are indistinguishable from consciously planned performances.

b) The 'event' being recalled

By showing that within an effective performance there are both 'automatic' and 'intelligent' elements, we simplify, but do not solve, the problem. The fact remains that the 'mental factor' of which we are conscious, in even what we now accept as the 'intelligent part' of our behaviour, does not seem to be a series of memories of past events running through our minds, but rather, to use Ryle's phrase, 'certain explanatory-cum-predictive assertions'. Yet how are we able to make these explanatory-cum-predictive assertions except by virtue of being apprised in some occurrent way of past situations and events?

It is true that we can become physiologically conditioned to utter (or sub-vocally speak) certain sounds in response to certain stimuli just as we can become physiologically conditioned to act in certain ways with our hands and feet. In fact we often 'catch ourselves' giving a muttered commentary on our activities and plans as we go about our business. But it is noticeable that on these occasions we are generally engaged in routine tasks which demand

little of our attention, tasks which we frequently do perform quite automatically, like washing up dishes or sorting a pack of cards into order, and the commentary is simply an extension of the automatic performance; it could be said to be 'directing' our activities only if we were to attend separately to it as we might to any independent instructing agent - a gramophone for instance - and obey its dictates. But this re-introduces deliberate intelligent behaviour, the following of the instructions, and the problem breaks out afresh.

It does not seem possible to avoid the conclusion that, insofar as we are actually remembering how to perform some task - are predicting the outcome of our conduct and shaping it accordingly - we must be basing our predictions upon our occurrent remembering of similar tasks performed in the past or on maxims formed in the light of past experience. That is, we must be relying on our occurrent remembering of events in some sense of that expression. We must therefore consider what sense of remembering events this can be.

i. Degrees of determinateness

What constitutes one particular event must always be an arbitrary matter. It can be misleading to talk of remembering an event as though there were certain fixed limits to this achievement as there are to eating an apple. One event is whatever we choose to regard as one event and it may be remembered in more or less detail. My remembering sitting down on this chair a moment ago is no more

remembering an event in any essential way than my remembering coming to this room nearly every day last year. Each memory could be augmented by greater detail and each 'event' could be sub-divided. Further, the temporal location of events is not an essential part of the memory of them.¹ It is possible, therefore, to allow that in remembering how to swim sidestroke I am not actually recalling some specific previous occasion of swimming sidestroke, without being committed to the view that I am not recalling any event which could be described as my swimming sidestroke in the past. I may well be recalling, though not necessarily in verbal propositions, my exercise of the skills and 'sub-skills' involved on an indeterminate number of past occasions, and being guided accordingly in my present performance.

Now, I contend that, unless and until our 'motor-response dispositions' develop to the point where we no longer need to remember how, the effective performance of tasks is dependent upon our occurrent remembering of this kind. And, further, that since there is an obvious thread of connection between all these past performances, the recollection of any of them, with or without specific location in time, can quite properly be described as the memory of an event (or of events - there is no real difference), even though the 'event' in question may spread over a considerable period and be of too in-

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This point was made in chapter III, p.70.

determinate a character to ever be thought of as 'an event' in normal contexts.

ii. Remembering 'states of mind'

It is necessary, in view of current ruling opinion on the question, to say something in support of my claim that these events may be remembered 'though not necessarily in verbal propositions'. In chapter III, I distinguished between remembered propositions and the forms of words which are used to convey them and gave my reasons for believing that we must accept the existence of non-verbal thinking and remembering. The separation of memory-claim from memory in chapter IV and the conclusion that the memory, as distinct from the memory-claim, is of our private experience in perceiving the event, not of the public event itself, shows how a non-verbal memory can play its part in the production of a verbal claim. The memory-claim when it is made must (qua claim) be made in verbal propositions, but there is no reason why the memory on which it is based should contain anything verbal.

Now, in the case of 'remembering how', instead of an uttered (or otherwise formulated) claim we have a deliberate activity. The memory is manifested not in a piece of knowledge but in a piece of purposeful behaviour. And the memory which gives rise to this piece of purposeful behaviour need not itself be a verbal memory. [It may, of course, take the form of a verbal proposition (an ordinary memory-claim), as it tends to in our hesitant 'learning' performances. But here no problem arises.]

Suppose that whilst I am swimming I am aware that a certain muscular movement of my body has produced on previous unspecified occasions a particular thrusting effect through the water. It is very doubtful that this could be expressed precisely enough in words to be of any directive value to me, yet it does not seem at all doubtful that I am remembering a certain relationship which I have observed in the past, and whilst I may not be able to describe this to myself in words I can exemplify it in action. It seems to be a matter of complete indifference whether we say that the actual 'subject of memory' here is an event or a series of events or a belief formulated non-verbally to myself at some past time as the result of my observation of a series of events. The important point is that my failure to make specific memory-claims to myself does not entail that I am not in fact remembering in the occurrent sense.

Thus, whilst Ryle is no doubt right when he says¹ 'A well-trained sailor boy can both tie complex knots and discern whether someone else is tying them correctly or incorrectly, deftly or clumsily. But he is probably incapable of the difficult task of describing in words how the knots should be tied', he is wrong in supposing this to show that the sailor boy is not in fact remembering how the knots should be tied in order to tie them. It shows only that his remembering is not in the form of verbal propositions.

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'The Concept of Mind', p.56.

In the case of this sailor boy, assuming that he is not performing by motor-response alone (which he could be), much of the remembering may well be in the form of imagery. If he is able to perform the task without watching what he is doing, there would be a good case for denying any visual imagery. But not all imagery is visual. There are certain bodily feelings involved in the performance of tasks, and the memory of these feelings, as distinct from the memory of any propositions about them, would be one kind of imagery - kinaesthetic imagery. And he could remember how to tie the knot by rehearsal, as it were, without an actual rope in his hands, and without the recitation of any rules. His remembering could be in a series of visual or kinaesthetic images of the stages of the performance, and he may also twist his hands in a kind of mime, possibly, though not necessarily, accompanied by a stumbling verbal account based on his imagery.

The manner in which we learn a skill must to a great extent determine the way in which we remember it. When we learn by instruction we tend to remember by recitation; when we learn by attempt we tend to remember by imagery, together with half-formed dictums made to ourselves during the attempts. Since most often we learn by a combination of both, our way of remembering will depend largely upon the relative effectiveness for ourselves of the two ways of learning the skill in question. This is why some men can tie bow-ties (usually a very 'conscious performance') only upon themselves,

whilst others can tie them only upon other people or on themselves with the aid of a mirror.

The tasks which we think of ourselves as remembering how to perform are for the most part muscular tasks in the broadest sense, and it is reasonable to suppose that any imagery involved in remembering how to perform them is mainly of the kinaesthetic kind. This fact makes it particularly easy for us to overlook its presence. Thus, in an article entitled 'Remembering' B.S. Benjamin wrote¹ 'Anyone who assigns the memory-image a central role in the analysis of remembering must explain the connection or lack of connection between our rememberings when memory images naturally are likely to occur, as in our memories of places and faces, and those where they are not, as for instance when we remember how to tie a running-bowline...'. Since tactual or kinaesthetic imagery would be very likely to occur in our remembering of how to tie a bowline, once it is allowed that the tying and the remembering are not one and the same thing, it seems clear that Benjamin is regarding memory-images as visual images - which for a very obvious reason play only a minor part in remembering how to perform physical tasks. It should be noted however that not all recent writers have fallen into this trap. E.J. Furlong writes² 'This stress on the visual has given a handle

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'Mind', vol. LXV, 1956, p.317.

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'Imagination', p.70.

to those who for one reason or another are ill-disposed to imagery. Perhaps impotent to visualise themselves they write of "mental images" in any form'. And H.H. Price¹ attributed his own poor performance at golf to his weakness in kinaesthetic imagery-powers.

iii. The simultaneity of act and directive

We are now in a position to answer the argument that if we were occurrently remembering events in the sense described and acting in accordance with the dictates of our memories whenever we performed intelligently, we could not then achieve the smooth continuity which characterises our overt behaviour.²

Let us suppose that I am building a wall, and that my performance is an instance of 'remembering how'. It would clearly be absurd to suggest that I must therefore remember every detail of how to build it before commencing operations. I do not have to 'remember how' and then build - nor yet do I have to remember how to lay a brick and then lay it. It is enough that my remembering keeps, as it were, always one jump ahead of my performance, that each 'task' (and what constitutes one task is what we choose to regard as one) be considered with a degree of determinateness suitable to its complexity and, insofar as it demands direction, planned accordingly in the light of my memory of how it can be accomplished. Many such 'tasks' are wholly contained

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'Thinking and Experience', p.237.

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This argument was put forward in the first section of this chapter. See p. 149.

within other 'tasks'; the merest flickings of the wrist, straightenings, smoothings, settings, may each be regarded as separate tasks. Thus the remembering how need not precede the building of the wall, or the laying of the brick - it may accompany it.

I say 'insofar as it demands direction' because much of the actual performance does not; it is simple motor-response to a physical stimulus. That it may be a learnt ability like walking, and not an inherent ability like breathing, is here quite irrelevant. It is the ability of our bodies to carry on, so to speak, with the job in hand which smooths out and renders continuous our overt performances. Our motor-responses, by filling the gaps between our planned activities, allow our overt performances to continue uninterrupted.¹

iv. The acid-test of remembering how

This completes my account of what it is to remember how to do something. I am not disputing that we can and sometimes do perform with complete efficiency tasks which we once learnt to perform and that, in A.J. Ayer's words,² 'such exercises need not be accompanied by anything that anyone would be even tempted to call a memory-experience'. But I claim that in such cases we are concerned, not with memory in the normal sense of that word, but only with acquired

¹ Compare Russell 'An Outline of Philosophy', p.198 'In talking, words suggest other words, and a man with sufficient verbal associations may be successfully carried along by them for a considerable time.'

² 'The Problem of Knowledge', p.153.

physiological capacities. When those capacities were developed, and whether they might someday collapse, throwing us back upon the resources of our memories, is beside the point. I also claim that notwithstanding this, there is an activity which can properly be called 'remembering how', which is quite distinct from 'being able', and which can occur whether or not we are actually performing the task in question. It is, however, more likely to occur whilst we are performing the task, both because its occurrence may then be demanded and because the performance acts as a stimulus to the memory.

It is intelligible to talk of remembering only when there is something which we remember - and conceivably could forget. If none of the performances people commonly speak of as remembering how fulfilled this requirement my arguments in this chapter would be tantamount to a plea for dropping the expression from the language. But since many of these performances do - in my opinion by far the greatest proportion of them do - my plea is only for the more careful application of the expression, at least in an epistemological enquiry.

Chapter VI

IMAGES - THE SUBJECTS OF IMAGERY

1. Kinds of imagery

a) The meanings of 'image'

I propose to begin this chapter with a brief examination of the uses of the term 'image', an examination which I hope will make apparent the extent and the limitations of the connections between these different uses.

When we speak of the graven image of a god the assumption is that the statue copies or reproduces the physical characteristics of that god, so that by looking at the statue we see what the god is alleged to look like. But the term 'image' is often used to mean a strong resemblance or suggestive likeness rather than an exact likeness. When someone says 'Our Fred is the image of our Arthur' he does not usually mean that he cannot tell them apart. He does mean, however, (though he may, of course, be wrong) that nobody could fail to see the resemblance. 'Image of' is much stronger than simply 'like'. 'Image', in its most basic and general sense, sometimes means an exact copy and sometimes not, but always it means an unmistakable likeness.

A mirror-image or reflection is an exact visual copy, but for the reversal of right and left. (The colour photograph is perhaps the most exact visual copy).¹ But it is not because of its exactness

¹ I am ignoring the fact that both mirror-image and photograph are usually smaller than the subject imaged.

that I take 'mirror-image' to be a special sense of 'image'; a mirror-image is something we can examine, it is itself an observable entity in the ordinary sense. We speak of the statue as 'an image' but it is also, and primarily, a statue, and we see the image of the god, as it were, in it. The mirror-image is nothing but the mirror-image. To speak of a statue as the image of a god is to speak of a relationship between two entities, the god whose existence is assumed and the statue, as when we speak of Fred's being the image of Arthur. But to speak of a mirror-image is not to speak of a relationship, a likeness between a man and something else, his replica; nor yet between a man and the sheet of glass or polished steel, or pool of water, or whatever else the image is 'in'. It is to speak only of the visible image itself. It might be claimed that it is just one way of seeing the object - but it is a mediate way of seeing it, and the mediating entity is not the mirror but the actual image in it.

After-images are 'entities' in the same way as mirror-images - they are things which are there to be seen simply as images. When I close my eyes after looking fixedly at a sunlit window the 'picture' of that window remains before me as though it had been photographed onto my retina. Except by such mechanical means as pressing my eyeballs I can neither remove it nor change it; it is just as much outside my control as is the view of the window itself when my eyes are open. And if the light has been particularly bright the after-image will remain superimposed on my visual field even when my eyes are open, partly obscuring the normal view from a section of that field.

The study of after-images, including the 'reversal' of their colours in some cases and not in others, lies within the province of physiology - but that does not necessarily mean that they are philosophically uninteresting. Being a common and easily identifiable experience, the after-image provides a useful contrast to the memory-image. There may also be a strong connection between after-imagery and eidetic imagery. For eidetic images seem to have both some characteristics normally associated with after-images and some normally associated with memory-images and imagination.

In discussing eidetic imagery I am at a considerable disadvantage, in that I cannot recall having ever experienced it myself, and, must rely, therefore, on the reports of those who have. An eidetic image may occur immediately, or some considerable time, after the perceptual situation which gave rise to it. It resembles an after-image in that it is seemingly 'there, before the eyes', in a way that permits us to study it as we might any external object. It is claimed that an eidetic image can be 'projected' on to a blank surface and can then be examined, much as we might examine a painting or a photograph. Normally it is a faithful reproduction of the scene perceived.

It would seem possible, then, to explain the eidetic image as simply a delayed positive after-image, a mere photograph on the retina, provided that the reproduction always was exact and that the 'picture' remained always wholly outside the control of the 'viewer'. But experimental psychologists suggest that neither of these conditions

is in fact fulfilled. Apparently eidetic images are often found on 'examination' to be imperfect reproductions of the scenes perceived, and the people 'viewing' them can sometimes be induced by suggestion to make them change, or even 'come to life'.¹ If we accept their testimony we must allow that eidetic imagery is not simply a physiological process of 'photographing' like after-imaging. The alternative is to assert that those people who have reported inaccuracies and changes in eidetic images were unable to distinguish the point at which memory-imagery or imagination-imagery came in to augment or replace the eidetic imagery. I find this second alternative very difficult to reconcile with my own experience of memory-images, for these do not seem to be substantives in any sense at all, and would hardly seem likely, therefore, to be confused with the kind of phenomena I understand eidetic images to be. We can, perhaps, draw comfort from the fact that most of the reports of such changes come from young children, and it is notorious that children are sometimes carried away by their imagination. I do not wish to give any definite opinion on the question, firstly, because as I have admitted, I have no experience of eidetic imagery, and secondly, because the eidetic image does not seem to play any vital part in memory. People who do have eidetic images usually allow that they also have other images, distinguishable from these, which they call memory-images.

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See I.M.L. Hunter - 'Memory - Facts and Fallacies', p.146ff.

At this juncture we need only say of memory-images that they are our means of being aware (or our actual awareness) of our past sense-perceptions as such. It is not essential that they be exact reproductions of these past sense-perceptions. Leaving aside for the moment the question whether it is proper to speak of seeing or hearing our memory-images, it is sufficient that our 'having' them recalls to us some past sensory experience of our own, as it were directly, not through the medium of verbal description. We need no command of language in order to have memory-images; on the contrary, psychologists claim to have considerable evidence that the occurrence of memory-imagery diminishes with the development of linguistic habits. Let us say, then, at this stage, that memory-imagery is the direct linkage of our past sense-perceptions with our present awareness of them as past sense-perceptions. The experience of imaging is similar, in a way that seems quite impossible to describe and yet which those of us who habitually remember in images must know, to the sensory experiences of seeing, hearing, and so on, though it does not involve the present use of any sense-organ; there is no reason why a man who has gone blind should not still have visual memory-images. Memory-images, unlike after-images and eidetic images, can often be induced and dismissed at will - though at other times they 'appear' as if from nowhere and seem to linger when we would be rid of them. In this their behaviour is no different from that of any other form of memory.

Sometimes we have images which are not, and which we know full well not to be, of any particular object we have ever experienced by sense-perception. Just as I can have an image of my friend sitting on the bicycle he habitually rides, so I can have an image of the same friend riding a donkey, a thing I have certainly never seen him do. And, as images, the two seem to be different only in their 'subject matter'. I in fact distinguish between them simply because I know one to be a memory-image and the other to be merely a figment of my own imagination; but how I know this is a problem which has exercised the minds of philosophers for a very long time. The extreme difficulty which has always been found in demonstrating how memory-images can be distinguished from imagination-images by their own intrinsic qualities or their 'modes of presentation' is one of the factors which have led so many philosophers to assert that we distinguish them only by their compatibility with other, non-image, memories - and to relegate the memory-image to the status of a mere aide-memoir accordingly. But I myself am quite unprepared to abandon the belief, arising from my own actual experience of in fact being able to distinguish them, that there must be inherent distinguishing marks. I want now to suggest that the failure of so many people to 'put their finger on' these differences is largely the result of a misunderstanding about the kind of difference they are trying to discover.

b) Images of memory and of imagination

i. Is the difference of kind or of degree?

However wild or grotesque our imagination-images may be there is at least some sense in which they arise out of actual past experience. I can visualize my friend on a donkey because, though I have never seen this sight, I have seen my friend and I have seen a donkey. I am not in the position of the Prince in one of Anthony Armstrong's fanciful stories, who, when given a magic wish, wished for a blue rumped gnurgle because he wanted to see what one would look like. Imagination imagery can be likened to those cards with heads and middles and rumps of animals on them that we used to play with as children; the creatures we 'made up' were quite fantastic, but the individual parts did all belong somewhere. In the same way our imagination-images are memory-images - but not of any single past perceptual occasion. To accept them as re-presentations of our own past perceptions would be wrong - but not altogether wrong.

And, conversely, in taking memory-images to be re-presentations of our own past perceptions we are right - but not altogether right. For an image does not have to be 'perfect' to rate as a memory-image; if my memory-image of the friend I lunched with today included a white shirt whereas in fact he wore a blue shirt, this alone would not be grounds for holding that I am not having a memory-image at all but an imagination-image. It would be a memory-image with some of the detail inaccurate, that is, including some detail recalled from a different perceptual occasion from the one I consider myself to be remembering.

Where, then, should we draw the line between memory-images and imagination-images? The answer is, I believe, that we do not need to 'draw a line' at all.

Once we cease to think of memory-images and imagination-images as two distinct kinds of phenomena we can point to at least three different criteria for 'allotting marks' on the side of memory or on the side of imagination - in the act, as it were, of actually having the images. I do not mean that we consciously judge the image to be 'memory-like' or 'imaginationlike', only that there are different factors which prompt us to accept it as memory or as imagination.

ii. Distinguishing features

a. 'Firmness'. There is about my image of my friend on a bicycle a unity and 'firmness' that is lacking from my image of the same friend on a donkey. In the one case there is a single whole, man on bicycle, a single focal point of attention. In the other case there are two separate focal points; it is almost as if I were imaging a man and then imaging a donkey and trying to 'clip them together'. The bicycle image, though it may be sketchy, is still constant and steady. The donkey image, though more detailed (as detailed in fact as I want it to be), tends to be constantly blurring and changing; details come and go and only in the face of my friend does the detail seem to be set and firm.

It could well be that Hume was thinking of this difference when he spoke of the 'vividness' of memory-images as compared with

imagination-images. But 'vivid', as that word is normally used, is certainly not the best description. 'Self-sufficient', 'unitary' and 'constant' are perhaps better terms. I realise that a particular imagination-image may be unitary, self-sufficient or constant, but since we are considering only one means of 'allotting marks', not a rigid distinction of kinds, so long as these qualities are generally characteristic of memory-images and not of imagination-images, the exceptions are not disastrous. And when exceptions do occur their non-conformity can often be explained as something peculiar to a particular case. They might, for instance, be images of images.¹

b. Controllability. Our imagination-images come and go and change quite freely. The donkey beneath my friend can be turned into an elephant, his hair can be turned bright green and made to stand on end; the image is at the disposal of my every whim. As Hume said² 'A man may indulge his fancy in feigning any past scene of adventure'. The odd thing is that Hume then went on to insist that without some 'memory indicator' he would take what he had feigned to be his memory of his own past. Surely the reason we speak of feigning is that we are aware of our own control over what is being postulated. Feigning and shamming are intelligible only on the assumption that the performer knows this is not 'the real thing'.

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See p. 202ff.

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'A Treatise of Human Nature', Bk.1, pt.iii, p.85 of 'Hume's Treatise' - L.A. Selby-Bigge.

Of course I can make the bicycle beneath my friend 'turn into' an elephant - but in doing this I am immediately aware of having 'taken charge of' my image. The bicycle will tend to re-assert itself as soon as I discontinue my deliberate fantasy, and there may even be a sense, which we shall consider later,¹ in which it is 'there' all the time.

c. The 'natural development' of context. Closely connected with 'controllability' is the third criterion, what we might call the natural development or expansion of images. The memory-image I have of a friend on a bicycle leads on naturally to an expanded image which includes the trees and buildings behind him, and to further images of his getting off his bicycle to greet me and of the sound of his voice as he did so. And all this additional imagery has the same 'firmness' and the same 'involuntariness' as the original image.

There are, of course, occasions when I remember so much and can remember no more, when the context simply refuses to 'expand' further - a stage which is bound to be reached eventually. But the feeling of 'expandability' still persists - I seem compelled either to enlarge my image, to expand its context - or else to shift my train of thought to something altogether different. So long as my attention remains, the 'next move' is both demanded and to some extent predetermined. At the conclusion of his book 'Remembering' Bartlett says, 'Always it is

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See p.214.

the material from some specially organised mass which has to be central, and about this the constructions and reconstructions of memory cluster'.¹ This certainly seems to be true of imagery.

The imagination-image does not so much expand as simply change. We have no feeling of predetermination or compulsion; the development, if any, is haphazard and voluntary (unless it follows some pre-arranged pattern of associated ideas).² To quote Bartlett again: 'With constructive imagination this is not so. The central "scheme" is not, so to speak, predetermined by the initial orientation. There is a freer range from setting to setting and from interest to interest'.³ Memory-imagery, on the other hand, is always felt to be an integral part of a greater whole. It 'belongs in context', and this may well be the basis of the 'feeling of familiarity' of which Russell speaks. Certainly this explanation of 'familiarity' would provide an answer to Holland's objection that an imagination-image entertained many times is more familiar than a memory-image of an experience had but once.⁴ The imagination-image, however often it occurs, will not normally develop a contextual setting into which it naturally, almost compulsively, expands.

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'Remembering', p.313.

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Cf 'metaphorical imagery', p.242.

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'Remembering', p.313.

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This objection was raised in chapter II, p. 48.

iii. Memory and imagination 'elements' in imagery

Since I have argued that the difference between memory and imagination imagery is one of degree rather than one of kind, it may be better to speak not of memory-images and imagination-images, but rather of the memory-elements and imagination-elements in imagery. We can then say that, on any given occasion, the memory-elements are those 'parts' of an image which derive from a single past perceptual occasion, whilst the imagination-elements are those 'parts' which derive from past perceptual occasions other than the one we take ourselves to be remembering. Or, at the level of 'uninterpreted images', when everything in an image derives from the same past perceptual occasion it is a memory-image, i.e., composed wholly of memory-elements, and when the content of the image is derived from more than one past perceptual occasion it is potentially either an 'imagination image' or an incorrect memory-image - the part which is incorrect being dependent upon what we subsequently take it to be the image of.

iv. Images of images

Now, there is really no reason why 'remembered experience' should be limited to 'remembered perceptual experience'. Just as I can remember perceiving things so I can remember imagining things. And if my imagining took the form of imagery, my memory of that imagining may well take the form of imagery too. In his article 'The Empiricist Theory of Memory' Holland considers the possibility of someone amusing

himself repeatedly by contemplating an image of Magdalen Tower standing on Magdalen Bridge.¹ Such an image, when first entertained, would be 'taken as' imagination. The memory-elements and imagination-elements would be equally balanced (whether we thought of the image as of the bridge or of the tower) and would be discordant with each other, with a consequent lack of 'firmness'. The image would be completely controllable and detached from any single context. But subsequent occurrences of the same image could be memory-images - memory-images of the imagination image - and the image would tend to become more 'firm' and less controllable. What would still be seen to be the image of a fantasy in the light of other extraneous knowledge, could well, in time, come to have many of the inherent characteristics of an ordinary memory-image. It could not, however, acquire all the characteristics of memory-imagery. For the only 'context' it could acquire would be one which would show it up immediately as the contrived fantasy it is. We could, if we wished, speak of a habit of forming a particular image rather than of the occurrence of memories of a previous image, but the effect would still be the same.

This, incidentally, provides us with at least one possible explanation of the 'fixed idea', the wrong belief to which we return even after we have been shown that it is wrong. I myself got it into

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MIND, Vol. LXIII, 1954, p.468.

my mind at an early age that a certain schoolmaster was cross-eyed (why I cannot say) and so often entertained an image of him with cross-eyes that on meeting him much later I was astonished to find that his eyes were in fact quite straight. Notwithstanding this I still image him with cross-eyes, and only by a considerable effort can I make myself image him otherwise.

v. 'Memory-images' and 'imagination-images' as complementary

I may have a memory-image of my father riding a horse down a country lane and then, just to amuse myself, 'turn the horse into an elephant', and so create an 'imagination-image'. But suppose I then become interested in the elephant. The image may re-orient itself, as it were, about the elephant, so that instead of a country lane there is a Zoological Garden with an elephant being ridden through it - just as I saw it on my last visit. The rider fades and becomes nondescript, and once more I have a memory-image. In this case the imagination has re-kindled a different memory, but sometimes imagination may serve to augment, rather than to distort, the original memory. This is how I am inclined to interpret a private 'experiment' reported by Furlong.¹

He tells how once he groped, with his eyes closed, from his chair to the door in a familiar room. A little later, recalling the experience, he was surprised to find that his memory of it was in

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'A Study in Memory', p.76.

visual imagery. Now, no doubt he had made the same journey many times with his eyes open. What then is more natural than that he should imagine the visual perceptions which would have been involved had he had his eyes open, and take this to be his remembering of the event? For the imagining in question is simply the transposition of true memory-images to another, and essentially similar, occasion.

He himself explains it by saying that what he was remembering was his whole state of mind at the time. But this seems to entail that as he groped he imagined the visual experience he would be having and subsequently remembered these imaginary visual experiences. And whilst this is certainly possible, it does not seem here to be necessary. 'Imagination-imagery' quite often 'fills out' our memories where memory-imagery is weak or altogether lacking; so long as it is correct in essentials we are not likely to be misled by it, though clearly, we could be. Had Furlong claimed from memory that he passed the cat on the way to the door, we should have felt obliged to enquire whether he touched it or only 'saw' it.

c) Classifying memory-images by their organic origins

It is notorious that people who write about imagery often become so preoccupied with visual imagery that they write as if no other forms of imagery existed. I am myself so dominated by visual experience that such examples as spring to my mind are nearly always of the visual kind, and it is as well to remind ourselves as often as possible that memory-images can be of many kinds - as many in fact

as there are kinds of sense experience. I want, therefore, to make it quite clear that whatever I may claim for visual imagery I am claiming equally, where it is not patently inappropriate, for every other kind of imagery as well.

i. Correspondence with sense-organs

It is not necessary here to settle the question of how many different kinds of sense-organs we have. We need only state that whatever can be regarded as one class of organic sensations can give rise to what may be regarded as a corresponding class of images. We have sight and visual imagery, touch and tactual imagery, smell and olfactory imagery, hearing and auditory imagery, taste and gustatory imagery. If we claim that there is a separate kinaesthetic sense, sense of motion and/or sense of heat, we should also claim that there is separate kinaesthetic, motion and/or heat imagery. It is sometimes felt that there is a special problem about images when the corresponding sensations are, as people say, localised. We know the difference between seeing something and having a visual image of it, but could there be the same difference (or the same sort of difference) between feeling something, say, a pinprick, and having a tactual image of it? I can see no reason at all why there should not be. The people who raise this problem are overlooking the fact that what is seen is also 'localised', though not in our own bodies, and if it is possible to have a visual image of an 'external object' without thereby having an hallucination, it is equally possible to have a

tactual image of a pinprick without thereby having an hallucination. The tactual image of the pinprick would not be painful for the same reason as the visual image of a car's headlights is not dazzling. In principle every sensory experience is recallable, and according to the view which I shall develop in this and the following chapters, to recall a sensory experience is to have an image. Recalling a sensory experience is not to be confused with recalling that we had the experience, which may take the form simply of a verbal proposition.

Now, here I want to give a caution about a frequently encountered, and potentially misleading expression - 'verbal imagery'. Words, like images, often function in trains of associated ideas, and, when what we are considering is the association of ideas, words and images are genuine alternatives at the same functional level. Bartlett, for instance, says: 'A person who uses visual cues more readily and frequently than other cues can also, as a rule, use other cues - verbal, kinaesthetic, auditory, and so on - if he is forced or encouraged to do so'.¹ This is quite unexceptionable as it stands within a discussion of memory-cues. But the listing of 'verbal' with 'auditory', 'kinaesthetic' and 'visual' may lead us, if we are not careful, to think of it as 'another of the same kind' in our consideration of imagery - and this would be very wrong.

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'Remembering', p.109.

Again, we find G.F. Stout saying 'There are some people, especially people who are much occupied with abstract thinking, who are inclined to deny that they have mental imagery at all. They are almost or quite unable to visualise objects, and their general power of mentally reviving auditory or tactile experiences may also be rudimentary. The images which with them mark the successive steps in a train of ideas are mainly or wholly verbal'.¹ This too is perfectly all right - so long as we bear in mind that these 'verbal images' are images of words and are in fact either visual or auditory or kinaesthetic images. 'Verbal imagery' belongs at the classificatory level of 'tree imagery' or 'people imagery' - it is not a mode of imagery; it is a class of subjects of imagery.

ii. Joint imagery

Just as perceptual experience can involve a number of different sense-organs, so the recall of that experience can involve a number of different kinds of imagery. My seeing an apple does not prevent my simultaneously tasting it, smelling it, feeling its surface or hearing it when I tap it to test its hardness. And my subsequent visual imagery of it need not in any way conflict with my tactual, olefactory, auditory or gustatory imagery of it. As I.M.L. Hunter writes² 'Not only may we see again the high green hills, the blue sky,

¹ 'A Manual of Psychology', p.149.

² 'Memory - Facts and Fallacies', p.135.

the light-flecked waves breaking on the rocky shore, but we may also hear again the cries of the sea-birds and the sound of the ship's hooter. We may smell again the odour of the wrack on the shore and the perfume of the rose in our lapel. We may taste the chocolate we ate on that day, and feel again the warmth of the sun in our faces, our movements in walking along the heaving deck, and the sinking experience of oncoming seasickness'. And, of course, it is not necessary that we have these experiences one at a time.

The somewhat lyrical style of Hunter's example draws attention to the richness of image-memory as compared with the somewhat sterile memory of proposition. Only in imagery can we 're-live' a past perceptual experience, and it is not surprising that those of us who are much given to imaging regard people who cannot or do not image, if indeed there really are such people, as greatly to be pitied.

2. Imageability

a) What is imageable?

What sort of things are images of? I can have an image of a tree or of the smell of a railway train, or of a sentence if it was written or heard or spoken, but it just would not make sense to talk of an image of a proposition or of a fact. I have said that to have an image is to recall a sensory experience. We must consider, therefore, what class or classes of 'objects' we can be said to experience by or with our senses.

i. Sensible qualities

Sensible qualities are obvious candidates, but we must be very careful not to confuse image and concept. To say that I have a sensation or an image of blue is to say that I have a sensation or an image as of a blue surface or expanse. It may be that in recalling the colour of the sky on a particular day I have a memory image which includes nothing but a blue expanse of no particular size and shape, but it still is the image of that particular blue of that particular sky. I may be able to have a general idea or concept of blueness but I cannot have a general image of blueness¹ (for what shade of blue would this be?), though I may have a series of images of different shades of blue. It is possible to image any particular sensible quality, but to do so is always to image the sensible quality of something, the appearance (or part of the appearance) presented by something.

ii. Appearances

By 'an appearance' I mean a certain combination of sensible qualities in a certain relationship to each other as presented to an observer. So defined it follows logically that whenever we perceive a thing we sense an appearance. R.M. Chisholm has pointed out with great clarity that from 'He sees a boat' we may infer 'A boat appears in some way to him' or 'A boat presents him with an appearance', but not 'He

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Cf. chapter VII, p. 265.

sees an appearance'.¹ However, to make the distinction, which I believe to be a very necessary one, between seeing, a perceptual experience which involves the use of our eyes and the classification or identification of what is presented to them, and mere visual sensing, the physiological reaction to a diversity of light and colour, to use Berkeley's phrase, at a pre-cognitive level, we cannot do better than to state that when the boat presents an appearance to me I see the boat by virtue of sensing that appearance. My mental reaction is, of course, to a boat, not to the appearance of the boat, in normal perceptual cases. And later, when I image what I previously sensed, my mental reaction is, on most occasions, to a remembered boat, not to a remembered appearance of a boat.

This may seem to obliterate the distinction I have made between the thing and its appearance, but it does not. There are three important differences:

- (1) The boat goes on in time; it is a thing in the world - the appearance is simply the momentary experience of a single observer or group of observers.
- (2) The boat has many other sensible qualities which we know about but which do not enter into the appearance. Therefore if these enter into the memory they must do so by means other than imagery of the event or occasion in question.

¹ 'Perceiving', p.151. See also R. Wollheim 'The Difference between Sensing and Observing', ARISTOTELIAN Soc., Supplementary Volume XXVIII, 1954, 'Belief and Will', p.219ff.

(3) The boat is what it is; the appearance is whatever we take it to be. So that if the appearance were such as to suggest to us a whale rather than a boat, then our interpreting the memory-image as of a whale would reflect well, not badly, upon our imagery.

Since I have defined 'an appearance' as 'a certain combination of sensible qualities in a fixed relationship' it is necessary to say something of the imageability of relations. Whilst what we image must 'carry relationships within it', it is important to be clear that, just as an imaged quality must be a particular instance of that quality, so an imaged relation must be a particular instance of that relation. To have an idea of the relationship itself is always to have an abstract idea or concept, and belongs to an intellectual stage involving interpretation and classification.

iii. The 'total momentary experience'

My reference to the appearance as a momentary experience may call to mind a phrase used by Russell, 'the total momentary experience'. He defines the total momentary experience as any compresent set of mental constituents forming for the man who experiences them a single unit.¹ But it is not clear to me whether he means a compresent set of sensory experiences or of any experiences at all. If he means the former, then a 'total momentary experience' would be what I have called an appearance (though the appearance, as recalled, may be of

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'Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits', p.315.

any part of the total momentary experience). But if he means the latter, then the total momentary experience may include elements - memories, judgments, thoughts, emotions - which are neither sensible nor imageable in the ordinary way. Only that which is presented to us via our sense-organs is recallable by us in imagery, as distinct from being recallable with the aid of imagery.

iv. Are images of any one sense mutually exclusive?

It would be generally allowed that, as sensations of the different sense-organs do not exclude each other, neither do their images. But it seems to have been widely assumed, on the other hand, that sensations of any one organic type come necessarily one at a time, and therefore so must images. I can see no justification for such an assumption. It may well be that this is a case where pre-occupation with the peculiarities of sight has led to error.

We can smell several smells, taste several flavours, hear several sounds, at the same time; and I see no good reason why anyone should claim that on such occasions our experience is always of one composite smell, sound or taste. Now, but for the accidental fact that our eyes look the same way - if for instance they were so spaced that their fields did not overlap - we would be able to see two views at the same time, not one superimposed on the other but two quite distinct views. And visual imaging is not an operation we perform with our eyes or any other sense-organ. There seems, therefore, to be no logical reason why we should not experience

several totally different visual images simultaneously. There may, of course, be empirical reasons why we do not generally do so. Even where there are 'external stimuli' it is difficult to give our attention to two distinct sounds at one time, and in imagery there are no 'external stimuli'. Nevertheless, we cannot deny the empirical possibility of the simultaneous occurrence of two or more images. I could not attach any sense to an assertion that we may be having images but not (to any extent) attending to them. Having images implies some degree of attention, but divided attention is by no means an unknown experience. What, for instance, prompts us to 'correct' an image? A.D. Woozley gives an account of his visual memory-image of a cricket umpire, and says¹ 'Even while having the image, I am sure that the bow-tie, the shirt, and the coat are right, I am sure that the trousers are wrong, and about the shoes I have no very clear idea at all'. It could be that he had an independent propositional memory that the trousers were, say, striped, whereas those in the image were checked. But Woozley does not give this explanation - he seems in fact specifically to discount it - and certainly such situations do seem to arise in the absence of any relevant propositional memories. If we grant the possibility of different simultaneous visual images we have immediately one possible explanation. In chapter IV, I claimed that in all negative memory situations there is a positive

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'Theory of Knowledge', p.61.

element. In the case of imagery not supported by any propositional memories that positive element may well take the form of other, fainter, co-existent memory-images, which, though not 'replacing' the image under consideration, show wherein it is wrong.

The problem, how an image can persist and nevertheless be known to be inaccurate, has puzzled philosophers for a long time. I have suggested one explanation - that an 'imagination-image' known as such can become habitual¹ - but clearly this would not meet all cases. In 'The Problems of Philosophy' Russell wrote 'We are certainly able, to some extent, to compare an image with the object remembered, so that we often know, within somewhat wide limits, how far our image is accurate; but this would be impossible unless the object, as opposed to the image, were in some way before the mind'.² There is obviously something very queer about this suggestion. How could any one have an object 'before the mind' except by having imagery? He could have a description of the object in the mind, but this is a different thing. It seems that Russell realised this, for, some fifteen years later he wrote:³ 'Suppose you call up an image of Waterloo Bridge, and you are convinced that it is like what you see when you look at Waterloo Bridge. It would seem natural to say that

¹ See p. 203.

² 'The Problems of Philosophy', p.180.

³ 'An Outline of Philosophy', p.189.

you know the likeness because you remember Waterloo Bridge. But remembering is often held to involve, as an essential element, the occurrence of an image which is regarded as referring to a prototype. Unless you can remember without images, it is difficult to see how you can be sure that images resemble prototypes. I think that in fact you cannot be sure, unless you can find some indirect means of comparison. You might, for example, have photographs of Waterloo Bridge...'. But the fact is that very often we are sure, and rightly so. And it could be that our certainty is based upon a comparison - the comparison of many simultaneous images of slightly different appearances presented by the bridge, all of which support and confirm each other.

I cannot assert, as a statement about my own experience, that I do have many different visual images simultaneously, because, quite frankly, I have simply found myself incapable of putting the hypothesis to an empirical test - my powers of introspection have failed me. But I do not, therefore, discount the possibility that I may have.

b) Images and sensations

i. Their similarities

I have spoken of the causal relationship between organic sensing and 'mental imaging' in a way which assumes the two to be so utterly distinct that no confusion could possibly arise as to which was which. But am I justified in making this assumption? An hallucination is precisely the taking of the one to be the other. And, even under

normal conditions, it is sometimes impossible for us to say whether we really heard or just imagined the faint noise in the next room, whether we really saw or just imagined the flash of light on the horizon. Few philosophers have ever faced up to the fact that what we call images are very like what we call sensations. Hume spoke of the greater 'liveliness' of sensations; but when we attempt to define this 'liveliness' we are ultimately reduced to saying that it is the distinguishing feature between sensations and images. There can be little doubt that Hume realised this, but it did not perturb him greatly because - 'Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking'.¹ Yet every one of himself will readily perceive the difference between a square and a triangle - but in doing so he does not perceive any distinction between the individual straight lines which make up the square and those which make up the triangle. It is hard to find any way to describe images other than as a 're-seeing' or 're-hearing' of some event, and when we are asked wherein this differs from an actual re-seeing or re-hearing what can we say except that the event is not really before us? When the next question is asked, 'How do you know it is not really before you?', we see the trap and are at a loss for a reply. For this reason I find quite unsatisfactory Russell's

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'A Treatise of Human Nature', Bk.1, Part 1, Sect. 1, p.1 of 'Hume's Treatise' - L.A. Selby-Bigge.

conclusion that the distinguishing feature by which we tell sensations from images is that the former arise wholly from external stimuli whilst the latter arise from internal stimuli also.¹ He is doing what Hume also did (though Hume would most likely have denied this) - providing formal, i.e. verbal, definitions on the assumption that the phenomena to be defined are already known to us, that we already have some means of distinguishing between internal and external stimuli. But such means could exist only by virtue of an inherent detectable difference between the experiences we call sensing and imaging in an overwhelming majority of cases.

ii. Their differences

I find it strange that recent philosophers have paid so little attention to the one really outstanding difference between images and sensations, although it was suggested by Ward² and stressed by G.F. Stout.³ It is that images never compete with sensations. My image of a red sky neither obliterates nor becomes superimposed upon my view of the blue sky. The two may 'exist' at the same time quite independently of each other. And whilst I can, if I wish, change my image from red to green, the blue of the actual sky remains steadily before me quite outside my control. I can look away, but

¹ 'The Analysis of Mind', p.145ff.

² 'Psychological Principles', p.171ff.

³ 'A Manual of Psychology', p.148.

so long as I keep my eyes directed upon it the sensation of blue persists. Now surely this persistence is the feature which distinguishes sensing from imaging. When we say that the sky is 'actually there' we are saying (at least) that there is a continuity of stimulus which cannot be rejected; it forces itself upon our attention whether we wish it or not. This is why the sudden sound or flash of light does not have the same distinctive character; we feel obliged to ask our companions whether they too heard or saw it. This is also why, if one particular image so monopolised a man's attention as to exclude from it even present external stimuli, he would be liable to hallucination.

If hallucination were a common experience we might well reach a stage where we were able to distinguish our sensations (and thereby the 'external world') from our imaginings only by constantly checking our experience against the testimony of other people. If groups of people suffered the same hallucination together then it seems doubtful whether they could ever finally decide whether the thing they 'witnessed' really happened. On the one hand there would be the inductive improbability, and on the other hand the confirming testimony. But in fact (and this is a very important fact), hallucinations are in any case very rare, and then almost invariably confined to a single person. It is possible for us, therefore, to write them off as odd exceptions for which psychological explanations must

be sought and coin the special name 'hallucination' to cover them.¹

My claim is that there is simply no need to seek any distinguishing feature between sensing and imaging other than the compulsive continuity of the one which is lacking from the other. This alone enables us to divide the real and present from the imagined and remembered, to develop a concept of what is 'normal', and to frame definitions by which we can decide, after the event, that certain cases are not normal.

iii. Are images fallible?

Thus we do in fact distinguish our imaging from our sensing, not by their respective 'subjects', nor yet by any difference inherent in a single experience itself, but rather by a difference found in a sequence of experiences. In the final chapter of this essay I shall accept the conclusion that what we call a sensation simply is an image, but one stimulated by external causes and thereby rendered 'persistent'. Now, is it reasonable to make this reduction and at the same time to go on talking, as I have done very freely, about wrong or inaccurate imagery? For it does not seem to make sense to talk of a sensation being wrong; it is simply what it is. Certainly

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There have been cases of strange 'appearances' to masses of people - some of the 'miracles' for example - which could not be explained away as mass hypnotism. And in these cases we simply do not know what to say; it must remain an open question whether the event 'really happened' or was hallucinatory.

we can misinterpret our sensations, and in the same way we can misinterpret our images. But the fault then lies not in them but in ourselves. And if it is meaningless to speak of a sensation's being wrong, it is equally meaningless to speak of its being right.

H.H. Price makes this point very clearly in reference to 'primary recognition', recognition at what we might call the sensory level.

'Shall we say then that primary recognition is infallible, or as near to infallibility as we can get? This might be misleading, because it might suggest that mistaken primary recognitions are theoretically possible, though by a fortunate dispensation of Providence they never in fact occur. It will be better, perhaps, to say that primary recognition is non-fallible, because the notion of fallibility does not apply to it'.¹

Against this view Russell has argued that there is such a thing as error at a pre-intellectual level. When we are stimulated to action, albeit in a purely motor-responsive manner, by some sensory occurrence, then if that action is inappropriate there is error. 'There is error when a bird flies against a pane of glass which it does not see'.² But surely this is very much a re-constructed error. We can say that the bird did the wrong thing; but can we say that it did a foolish thing? Error presupposes some sort of option. We might say that the bird behaved as if it thought there was no obstruction, but surely it would

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'Thinking and Experience', p.86.

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'Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits', p.201.

be truer to say that the bird did not behave as though it thought there were an obstruction. To attribute error to the bird we should have to claim that it did see the obstruction but believed that it did not - which is simply absurd unless we are using 'see' in two quite different ways - once as 'visually sense' and the other time as 'perceive'.

But, allowing that 'sensations' are non-fallible, does it follow that all imagery is non-fallible in the same way? It may perhaps be felt that, since an image is already a re-presentation, it comes into being, so to speak, with a criterion of accuracy that cannot apply to a direct sensory presentation. But the 'imagination-image' is wholly composed of misplaced or ill-assorted memory-images, and that misplacement or ill-assortment is itself a form of initial error - only provided that the image is taken to be unitary, i.e. provided we regard it as the image of some specific past occasion, not as the assortment of images from different occasions which it in fact is.

To this extent, at least, there must be interpretation for the question of error to arise; and wherever there is interpretation there is the possibility of re-interpretation.

The only circumstances, then, under which we could hold the imagery itself to be wrong or false, would be if something were presented to us in imagery without any basis in past perceptual

experience. Thus, granted the single assumption that all mental imagery is basically the re-presentation of past sense experiences, however jumbled these experiences may be in their sequences and complexities, then all imagery is non-fallible in the same sense as sensation is non-fallible.

Chapter VII

IMAGES (Cont'd) - THE FUNCTION OF IMAGERY

1. Are images inspectables?

In chapter VI we were principally concerned with what imagery is of; we must now consider what imagery is. It is taken very much for granted in some quarters that the substantive term 'image' is only a courtesy title. I.M.L. Hunter, for example, writes: 'Strictly speaking we ought not to talk of the image of a scene but rather of imaging the scene or experiencing the scene in the absence of any appropriate external stimulus such as exists in perceiving. In the interests of easy expression, we may talk of images as things instead of as processes provided we always bear in mind that such language is more metaphorical than precise'.¹

Whilst I certainly agree with the view he expresses, I cannot agree with his manner of expressing it, as though it were an obvious truth which needed no supporting argument. A great many empiricist epistemologists still talk of images in 'entity' terms without any apology, and one authority of considerable weight, H.H. Price, has specifically defended their right to do so.

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'Memory - Facts and Fallacies', p.137.

a) Price's defence of 'images'

In 'Thinking and Experience'¹ Price specifically rejects the view that there is imaging but there are not images, that the relationship is two termed, between the public thing imaged and the private act of imaging without any intermediate 'entity' being involved. Although he admits that there could be a danger of being misled by the substantive term into thinking of an image as 'a persistent intra-mental thing or continuent', he holds this danger to be so slight as to be of no account, and he counter-charges that the upholders of the 'two term' view 'do not scruple to talk about words as if they were entities. If they insist that there are no images, but only imaging, ought they not equally to insist that there are no words, but only speaking and writing? Indeed a token word is far less "like an entity" than an occurrent image is'.²

But the two cases are parallel only on the assumption which Price himself makes that images are symbols. When we talk about words we are talking about symbols - furthermore, about publicly observable symbols, e.g. sounds and marks on paper. My seeing or hearing the word 'Napoleon' may prompt me to think of Napoleon. But my having an image of Napoleon already is my thinking of Napoleon (even though I may not name or otherwise identify him). I am not, of course, claiming that I

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'Thinking and Experience', p.247 ff.

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'Thinking and Experience', p.248 (his italics).

cannot think about Napoleon without having an image of him - clearly this would be possible. I am claiming only that having an image is itself one way of thinking about him, which merely reading or hearing his name certainly is not.

We are all agreed that imaging is not a public procedure. But since it must, in any case, involve some private mental performance (which is quite clearly understandable) why need it also involve some kind of private mental entity (which is very difficult indeed to understand). To think and to have thoughts is exactly the same thing. The thoughts are not 'there' to be thought about. And when I remember an event in propositions I do not remember those propositions in propositions. Why, then, when I remember an event in imagery, should what I am imaging be an image of the past event rather than the past event itself? The usual reply: 'Because that event is no longer existent', is entirely pointless. If it were existent we should perceive it, not image it. What is now existent is the 'act of imaging'. And it is the kind of 'act' which can be directed only to past, not to present, objects.

Imagery is, in fact, simply one way of remembering things; the way of remembering which is applicable to perceived appearances. It is not something that helps us to remember things the way that notes in our diaries do. I agree that it is more natural to think of an image which eludes us when we want it and obtrudes itself when we do not, than to think of an inability to control our imaging, but

this simply reflects the natural tendency we have to 'substantify' our activities, especially those activities which seem to be involuntary.¹ It is just as natural for us, in the same way, to think of a nervous tic in the leg rather than of an inability to control our legs. And our thinking this way does not make a nervous tic in my leg the same kind of thing (only invisible in some way) as a sheep-tick in my leg.

'Modern philosophers', Price says, 'are never tired of telling us that mental images are not at all like pictures. But they are'.² He is quite right, they are - but only in the way that perceived views are like pictures; likeness is a reciprocal relationship and pictures are like mental images. Having a mental image is in many ways very like looking at a picture, but it is a good deal more like looking at the 'real thing'. And it certainly is not like looking through a picture at the scene it represents.

It is comforting to turn from the work of those philosophers who treat imagery as little more than an amusing pastime for the simple-minded to an unequivocal assertion like that by Furlong: 'We do also visualize, and when we visualize there is something presented to us,

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It is noticeable that we are more inclined to talk of 'imagining a flying elephant' than of 'having an image of a flying elephant' and we say 'I just can't imagine it, rather than 'the image of it eludes me'.

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'Thinking and Experience', p.249.

something having the properties we have stated, and this is an image'.¹ But why 'presented'? Why not simply 'There is something present to our minds (though not to our senses); and when this occurs we are imaging'? It is clearly not within my competence to deny any man's account of his own experience. And so I must accept that H.H. Price 'cannot help noticing that in imaging we seem to be confronted with something, to have something over against us or presented to us - and something other than the material object or physical event, real or fictitious, which we are trying to envisage',² though I might well ask how he distinguishes ordinary memory-imagery from eidetic imagery. I can only assert that this is not my own experience, nor that of other people I have questioned on the subject, and attempt to show that, though some of our memory-performances do demand that there is imagery, none of them demand the existence of any such 'extra entities' as images are sometimes held to be.

b) Inspecting and 'reading off'

The 'three term' view of imagery arises from the assumption that we observe or inspect our images, as we might a newspaper, in order to gain factual information from them about the sensible appearances of things seen in the past. Russell seems to be making this assumption when he writes:³ 'Suppose, for instance, you want to remember whether,

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'Imagination', p.81.

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'Thinking and Experience', p.248.

3

'An Outline of Philosophy', p.207.

in a certain room, the window is to the right or the left of the door as viewed from the fireplace. You can observe your image of the room, consisting (inter-alia) of an image of the door and an image of the window standing (if your recollection is correct) in the same relation as when you were actually seeing the room'. Now, I do not want to deny that imagery can remind us of, or even, in some cases, enable us to discover, the spatial relationships which existed between the things we have observed. What I do deny, and what Russell seems to be suggesting, is the existence of two distinct 'stages' in the memory of the room's appearance: the 'balling up' of a 'picture' of the room, and the inspection of that 'picture' in order to ascertain how the room looked.

An image is not something we carry about with us like a map (though the capacity to have a certain image may well be part of our present physiological make-up); we actually have the image only insofar as we are remembering the appearance in question. I do not mean that we must first remember and then have the image. I mean that, since what we are remembering is an appearance, our remembering of it is in imagery; by imaging the room we are remembering its former appearance, which includes the relative visual positions of the window and the door. So that what we are observing is the appearance of the room with the window and the door, not an image or replica of it. Only 'observe' is not the right word here, because the things we observe are present to our senses, they are 'really there'.

The word we want is 'remember'; and in this case the remembering is in imagery.

I do not deny that if we genuinely could not remember the relative positions of the door and the window, imagery may help us to do so. We might, for instance, 'call up' images of various alternative window/door relationships, and one of these 'called-up images' might then develop the characteristics of a memory-image, become more 'firm' and harder to control, and tend to expand in context.¹ But all we are doing here is imagining in imagery in order to stimulate ourselves into remembering in imagery. Having the memory-image, if and when we did have it, would again be remembering.

I am convinced that we cannot, as it were, get anything from an image that we have not already put into it. And our ways of 'putting something into it' are by imagining and remembering. We can, of course, interpret our images; we can draw inferences about factual relationships from appearances presented in imagery which we did not draw when those appearances were presented to perception, or which we did draw but have subsequently forgotten. And to this extent we do, in a metaphorical sense, 'read off' information from our images. But this 'reading off' can only be some further interpretation of what we already are remembering - not an addition to it.

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The 'memory characteristics' of imagery, as described in chapter VI, p. 198ff.

Furlong considers the case of a gate of which we had noticed the colour but not the number of bars. In the subsequent image of it, the colour and general shape are clear and distinct, yet, though the gate as imaged is barred, it does not have any definite number of bars, only a barred 'look'. And he says:¹ 'If we are in any way acquainted with the past when we remember, then it is hard to see why...we cannot read off the number of bars in the gate, as we could have done on the original occasion'. But, in the first place, to be acquainted with the past is not to be in the past. And, in the second place, the past with which we are acquainted is our own past experience, and this happens to have been limited to observing the general 'look' of the gate. People would be far less puzzled by the 'vagueness and sketchiness' of memory-imagery if they realised how very 'vague and sketchy' most of our sense-perceptions are. When I look at a corrugated iron roof I am aware that I am seeing 'stripes', but I am certainly not aware of the number of these. To ascertain their number I must move my eyes along the roof, inspecting the 'stripes' one by one. And this is precisely what I can never do with my memory-image of the corrugated roof. Our imagery can contain, at most, only that degree of detail that the appearance re-presented in it contained. Thus we can 'read off' an image only such information as it would have been possible to have 'seen at a glance' at the time of the perception.

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'A Study in Memory', p.38.

This may be more than was in fact 'seen at a glance'. The 'look' of a three-barred gate is quite distinctive, and so the fact that a gate was three-barred could be learned from the memory of that 'look' (the memory-image) even though we had not remarked this fact when we saw the gate, or, having remarked it, had subsequently forgotten it. But, for most people, this would not be so with a twelve-barred gate. So there is a sense in which we 'notice' the three-barred character of the gate although we do not actually count the bars, whereas it is not possible to 'notice' a twelve-barred character in this way. Noticing the twelve-barred character, as distinct from the multi-barred 'look', necessarily involves counting the bars.

2. Imagery and recognition

We sometimes speak of recognising images, and also of recognising by means of imagery. Both these are suggestive of an 'entity' view of imagery, and, in the light of my argument that images are our memories of the appearances previously presented by events and things, but not extra inspectable 'entities', we must now consider whether, and in what sense: (1) we recognise images, and (2) we recognise by imagery.

a) Recognising images

i. Recognition in absence

I have a visual image which I recognise to be of the man who lives in the flat below mine. What does this amount to? I have a certain image, i.e. remember a certain appearance. The image is 'involuntary', 'firm' and 'unitary'; it is a memory-image. It is of

the upper half of a man, and this is not something I work out or infer; in having the image I am conscious that I am imaging a man whose appearance is familiar to me. I may then wonder 'Who is this man?', which generally amounts to 'Where and when did I see this man?' And, as the result either of a 'broadening' of the image or of the stimulation of certain propositional memories, the answer comes to me: 'Yesterday, coming out of the flat downstairs'. The 'recognition' may come immediately, or it may take time, or it may not come at all. It may be incomplete; I may, for instance, remember where I saw him but not when.

This all seems exactly similar to what would have happened had I passed him in the street instead of having an image of him - except, it might be objected - that what is being recognised is an image and not a man. But why should this objection be made? In both cases the person I am identifying is the man who lives in the flat below mine. The only difference is that one time he is within my sight, the other time he is not. If we are to call one of these cases recognising an image (which amounts, on the view I have expressed, to recognising an imaging), then, what are we to say of the cases where what is recognised is an image or imaging? I might, for instance, amuse myself by imaging an elephant with wings, and be aware as I do so that I have produced a similar image on a previous occasion. Here I am recognising an image.

ii. 'Recognising that'

Suppose we draw a distinction between recognising and 'recognising that'; in recognising the man in the street I also recognise that he is the man who came out of the flat below mine yesterday. We might then say that in having the image I recognise that it is of this particular man.

I do not think that such a distinction would help us because it simply robs 'recognise' of any special force, and in any case it is wholly arbitrary. For what is my original recognition of the man but the recognition that I have encountered him before? And wherein is this different from the initial familiarity of my memory-image? If we maintain that recognising a man is something prior to any 'recognition that' about him, then, to be consistent, we would have to allow that knowing an image to be a memory-image is a basic recognition of this kind. And since it is not the recognition of an image, it could only be the recognition of the subject imaged.

It seems, then, that we can recognise images if we have had them or others very like them before - but only in the sense that we may recognise any of our performances when we have performed previously in the same way. We may also, if we wish, speak of recognising things and events in their absence by means of imagery. But to do so is to destroy such distinction as there may be between 'cognise' and 'recognise', and it is much less confusing to talk simply of remembering things and also remembering further propositions about them.

We must now consider the part played by imagery (if any) in recognising things in their presence.

b) Imagery in recognition

i. The need for comparison

In chapter III, I claimed that recognition implies some form of comparison between present and past. When I say 'This is the dog that bit me' or 'This is the same kind of car as my fathers's' I must be simultaneously aware, in some way, of both present and past instances. Now, as we have seen,¹ present sensations and memory-images do not compete, so that a simple and obvious explanation of recognition is that an appearance presented to us is found to be like an appearance we remember, that is, an image we are having of a certain past perceptual situation.

The catch in this simple explanation is that it does not seem to accord with our common experience. In most of the cases which we would tend to regard as recognition we simply name things or act in some other manner appropriate to them. This does not mean, however, that the 'explanation' must immediately be abandoned. We discovered in chapter V that a great deal of our activity can be accounted for in terms of developed motor-capacities to respond appropriately to given stimuli; and this applies to the great bulk of our recognitions and recognitional behaviour in our daily lives, including, incidentally, our 'recognitions in absence'.

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See chapter VI, p. 208.

And what of those cases where recognition is not immediate?

Quite often we pause and ponder before deciding that this wool is the same colour as the socks our wives are knitting for us, or that the cat outside the window is not our neighbour's after all. And here, although we could in some cases be reciting to ourselves descriptive catalogues which we check against the present object,¹ there seems little doubt that, sometimes at least, we are comparing the perceived object with a past object remembered in imagery in exactly the way suggested.

Now, if we do in fact behave in this way when recognition is considered or deliberate, there is at least a good case for suggesting that this is the basic mode of recognition which renders possible the development of language habits and other 'motor-capacities'. I find it surprising, therefore, that Price refers to this theory as an 'extreme imagist view' and doubts whether anyone has in fact ever held it.²

ii. The infinite regress argument

Price supports his condemnation of the theory with a claim that it is logically impossible for recognition ever to 'depend upon' the presence of imagery. He argues that when we recognise, say, aircraft by means of a silhouette chart, the identification is valid only because we have independent grounds for believing the chart to provide

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This possibility is considered later in this chapter, p.249ff.

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See 'Thinking and Experience', p.277.

accurate models. But if our exemplars are simply images in our own minds no such independent grounds for accepting them are possible. Their acceptability as 'models' must depend, then, upon their being themselves recognised as 'true copies' of the objects we are remembering. And if recognition demands the existence of a prior image for comparison, their recognition could be achieved only by comparison with some pre-image, and so on ad infinitum.

Now, on the view of imagery which I have put forward the 'regress' cannot ever get started. For there can be no question of 'checking the copy'; the imagery is the memory of the past perceptual situation itself. In chapter VI we discussed the manner in which, and the extent to which, we can know it to be a past perceptual situation and not just a 'piece of imagination'.¹ It is true that we can be mistaken about what it is we are imaging. And, equally, we can be mistaken in our recognitions. Price seems to overlook this, to talk as though our 'right to recognise' were somehow a 'logical right', and clearly it is not; we have all had the embarrassing experience of 'recognising' somebody and finding that he is a total stranger. But so long as recognition (or what we take to be recognition) is a two-termed relationship between a present object and a remembered past object, although there is always the possibility of error, there can be no question of an infinite regress. As I have pointed out, objects

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See p. 198ff.

may be 'recognised' when we image, but only under special circumstances do we ever recognise images, i.e., when we recognise them as previous images, not as previous perceptions.

iii. Image dispositions

I am not here claiming that we must accept an 'imagist theory of recognition'. Our behaviour could be accounted for without it - I have admitted that most of our everyday recognition is simple motor-response and there is no logical reason why the motor-response dispositions, the capacities we have for recognising things in this immediate sense, should not have developed like any other purely physiological capacities. But I do claim that it is not a silly theory. It appears to be so only when it is taken in conjunction with the 'entity' view of imagery. I also claim that most people are capable of what I have called 'considered recognitions' and that in such cases we seem bound to admit that they are in fact comparing a remembered appearance with a presented appearance. The final decision that something is, or is not, the same shade of colour as something else was, could be made only in the light of a knowledge of the past appearance as well as the present one. Price allows that 'Recognition is only possible to a being with the capacity of retentiveness, whatever the right analysis of that capacity may be',¹ and in this case the only analysis which can meet the demands of the situation is a dispositional knowledge of

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'Thinking and Experience', p.58 (his italics).

the appearance. And if I have a dispositional knowledge of an appearance it is always at least empirically possible that I shall have a memory-image of that appearance. From the definition I have given of imagery as the direct memory of appearances it follows logically that a capacity to recognise from a direct appearance is also a capacity to have the appropriate memory-image. For the dispositional knowledge of an appearance can only be the dispositional memory of that appearance. Thus a dispositional ability to recognise A in its presence in the non-motor-responsive sense entails a dispositional ability to image A in its absence.

In stressing the fundamental importance of recognition, Price says: 'Having made my generalisation, having learned to expect milk (in my actions at least) whenever tea is observed, I cannot apply what I have learned or use it as a guide to my future behaviour, unless I can also recognise further instances of tea when I meet them; even though I may be as incapable of conceiving tea in abstracto, as the cat is in Locke's opinion'.¹ Now, if we do perceive something in abstracto then we may be able to recognise an instance of it, as it were, by description - much as the aeronautics students may 'recognise' a helicopter the first time they see one.² But, apart from cases

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'Thinking and Experience', p.43 (his italics). Price is considering the case of a cat which has come to expect milk when it sees people preparing tea.

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Price uses this example in 'Thinking and Experience', p.53.

of immediate motor-response, it is hard to see what the recognition of an instance could amount to in the absence of any such abstract concept, except the noting of similarities between a present appearance and a remembered past appearance.

Once we grant that we can distinguish between immediate, motor-responsive recognition and what I have called deliberate and considered recognition, and grant also that the occurrence of the latter entails at least the capacity to have the appropriate image, then the only really strong objection to the 'imagist theory of recognition' is that we are not generally aware, even in our most deliberate recognition, that we are having images. But imaging, like any other remembering, requires a stimulus to 'set it in motion'. And in the case of recognition, the stimulus is a present perceptual experience. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we think of the object of our attention as, not an image, but its prototype, the actual object which is persisting before our eyes.

Nobody thinks it terribly strange that in the 'helicopter case' we are at once seeing the machine and remembering a past description of it. Why then should it seem strange that in another case we may be at once seeing an object and remembering a past appearance of it? On the other hand it would be very strange indeed if, under what must be the strongest possible stimulus, the actual appearance before us of the thing itself, an image for which we have the 'capacity' failed to

occur; and in fact it is surprising when we fail to recognise someone we 'ought to' recognise.

Further, the fact that we often at once recognise a man and notice that he is in some way different - has shaved his moustache for instance (though we had never 'noted to ourselves' that he had a moustache) - suggests that such images must be occurring even when the recognition seems to be entirely spontaneous.

3. Images, signs and symbols

a) Are images 'signs'?

It has become common practice amongs philosophers to refer to images as symbols. Thus A.J. Ayer writes: 'As in the case of any other symbol, it is the use we make of its qualities that matters, the construction we put upon them, not these qualities themselves',¹ and in his description of what he regards as 'the Imagist Theory of Thinking' Price writes: 'Mental images are the primary symbols, and all other symbols are secondary and derivative'.² There is, of course, a distinction which can be drawn between symbols, phenomena specifically (and arbitrarily) made to stand for other phenomena, and signs, phenomena which simply lead us to think of or expect other phenomena. But I am not here concerned with this distinction. My argument is that both symbolising and signifying are three-termed relationships -

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'The Problem of Knowledge', p.158.

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'Thinking and Experience', p.239.

A signifies or symbolises B to C - and once we reject the 'entity' view of imagery we simply cannot maintain that an image is a symbol or a sign of a past event. What we contemplate when we image is the appearance presented by the past event itself (though it may not be the past event we take it to be). This is not to deny that an image can be made to act as a sign (and thereby made into a symbol) - anything can be made to act as a sign. But when this occurs it is the sign of one thing, the image of another.

ii. Metaphorical images

Price speaks of such cases as 'metaphorical imagery', his assumption being that it is the imagery which 'stands for' something other than what is being imaged. 'An example of a metaphorical image would be an image of a lion which is used, not for thinking about lions, but for thinking about courage. It is possible that some of our verbal metaphors, even some which are now cliches like 'the ship of state' may have originated in this way'.¹ The only thing I wish to object to here is the suggestion that it is the image which is a sign or symbol of courage, whereas in fact it is the lion which is imaged which is the symbol of courage. In thinking of courage we think of a lion, and our thinking of it may take the form of imagery.

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'Thinking and Experience', p.295 (his italics).

b) The 'imagist theory'.

i. Price's criticism

According to Price the 'Imagist Theory' holds that images are the only true symbols of our past experience, and that, although words do have meaning, 'they have it only indirectly, as substitutes for images. These substitutes are needed because words can be manipulated more quickly and easily than images can'.¹ But they have, so the theory is said to maintain, only a temporary licence - they are meaningful only so long as they could be cashed for the images of what they stand for.

Now, the most damaging criticism of such a theory would be that many words stand for concepts which are simply not imageable because they are wholly relational, and therefore derived through rather than in sense-perception. This difficulty being well known and widely accepted, Price does not elaborate it. Instead he develops at length an argument designed to show that even for the consideration of 'qualities' and 'entities' the traditional imagist theory is not tenable. But he is arguing only against this 'traditional theory' which treats imagery as a combination of 'entity symbols' (like words) by which we identify and classify the objects about us.

Now, I do not want to claim that he is arguing against a 'straw man' of his own creation. There may well be some philosophers against

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'Thinking and Experience', p.239.

whom his arguments are most damaging. But I do claim that his argument in no way effects the 'imagist theory' (if it should be so called) which I am here putting forward. When Price maintains that the imagist is wrong to assume that 'thinking can only be in touch with reality if it is a kind of inspection',¹ he is taking this to mean an inspection of images, not an inspection of the reality itself in imagery. And his argument quite fails to take account of the distinction between the appearance presented to us by reality and our perceptual interpretations, definitions, and descriptions of those appearances, (although this is, in effect, the distinction he himself has made between 'primary' and 'secondary' recognition).²

The claim central to his argument is that an image cannot be essential for thinking of what is absent since we can exemplify a concept in many ways other than by imagery - by making a model or a drawing for instance. And 'if it be objected that one has to have a mental image first, in order to produce the model or drawing, we must reply that this is both false and vicious in principle. It is false in fact. If I am asked to draw a hexagon, I may have an image first, especially if I am somewhat uncertain what a hexagon looks like. But it is not true that I must have one. ...And if such comparison with an image blueprint were indeed indispensable, how about the production

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'Thinking and Experience', p.262.

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See chapter II of 'Thinking and Experience', p.44ff.

of the image blueprint itself? Should we not be driven to say that it too could only be produced if we have a super-blueprint to copy it from, and to guide us in detecting and correcting any defects it may have'?.¹

ii. Image and concept

Let us look at the 'false in fact' claim first. If Price means that, being unable to remember what a hexagon looks like, he may, (though he need not), consult his image of a hexagon to find out what it looks like, then clearly he is simply wrong. If he did not remember what it looked like he could not have an image of it.² It would be like saying 'I couldn't remember his name so I consulted my memory of it'. If he means only that one way, though not the only way, of trying to remember it would be trying to image it, then, in the case of the hexagon, I agree with him. In fact, if I did remember what a hexagon looked like, i.e. had a memory of its 'look' in imagery, this may (though it may not - compare the barred gate case) assist me to remember that it is a six-sided figure. But there is a confusion here between remembering a 'look' and remembering a proposition. I agree that I can remember the fact that a hexagon is a six-sided figure without any image at all - and, remembering it, can draw a hexagon - but this is

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'Thinking and Experience', p.256 (his italics).

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I am assuming here that 'looks like' is being used in its popular sense, not in the special sense (as distinct from 'how it looks') in which I use it in Section 4.a) following. See p.247.

only because what I am remembering is not the appearance of an individual but a formal relationship quite simply definable in words. If I were to set out, instead, to draw from memory a picture of my friend John, with a certain peculiar facial expression he sometimes has, the story would be very different. For then I would be concerned with a particular appearance which would defy any attempt at 'complete description', not simply with an instance of a particular quantitative relationship. Price fails to make this important distinction. He seems to assume that since the occurrence of imagery is not essential for all thinking and remembering it cannot be essential for any thinking or remembering.

iii. The 'infinite regress argument' again

When we turn to his argument that it is vicious in principle the charges made simply do not apply to my view that imagery is indispensable for a certain kind of remembering, the remembering of appearances, however damaging they may be to the 'traditional imagist theory'. My reply is the same, in effect, as I made to similar charges against the 'Imagist Theory of Recognition'.¹ There can be no question of an infinite regress of the images; our imaging simply is our remembering the appearance that was presented to us by the thing or event. To the extent that the imagery is 'imperfect' our memory is imperfect as to the past presented appearance. And, insofar as we are concerned with

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See p. 237.

appearances, it must remain imperfect - unless and until the imagery itself is 'perfected'.

4. The need for imagery

a) 'How' and 'what like'

i. The private experience of knowing how

We now come to the distinction which is central to my view of imagery, and thereby to my view of memory, a distinction which has been foreshadowed, I trust, in everything that I have said to date. This distinction is that between how a thing looks, smells, sounds and so on, and what it looks like, smells like, sounds like and so on. To quote William James: 'The best taught blind pupil of such an establishment yet lacks a knowledge which the least instructed seeing baby has. They can never show him what light is in its "first intention"; and the loss of that sensible knowledge no book learning can replace'.¹ It is this 'first intention' which is how a thing looks. And the extraordinary difficulty in talking about it is that, whilst we know how it looks, we can describe it only in terms of what it looks like.² But, whilst the car standing opposite looks like thousands of other cars in many respects, and unlike them in others, how it looks is something quite peculiar to itself. Or rather, it is a peculiar relationship between itself and myself, the viewer. How something

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'Principles of Psychology', Vol. 2, p.4.

2

Cf. Wittgenstein - 'Philosophical Investigations', Pt.1, para.78, p.36e - We can know, but cannot say, how a clarinet sounds.

looks refers only to the appearance it presents; what it looks like refers to its resemblances to countless other things.

ii. Knowing and knowing about.

Price is quite right when he says 'One man can describe his visual images to another. He may describe them in great detail, and he may be understood'.¹ But when he continues 'You cannot be acquainted with my visual images; but you may know them by description if you have images yourself' he is obscuring a very important distinction. He should say 'You may know about them'. For it is not simply a matter of your not being able to be acquainted with my images because they happen to be mine and not yours. In this sense you cannot be acquainted with my visual perceptions, but if you and I stand successively in the same place facing the same motionless scene, then we may well be satisfied that we have enjoyed effectively similar visual perceptions. It is reasonable to assume that since we both have equivalent sense-organs which were stimulated by the same external causes in viewing the scene, we each learned independently how it looked. And, under these circumstances we would subsequently 'know each other's imagery' if we agreed that we were both imaging that scene as we had seen it. But we would know it by description. The 'absolute privacy' of most imagery arises from two facts; remembering how a thing looked, like perceiving how it looks, is a unique experience quite distinct from

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'Thinking and Experience', p.154.

any catalogue of descriptive terms; and remembering, unlike perceiving, is not dependent upon any present public object.

Philosophers have not altogether ignored the distinction between how a thing looks and what it looks like - the ways in which its appearance can be classified. Chisholm, for instance, writes:¹ 'The man in charge of the stage lighting will be concerned not with the actual colours of the settings but with the ways in which they appear under certain conditions. And philosophers and psychologists, studying perception, may be concerned with the nature of the appearances rather than with the objects which appear'. And von Leyden asserts that 'self-centeredness...is implicit in every recollection, at any rate in those cases where we remember how something took place, though not perhaps always in those where we remember that something took place'.²

Yet no-one seems to have observed, or if observing to have felt it worth remarking, that this 'how it looks' is, at the memory level, the peculiar province of imagery.

b) The alternatives to imagery

i. Describing appearances

No descriptive catalogue can ever give direct knowledge of how something looks. But it does not follow from this that such a catalogue

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'Perceiving', p.161.

2

'Remembering', p.78 (his italics).

can never serve to identify that thing. It would be wrong to suppose that the ability to describe some past event is *prima-facie* evidence for the existence of an image of it. Benjamin seems at least to be attributing this view to others when he says: 'It is a genuine puzzle sometimes to know what is to count as an image. For instance, what the writer presumes is his memory-image of the High from Magdalen Bridge is so fleeting, blurred and thin that, if, as it were, it could be captured for the requisite time, it would undoubtedly prove impossible to draw it; yet he can describe the view to himself and others. Would this count as an image, a reliving? One tends to put an end to such a question, I think, by wearily agreeing that it must be an image'.¹ I agree that if he has an image he has an image, albeit a fleeting, blurred and thin one. But his ability to describe the view in no way entails his having an image of that view, and few, if any, imagists have ever maintained that it does. It entails only that he has either a good memory for descriptive propositions (which might have been learned from any source, not necessarily his own experience) or a memory-image of the view.

Thus Russell, who states that he is a poor visualiser, says:

'When now I meet a man and wish to remember his appearance, I find the only way is to describe him in words while I am seeing him, and then remember the words'.² He admits that this method is unsatisfactory if

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'Remembering' MIND Vol. LXV, 1956, p.320 (his italics)

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'An Outline of Philosophy', p.195.

'Two men having these characteristics are present at once'. 'In this respect', he says, 'a visualiser would have the advantage of me'. But he claims: 'Nevertheless, if I had made my verbal inventory sufficiently extensive and precise, it would have been pretty sure to answer its purpose'.

ii. The limitations of the verbal alternative

Of course, if the description were sufficiently extensive it would answer the purpose. But how extensive must that be? As the police know well enough, a couple of good photographs of a wanted man may be worth more than a description a mile long of his visual appearance. A great many men might still answer the description, but the chances are that one man, and one only, would match the photographs. And why does Russell say 'unless two men having these characteristics are present at once'? We do not use our memories of people only for identifying them when we meet them. And, if we take seriously what he has said of himself, even when one of the two men answering the same description appeared by himself, Russell would still not know who it was, even though he might have known the man well for a considerable time.

Since it seems improbable that Russell is in fact incapable of distinguishing between his acquaintances, either when he meets them or when he just thinks about them, we must suppose either that he makes very careful descriptions indeed to himself and is very fortunate in that these never coincide, or that verbal descriptions augment his imagery rather than that they replace it - despite his claim, 'I do

not think there is anything in memory that absolutely demands images as opposed to words'.¹ Of these two possibilities the latter seems to me to be the more probable.

I must grant, however, that wherever distinguishing relational features exist it is possible, in principle at least, to isolate and describe them, however difficult this may sometimes be in practice. But what of the case where the distinguishing feature is a quality rather than a relation? (What Locke would have termed a secondary quality). To take the obvious example: How is it that I can now remember that the car which stood outside my window a while ago was a different shade of green from the one that stood there yesterday? I did not note this fact at the time, and I do not know any names for either of the shades. Even without names for the shades I could have noted, say, that one was like the colour of peas and the other was like the colour of yew trees, and I could now be reasoning that they were not, therefore, the same shade. But this only moves the problem a stage further back; for how was I able to note these likenesses when there were neither peas nor yew trees present to my senses? And how do I now know the different shades of peas and yew trees in the absence of these objects in a way that enables me to compare them?

Surely we cannot seriously suggest that, unless I have noted to myself the names for two different shades of colour at the times of

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'An Outline of Philosophy', p.196.

perceiving them, I cannot ever compare them in memory except by means of a complex network of propositions of the kind 'A is the same colour as B', 'C is a different colour from D', 'D is rather like B', which I have framed on various occasions when two or more coloured objects were present together for my inspection. Yet this seems to be the only way in which shades of colour could be remembered by describable relational features. The only alternative is that I know that the two remembered shades were different, or that they were the same, simply because I now remember how each of them looked, i.e. I now have memory-images of them both.

If we accept this last alternative, then it seems to follow that images of the same (organic) kind are entertained simultaneously.¹ Perhaps I could be forming some propositional description of the relationship of one imaged colour to some presently perceived colour, and then checking the other imaged colour against this description; but in fact I am satisfied that I am not doing this. If, then, as I have maintained, how the colour looked is knowable only in imagery, the two images must be simultaneous. For if I had the images in chronological succession, then, as soon as I had one, and thereby knew how it looked, I should have ceased to have the other and thereby ceased to know² how it looked. This would render impossible any comparison of the 'look' of the one with the 'look' of the other.

¹

This question was discussed in chapter VI. See p.213ff.

²

In the 'occurrent sense', which is what we are here concerned with.

The two 'looks' could, of course, combine in a kind of composite image. But I would still have to be conscious of having two distinct memories, not a single 'imagination-image'.

iii. Non-imagers

I have claimed that there is a large and important area of our memory (and our imagination) which is solely the province of imagery. This is the memory of presented appearances as such, and, at the introspective level, it is the final court of appeal for all our memory-claims. What are we to say, then, about those people, including many of Galton's correspondents, who seem to be quite normal in every way, and yet simply deny that they ever have images at all? There seem to be three possible alternatives:

(1) They lead what would seem to be strangely empty mental lives (in the way that we might feel that congenitally blind and deaf people must lead empty mental lives). And, further, they can achieve only a very poor degree of certainty about matters of past fact in the absence of supporting testimony or 'cause/effect' evidence, since their memories, being all propositional, would not permit of any individual reinterpretations. If their remembered propositions were wrong - that is, if they were formed as the result of misjudgments about perceptual situations - they would have no means of setting them right so they would have to remain wrong for ever.¹ Or

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The re-interpretation and 'correction' of memories is dealt with in chapter III, Section 1, p. 66 and chapter IV, Section 5, p. 136. I say 'individual reinterpretations' to allow for the 'football team example' given in chapter IV, p. 121.

- (2) They are lying in order to pose as 'superior intellects' or simply to be perverse. Or
- (3) They have misunderstood the nature of imagery, and their denial that they have images is the result of their misunderstanding, much as the denial by a respectable housewife that she has erotic impulses would be the result of her misunderstanding.

I discount possibility (2), and I am naturally loath to accept possibility (1). I shall therefore begin with the third possibility. Now, I myself have no experience of eidetic imagery, though I am happy to believe that others have. And if I conceived of imagery as necessarily the same kind of thing as eidetic imagery - in Price's words, 'something over against us or presented to us - and something other than the material object or physical event, real or fictitious, which we are trying to envisage'¹ - then I should have to place myself in the ranks of the non-imagers. This is exactly the misunderstanding which A.J. Ayer seems to be guilty of when he says 'I remember that a moment ago I ran my hand over the surface of my writing table: I remember how it felt in the sense that I can give a description of the feeling, but I do not have any tactual image of it'.² Now, unless he accompanied the gesture, Russell fashion, with a catalogue of descriptive phrases - which seems at least highly improbable - his

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'Thinking and Experience', p.248. Note that Price is referring to ordinary memory-imagery, not to eidetic imagery.

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'The Problem of Knowledge', p.156 (my italics).

assertion must be false according to my definition. For to remember how it felt in a way that makes possible a subsequent description is to have imagery, and in this case the imagery would be tactual.

It may be protested here that I am simply applying my own definition in order to convict Ayer of error. But the only point I am interested in making here is that we do have a unique experience, the direct memory of appearances, the memory of how things looked, felt and so on, and that this does play a central role in our remembering of events, and also in our being certain that we are remembering events. I call this kind of remembering 'imagery' because this seems the natural thing to call it: if someone else wants to reserve the term 'imagery' for something like eidetic imagery, well and good. Subject to this reservation Ayer can make his denial without contradiction; but he must find some other term to cover what I am calling imagery. He must not ignore its existence. And he can call it simply 'describing' only if he is prepared to claim that he never has perceived, or remembered, how anything looks, sounds, and so on, without actually describing it to himself or to somebody else.

For obvious reasons it is hard to see how we could 'demonstrate' or 'ostensify' this unique experience to someone who denied having it. Suppose a man, blind from birth, knew and used the word 'smile' but claimed that he himself never smiled. To convince him that he was wrong you would have to say to him each time you caught him smiling: 'That's it, you're doing it now', and in time he would

probably get the idea of what a smile is; not the impressive affair he had imagined it to be, merely a very mild experience he had hardly even noticed.

But with the man who claims that he never images the position is more difficult. Not only can he not see our imaging; we cannot see his either. The best we can do is to say to him something like: 'Think of your wife - think of her smiling with that particular quizzical expression she sometimes has', or even: 'Remember the colour of your new curtains - not the manufacturer's fancy name for the colour, or a catalogue of other things the same colour, or whether you like it or not - the actual colour itself'. And if he says 'Yes, I am doing that' we can tell him that he is imaging. His reaction may then be like that of the blind man - 'Oh, if that's all it is, then of course I image'.

However, if he stoutly maintains that he is having no experience which he can distinguish from the construction of descriptive propositions, or if he finds himself simply unable to perform the tasks asked of him, then we must, however sadly, revert to the first alternative. But we should be well advised, henceforward, before accepting his memory-claims about past events, to check very carefully his reasons for making those claims - especially if they contain any wealth of detail.

5. The actual characteristics of memory-images

In chapter VI we considered what kind of objects images are of, and we have now discussed what having images amounts to. But before

concluding this chapter we should look at imagery itself and consider certain questions about what kind of experience imaging is.

a) The qualities of images

Since we have decided that what we call an image is just a particular kind of memory, the memory of how things looked, sounded, and so on, it makes no more sense to ask 'Where are images?' than to ask 'Where are memories?' Our insistence upon the existence and importance of imagery does not involve us in any mysterious speculations about other dimensions of space, nor are we obliged to make any such empty assertions as 'an image is where it is'. Imagery 'occurs in' our minds, and something correlated with it no doubt occurs in our brains, and the event imaged occurred, if at all, in physical space at a past physical time.

But, even though imagery is a performance rather than a set of entities, there are still some questions about the characteristics of it which it is reasonable to ask. What are the relationships of size and position between the scene as imaged and the scene as originally perceived? Do we necessarily image the whole scene as it was perceived? Must the original colour, or any colour at all, be reproduced in the imagery?

i. Position

Ideally, when we remember a scene in imagery the parts of that scene as imaged are in the same spatial relationship to each other as they were in the scene as perceived. There is, however, as we

considered in chapter VI, an imagination element in nearly all imagery,¹ and this may well manifest itself as a disproportion between the parts as imaged, especially if some particular feature is the focal point of our attention.

It has been held by some philosophers that there must be a spatial relationship of some kind between an image and a presently perceived scene, since it is possible to 'project' an image into an actual view (although this neither becomes nor obscures any part of that view). For instance, it is claimed that I could image a cat as sitting on the mat which is now before me. Now, there is no doubt that we often talk as if such 'projection' were a possible and quite normal procedure. But what could it be that we are implying? 'Projecting images' is certainly nothing like projecting a picture of a cat on to the mat with a cinematograph. Indeed there is really nothing to be projected. When we attempt an analysis of what is happening there seem to be two possibilities only, neither of which involves anything we would wish to call a spatial relationship between an image and a present perception. It is possible that:

- (1) I have an image of a cat and I conceive the possibility of this cat being on the mat which I am in fact looking at; or
- (2) In addition to my perceiving the actual mat on which there is no cat, I am also imaging an exactly similar mat (together with its visible surroundings) on which there sits a cat.

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See p.197.

ii. Size

Now, in the second case, would the mat, as imaged, be the same 'size' as the mat as actually perceived? It is clear that we can be talking only of visible size, and since in this case it is my perceiving the mat which has stimulated me to image it, the chances are that it will be the 'same size'.

A memory-image is as visibly large or small as its object as originally perceived, even though it does not 'occupy', as does an after-image, any part of the total potential field of vision. There is nothing deep or mysterious in this. It simply means that if I saw my friend twenty paces away from me, I image him as if he were twenty paces away from me. To test this, try to remember a favourite snapshot in imagery; you will find that it is always imaged as if it were about eighteen inches away, the distance at which we normally look at snapshots. By an effort it may be possible to 'enlarge it', but once we do this we are immediately conscious of the entry of 'imagination elements' into the imagery.

It is possible, in principle, to have a visual memory-image of a complete visual field, a thing we rarely if ever in fact have, and a memory-image 'covers' only that portion of the possible visual field which was covered by the object imaged in the original perception of it. It follows that there is, as it were, a 'blank surround' to the image - much as there is to a particular object looked at through a telescope. Now, when a particular area or object is detached from its

setting, we are aware of the 'blank surround' and of its potential occupants which provide the spatial element (there is also the temporal element) of that 'context' which is distinctive of the memory-image, known as such, and determines the 'expansion' of the image.

iii. Colour

In 'The Mind and Its Place in Nature' Broad asserts:¹ 'A visual sensum must in fact have some perfectly determinate shade of colour; and so must a visual image'. It would be very difficult to deny this claim, but nevertheless it raises certain questions: Need a memory-image include the same colours as the perceived scene? Need the image include any chromatic colour? Can we make a distinction between colour and mere visible variety?

Of course imagery can include exact shades of colour, as in my examples in the previous section. But, if what is being remembered, or our particular interest in what is being remembered, is the shapes and relative sizes involved in the appearance, colour seems to be no more necessary than in a newspaper photograph. We do not feel that the picture in the paper is not a true representation of the Prime Minister because it shows his face as grey and not pink, though we might well do so if the rest of the picture were in colour. Whether or not our visual imagery always does involve chromatic colour is an empirical

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'The Mind and Its Place in Nature', p.258.

question we should each have to answer for ourselves; there seems to be no reason why it must do so.

Nevertheless, it may still be held that an image must have some perfectly determinate shade or shades of colour. The 'black and white' picture is intelligible only so long as it is a kind of 'translation' of the multi-coloured appearance, and blacks, whites, and greys must themselves be 'perfectly determinate'. It is true that our concern is with the relationship between the shades rather than with the shades themselves, but whatever is related must be one shade or another. Notwithstanding this, it seems to me that I can image in considerable detail a framed photograph of my father in military uniform, yet I would find it very hard to say whether I am imaging it as 'black and white' or as 'sepia'. Possibly I am imaging it as both simultaneously.

In another odd case, I remember my supervisor's voice, i.e. remember how it sounds in auditory imagery, yet without remembering it as making any specific utterance. There is at least an initial puzzle about both these cases; the second may simply be an extreme case of 'remembering the "look" of the gate',¹ but the first seems to demand for its explanation an investigation of what is usually called 'generic imagery'.

b) Specific and 'generic' imagery

Thinking and remembering in imagery, as this performance is traditionally understood, seems to demand that the image be at once

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See p. 231.

sufficiently like the original perception to be identifiable, and sufficiently unlike it to be productive or reminiscent of the concept or idea of a continuous thing in the world. This problem is often magnified by the assumption that an image is a kind of symbol for a class-concept, an assumption which I have denied. Having an image of a dog may lead us to think of dogs in general, but there is no reason why it should do so. And certainly I do not 'use the image' to think about the concept dog, although I might well regard my having an image of Rover as my thinking about Rover as a creature in the world, especially if the image I have of him is not identifiable as an image of any one occasion in his life. In practice I find that my own 'standard images' do tend to be of 'fixed instances'. Thus the images I have of people are frequently in fact images of their photographs. For obvious reasons these photographs can more easily be 'imprinted on the memory' than can any single fleeting appearance of the people themselves. Similarly, the images I have of places are most frequently of the oft-repeated views of those places from certain vantage points: houses from their front gates, valleys from the nearby hills we climb to look at them, and so on. Nevertheless, we do have memory-images of sights seen only once and only for a moment (else our memories of events would necessarily be wholly propositional). We also do seem to have images of particulars which have been built up over a series of different, and differing, viewings, and it is these that are felt to be at once both like and unlike any one single 'viewing'.

i. Vague images

We have discussed the way that 'vagueness' permits us to remember the 'look' of the gate without knowing the number of its bars.¹ Now we must consider how 'vagueness' may also permit us to remember the 'look' of the gate open, half-open or shut, all seemingly at once. For we do seem able, in some way, to do this. Russell contends that the vagueness of imagery not only fully explains this strange ability, but also 'supplies an answer to Hume's query: Could you imagine a shade of colour that you had never seen, if it was intermediate between two very similar shades that you had seen? The answer is that you could not form so precise an image, even of a colour that you had seen, but that you could form a vague image, equally appropriate to the shade that you had not seen and to the two similar shades that you had seen'.²

I believe that, insofar as this is a statement of fact, it is wrong. Unless we beg the question by making precision an empirically unattainable ideal, then why does Russell assert that you can not form a precise image of the required shade of colour? It would be most surprising if many painters and other people whose job it is to match colours do not do so regularly, and I am satisfied that I not infrequently do so myself. If we avoid this difficulty by rephrasing the question as 'Could you form as precise an image of a colour you

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See p. 231ff.

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'Human Knowledge - Its Scope and Limits', p.125.

had never seen as you could of a colour you had seen?', my own answer would be an unequivocal 'No'. What we can have is a concept of such a shade; the use of the word 'intermediate' shows this to be possible; but we cannot have an image of it for the very reasons which led Hume to regard the 'possibility' as a puzzle. The problem only arises because people have overlooked the fact that colours, like sounds, form a natural scale. The missing shade is not, therefore, a completely unknown quantity like the blue rumped gnurgle.¹

I said 'insofar as it is a statement of fact', because 'vague' is itself a vague word.² Before we can decide in what way vagueness permits us to image 'all the positions of the gate at once' we must determine what this particular kind of vagueness amounts to.

ii. Generic Images

There are several possibilities and they are generally classified together under the heading 'Generic Imagery'.

a. 'Composite pictures'. Firstly, there is the notion of a composite image, rather like a composite photograph, that is, a number of photographs taken on the same film and superimposed on each other. Clearly we cannot take this too literally, for unless the separate objects were extremely similar in outline the resultant picture would be simply an undecipherable mess. And if they were sufficiently close - say, several

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See p. 197.

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This point is made by J.L. Austin. See 'Sense and Sensibilia', p.125.

shots of the same face with just slightly varied expressions - the need for the composite would be lost; any one of the pictures would serve equally well. Except as regards the expression - and this would be the one point wherein the composite would be blurred and useless. With colour the position would be just as bad. A yellow surface superimposed on a blue surface would give a green surface, not a surface that was somehow both yellow and blue at once.

Suppose we suggest that instead of superimposing each entire image upon the others, we 'select' and combine parts of each to make up a composite which is, as it were, a single image drawn from many sources. This is certainly possible. But the image itself would still be 'specific' and, being 'drawn from many sources', it would lack the authority of a memory-image; whereas what we want is an image which is not specific and yet has that authority. Nor would this composite be representative of the continuous object except in the way that a piece of china made up from bits of different articles in a teaset would be representative of the teaset. And finally, there is also the drawback that the appearances involved must still be at least sufficiently alike to be compatible, e.g., if the composite image is of a man's face they must be all frontface or all sideface; a combination would not be possible.

b. Series of images. There is however one other possibility which Price, amongst others, has advanced. 'When I think about some object or class of objects in an imagy manner, I am not restricted

to using just one single image. I might use a series of different images. Again, the images which I use need not be static'.¹ Thus by a series of different images of the same object, drawn possibly, but not necessarily, from a perceived sequence of events, we can image, as it were, all round the object in both space and time.

I would also add that it is by no means certain that this would have to be a series in the chronological sense. We could find no logical reason to deny (and some empirical reason to assert) the possibility of having several simultaneous images; why then should we not have several simultaneous images of different 'aspects' of the same object?

iii. Image and concept as complementary

Our analysis of 'generic imagery' shows clearly that 'a generic image' is a misleading expression. What we have is a number of complementary images or imagings which act jointly to exemplify or bring about in us a general idea or concept of a continuous individual entity or a set of characteristics. The images are, as Berkeley and Hume held them to be, the particular re-presentations to us in memory of particular past sense-experiences. Out of them concepts can arise, and by means of them concepts can be checked and defined. It is because of this that people have been led to refer to what are in fact concepts as 'generic images'.

A memory which consisted wholly of imagery would not be so utterly meaningless as a 'perception' which consisted wholly of sense-

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'Thinking and Experience', p.272.

experience, since it would be possible to form concepts, with the aid of present perception, from series of occurrent images. It would nevertheless be a very limited and strange memory - the kind of memory we are disposed to attribute to 'lower animals'. On the other hand, a memory with no imagery would be, as we have seen, both sterile and inconclusive. Language permits the development of complex forms of thinking; imagery provides the constant link between that development and our own past perceptual experience, our actual apprehension of the world about us.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSIONS

1. Recapitulation

a) The problem raised

i. How is it that we are sure?

It may be remembered that in chapter I of this essay I made the point that the question to be answered is, not 'Should we trust our memories?' but 'How is it that our memories are in fact trustworthy when they seem, at every stage, to be open to error?'. At all times we are aware of a great deal of the experience we have had in the past, and aware of it in a way that gives us confidence in every way as great as the confidence we feel about our present surroundings. Yet in no case, it seems, can we prove to ourselves, or to other people, that things did occur as we remember them to have occurred, as we feel that we can prove the existence of our present surroundings - by pointing to them, knocking against them, measuring them, or tasting and smelling them.

Of course, one of the ways by which we prove the existence of our present surroundings - the prediction of effects which will arise out of them - is open to us, on some occasions at least, for establishing the truth of our memory-claims. But here we are not really proving anything about memory, only about matters of fact: the rose which is evidence for the accuracy of my memory-claim that I planted

a rose could have been put there by somebody else, or could have grown wild; the crater which reassures me that there was an explosion could have been made by an excavator. In any case confirmations of this sort do not generally create memory-beliefs, they merely reinforce our confidence if we are doubtful whether we really are remembering, and assist us to convince other people who may be inclined to doubt our memory reports.

The 'memory-experience', the certainty we feel about matters of past fact whether or not there is any 'objective evidence', suggests very strongly that in some way we actually 'look at' or re-live our past experiences as part of our present experience. But the difficulty is to give a sense to this which is not purely metaphorical. When we look at something we are directly acquainted with it, and in this direct acquaintance lies our authority to make confident assertions about it. Our task, therefore, is to show that in memory, or in some kinds of memory, we have the same authority. In short, we must explain how, and when, we are directly acquainted with the past when we remember.

ii. Special cases

Firstly - the past with which I am directly acquainted must be my own past. It would be blatantly absurd to suggest that when I remember that the Battle of Waterloo was fought in 1815 I am somehow directly acquainted with that battle itself. It is not so absurd, however, (though it may well be false) to claim that I am directly acquainted with the occasion of my learning this piece of history.

To show that the authority of all memory rests upon our direct acquaintance with the past, it is first necessary to show that what is generally called the memory of events - the memory of one's own actual experiences - is the basic form of memory from which all other forms derive. Although it is perfectly natural and intelligible to talk of remembering individuals or remembering propositions or remembering how to do things, as distinct kinds of remembering, we must show that all these can be reduced to, or explained in terms of, remembering past events in our lives, events which we ourselves witnessed. Accordingly a considerable part of this essay has been devoted to demonstrating this reduction.

I have argued that to remember an individual is either to remember a particular appearance or a series of appearances which we regard as being of the same individual, or else to remember an event or series of events in which that individual figures.¹ Thus to say that what I am remembering is an individual, not an event, is only to say something about my point of interest in my memory. The same memory which I now regard as 'of my uncle' I could equally well regard as 'of the time my uncle fell down the steps' or 'of the time my uncle wore a bowler hat'.

When we turn to 'propositional memories' it is vital to bear in mind the distinction I made between remembering propositions and

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See chapter III, p.63.

remembering in propositions.¹ All our remembering, insofar as it is expressed in memory-claims, is in propositions. To remember propositions is to remember the beliefs we have held in the past about matters of fact - whether we announced them publicly or not - as distinct from remembering the events, our perception of which led us to hold those beliefs. (And as distinct also from remembering the sentences in which the propositions were expressed).

Clearly, a proposition is not an event in the world. Thinking - producing propositions - is, of course, a mental event, and mental events as well as physical ones may be remembered. But in remembering them we are not acquainted with a past public event; we are only presented with evidence that we have been so acquainted. And the past public event need not be the event which the proposition is about. It frequently happens that we remember a proposition though we have forgotten, or are not presently recalling, or never even witnessed, the event to which it refers, though it is always possible, of course, if we did witness the event, that we may remember it, or some part of it, along with the proposition. For instance, I remember that as an infant I lived in West Hartlepool; I can remember several occasions of producing my Birth Certificate which showed West Hartlepool as my birthplace and several conversations about my having been born there. And but for these memories my claim - I remember that I

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See chapter III, p. 77ff.

once lived in West Hartlepool - would be quite unconvincing, even to myself. For I cannot remember living in West Hartlepool.

To the question of remembering how to do things I devoted a whole chapter, because this, above all others, has traditionally been regarded as a special case of remembering, not to be fitted into the 'perceptual mould'. My conclusion was that, although it is normal practice in everyday speech to identify 'remembering how' with 'being able', there is nevertheless a distinction between them which we are all conscious of, and which we are sometimes obliged to make in order to be intelligible. And though 'being able' may well be, in many instances, a case of retentiveness, it is physiological retentiveness only, and as such outside the scope of an epistemological enquiry. The 'remembering how' which is a function of intelligence, as I defined that term in relation to memory, is intelligible only in terms of 'remembering that' - remembering events and propositions. And, as we have seen, remembering propositions is itself dependent for its authority upon the memory of events.

iii. Re-interpretation - memories and claims

In chapter IV, I distinguished between our memory-claims - the propositions we produce about our past experiences - and our actual memories - the remembered propositions and occurrent imagery which constitute the 'remembering state of mind' on which those claims are based. I pointed out that, whilst it is by the former that our memories are judged to be true or false, it is from the latter, and only from

the latter, that what I called the initial authority of memory can arise. The memory-claim may refer directly to a past state of affairs in the world; the memory is always of a past state of myself - my own perceptions and judgments when confronted with that state of affairs. Thus it is always possible in principle at least, to amend a memory-claim in the light of a re-assessment of the memory itself without recourse to any 'external evidence'. When a man is relating what happened on some past occasion which he witnessed it is always sensible to ask him 'But what are you actually remembering?'.

b) The problem remaining

i. Narrowing the gap

We have already come some way towards the solution of our problem. If it be allowed: (a) that all memory-claims must be or rest upon memory-claims concerning past events, and (b) that these memory-claims are based upon occurrent memories of our own past states when we were confronted with these events; then, the authority we attach to all our memory-claims must derive from our ability to remember our own past states. And since these claims are always open to revision in the light of a closer scrutiny of our occurrent memories, it may well be that many of our so-called 'false memories' are not memories at all; they are merely false inferences from our memories of our own past states.

It may be recalled that I distinguished two kinds of error which could be avoided, or at least guarded against, by introspection. We can avoid claiming more than is warranted by the occurrent memory. We

can also re-check the remembered propositions to ensure that, at the time of the perception, we were not misinterpreting the event we witnessed - provided only that we have memory-imagery of the event against which to check.

Thus our memories are open to 'checking' and reinterpretation at two points. But unless that which is being reinterpreted, the memory-imagery itself, is a re-presentation to us of the actual past event, and not itself an interpretation of that event, then all our reinterpretations are pointless and vain. Before we could decide whether, and in what way, our imagery does constitute such a re-presentation - a direct acquaintance with the past event - it was necessary to consider the nature and function of imagery. This we have done, and we are now in a position to see how imagery does constitute an actual re-presentation to us of the past events themselves.

ii. The 'physical element'

I claimed that the function of imagery is to provide a direct contact with how things looked, sounded and so forth. I defined imagery, accordingly, as the direct memory of appearances, an appearance being what is presented to the senses by a physical event or object irrespective of any perceptual judgment or classification. I also claimed that we may have a disposition or capacity to image a particular appearance (whatever the physiological explanation of this may be) just as we may have the capacity to make any overt muscular movement, in response to an appropriate stimulus. The

appearances 'given to us' in imagery are the same appearances as were previously 'given to us' in sensation. The objects which presented those appearances are no longer here; but the appearances never were 'here' in the sense that the objects were, so the absence of the objects does not entail that the appearance is not the same appearance.¹

Sensing an appearance is not a cognitive operation, though it may be a prerequisite of certain kinds of cognitive operation, e.g. perceptual judgments. To perceive is always to perceive that something is the case, to note a factual relationship. Hence philosophers have attempted to distinguish between 'knowledge of' and 'acquaintance with' the objective world. The danger of making this distinction is that, having made it, there is a tendency to then apply it as though it were between two 'kinds of knowledge', when in fact it must be between knowledge and something else. For, to maintain the distinction at all, we must allow that we are 'acquainted with' the world only in the same way as the table is 'acquainted with' the floor it stands on. We cannot have the benefits of special use and ordinary use at once. Ordinarily we say that we are acquainted with certain facts when we have not yet decided 'what to make of them'. But we are already allowing that we know these facts as such, that we have noticed them.

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By 'same' I mean qualitatively same. On p.281 following I argue that numerical sameness and difference cannot be applied to appearances.

And to notice something is always to notice something about it, even if only to notice that it is distinguishable from something else - and this is to make a perceptual judgment. We cannot isolate 'objects of acquaintance' or 'pure sensations' within our actual experience; they are simply inferences from that experience. Our experience is of objects in certain relationships. It is true that, since we perceive relationships, there must be elements which are related. But it is a further, and unjustified, step to say that we must perceive the related elements, as a prerequisite of perceiving the relationship. To quote G.F. Stout: 'it thus appears that we can never have absolutely pure sensation, sensation absolutely devoid of meaning either original or acquired. We may even go further than this and lay it down as a general principle that sensations always have derivative meaning; for retentiveness and association operate from the very beginning of mental life. It may be urged that this cannot be the case in the earliest moments of experience. But even if we set aside what may perhaps be due to the results of ancestral experience transmitted by heredity, we have to recognise that the first instant of conscious life is only an ideal limit, which we cannot definitely mark off so as to consider it separately. Thus, even from this point of view, the concept of absolutely pure sensation is an artificial abstraction'.¹

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'A Manual of Psychology', p.124.

The point is that sensation, the separate activity of sensing, is something the existence of which we seem driven to accept; but it is clearly not a mental operation in any ordinary sense. It must, then, be a physiological operation. Just as we can move our feet and judge that they are moving forwards or backwards, so we can visually sense and judge that we are seeing trees and houses (that is, we can see trees and houses; 'see' is a cognitive term as we normally use it). In neither case are we conscious that the 'physical activity' precedes the 'mental activity'. At most we assume that it 'must do so'.

Sensation, then, is simply the physiological process by virtue of which appearances are presented to us. If these appearances can be retained, again in a purely physical or physiological way, and reproduced in imagery, then we have a permanent physical access to external reality, by virtue of which we can make some factual judgments about physical events after those events have occurred, with the same right of assurance as we could have made them when the events were occurring.

Now, my contention throughout has been that the ability to image is simply the ability to retain and re-actualize sensed appearances; that is what I mean by calling imagery the memory of how things appeared. Thus we have found in imagery, if not a 'physical element' of the past physical event itself, at least a physiological element of the past perception of that event. And we have found in memory

the element we were looking for which is prior to any interpretation of the event remembered. The objection that the imagery may not be of actual past events is anticipated by my argument that 'imagination images' are memory-images:¹ correctly identified, all images are seen to be memory-images.

But 'correctly identified' is a quite considerable qualification. I have argued that the proper question about imagery is not 'Whether it was' but 'When it was', and I have considered various ways in which we can identify the 'memory character of imagery'. But still it may be felt that this is not enough, that we have a better right, and a different kind of right, to be sure about what is going on around us in the present than to be sure about what has gone on around us in the past. To see what justification there may be for this feeling we shall now consider 'the past' and its relationship to 'the present'.

2. The past

There are two distinct, though obviously related, problems about the past: how we know the past when it is no longer here to be known, and how we come to have the concept of pastness at all - what is the origin of our concept of temporal sequence. Perhaps we might assume that it originates with our own memories, as the 'home', so to speak, of the events we remember. But this is to presuppose that we are competent to distinguish actual happenings from imaginary happenings

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See chapter VI, p. 197ff.

without recourse to any notion of a 'real past' as a criterion. It is imperative, therefore, for those who wish to deny that there is any unique memory-experience, and who wish to base their account of memory upon our knowledge of the past and our ability to report it correctly, to show that the concept of pastness could arise from present experience independently of memory. But before examining any suggestions as to how this could be, let us look at the first question: how can we know the past?

a) Knowing the past

i. 'Actual presentation'.

There are various ways of knowing what happened in the past: we can read about it, or be told about it, or work out what must have happened for things to be as they are now. Or we can remember our own past experiences. The first group are all quite simple and intelligible - once we understand clearly what we mean by 'the past' - and they are not directly connected with memory. We simply 'place' certain events in a former time.

But with our memories of our own experiences there is no question of placing events in a former time; in being remembered they are already so placed. We are aware of certain events, and at the same time aware that they belong to the past. Now, it would be possible to accept this and yet still to feel that saying that in memory we are directly acquainted with the past is a strangely 'metaphysical' claim. It may be felt that, taken literally, it is simply absurd -

for the past is past - and, taken metaphorically, it reduces to the trivial assertion that the events we remember are always past events.

I do not believe, however, that this feeling would be justified. The 'reduction' cannot be sustained because there is a difference, however we may characterise it, between actually remembering an event and simply remembering propositions about it. What we may call 'being actually presented with a past event' must at least be a particular kind of remembering. The charge that the claim is absurd arises from the confusion of 'being presented' with 'being present with', and a misunderstanding about what is presented in both memory and perception. We can be present when an event occurs, and we are then presented with an appearance of that event (or by that event). We are not presented with the event; we merely witness it. When we remember the event in imagery we are again presented with the same appearance, but this time by our own 'retentive mechanisms', whatever they be, not by a current happening in the world. If it be protested that the appearance presented is the same qualitatively but not numerically, then I ask what numerical difference of an appearance could mean. We are not using the term 'appearance' to stand for an activity; any object which does not change presents the same appearance on any number of occasions to any number of observers who happen to be suitably placed. These presentations are numerically different, as are the 'perceptual acts' of the observers. But we are concerned with the appearance (how it appears), not the appearing (that it

appears), and the only criterion of identity which can be applied, therefore, is qualitative sameness. If I may use an analogy: The same joke may be told many times by many different people but it remains the same joke. Numerical difference can apply only to the occasions of telling it.

Actual presentation with the past demands only that we be in effectively the same position as we were in the past for noting and identifying events which then occurred. It is surely misleading, then, to characterise direct presentation of the past in such ways as this: 'Just as it is asked whether the sense-datum is a mental representation of an external object or a constituent of that object, so it has been asked whether the memory image is a present symbol of what occurred in the past or the past event itself'.¹ To suggest that an image is itself a past event is an obvious absurdity. But there is nothing absurd in asking whether the appearance presented to me in imagery on this present occasion is the same appearance as was presented to me in perceiving on some past occasion. It is no more absurd than asking whether, in hearing a gramophone record, we are presented with a past performance of an orchestra, and the case for a positive reply seems somewhat stronger. For in that case it could be argued that what we are really presented with is the effect of vibrations set up by the record, whereas, once we have got rid of the 'entity image'

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From an article by C. Landesman - 'Philosophical Problems of Memory' Journal of Philosophy LIX.3. Feb., 1962, p.57.

notion, there is nothing we could be presented with in the memory case except the appearance of the event itself. If anyone should wish to push the analogy to what may be its logical conclusion, and say that we are really presented with the mnemic effects of certain of our own physiological retentive organisms reacting to a stimulus, then I have no objection - for these 'effects' simply are the presentation to us of a certain appearance which has been presented to us before.

There will undoubtedly be those who balk at saying that in memory we may be actually presented with the past. Very well: let us say only that in memory we have an access to the past which is effectively equivalent to the access we have in perception to the present. A case could be made out for either description, and this would be an argument about English usage. The important thing is not how we choose to describe the facts, but that we are clear as to what these facts are.

ii. Knowing and knowing about

I have maintained that in imagery we are re-presented with the appearances originally presented to us by past events. When we remember propositions, our own past judgments, these are already, as remembered, interpretations of the appearances presented by past events. In his article 'The Empiricist Theory of Memory'¹ Holland casts doubt upon the possibility of making any sharp division within propositional

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MIND, Vol. LXIII, 1954, p.482. Holland is criticising a distinction drawn by Woozley in his 'Theory of Knowledge'.

memories between those arising from the perception of events and those arising from reports and inferences. He does, however, allow that 'There is, of course, one way in which I can recall the Rugby Match [which he had witnessed] that is not open to me in the case of the Boat Race [which he had not], and that is by picturing to myself parts of it as I saw them; and it seems likely that it is recollections in which visual imagery occurs that Woolzley has mainly in mind when he segregates one sort of remembering from all others as being cognitive. Yet if this is the case, one wonders why he does not say so plainly'.

I agree that the only intelligible distinction of kind we can make within memory occurrences is that between propositional memory and imagery. But, arising out of this is a distinction in memory-claims. It is based upon situations in which memory-imagery of the event claimed as remembered could occur and those in which it could not. The distinction is not based upon memories in which imagery does occur and memories in which it does not.

In fact, our memories of events we have actually witnessed generally include both propositions and imagery, and the essential difference between the memory of the Rugby Match and the memory of the Boat Race is that the one can be supported by the memory 'presentation' of the event itself, whilst the only 'presentations' which can support the others are of other events - reports of the race in newspapers or from friends. The question: 'What is it you are actually remembering?' is here very pertinent.

Having once acquired a piece of knowledge, by whatever means, I may remember it. But if that knowledge was acquired as the direct result of my perceptual experience I have thereby a far better warrant for certainty than if it had simply been imparted to me secondhand. In the latter case I may always suspect that my informant was mistaken or untruthful; in the former case, the more I ponder on the memory, the more likely it is that 'supporting evidence', both imagery and remembered propositions, will be forthcoming. Compare, for instance, my two memories: that Magna Carta was signed in 1215, and that I spent some time in Rio de Janeiro in my youth. In the first case I could be convinced that I had misremembered the date by exactly the same kind of means as I could be reassured that I had remembered it correctly - by historical records and the authority of experts. I may be surprised, but I would not be astonished; this is the kind of 'memory' we are used to getting wrong.

If, on the other hand, everybody I knew denied that I had ever visited Rio, I could only suppose that they were having some sort of joke with me. I would find it quite impossible to account for the vivid imagery I have of that city, and the supporting memories I have of the voyages to and from it, in terms of any books I may have read or films I may have seen. If people, to show that they were not joking, produced documentary proof that I could not have ever been in Rio, then I would have to allow that I was suffering from what I called in chapter I a 'mnemic hallucination', and visit a

psychiatrist. But, as I have observed before, it is just a fortunate fact that hallucinations of any kind are very rare indeed.

Furlong says:¹ 'The sensuous imagery supplies context to what we remember; it places our recollections; it focuses our attention'. This is certainly true, but imagery has a more fundamental role in memory than this. Additional propositional memories supply a kind of context to what we remember - as when I remember that once I drank a whole bottle of brandy, and also remember that I was subsequently very ill. The thing which only imagery can supply is not context but content to our memories - the past events as we perceived them. I could have been ill through drinking whiskey, or because of a stomach infection. But if I have visual and gustatory images of the bottle in my hand and the brandy in my mouth this possibility hardly matters. With imagery the relationship is of evidence to conclusions, not - as with additional propositions - of premises to conclusions.

This is why I reject Ryle's claim:² 'The question "How can I faithfully describe what I once witnessed?" is no more of a puzzle than the question, "How can I faithfully visualise what I once witnessed?". Ability to describe things learned by personal experience is one of the knacks we expect of linguistically competent people; ability to visualise parts of it is another thing we expect in some

¹ 'A Study in Memory', p.87.

² 'The Concept of Mind', p.276.

degree of most people...'. In the first place, the ability to describe things has nothing to do with whether they were learned by personal experience or not. And in the second place, the ability to digest food is also something we expect of most people, and this is not a puzzle at all - or, if it is, it is a different kind of puzzle. To remember how to describe something so that we know that we are describing it correctly demands the mental retention of a great many propositions, sufficient to support each other, to form an adequate¹ context for the memory. But imagery demands no mental retention, only physiological retention. In being re-presented with how the object looked I am in a position to decide what it was. That I know about the past by means of memory may mean that I am remembering propositions made in the past, or that I am interpreting my present imagery, or both together; but there is a perfectly familiar distinction between knowing and knowing of or about. I know the man next door whereas I know of or about the Prime Minister but I do not know him. I can know the past, as distinct from knowing about it, only when I am having imagery of it.

b) Conceiving 'the past'

When we ask how we come to have a concept of space we may be told that we simply perceive it directly or that it arises from our perceiving objects in certain relationships which we characterise as

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For the significance of the term 'adequate' see chapter IV, p. 108.

'spatial'. But to claim that we conceive time only as the result of perceiving (or being aware of) events in a certain relation which we characterise as 'temporal', presupposes that our memories of events are identifiable as such, and form a temporal sequence, leading up, so to speak, to the here and now. Once I have the idea of my past and also the idea of existents outside and independent of myself, then it is a straightforward step to the idea of the past. But, without the aid of some memory-indicator to differentiate, within the thoughts I entertain, what actually has happened from what logically could happen, how could I come to conceive my past? It has been suggested that our idea of the past grows up, so to speak, with our use of the past tense in speech. I do not doubt that the use of past tense helps to clarify the concept of the past, but I fail to see how a past tense could ever come into use unless and until people had at least some concept of their own past lives to which to apply it. Those who deny that remembering is a unique experience, and as such identifiable, are thereby obliged to claim that we perceive temporal sequence directly, that memory is a concept derived from our acquaintance with the past, and not vice-versa, and they are led to what is, in my opinion, a very contrived and unconvincing argument.

i. The specious present

This argument is that the present, though we treat it as simply an ideal limit, has in fact a very short duration - just long enough for us to perceive the temporal sequence of events. So that what I

am now perceiving has within it one event succeeded by another. Thus I can grasp the notion of temporal sequence from present perceptual experience alone, and from this evolve the notions of past and future. Furlong, for example, speaks of 'a succession of sounds which we can apprehend in one act',¹ the rat-tat-tat of someone knocking at the door. And he says: 'Thus from this familiar mode of experience, the specious present, we can learn what it means to say that an event has occurred, and that one event is before another. And indeed this is likely to have been the way in which we first acquired this knowledge, for it is hard to see how else we could have obtained it'.²

Now, I do not want to deny that we apprehend rat-tat-tats 'in one act', nor to deny that this could be our first introduction to the idea of temporal sequence. What I do want to deny is that it is either correct or necessary to maintain that this apprehension is 'in one present', whether we call it specious or not.

I can express my argument better in relation to a plea by C.I. Lewis for a temporally extended present, though his reason for making it is slightly different.³ "The present" is "long enough" for the genuine apprehension of the data of experience; because otherwise there would be no such thing as direct experience, of which anyone

¹ 'A Study in Memory', p.95.

² 'A Study in Memory', p.96.

³ 'An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation', p.331 (his italics)

could be aware or even mention as what we do not have'. He argues that unless there were a present in which we could learn what we subsequently remember about the world as presented to us, memory could never even originate. 'Either the pristine given character is there to be inspected, or there is nothing there the inspection of which would inform us of what has just escaped'.¹

Now, I grant that perceptual judgments 'take time'. But I deny that the perceptual judgments which I remember must have been made within a single 'present'. If we regard the present as simply the ideal limit of the recent, then, though our sense-organs may be functioning continuously, our perceptual judgments are being made, as it were, up to the present rather than in the present. So long as we have the faculty of retaining what is presented to the eyes, ears and so on, we can still make perceptual judgments; we need only allow that they are being made about the immediate past as given in memory, not about the present as given in 'sensation'.

By taking this stand we avoid the problems which must arise from such claims as this by Russell: 'The specious present includes elements at all stages on the journey from sensation to image. It is this fact which enables us to apprehend such things as movements...'.² For here, if we take the 'fading of sensations' (Russell's description of the

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'An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation,' p.331

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'The Analysis of Mind', p.174.

transition) literally, we must expect that seeing a car move down the street would involve seeing one firm shape with a series of ever fainter ghost shapes behind it, as we do in fact see shooting stars which move too fast for our eyes, or objects in photographs when the camera has been left open too long. And if we do not take it literally, can it mean anything but that we see the car where it is and also remember it where it has just been, that a single perceptual judgment embraces both the 'present sensation' and an indefinite series of memory-images of past sensations (or the appearances given in past sensations)? This seems to be the only intelligible interpretation, and, since the perception of changes must in any case involve memory-imagery, why can we not dispense with the 'present sensation' as a distinct kind of experience altogether?

The case for doing so is greatly strengthened by the difficulties we are bound to meet in explaining how and when a sensation 'becomes' an image. According to Russell 'We have seen no reason to think that the difference between sensations and images is only one of degree',¹ yet, within the specious present, 'a² sensation fades gradually, passing by continuous gradations to the status of an image'. It is by no means easy to see how anything can pass by continuous gradations from being one thing to being another unless the difference is simply

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'The Analysis of Mind', p.147.

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'The Analysis of Mind', p.174.

one of degree. This surely is how we would normally define a difference of degree as opposed to a difference of kind.

ii. Perceiving, remembering and imagining as a single scale

Hume, like Russell, was reluctant to deny that sensations are different in kind from images. He was faced, therefore, with the problem that there seemed to be no way of distinguishing between the 'liveliness' by which he differentiated sensations from images, and the 'vividness' by which he differentiated memory from imagination imagery. This fact he tacitly acknowledged by interchanging the two terms quite frequently throughout his work. Why did he not simply accept that between present perception, memory-imagery and imagination-imagery there is a single difference of degree only? Why not allow that they all lie on a scale of vividness/liveliness, with present perception at one end and wild imagination at the other?

I have already argued that the difference between memory and imagination imagery can be one of degree only.¹ I have also argued that in all our perceptual judgments we must employ memory imagery; to deny this is to embrace the apparent absurdity of a 'present' of unspecified duration. Surely the next step is to allow that when we speak of present appearances we are simply referring to that memory-imagery which, due to the proximity in time of its 'external causes', approaches the ideal limit of memory-authority.

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See chapter VI, p. 197.

It may be objected here that this would leave out entirely the unique quality of 'substantial existence' which belongs to the subjects of present perception, that we would be like people who have lost the use of their sense-organs and can 'see' and 'hear' things only in imagery, having no direct contact with the world they are actually living in. But this is not so. For we have not lost the use of our sense-organs; on the contrary they are operating busily all the time, constantly introducing to us novel situations. I have stressed the fact that 'sensing' is very like imaging - so like it in fact that the only effective distinguishing feature is that we 'cannot get away from' our sensations.¹ Whatever other imagery we may have, our 'present sensations' remain firmly, involuntarily and persistently with us. But, if we regard 'present appearances' as being given in memory-imagery like any 'past appearances' except in that they arise out of the most recent sense-activity, is any of this going to be different? All memory-imagery occurs as the result of some stimulus, and if that stimulus, which in this case is the effect of physical events upon our sense-organs, is being constantly reinforced (by the continuity of those physical events), then the memory-image must keep occurring. And it must have the maximum 'firmness', the minimum of 'controllability' and a complete, coherent context.

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See chapter VI, p.219.

We no longer have any problem about 'continuous gradations'. There is a single transition from imagery which reproduces the appearances presented by 'external events' in exact and perfect detail, to imagery which so distorts and rearranges those appearances that the perceptual origins of the various elements of them could hardly be traced.¹ The visual experience of a moment ago is only fractionally less 'firm' than that of this present moment, and we need not postulate a temporally extended present to explain our seeing things as they are, either still or in motion. Nor is it any objection to say that we must then have both 'sensations' and images at the same time. I have shown that there is no logical reason why the presence of one image should exclude the presence of any other, and that there are excellent reasons, quite apart from this present argument, for believing that it does not.²

iii. Perceiving as remembering

In a recent article, 'Philosophical Problems of Memory', C. Landesman admits that there is a natural, almost inevitable, tendency to analyse memory in terms appropriate to perception. But he points out, as the one seemingly insurmountable difficulty, 'In perceiving one usually learns something that one has not previously known; perception is an acquisition of new knowledge. However, it is

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For example, the monstrosities which appear in nightmares may seem to be wholly unlike anything we have ever seen.

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See chapter VI, p.213ff.

essential to memory that what one remembers one does not know for the very first time'.¹ But I have established, I think, that memory-images can be reinterpreted when they occur. If we regard such reinterpretations as part of our remembering, then to that extent we do gain new knowledge in memory. There is a problem only if, on the one hand we exclude from remembering all interpretation, and on the other hand we think of remembering as a kind of perceiving. Once we allow that remembering is the major class and perceiving is simply the limiting case of that class, i.e., that perceiving is a sub-species of remembering, the problem dissolves. For then all knowledge, new or otherwise, is seen to be gained in memory.

We are able to distinguish 'present perceptions' as a unique class because they are the means of acquiring new knowledge of the external world. But 'present sensation' is only an ideal case, one which we can assume but not examine. For this reason arguments about such questions as whether we can properly be said to see movements raise quite unreal problems.¹ We really see things as moving just as we really see things as stationary.

I want to make it quite clear at this point that I am not proposing any startling or revolutionary new theory of knowledge. On the contrary I am simply trying to eliminate the inconsistencies in the

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The JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, LIX.3. Feb. 1st, 1962, p.59.

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Consider e.g. H.A. Prichard, 'Seeing Movements' - 'Knowledge and Perception', p.41ff.

traditional theory of knowledge, advanced by Hume, and adhered to with minor variations by every 'British Empiricist' since. And to do so by accepting the conclusions to which I am logically committed by that theory.

Certainly, nothing I have said need in any way weaken the force of the normal, and very necessary, distinction we make between present perception and memory. The words we use in our perception-claims - 'see', 'hear', 'touch', and so on, are perception words. When I say that I see a bird on the windowsill I am asserting that there is a bird there now, not that there has been one there. The distinction between our perception-claims and our memory-claims is perfectly clear: both refer to objective reality, one to how it was, the other to how it is now.

But this sharp distinction lies in what is being claimed, not in our right to make the claims. Memory-claims are based upon memories we are having of our own past states at the time we make the claims. But perception-claims are not based upon some equivalent cognitive states called 'perceptions', for to perceive something is already to make some claim about a 'present state of affairs', to assert the existence of a particular factual relationship. As I argued in chapter VII, even recognising is always recognising that.¹ Perception-claims are based, like memory-claims, on the memories we are having

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See p. 234.

when we make them, but in the case of perception claims these memories consist very largely, though not entirely, of 'immediate memories'.

It is important to note that the basis of perception-claims does not consist entirely of 'immediate memories'. It is generally acknowledged that any perceptual judgment (any perception in the way that I use that term) must 'go beyond' the present 'given', depending at least as much upon memory and the expectancies created by memory as upon 'present sensation'. The 'pristine given character', as Lewis calls it, is always to some extent tainted by the dubious authority of memory as soon as we advance to any pronouncement about matters of fact. This is the point Stout was making in the passage I quoted earlier in this chapter. My certainty that the door is now closed may rest much more heavily upon my memory of closing it a minute ago and not opening it since than upon the cursory glance I have just cast towards it. And when I have just switched off the light in my room, my certainty that my coat is hanging on the door is likely to arise from my having seen it clearly a moment ago rather than from my present perception of the vague shape which I now take to be my coat hanging on the door.

'Common sense trusts memory, not blindly, but because it has found memory to be trustworthy', Furlong says.¹ But with memory-imagery as such the question of trusting does not arise; we simply have it and we

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'A Study in Memory', p.18.

accept it because we cannot do otherwise. It may be truer to say that, because we have usually found that our interpretations of the appearances which are presented to us are coherent with each other and with the reports made by other people, we accept them as knowledge about the world. When they are about what is happening now we call them perceptions and when they are about what has happened we call them memories - without being too precise about our qualification of events as 'occurring now'.

iv. 'Present', 'past' and 'absent'

To return now to the question of how we come to conceive the past, I suggest that 'past' is simply a classificatory term we apply to all those events which present themselves to us (present appearances to us) without that persistence by which we identify present events. It is no accident that 'present' is the contrary of both 'past' and 'absent'. The constant reinforcement of our imagery 'gives the present to us' as persistent, coherent experience which we cannot ignore. Events which we are aware of as real events, but which are not presented with this persistent continuity - which are in fact discordant with the events so presented - are thereby negatively classified as 'not present'. That I am now thinking of my friend's appearance, i.e. how he looks, though I am not now seeing him, entails that I have seen him at another time and also that, if he still exists, he is in another place.

That we conceive the past simply as the 'not present' within 'the real' is suggested in a passage by Furlong (though I do not claim that Furlong had any such idea in mind or that he would necessarily accept the view I propose, especially in the light of his claims, which I quoted above, for the specious present). 'The imaginary is what we invent, what is largely dependent upon our will. The real is what comes to us without our asking; its main characteristic is involuntariness, spontaneity.... Now in memory there is also this involuntary, spontaneous character; it is understandable therefore, that we should ascribe reality to what we remember. But we can clearly observe that what we remember is not now happening, and so we place it in the past, thus assigning to it a reality of a sort'.¹

My only comments on this passage are that the distinctions between perceiving, remembering and imagining are not the sharp distinctions of kind which it suggests, and that we do not 'place' remembered events in the past; rather we exclude them from the present.

3. The verification of memories

a) Coherence

Thus we identify our current memories as the basis of both our perception-claims and our memory-claims, allowing differences of degree, but not of kind, in their value as 'evidence' for the claims made. And, in doing so, we deny that the perception claim is in any specially

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'A Study in Memory', p.98.

privileged position. As a matter of empirical fact it is less likely to be wrong. But this is only because the sense-evidence on which it is based is up-to-the-minute evidence, not because it is better evidence in some other way.

When Holland speaks of 'the distinction which we certainly draw in ordinary life between those recollections which can only be supported by further recollections and those which are supported by something better',¹ he is speaking of a distinction which simply does not apply to the authority of memory as such, but only to the comparative authority of one's own memories and the claims made by other people. He says: 'If I claim to remember putting some money into a box and certain other people saw me do it and later the box is destroyed by fire, then, supposing my recollections to be called in question, there may be no better means open to me of supporting my claim than to bring forward these other people to bear me out by saying that they also remember my putting money in the box. But suppose the box is not destroyed. Then I can if necessary fetch it and display its contents. How can it be said in this latter case that my recollection is only supported by other recollections in the way it was in the former case?'.

The important question is: What is it that causes us to make this distinction in ordinary life? The answer may be: To convince

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'The Empiricist Theory of Memory', MIND LXIII, 1954, p.476.

people that we did put the money in the box, or even: To convince people that there is money in the box. Surely it is not: To convince ourselves that we remember putting money in the box. I certainly do not deny that people are more readily convinced by what they see with their own eyes than by other people's memory-claims. But this fact does not, as Holland suggests, free us 'from dependence on memory in general'. My arguments above show that we can say that the recollection is still supported only by other recollections, even though these include the 'immediate recollections' of the people who witness the opening of the box. Their greater conviction arises, not from the fact that a memory is replaced by a 'present perception', but from the fact that someone else's claim is replaced by their own experience. Whether this is perceptual experience or memory experience is of minor importance. It is also true that people are more readily convinced by their own memories than by the claims of other people.

The important point is that all cause/effect confirmation must involve sense-perception, and once we allow that 'perceiving' is simply our name for that remembering which 'runs up to' the ideal limit we call the present, then it follows that the coherence by which we judge our memories to be true operates wholly within memory. And, as we have seen,¹ the most recent memory is not necessarily the strongest and most reliable.

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See p. 297.

We judge our memory-claims to be true by their coherence with other memory-claims, our own and other peoples. And we feel our memory-claims to be true because of their seeming coherence with other memory-claims. We should never lose sight of the fact that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, when we feel them to be true they are true. Von Leyden is perhaps right when he says that we may rule out the suggestion that the only characteristic of memory is 'the experience of being under the influence of some sort of an impression, and of a confidently held belief, concerning one's own past'. But I do not accept his claim that: 'It is impossible that the nature of this experience by itself should constitute the "essence" of memory, since an unjustified or even disproved memory-claim does not cease to be associated with, and even upheld by, precisely that same sort of experience'.¹ The feeling of belief arises out of an initial contextual coherence, and it is true that, on occasions, belief attaches to a memory-claim before the context of the memory has been expanded sufficiently to justify this belief. But, if the claim has been disproved (and I take it that Von Leyden means disproved to the claimant, else his claim is utterly trivial), then this can only have been by the introduction into the memory-context of some fact which is not coherent. When this happens the claimant must see the need to amend or modify his memory-claim, and the feeling of belief cannot persist.

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'Remembering', p.105 (my italics).

b) 'Looking again'.

i. Temporal location of memories

It is always possible to 'believe too soon'. And because of this we can never achieve 'absolute certainty' about matters of past fact. But this need not distress us, for we can never achieve 'absolute certainty' about matters of present fact either. If we suspect that we may have made a perceptual error, or even if we are just particularly anxious not to, we look again - or in some cases keep looking - until we are satisfied that our perceptual judgment is right. But sometimes it is by no means easy to be satisfied. We may look at a distant object for some time, seeing it sometimes as a man and sometimes as a bush blowing in the wind. Looking again is not a sure-fire way of becoming certain; at most it is a means of knowing whether we are certain or not - or of just how much we can be certain. And exactly the same applies when we 'look again' in imagery at the events we have witnessed in the past. But in this case it is generally necessary to 'look again' harder, more often, and more carefully, for we have to decide not only what it is, but when it was as well. This is to say, we not only have to be sure that we have identified the remembered objects or events correctly. We have also to be sure that these objects or events do belong to a single past perceptual occasion.

The 'immediate memories' we employ in perception are felt to be immediate, and the question of their temporal location does not arise. The appearances presented to me in imagery all belong in my past, but

in what part of my past may not be at once apparent. Some philosophers have claimed that when we have memory-images we 'see', as it were, the temporal location of the event imaged, i.e. the comparative 'distance' of the event from the present moment, almost as we see objects as more or less distant from us in space. Furlong, for instance, writes: 'We seem also to have some ability to judge what we might call "temporal distance" by means of vividness, detail and spontaneity of our imagery. To image this morning's breakfast is one thing; to image that of yesterday is another. The vividness and other such qualities of our imagery are "secondary signs" of temporal distance'.¹ Now, I believe that this is substantially true, especially in the case of our more recent memories. But, when we consider our more remote memories, it is clear that the notion of 'judging temporal distance' requires some further analysis. It is not enough to speak of 'vividness'; my memory-imagery of some very exciting happening in my early youth is likely to be much more vivid than my memory-imagery of the hum-drum events of this morning.

First and foremost, our memories are temporally located by the other memories coherent with them. I know, for instance, that my present imagery of my children in a boat is a memory of my last holiday because it 'runs off into' other memories: of the scenery, the house we stayed in, the journey home, and so on. But this is

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'A study in Memory', p.99.

not enough; there must also be some fixed reference point. All these events were (roughly) at the same time; but what time was that? To fix the temporal location of a remembered event seems possible only if we connect it to the present moment by an unbroken chain of coherent memories. And this is, I believe, what in fact happens.

This does not necessarily mean that to remember when anything happened to us we must also remember everything that has happened to us since. My claim seems much less odd when we realise how very indeterminate the memory of 'an event' can be. A set of coherent memories may be narrow and highly detailed, or it may be much wider and very sketchy; or it may be both at once - a nucleus, as it were, of detailed memories, fanning out into an extended context of less detailed memories, until it extends, however sketchily, over the whole of our past experience.

This extension of the context is made possible by the use of 'fixed markers'. If I wanted to colour in the eighteenth fiftieth part of a line drawn across this page I should not divide the line into fifty equal parts and then count along it. I should halve it and then halve one of the parts and so on, and the marks I made would remain on the page as a ready-made guide for any future endeavour of the same kind.

Our 'temporal markers' work in much the same way, and we all establish them for ourselves in the course of our lives. My own are

mainly such things as the size and general appearance of my family, the places where I have lived and the kind of work I was engaged in. As soon as any expanding memory-context embraces any such 'marker' the memory can take a short-cut, as it were, to the present time. The noticeable inability of small children to distinguish between the recent and the comparatively distant past may well be due, in part at least, to their lack of adequate 'markers'.

In this way most of our memories do 'come labelled' with the temporal location of the events remembered - with a greater or lesser degree of determinateness. On occasions I remember some event but have only the haziest notion of when it happened, but every memory of a past event in my own life has some degree of temporal determinateness and that temporal determinateness tends to increase with any expansion of the memory-context.

ii. Non-fallibility and evidence

At the end of chapter VI, I stressed that imagery, as such, is non-fallible; error can arise only in its interpretation; the imagery itself is only evidence for our memory-claims, it does not enter into those claims. There must, therefore, be a certain arbitrariness in any distinction we may make within memory-claims between what we really saw and what we took ourselves to be seeing.

We can make a distinction between seeing what is in fact a book, and seeing what we take to be a book (whether it is or not). But, in the case of memory, the very point at issue is whether or not what we

took to be a book was in fact a book. We can distinguish between remembering seeing a book and remembering the visual appearance of a book, but this is only the distinction between remembering a particular event and remembering a particular individual. The distinction we cannot make is between remembering seeing a book and remembering seeing an appearance, for, as I argued earlier, we do not see appearances.¹ Appearances are presented to us by the things we see. To see is always to see something as something, even if only as a patch of colour. The only distinction of kind we can make is between how we saw (our evidence) and what we took ourselves to be seeing (our claim). The problem is that some initial degree of interpretation must be put upon our imagery to allow it to function as evidence. To assert that the man was bleeding on the strength of our memory of how he looked we must at least identify what we saw as a red patch spreading over a white patch.

At this point I must say, quite boldly, that the ultimate justification for our memory-beliefs is not logical but psychological. In chapter III, I made the distinction between what we (psychologically) could not see as anything but a certain object or event, and what we see as a certain object or event as a result of expectancies we happen to have at the time, or judgments about what it 'must be'. Having made this distinction in any given case, we have reached the terminal point of checking of our memory-claim.

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See chapter VI, p.210ff.

iii. Verification is always confirmation

But this situation is not peculiar to memory. We cannot reach logical certainty about matters of fact, whether they be of past fact or of present fact. To 'verify' a claim, whether it be a memory-claim or a perception-claim, is simply to confirm it - not to put it beyond the reach of doubt. The question 'Are you sure?' is really only an invitation to reconsider, and the reply 'Yes I am' is only a rejection of that invitation.

I have claimed that the context of most of our memories spreads, so to speak, throughout our entire past histories, very sketchily except in the 'immediate vicinity' of the event which is the subject of the memory-claim, but clearly enough to enable us to 'locate' the remembered event, and to indicate to us with that degree of determinateness we are entitled to 'locate' it. In the case of our 'present perceptions' practical certainty is usually immediate. They are in a favoured position in that they rest, in part, upon the imagery of appearances which are still being presented, and this is sufficient to account for the greater likelihood of error in memory, a likelihood which increases as the events remembered 'fall away from' the present.

But the recentness of events is not the only factor which makes for 'firmness' in the memory of them. The extent to which we noticed them, i.e., the extent of the observed context, is ultimately of greater importance. That is why I can be more certain of my memory of travelling from Perth to Canberra two years ago than of my memory

of stubbing out a cigarette a moment ago, or even of my perception, in which I have no interest at all, of the people and cars now passing my window.

We trust our memories in the same way, and for the same reasons as we trust our eyes and ears - and with the same kind of justification. The advantage on the side of 'present perception' is that the memory-context expands automatically with the passage of time. The compensating advantage on the side of our more distant memories is that they are concerned only with those events which did interest us, did command our attention, whether we realised this at the time or not. Because of this the supporting memory-context is not only always available to us, it is in fact already 'present' as the setting to the memory. It is only the presence of this context that leads us to claim to remember.

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