

ON REMEMBERING

"There is a sense in which we can remember p when we have known p before".¹

"When I remember that I wrote the last page just now, this does not involve that I shall have known p before".²

"To know p " is different from "to know that I wrote p "; and "remembering p " is different from "remembering that I wrote p ". According to Moore, remembering p involves knowing p ; but remembering that I wrote p does not presuppose that I *know* that I wrote the last page.

Moore, in his second assertion, remarks that to remember that I wrote the last page does not involve that I know that I wrote the last page. What he says is that there is a sense of remembering when the first condition, namely, to remember p , prior knowledge of p is required, is not satisfied.

What do I mean when I say that I know that I wrote the last page? Is it different from saying that I know p ? My answer to these questions would be that when I say that I know that I wrote the last page, I know writing of that page to be true in the same sense in which I say "I know p ". It is not different from saying that I know p . The only distinction we can think of between the two is that in the case of knowing of writing a page, knowing of *doing* is involved, whereas in the case of "I know p " knowing of *things* is involved. When I say that I know p , what I mean is that *this* is the case; but, to say that I know that I wrote the last page means I did something it involves doing whereas to say "I know p " involves no doing.

Remembering involves knowing; rather it must entail knowing. In the positive sense of the term, to say that I remember p entails that I have known p before. Negatively, it is not possible to say that I remember p unless I have known p before. But, Moore in his second assertion "to say that I remember that I wrote the last page just

now" says that no prior knowledge is involved. Let us reformulate his example in order to substantiate the claim that it is not possible to remember the writing of the last page without knowing the same before. Consider

- (a) I wrote something.
- (b) I know that I wrote something.
- (c) I remember that I wrote something.

Moore maintains that (c) entails (a) but not (b). But, can (b) be omitted? Or, does not (c) entail (b) also? My answer to these questions would be that (b) cannot be omitted and also that (c) must entail (b) as well. The evidence for the truth of these assertions comes from autobiographical statements like "I am thinking", "I am painting a landscape", and an infinite number of similar examples. Such autobiographical assertions must involve knowing. To say that I remember that I painted the landscape entails that I know that I did that. Similarly, to say that I remember that I wrote the last page must imply that I know that I wrote the last page.

To say something about one's own experience or behaviour is different from making assertions like "There is a chair in this room". To say that there is a chair in the room would not entail that I know that there is a chair in the room. But, to say that I know that there is a chair in the room entails that there is a chair in the room. Thus, there can be seen a distinction between the assertions about my own experience and behaviour and those which are about things outside us.

There is something more interesting which can be cited at this point. Consider the proposition "I remember my dream". The analysis of the concept of remembering requires us to say that the assertion "I remember my dream" entails the assertion that I know my dream. This, however, does not get support from common usage. We never say that I know my dream but we always make such assertions as "I remember my dream" or "I had a dream". This raises

a problem. Since to say that "I remember that I wrote the last page" entails that I know that I wrote the last page (which is an assertion about my own experience and behaviour); similarly to say "I remember my dream" must imply that I know that I had a dream, since this assertion that I remember my dream is also about my own experience. Is it the case that when I say that I remember my dream, I am not using "remembering" in the sense in which it involves knowing? Is it being used in the sense in which when I say "I remember my dream" means only that I had a dream? But, if I mean by "I remember my dream" that "I had a dream", then how is it that I can recall what I had dreamt without having known that I had dreamt? Thus, it should be that to say "I remember that I had a dream" would entail that I know that I had a dream.

We have said earlier that remembering does *entail* knowing. When I say that I know p , it implies that p is true. Similarly, when I say that I remember p , it also implies that p is true, because "remembering p " entails "knowing that p ". Briefly the position is this: To say "I remember p " entails "I know p ". To say "I know p " entails " p is true". Therefore, to say "I remember p " entails " p is true". The argument follows the law of transitivity; hence it is valid. Thus, the thesis "I remember p " entails "I know p ". So, to the question "Does 'I do not know p ' entail that 'I do not remember p '?" the answer is that "not knowing p " does entail "not remembering p ", and also "I know p " does not entail that "I remember p ".

From the above analysis of the concept of remembering, one is inclined to think that Moore's second assertion that "I remember that I wrote the last page" does not involve prior knowledge seems to go against the logic of the concept. One really wonders whether Moore was justified in making such an assertion.

NOTES

1. Moore, G. E., *The Common-Place Book 1919-1953* (Edited by Casimir Lewy). London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962, p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 9.