

## McTAGGART ON PERCEPTION

McTaggart's views on perception, unorthodox and important (even if at times controversial) as they are, have largely remained neglected in the Anglo-American discussions of the subject. It must be counted as an inexplicable irony about fashions in philosophy that rejection of a thinker's philosophy, or of the school he represents, often leaves in its wake a complacently dismissive attitude even with regard to other important things he may have to say on issues of contemporary relevance. The problem of perception has been one of the most extensively and hotly discussed subjects in the analytic tradition (and of course in the phenomenological tradition of the Continent), and yet practically nothing or little has been heard about the views of philosophers like McTaggart on the question. It is this general (and unhappy) neglect which has urged me to bring the issue into light.

McTaggart's views on perception form a well laid out coherent theory and are no mere desultory statements of someone treating of the questions by incidence. His treatment of the different issues relating to perception is informed by an internal exigency and a thematic unity, as would become evident as we go along. That perception is one of the central concerns in McTaggart's thought (something which he shares with the phenomenologists, Edmund Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, regardless of differences as to orientation and treatment) hardly needs emphasis -- a superficial look at his opus, *The Nature of Existence*<sup>1</sup> (NE), especially volume two, should show that. It is, however, not the relation that the problem of perception bears to McTaggart's system which is of direct relevance here. I do not thereby pretend to suggest that it is in every case feasible or even desirable to divorce a philosopher's reflections on a certain problem from his over-all philosophic position. That is, the suggestion is not that treatments of a subject like perception can *always* stand by themselves; sometimes a more studied attention to the background of the thought (on the issue at hand) may seem necessary. Even so, I think it would not be denied that it may sometimes be advantageous to lift (so to

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say) the problem out of the philosophic system in which it seems embedded and deal with it separately if only with the hope that its discussion may bring into relief at least some of the aspects hitherto not exclusively attended to, or throw some fresh or further light on the relatively familiar ones. In fact, this writer is persuaded that the value of McTaggart's views on perception (as also of his reflections on fundamental concepts such as reality, existence, substance, quality, relation, cause, time, etc.) remains relatively independent of the edifice that is built on them, and so is in itself worthy of attention.

McTaggart's utterances on perception are not all of them to be found under any single special heading. He deals with various aspects of the problem according as the context necessitates. Piecing them together is therefore a task worthy of attempt and also, as I think, philosophically rewarding. In doing so I would in general avoid consideration of his "idealism" -- sometimes the main talking -point of his philosophy -- unless indeed warranted. The same, however, cannot be done with regard to concepts of substance, quality, relation etc., without reference to which discussion of his theory of perception simply does not get started.

It would be well to begin our enquiry by noticing McTaggart's preliminary meaning of the term "perception." And McTaggart says the following :

I use the word perception to denote that *species* of awareness which we have of the *existent* - awareness being a mental state which is *not* belief, though it is *knowledge*.<sup>2</sup>

So perception is a species of awareness (which is equivalent to knowledge) of the existent. The view that perception is (or yields) knowledge goes back very far in the Western tradition. Thus Theaetetus says to Socrates : "So far as I can see at present, knowledge is nothing but perception."<sup>3</sup> All knowledge may not be reducible to perception, but perception is without doubt the most primordial mode of consciousness we have of reality. Implicit in this view is the assumption about the 'general reliability' of perceptual experiences. This general reliability may sometimes come under a cold, as, for example, in illusions or other cases of error, but our conviction about it is scarcely if ever *radically* shaken by the occurrence of such cases. We generally believe that we know, or can always devise, in case of need, ways and means of taking care of such aberrations. Perception, to use phenomenological language, is the human concrete

"opening" to the world through the windows of the senses and the base of our knowledge (of that world) and even of action.<sup>4</sup> To perceive something - nay, even to be conscious of something - is already to single it out (however vaguely at times), to set it apart from the rest of the world, to take note of it with those of its features we can lay hands on in perception.

The word 'species' in the above quotation from McTaggart is to be marked. Perception being a species of awareness, not all awareness is exhausted in perception, even though it may share, with perception, the characteristic of being (possible) knowledge. To the explication of the terms 'Perception' and 'Awareness' and their distinction McTaggart attaches the greatest importance. He professes to having used both the terms in the sense given to them by Russell and explained by him in the chapter entitled "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description" in his *Mysticism and Logic and other Essays*.<sup>5</sup> To get clear about McTaggart's meaning we quote below some crucial lines from the passages from Russell quoted by McTaggart himself. Regarding 'awareness' and 'acquaintance' as synonymous, McTaggart says that one is aware of an object when one has (to quote Russell) a "*direct* cognitive relation to that object."<sup>6</sup> Russell further says: "In fact, I think the relation of subject and object which I call acquaintance is simply the converse of the relation of object and subject which constitutes presentation. That is, to say that S has acquaintance with O is essentially the same thing as to say that O is presented to S."<sup>7</sup> The awarenesses we have considered so far have all been awarenesses of particular existents, and might all, in a large sense, be called sense-data. For, from the point of view of theory of knowledge, introspective knowledge is exactly on a level with knowledge derived from sight or hearing. But, in addition to awareness of the above kind of objects, which may be called awareness of *particulars*, we have also (though not quite in the same sense) what may be called awareness of *universals*.<sup>8</sup> Perception, according to McTaggart, "is the awareness of what Mr. Russell calls particulars, as distinct from the awareness of what he calls universals."<sup>9</sup> Explicating further his meaning of the terms, McTaggart says: "In the terminology which I propose to adopt, it (i.e., perception) is the awareness of substances as distinct from the awareness of characteristics."<sup>10</sup> McTaggart clarifies that though he does not accept "without reservation" Russell's view regarding the nature of the objects of which we become aware in introspection, "this does not affect the meaning of awareness."<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere too McTaggart clarifies that perception as knowledge is distinguished from other knowledge by "being knowledge by acquaintance, or awareness."<sup>12</sup> And he adds :

It is distinguished, again, from other awareness by being awareness of substances, as opposed to that awareness of characteristics which tells us what a quality like yellow, or a relation like superiority, is in itself.<sup>13</sup>

So perception in McTaggart's sense of the term means knowledge of "substances", and applies to both our awareness of the environing world of objects and our awareness of "the contents of my own mind which is given me by introspection."<sup>14</sup>

Before we proceed further it is necessary to call attention to one important point. We will note that while McTaggart's "perception" may be deemed as equivalent to Russell's "acquaintance with" in so far as it is limited to particulars (McTaggart's substances),<sup>15</sup> there is a very distinct sense in which it differs from Russell's phrase. It is a crucial feature of McTaggart's use of "perception, to the details of which we shall return later, that it is impossible to perceive a substance (or particular) without perceiving it *as* characterized in certain ways, i.e., *as so-and-so*. So while McTaggart can always without difficulty make such statements as "I perceive X as black, as sad, as amiable, as jealous, and so on", one cannot in the Russellian use of the term say : "I am *acquainted with* as red." Russell, be it noted, expressly refers, in the essay concerned, to sense - data as the objects with which we are "acquainted".<sup>16</sup>

McTaggart's view of perception as knowledge of substances straight -a- way leads us into the heart of McTaggart's notion of substance. We shall not here attempt to enter on the details of the question but only note, in outline form, some special features of McTaggart's meaning of substance for it has direct and central bearing on his theory of perception.

It is here worthy of note that according to McTaggart, it is not only substances which exist but also qualities and relations, and further, qualities and relations of those existent qualities and relations.<sup>17</sup> McTaggart dismisses the view that characteristics of existents do not exist, as patently unreasonable. If Socrates exists, and is wise, it would be unreasonable to deny that his wisdom exists. And his wisdom is nothing but his quality of being wise. And so does exist the relation of moral superiority in which Socrates stands to Nero, as also the quantitative relation in which his wisdom stands to the wisdom of Aristotle. So qualities and relations

belong to the basic "furniture" of the world.

The things which come first in the order of existents are substances, however. McTaggart's primary meaning of substance needs, I suggest, to be distinguished from what we should prefer to call his "Doctrine of Substance". And it is acquaintance with the former which is principally relevant for our present purposes. (Occasionally, though, we might need to refer to his Doctrine of Substance too; but that does not affect the distinction drawn.)

One useful way of approaching McTaggart's idea of substance would be to notice what McTaggart thinks a self-evident truth: namely that whatever exists *must* have, besides existence, some other characteristics which could be truly asserted of it.<sup>18</sup> This, not because saying about something just that it exists is to say nothing significant - for saying of something that it exists at least helps in distinguishing it from the non-existent - but because it inevitably leads us to the question as to *what* that thing is.<sup>19</sup> That is, the 'what' *invariably* and ineluctably goes along with the 'that'. The above position rests on McTaggart's firm view that whatever exists must have a *nature*, and this nature of the existent consists, according to him, of the characteristics it possesses. Lest this demand for some quality besides existence appear as a mere epistemological requirement, it deserves to be emphasized that this is indeed how it should be, it being a *self-evident* truth (as noted above) that what exists, possesses some characteristic besides existence. An unqualified something would be a mere non-entity, and indistinguishable from nothing. It would, as McTaggart says, be "a perfect and absolute blank."<sup>20</sup> (C.D. Broad too regards the above proposition as "self-evidently true" and thinks "existence" to be a 'formal' quality.)<sup>21</sup> Thus, as McTaggart sums up, that which is "true of" something is a quality of that something.<sup>22</sup> (McTaggart however hastens to add that this "being true of" (something) ought not to be taken as a 'definition' of quality, which, according to him, remains, like existence, indefinable<sup>23</sup>.)

Again an existent, apart from having some quality besides existence, also stands in a certain relation to some other existent-assuming, that is, that there is a plurality of existents.<sup>24</sup> And thus is introduced the category of Relation. Relation too McTaggart regards indefinable, though it can be understood (he says) through specific examples. (Thus *X* is greater than *Y*, loves *Y*, is the father of *Y*, is to the right of *Y*, are examples of relation

in which *X* stands to *Y*). In fact the category of relation is established by the simple fact of an existent having, besides existence, some other quality; for the existent can have that quality only by standing in a certain relation to that quality. Saying that 'X is happy' allows itself to be analysed in terms of the statements 'X has the quality of being happy' (Quality) and 'X stands in a certain relation to happiness' (Relation). This is, then, how we reach the conception of Substance.

Of the two definitions of substance which we come across in McTaggart's works the first one occurs in section 67 of *NE*, Vol. I, and means by substance something which has qualities and is related without being itself either a quality or a relation. The second definition, which amends the first one, and which is not only truer but also accords best with McTaggart's principles, is found in "An Ontological Idealism" where McTaggart says; "That which has qualities and is related without being itself either a quality or a relation or having qualities of relations among its parts"<sup>25</sup> - the last phrase being added to exclude 'facts'.

As will have been noticed, McTaggart approaches substance via characteristics. This means that substance cannot be reduced to qualities or relations even though either or both of them determine *what* a particular substance is. That is, even though a substance is identified as *this* substance by its characteristics, it is not to be identified *with* those characteristics. Deriving substance from qualities or relations would lead thought to a vain infinite regress. For anything to be actual, there must be some 'fixed starting-points'<sup>26</sup> of actuality, and substances answer to this need; and thus we are spared the anguish of having to postulate characteristics of characteristics of characteristics ....or facts about facts about facts ...or facts about characteristics of facts about characteristics ... or anything of the kind which would produce an unattached chain of dependence stretching away to infinity.<sup>27</sup>

The important points relating to McTaggart's notion of substance having been briefly noticed, let us now return to the question of perception proper. But before we do so, a crucial clarification, bears as it does on our treatment of the problem at hand, needs to be made. And it would be well if the reader keeps it in mind throughout the present discussion. There is nothing, I venture to suggest, in McTaggart's definition of substance (or of perception) which should prevent subsumption of what are called physical/material objects<sup>28</sup> and events under the category of substance. It is true that

McTaggart finally came to reject the reality of matter, but this was on metaphysical grounds, and has, I want to insist, to do with his Doctrine of Substance and not with his definition (or meaning) of substance. For example, McTaggart's a priori conclusion that no substance can be simple, that every substance is compound (since it has an internal structure and, therefore, parts which are, in turn, substances) and so infinitely divisible, is no part of his *definition* of substance but, as he himself says, a 'synthetic' - even if 'self-evident' and 'ultimate'<sup>29</sup> - proposition about substance. So if I am correct in my reasoning, there is nothing that gives us any presumption against regarding physical objects too as substances. They will be substances because they will have characteristics without either being a characteristic or a fact. And of course, substances would include (even on McTaggart's own specific view) self and mental states and thus count as (possible) objects of perceptual knowledge<sup>30</sup>.

McTaggart's view of perception as direct awareness of substances brings him very close to what is called 'direct realism' and what Sellars prefers to call, rightly, 'direct realism'<sup>31</sup>. The direct realism of McTaggart's consists in his steadfast refusal to admit any surrogates (like sense-data, for example) meant to mediate between perception and its objects (physical or otherwise). This Direct Realism, I suggest, should be seen as, to put it in the words of Gram, "independent of the ontological question of whether there are any material objects in the world, whether the world contains both material and mental items, or whether whatever exists is mental".<sup>32</sup> If so, a more or less working formulation of what constitutes the essence of Direct Realism, could, to quote Gram again, be the following :

*In every case of perception we are directly aware of the perceptual object and not a deputy or representative from which we draw inferences to such an object.*<sup>33</sup>

The one clear advantage which Gram's formulation of Direct Realism enjoys over other formulations of the theory - if it is a theory<sup>34</sup> - is that in one stroke it rids the theory of the chronic and erroneous belief associated with it : namely that Direct Realism (or perception) has to do only, or at least mainly, with the external world of physical objects and events. And this in turn opens the way - and this is very crucial - for the admission of both physical and mental entities as actual or possible objects of perception. This is, again, what McTaggart's view of perception perfectly seems to accord with. In fact the above view of Direct Realism does not forbid an idealist, who only entertains the reality of the mental world, from embracing a direct realist theory of perception.

McTaggart's view of perception as knowledge of substances (as indeed his view of misperception too, as we shall later see) is, as should be obvious, a correlate of his view of substance. It is germane to McTaggart's view of perception that perception as knowledge of a substance has perforce to be a knowledge of what that substance is; it must tell us something about the nature or character of that substance; it must disclose, bring to our notice, some feature(s) of it so that we are able to identify it in *some* (however incomplete or inadequate) way. Any knowledge which fails to achieve this target must lose its *raison d'être*. It is this view of perception which gives it the preeminent place among the sources/modes of knowledge. To be sure, it is possible, says McTaggart, to know a priori what characterizes the existent as a whole<sup>35</sup> - just as it is possible a priori to determine that an existent, if there be one, must have some characteristic(s) besides existence (see above). But when it comes to particular substances, we find that their characteristics can only be known in perception of those substances. Knowledge concerning the characteristics of *particular* substances cannot but be empirical, and all empirical knowledge, in McTaggart's view, has its basis in perception alone. To see the matter expressed in his own words :

Although perception is awareness of substances, we find that it always gives us knowledge *about* the characteristics of these substances. If it did not, we should have no knowledge about the characteristics of any particular substance, except the knowledge that it had those characteristics which we know *a priori* to belong to all substances. For *all other* knowledge about the characteristics of any particular substance is empirical, and ...no empirical knowledge can be based on anything but perception.<sup>36</sup>

Perception, therefore, is, to put it in McTaggartian terms, knowledge of something *as having* characteristics. To perceive a thing without perceiving it as characterized in certain ways is to fail to know it as an individual, and so not really to perceive it. It is, as intimated above, integral to McTaggart's notion of substance that it is the nature of a (particular) substance - which nature consists of characteristics, i.e., a substance's primary qualities and the relational qualities directly born of its original relations, and so on - which individuates it, makes it the kind of substance it is, and so distinguishes it from other substances. It is to be borne in mind that it is none of McTaggart's claims that whenever we perceive something as so-and-so, something is *indeed* so-and-so. Not all cases of perception are cases of knowledge; for we may well be misperceiving. But in case a certain perception *is* a case of knowledge, it is by its very nature knowledge of something *as having* certain characteristics. This key proposition of McTaggart's "metaphysics of knowledge"<sup>37</sup> (as we may call

it) undermines in one stroke the notion of bare particulars<sup>38</sup> however hard Russell may have tried to give that notion a measure of respectability by his talk of "proper" names".<sup>39</sup>

It bears explicit mention (though it should have been obvious by now) - lest McTaggart's idealism lead one to suppose otherwise - that McTaggart firmly believes - in common with the realists and in disagreement, for example, with Berkeley - that the objects of knowledge and so the reality (known) is independent of our knowledge of it: the very nature of knowledge, he would say, presupposes it. In so far as, therefore, we are concerned with the question of the existence or reality of perceptual objects, the existence of the percipient subject is a matter of indifference. The objects towards which perceptual consciousness turns its gaze are presumed to be existent as a matter of course, and in independence of that consciousness. The fact that the objects of perception are from the outset *felt* as known in their character confirms the above. Expressing a similar conviction, Husserl remarks:

Before the movement of cognition begins, we have "presumed objects," simply presumed in the certainty of belief. This certainty of belief continues until subsequent experience or the critical activity of cognition shakes it, modifies it to "not so, but otherwise," or "possibly so", or even confirms the presumed object in its certainty as "really being so" and "truly existing."<sup>40</sup>

This preexistence or "pregivenness" (of objects), as he calls it, Husserl gives the name of "preliminary presence".<sup>41</sup>

The importance of the theme makes us venture some independent observations. It is to be marked that it is perhaps in perception alone that the (characterised) real presents itself (to consciousness) *directly* and *immediately* ('immediately') need not mean, as Strawson<sup>42</sup> well says, 'infallibly') so that one can, with justice, talk of the (presented) content as *given*<sup>43</sup>. The consideration that below perception there is no other "experienced" (or "felt") level (of awareness) which is *in character* different from it, should lend substance to the preceding observation. One important reason behind the common supposition that thought and imagination sometimes distort the real, seems to be that below imagination and thought is the felt level of perceptual awareness with the contents of which those of the higher levels (here, imagination and thought) can (always) be checked and compared and in the event of distortions coming into view it can be discovered that it is the 'manipulative' capacity of those higher levels which has introduced them into the contents of the former.

But below perception there is no such (felt) level against which the contents of perception can be checked. *The contents of perception are answerable to perception alone.* The mere sensation level, if there be any, is *not* qualitatively different from the perceptual one: the concern in both is with presentations. That is why, as we remarked above, perception has a "natural" claim to truth and so to reliability, for the 'perceived' *is* taken to be real. This claim however is not incompatible with the fact or possibility of illusion. Even the illusory content, as we shall see, comes to be seen as such, i.e. as illusory (and so corrected) only in some subsequent perception. Such a claim however is *not naturally* available to imagination and thought, felt as they are from the first, in whatever measure, as free<sup>44</sup> (since spontaneous) and manipulative (since creative).

It is to be noticed that the way our consciousness remains *glued* (so to say) to the object in question and its features (that is, those which 'appear' within the perceptual field) in perception, "feeling" itself 'unfree' (in the sense of finding itself *unable*) to 'create' or 'manipulate' the character of the given - even when in actual fact it does so on occasions (as, e.g., in cases of errors etc.) - only, again, serves to highlight what we have said in the foregoing.

This is not blandly to spurn a priori the suggestion regarding the percipient subjects' own contribution - a la Kant or otherwise - in the end-result called knowledge: there may be some such thing, for all one knows. Our point only is that, given, even, that, the perceptual activity seems scarcely to be aware of any such *role* of its - which role is susceptible of being ascertained only in reflection - apart from its awareness of itself being a perceptual act. It is a different thing, though, that we come to be aware, however vaguely, of the alleged form of an object (in case of Kant, the spatial and temporal ordering) in perception itself of that object.

Besides upholding the independence and anteriority of the objects, McTaggart would hold - unlike e.g. F.H. Bradley<sup>45</sup> - that the subject - object distinction is there (nay, announces itself) from the first, and is not the result of some subsequent abstraction. It is indeed the objective constituent which, McTaggart would say - in common with Brentano<sup>46</sup> and G.E. Moore<sup>47</sup> distinguishes one state of awareness from another.

### Perception not judgement

At this point a crucial clarification - crucial even for McTaggart's metaphysics of substance (or spirit) - seems called for so as to prevent misapprehension of McTaggart's meaning of substance. Perception as knowledge of a substance, say *X*, as being so-and-so, needs to be distinguished, according to McTaggart, from the knowledge *that X* is so-and-so. "For knowledge *that* anything is, or has, anything is a judgement and not a perception".<sup>46</sup> McTaggart here is concerned to draw a distinction between perceptual awareness proper and judgemental awareness based on that awareness. Ordinarily it is supposed that when we perceive something our knowledge of its being so-and-so is a result of an act of judgement. That is, it is supposed that all perceptual awareness is at root only judgemental awareness. And judgements are invariably tied to a 'that' clause. McTaggart however disagrees with this view. He does not deny that there are, or can be, judgements<sup>49</sup> which have their basis in perception. He only, but importantly, insists that perceptions *qua* perceptions should never be taken as, or, as having the form of, judgements. Therefore he remarks: "The best expression, I think, for the relation between the perception, the perceived substance, and the characteristics is to say that we perceive the substance *as having* characteristics."<sup>50</sup> McTaggart would concede that the issue is a ticklish one, that the distinction between the knowledge of *X as having* characteristics and the knowledge *that X* has characteristics, does not easily admit of neat verbal formulation. But that does not mean, he would urge, that the distinction is non-existent or nugatory and idle. Appealing to introspection, he says that the said distinction becomes evident to anyone who reflects on e.g., the judgement, "I am sad" and the (introspective) perception of himself (as sad) on which that judgement is based.<sup>51</sup> One direct consequence of this doctrine<sup>52</sup> is the repudiation by McTaggart of the customary view which sees all knowledge as necessarily propositional in so far as propositions necessarily involve judgements<sup>53</sup> (of one sort or another) and in so far as judgements are wedded to a that-clause.

McTaggart goes on to argue further the distinction between perception and judgements - the full import of which distinction can be more completely appreciated only when one considers McTaggart's system as a whole. The distinction is however important even from the limited point of view as ours. A perception, McTaggart points out, is *always* definite in a way in which judgement cannot be. I can judge that an

object possesses a 'determinable' *without* judging or being able to judge what 'determinate' form of that determinable it possesses. In perception, on the other hand, McTaggart holds, I perceive an object as possessing a perfectly determinate form of the characteristic.<sup>54</sup> (Professor Geach has called this principle 'perceptual determinacy').<sup>55</sup> Thus I can *judge*, for example, that the eyes of the present Prime Minister of India have a certain colour without judging what specific colour they have; but I cannot *perceive* his eyes as having colour without *also* perceiving them as having some absolutely definite and determinate colour. And it does not matter whether my colour-vision was normal or not and whether I could *name* that colour. (And what holds true of judgements, holds, in this respect, true of assumptions too.) The point is important and is often missed by those who neglect or play down the distinction between perceptions and judgements. Here in one stroke, the Absolute's shrewd family solicitor<sup>56</sup> clinches what to many might seem a muddled view.

Before proceeding further, I wish to pause and invite attention to what impresses me as a striking affinity of view point between McTaggart and Husserl. Husserl too sees a basic distinction between what he calls "experience" and "judgement", the distinction (between these two different *kinds* of act) consisting in the fundamental differences in "the *logical form* of their respective noematic *Sinne*".<sup>57</sup> The noematic *Sinn* of experience is "singular meaning",<sup>58</sup> whereas that of an act of "judgement" is a proposition. To the extent - and this extent is quite much - "experience"<sup>59</sup> includes perception, our empirical judgements and beliefs have, as their foundation and source of justification, perceptual experience<sup>60</sup> and to that alone they continually return and strive to "adjust". To Husserl, perception is at root 'non-propositional', i.e., does not involve a 'that' - clause. To be sure, Husserl does admit "perceptual judgement", but this, he emphasizes, is judgement which is made against the testimony of the appropriate perceptual evidence.

One good way to understand Husserl's distinction between the act of judging and the act of perceiving is to understand his distinction between what he calls a "predicative" act and a "pre-predicative" act. Perceptual judgements are "predicative experiences" (and judgements in general, "predicative acts") and perceptions "pre-predicative experiences". Husserl's view of the perceptual experience as a pre-predicative act is tied to his view that perception is a kind of *direct* relation to the individual.

Experience in the first and most pregnant sense is .... defined as a direct

relation to the individual. Hence, those *judgements* which are *primary in themselves* are, as judgements with individual substrates, judgements about individuals, *judgements of experience*. They are preceded by the self-evident givenness of individual objects of experience, i.e., their pre-predicative givenness." <sup>61</sup>

It is necessary to emphasize - lest Husserl's view of perception as "pre-predicative" experience lead one to think otherwise - that to Husserl perception is not an experience of 'bare particulars' divested of properties, but of objects always "given" to us as having properties.

The existent is always given, at bottom, *qua* natural body, provided with natural properties accessible to simple experience ....If this experience is given at first hand ....we call it *perception*, more precisely, *external perception*. <sup>62</sup>

So whatever the other connotations of the term "pre-predicative" experience be - on which we shall not enter here <sup>63</sup> - it never means for Husserl awareness of 'bare' existents. <sup>64</sup> Husserl too believes, like McTaggart, that our perception of the external (physical) world is "direct" and not mediated by the awareness of a *sensum*, appearance or any such third entities. He says :

I perceive the thing, the object of nature, the tree there in the garden; that and *nothing else* is the real object of the perceiving "intention". <sup>65</sup>

The perceptual act, according to Husserl, is a *sui generis* 'species' of act; the perceptual experience is therefore not an experience which is "founded" on some more primitive experience such as direct or immediate awareness of sense-data or things of that kind. Husserl's use of the term "sensory data" is quite different from the sense data as they generally were understood in the British-American tradition. Husserl, like McTaggart, did not admit any surrogates in virtue of which we come to judge (or infer) that there are physical objects or events.

McTaggart rejected off-hand (though not without producing plausible reasons which were, to be sure, chiefly of metaphysical sort) the sense-datum theory at a time when it was a reigning doctrine and when actuated by a procrustean impulse it was winning over new advocates everyday who vied with one another in submitting refined versions of it in their eagerness to assimilate it to their epistemology and metaphysics. The consequences of admitting sense-data as objects of direct and immediate experience have been all too obvious. These explanatory postulates of empiricism gave rise to more problems than they solved even at the time of their conception.

To continue with our main theme. If perception, according to McTaggart, is knowledge of a substance as having characteristics, does it mean that it should provide knowledge of *all* the characteristics the substance perceived possesses in reality? McTaggart sees no such necessity.<sup>66</sup> Lest this perceptual 'limitation' lead one to draw conclusions more than are in fact warranted, it is extremely necessary to emphasize that one does not need to perceive all the characteristics of an object in order to perceive some (or any) of its characteristics.

This point is of considerable importance. To refer to an aspect of McTaggart's metaphysics, if the universe, as McTaggart believes, and as (e.g.) Russell and Wittgenstein do not, is an organically connected whole, 'complete' knowledge and description of one substance would perforce include - "since it would include all facts true of"<sup>67</sup> it - descriptions of the totality of the substances in the universe.<sup>68</sup> The task may not be impossible, though it seems improbable. But even if we put aside the consideration of what the universe is truly like, a perception need not give us knowledge of the whole set of characteristics a substance possesses. In fact it is possible - and is presumably mostly the case - that a thing, say *X*, is *perceived* as having only the quality *A*, while in fact it *has* the additional qualities *B* and *C*. And yet, be it noted, it is the whole object which is the referent of knowledge. The perceptual object at the particular point of time may go, and in fact generally goes, beyond the datum of sense (and herein incidentally sometimes lie the germs of both truth and error).

It is also not necessary, according to McTaggart, that when we perceive a substance, we must perceive *all* the original and relational qualities it has. The distinction between original and relational qualities,<sup>69</sup> though valid in itself, is not relative to the original qualities being perceptible when the substance they characterize is perceived. We may, in perceiving a substance, fail to perceive all the original qualities it has, but perceive successfully some of its relational qualities.<sup>70</sup>

### **Perception and the Principle of Sufficient Description**

From this we are led on to consider another important point concerning McTaggart's theory of perception. And to make this point intelligible to ourselves, we need to understand the meaning of one of the most important principles of McTaggart's : the principle of Sufficient Description.<sup>71</sup> This principle is closely bound up with another key

metaphysical principle, namely, the principle of the Dissimilarity of the Diverse<sup>72</sup> (McTaggart's name for Leibniz's principle, the Identity of the Indiscernibles, to which McTaggart subscribes), and in fact derives from the latter.

It is common knowledge that every characteristic of a term constitutes a 'description' of it. And if the characteristic happens to apply to only one term and to none else, it becomes an 'exclusive' description of the term. If any two substances are different, which they must be, on the principle of the Dissimilarity of the Diverse, then each of them must have some characteristic or set of characteristics which constitute an exclusive description<sup>73</sup> so that one is distinguished from the other. 'Father of Julius Ceaser' is an exclusive description which can apply only to one term; it would not, however, be a sufficient description, for the term 'Julius Creaser' is a proper name and remains undescribed. The necessity that attaches to the above principle is not that without it no term could be *known* so as to be distinguished from other terms; it derives from the 'fact' no two substances can be similar and that, therefore, a substance which is not *absolutely similar* to any other has of necessity an exclusive description.<sup>74</sup>

Now if an exclusive description does not involve reference to merely designated terms but consists wholly of characteristics, it becomes a Sufficient Description.<sup>75</sup> Thus, to borrow an example from Geach, it would be a sufficient description of Adam and Eve to say that they are the 'first man' and the 'first woman' respectively, if all the human beings were to be descendants of them. Notice that it is not necessary that a sufficient description of a particular must, in order to *be*, be known to us: it is sufficient, says McTaggart, that a substance *has* a sufficient description. The necessity that there should be sufficient descriptions McTaggart derives from the fact that there must be an exclusive description applicable to every particular.<sup>76</sup>

Now if every substance must have a sufficient description, the question arises, is it necessary that when we perceive a substance we must perceive it as having the characteristics which are enough to constitute a sufficient description of that substance. McTaggart denies this too. He conceives it perfectly possible that we perceive a substance as having the qualities *ABC* and as having no other qualities,<sup>77</sup> though it might *in actual fact* have other qualities which together with *ABC* form a sufficient description of it. And it is, McTaggart would say, not inconsistent

with the fact or the possibility that there should be another substance in the universe which also has the qualities *ABC*. (A fortiori, as noted above, a substance can be perceived without being perceived as having all the characteristics, or even all the original qualities which in fact it may be having).

McTaggart further holds that perception gives us knowledge about characteristics.<sup>78</sup> Take e.g., the statements 'I am extremely sad' or 'I am intensely sleepy' (to take McTaggart's own examples). In these statements, McTaggart would say, I am asserting extremeness as a characteristic of sadness, and intensity as a characteristic of sleepiness which characterize *me*. Likewise, the judgement that the shades of *A* and *B* are incompatible when *A* is red and *B* black, is, McTaggart would add, given to us in perception. It is only through perception that I know that I am sad or sleepy and further that I am extremely sad or intensely sleepy. Again it is only through perception that I come to know *A* and *B* as being red and black respectively, and it is again in perception that I come to know the two shades as incompatible. (To such knowledge of things W.E. Johnson has given the name 'intuitive induction'.<sup>79</sup> Russell covers some of these cases under what he calls 'intuitive knowledge', regarding them as 'self-evident').<sup>80</sup>

### Structure of Perception

One very important feature of McTaggart's theory of perception is his view of the 'structure' of a perceptual cognition. He sees a definite, nay precise, isomorphism between the structure of the perception in question and the structure of the object perceived. This view seems novel and is (I think) of considerable importance for philosophical psychology. What I mean is that while the principle may have been implicitly entertained in disquisitions on psychology of perception it has perhaps not been held by any previous philosopher, at least in the form in which McTaggart states it. One (implicit) assumption of the principle, not brought out by McTaggart but germane to it, can be briefly stated as under.

It is common knowledge that some of our images of things such as (e.g.) trees, tables, buildings have their basis in perceptions of those objects; and these images, when recalled, always present the form (or structural aspects) of those objects depending upon the 'intentionality' of the recalling consciousness. There must then be some principle under which our perceivings register the form of the objects as they are presented

to sense, and are themselves accordingly structured; so that when recalled these (past) presentations, surviving now in image-form, are able to deliver to consciousness the forms (which include, I assume, the spatial and temporal characteristics) of the objects.

The only theory I can think of, which seems to anticipate in some ways McTaggart's doctrine is the theory of perception of *Advaita Vedānta* in the Indian tradition. It is a cardinal feature of the *Advaita* theory that in the perception of an external object the 'mind' ('*manas*' or '*antaḥkāraṇa*' in the original language) goes out to the object through the senses (which themselves are conceived as actively receiving the stimuli coming from the objects, and so reaching out to them, but only under the 'impulse and guidance' of mind) and assumes the 'form' of the object i.e. gets determined into a mode (or *vṛtti*) like the object, occupying the same spatio-temporal position as the object. The critical condition here is that the object must be capable of being grasped by the senses. Both the mental mode and the object are, according to *Advaita*, pervaded (i.e., illumined) by consciousness or the self<sup>81</sup> which is of the nature of consciousness. This is how the object with its 'apparent' (that is, perceived) formal structure comes to be known and determined as so-and-so. Since at the time of perception the object and the mental 'mode' that takes on the object's form remain identified, we know only the object and not its image. But with the disappearance of the object's contact with the sense, we are left only with the image in memory. It is through this image that we are able to call to mind the object with its perceived form when we happen to remember the object. As should be plain, in this 'going out' of the mind<sup>82</sup> is implicit the suggestion of the priority of the knowing subject over the known, so that the meaning of knowledge is safely retained. The physiology assumed in the *Advaita* doctrine is extraneous to our purpose and hence should be ignored. My only object was to invite attention to the non-trivial kinship that seemed to me to exist between the *Advaita* doctrine and that of McTaggart's.

To return to McTaggart. A perception, then, corresponds in its structure to the way it represents the object (perceived) as differentiated. If I perceive an object as having parts, my perception will be differentiated into parts according as it represents the objects as differentiated. Perception of a complex structure will itself be complex, just in the way and to the extent the substance is complex.<sup>83</sup> Mark that it is the 'apparent' (or perceived) differentiation that matters. If a substance has parts but they are not perceived as such, then this would not differentiate

the perception that represents the substance (or the whole) of which they are parts. (And what holds for perception holds for 'imaging' too. In terms of internal structure imagings resemble perceptions; they are however, in McTaggart's sense of the term, not cognitive; they are neither knowledge nor error.) From this follows the famous doctrine of McTaggart's which states that perceptions of parts of wholes can be parts of the perceptions of those wholes.<sup>84</sup> As McTaggart says:

It seems to me that this is possible, and, indeed, that our experience assures us that it is sometimes true.<sup>85</sup>

Or again :

It must, I think, be admitted that the perception of a part may be part of a perception of the whole.<sup>86</sup>

This situation is possible (or conceivable) only when a self *S* perceives *W* (the whole) *as* containing *P* (part of the whole) and perceives *P* as contained in *W*. For it is possible for *S* to perceive *W* without at all perceiving *P* though the latter is a part of *W*. Again, it is perfectly possible, according to McTaggart, to perceive both *W* and *P* without perceiving *W* as containing *P* or *P* as contained in *W*. But there are cases where *S* perceives both *W* and *P* and perceives *P* as part of *W*.

Suppose, to take McTaggart's own example, I judge that there is a carpet in the room with a pattern on it. This judgement cannot perhaps be based except on my perception of the carpet, the whole, and of the pattern, the part. So McTaggart would say we do perceive two entities *W* and *P* and see the latter as part of the former. But the question to be decided is : Is it that in such cases my perception of *P* is *part* of my perception of *W*? One may also ask a further question whether it is *only in such cases* that my perception of *P* is part of my perception of *W*?

To take up the latter question first, McTaggart does not rule out the possibility that in one perception we might perceive only *W*, while in our other perceptions we might perceive each of parts (*Ps*) of *W*, and that then we might perceive the relation between the perceived *W* and the perceived *Ps*. There can be cases, however, where, McTaggart contends, this does not happen as e.g. where I perceive both *W* and *P*, and where, therefore, my perception of *P* is part of my perception of *W*. This McTaggart tries to show on the evidence of introspection. Consider, for example, what happens when "we gradually perceive the parts of a datum of which we only perceived the whole before - as when, with a gradual increase of light, more details appear in the pattern of the carpet."<sup>87</sup> The change here, says

McTaggart, from a relatively simple perception to a relatively complex perception (of the carpet as patterned) does not consist in the addition of more perceptions (of parts) to a, to use Broad's words "persistent and internally unchanged"<sup>88</sup> perception of the whole.

Broad is unable to regard the example as "relevant" for McTaggart's purposes, and contends that what seems more plausible to assume in such cases is that different "sensibilia" are successively presented, each more complex - and differentiated - than its predecessor, and that, if inter-related, they form a single "sense-object". He, however, adds that an increase in the internal complexity of the "prehensum", which one perceives, "may, or may not, involve a parallel increase in the internal complexity of my prehensions."<sup>89</sup>

This suggestion of Broad's seems defective and rests on a misunderstanding of McTaggart's view. We noticed earlier that according to McTaggart a perception is internally differentiated according as it represents the object perceived as being differentiated. We also emphasized that here it is *apparent* differentiation that counts and not the differentiation which may *be*, but does *not* appear to be so (in perception). It follows, then, that if an object, a perceptum (Broad's 'prehensum'), is *perceived as* differentiated, the perception too would correspondingly be differentiated. McTaggart next proceeds to show that it is only when I perceive *P* as part of *W* (which too I perceive) that my perception of *P* is a part of my perception of *W*. No one, he says, would suggest that my perception of *P*, which is not a part of *W* could be part of my perception of *W*. And the fact that *P* is part of *W* would not bring my perception of *P* any nearer to my perception of *W*, if *P*, though perceived, is *not perceived as* part of *W*.<sup>90</sup>

As against this, Broad appeals to misperception - which McTaggart indeed admits - and argues that I may very well misperceive (or misprehend, as Broad would have it) *P* as *not* being a part of *W* while in actual fact it may be a part of *W*; and I may misperceive (he adds) *P*<sub>1</sub> as *being* a part of *W*, while in actual fact it is not.<sup>91</sup>

To this, I think we could reply as follows. To take a mental state as an example, we may say that while it is perfectly possible to misperceive a mental state (or an experience) as to its character or feature, it is *self-evidently* impossible to mistake as to its *belongingness*. I may perhaps mistake my state of anger for one of sadness but I cannot conceivably

mistake as to whom the state (of sadness) belongs. Is it conceivable by any chance that I *may* imagine my state of sadness as someone else's. Clearly none of these possibilities (if possibilities they are) seems probable; Broad's objection, therefore, though ingenious, fails to hold water. Notice what is being denied is not that misperception is possible, but that in an event where our perception of a whole is veridical, we cannot misperceive the parts of that whole as regards their belongingness. We can of course mistake one whole (or object)  $W$  or another whole (or object)  $W_1$  and so also mistake parts of  $W$  for parts of  $W$ . But that is a different proposition altogether and has no relevance whatever to the issue at hand.

### Perception of Whole without Perception of Parts

One doctrine of McTaggart's which he barely adumbrates but for which, because of its significance, there is a warrant for more explicit allusion, is that in McTaggart's view it is possible to perceive a whole without perceiving *any* of its parts.<sup>92</sup> The doctrine is similar to the view of Russell's which he expresses thus : "We must suppose that we can perceive, name, and recognize a whole without knowing what are its constituents."<sup>93</sup> Or again : "Whether it is possible to be aware of a complex without being aware of its constituents is not an easy question, but on the whole it would seem that there is no reason why it should not be possible."<sup>94</sup> Elsewhere<sup>95</sup> McTaggart, while contrasting a compound substance with a compound characteristic,<sup>96</sup> makes the point that it is possible to be aware of a "compound" substance without being aware of the simple substances that compose it. "For the awareness of a substance is perception, and we can perceive a compound substance without perceiving any simple substances as its parts."<sup>97</sup> The import of this teaching of McTaggart's can perhaps be better understood by referring to a principle of his Doctrine of Substance : namely the INFINITE DIVISIBILITY of Substance. The meaning, in brief, of this principle<sup>98</sup> is that since, as McTaggart holds, every substance has an internal structure (composed of a plurality of simultaneous and successive differentiations) and so has 'content'<sup>99</sup> and (therefore) parts (which comprise its content), every substance is a compound substance. Now the parts of this compound substance would in turn be substances for they would have qualities and stand in relations without being themselves either a quality or a relation (or a fact). And since as substances these parts will have a 'content' and therefore will be differentiated into parts which will be substances in turn, what we will have would be an unending series of seats of parts of a

substance. This is how we get a foothold on the idea of 'infinite divisibility' of substance.<sup>100</sup>

Now given this doctrine (of infinite divisibility of substance), it should be plain that we shall be led into vicious infinite regress if we were to hold that one cannot perceive a whole without perceiving some at least of its parts. For then, to put it in the way Broad explicates it, I cannot perceive a whole,  $w$ , without perceiving at least one part of  $P_1$  of it. But  $P_1$  would itself be, given infinite divisibility of substance, a complex whole. So I cannot perceive  $P_1$  without perceiving at least one part of  $P_{II}$  of it.  $P_{II}$  would in turn be a complex whole; so that I cannot perceive it without perceiving at least one part of  $P_{III}$  of it. And so on without end. The doctrine, therefore, that one cannot perceive a whole without perceiving *at least* one part of it, would entail that in the case of a whole which is infinitely divisible, the whole is perceived only if parts within parts to infinity of that whole are *also* perceived. And this on the very face of it is impossible. So McTaggart would conclude that there is nothing extraordinary or unreasonable about the assumption that one *can* see a whole *without* seeing *any* of its parts.

Now it appears to us that this view of McTaggart's, though very attractive, is not without difficulties. It is of course true that if McTaggart's view of the infinite differentiation of substance were to hold, it would be a stupendous undertaking for anyone to prove that perception of a whole is impossible without perceiving some at least of its parts. And the gravity of the problem would assume further proportions, were one to take the extreme view that perception of a whole is impossible without perceiving *all* the parts it has. So it would seem that if a substance is infinitely divisible, there is not much of choice between the view that a whole cannot be perceived without perceiving at least *some* of its parts and the (extreme) view that a whole cannot be perceived without perceiving *all* of its parts. But suppose that the truth of the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of substance were to be denied. All sorts of views might be taken in that event. (That this would result in complete breakdown of communication - for it is self evident to McTaggart that every substance is divisible into parts into parts to infinity - need not worry us.) But one can here specially refer to one possibility. The opponent might allow the infinite differentiation of substance and yet argue that a distinction obtains between perceiving (the part)  $P$ , as a part of the whole,  $W$ , and perceiving  $P$  which *in fact* is a part of  $W$ . That is, one could say that one can perceive  $W$  without perceiving  $P$

as a part of it, denying however at the same time that he can perceive *W* without perceiving *P* which in fact is a part of *W*.<sup>101</sup>

My own view is that we cannot afford to adopt a dogmatic posture on the issue. About certain wholes - e.g., a tree or a table - it may seem plain that we cannot perceive them without perceiving some parts of them. But there might be wholes perceiving which does not entail perceiving some or their parts, and so McTaggart's doctrine would hold in such cases.

It is interesting to note that G.F. Stout holds, in regard to the apprehension of a whole, a view similar in certain ways to the view(s) of McTaggart (and Russell). In rejection of Sensationalism according to which apprehension of a whole can only be built out of individual sensations, Stout strongly advocates the idea that we can have 'implicit apprehension' of a whole without apprehending its parts or details. An implicit awareness of a whole may precede explicit awareness of the parts of that whole. To quote some mentionable lines from Stout :

- (a) "It is certainly possible to think of a whole in its unity and distinctness without discerning all or even *any* of its component details."<sup>102</sup>
- (b) "It is possible to distinguish and identify an whole without apprehending any of its constituent details."<sup>103</sup>
- (c) "This circumstance suggests a name for that apprehension of a whole which takes place without discernment of its parts. We may call it *implicit* apprehension."<sup>104</sup>
- (d) "The obvious conclusion from introspective data is that in perceiving the shape of an ordinary sensible object we apprehend the whole without apprehending all its parts."<sup>105</sup>

### Perceptions as Parts of the Percipient Self

We now turn to a question which for McTaggart is of central importance and which is one of the premises on which rests McTaggart's metaphysics of substance (or of spirit). This question concern McTaggart's assumption that perceptions are *parts* of the percipient self.<sup>106</sup> This, McTaggart thinks, can be shown to be the case if it could be shown that perceptions are states of the self which perceives. McTaggart feels that this fact - viz. that perceptions are states of the percipient self - has not been adequately appreciated by those who see in perception - nay in all awareness - a mere relation, i.e. a relation between the self that perceives and the object that is perceived.

McTaggart duly recognizes that a certain special relation obtains between a self and the object which it perceives. If a self, *S*, perceives an object, *O*, this fact involves a relation between *S* and *O* "of such a nature that it only holds between a percipient and its perceptum."<sup>107</sup> But McTaggart goes on to ask whether there is not, besides this relation, "a state of perception which is part of the percipient self."<sup>108</sup> McTaggart here obviously sees no incompatibility between perception being a relation and its also being a state of mind. There are, thinks McTaggart, introspective grounds for believing it to be so, but he prefers to urge certain other considerations (for after all other people might interpret their introspections differently) which, he thinks, go to prove the hypothesis that perception is a state and hence part of the self within which it falls. Even as a state - and not only as relation - a perception has a special nature in the sense that no one perception can be a part of more than one self.<sup>109</sup> McTaggart regards this proposition as 'synthetic' and 'ultimate'.<sup>110</sup>

The first argument that McTaggart puts forth in support of his view is as follows. There is a "characteristic observable difference"<sup>111</sup> between the experience of perceiving many objects simultaneously and that of perceiving fewer objects simultaneously. There is again a difference between the experience of perceiving many objects in rapid succession during a certain period and that of perceiving fewer objects during a period of the same length. This difference, says McTaggart, can be best expressed by saying that the self is "fuller" in one case than in the other. And the appropriateness of this metaphor can be best seen only in terms of the theory that each perception is a different substance and is a part of the self that perceives. "For one thing is only fuller than another if it has more content, which means more substance."<sup>112</sup> This difference would not have been expressed thus if the self had merely stood in the relation of perception to more objects on the earlier occasion and to fewer on the later occasion.

As against this Broad contends<sup>113</sup> that the self might be more "variegated" on the former occasion than on the later. This involves the supposition that to every relational property (of the form, to put it in Broad's words, 'prehending the object *O*'<sup>114</sup>) of the self there corresponds an original quality such that acquiring the relational property determines acquiring (by the self of) the corresponding quality. Patternson<sup>115</sup> calls this supposition of Broad's "extraordinary" and feels, even without accepting McTaggart's view, that the posting of such a large number of original

qualities would involve our assuming a pre-established haumony to account for them. Besides, a quality, the acquisition of which was causally determined by the acquisition of relational property, would, Patterson observes, appear itself to be a relational property. Patterson's own suggestion is that the difference between the two states might lie in a "feeling of some sort."<sup>116</sup>

McTaggart's second argument in support of his view that perceptions are parts of the self that perceives, is that our cogitations, volitions, and emotions, taken together "exhaust the self, so that it is completely comprised in them."<sup>117</sup> It should be clear that the self could not be composed of or "exhausted" in all its various relations (or relational properties). But even if they exhausted its nature, which in point of fact they do not, they would not be parts of it. On the other hand, McTaggart argues, there is no difficulty in supposing that experiences (i.e. perceptions), if they are states, are parts of, and make up, the whole self.

On the other hand, if they are states, and therefore parts, of the self, it is easy to see that they do exhaust it, since there is a very real sense in which a substance is exhausted in a set of its parts.<sup>118</sup>

McTaggart's third contention - and this again strikes one as novel-relates to (what he calls) the "direct difference" that the cognitive relation makes to the knower than to the known.<sup>119</sup>  $X$ 's cognition of  $Y$  makes, according to McTaggart, greater direct difference to  $X$  than to  $Y$ : the direct difference between  $X$  who perceives  $Y$  and  $X$  if he does not perceive  $Y$  is more profound than the direct difference between  $Y$  who is perceived by  $X$  and  $Y$  if he is not perceived by  $X$ . Even a consideration of the indirect difference yields, in McTaggart's view, the same result although it may *appear* to be different. To borrow McTaggart's own fine illustration, if a detective knows the murderer, *causally* this is more likely to affect the future fate of the murderer than that of the detective. But if we consider *just* the fact of the acquirement of knowledge, just that something is being thought about or known, this makes much greater difference to the detective, the knower, than to the murderer, the known. Now if knowledge (here, perception) were a mere relation, this greater difference would not be accounted for. For then the knower would just be one term in the relation, a term which knows, the other term being the object, which is known, and there would be nothing, says McTaggart, in these two characteristics (the characteristic of being a 'knower' and the characteristic of being a 'known') which could account for the greater

difference that knowledge makes to the one than to the other.

If, however, knowledge is also considered a part of the knowing self, the problem, says McTaggart, is solved. In his opinion, the cognitive relation involves in the knowing self the "presence" of a part with certain characteristics - which is cognition - which did not exist in the knower before the cognitive relation was established and which without it he will not possess. On the other hand, the cognitive relation involves nothing in the object known "except a relation to the knowing self".<sup>120</sup> So this asymmetry in the "correlated changes" (Broad's phrase) of knowing self and known object is easily explained, in McTaggart's view, on the view that perceptions are parts of the percipient self.

McTaggart's final argument<sup>121</sup> in support of his view is directed against people who admit that pleasures and pains are parts of the self who suffers them, but deny that cognitions, including perceptions, are parts of the self.

(i) McTaggart remarks, first, that such people are not being consistent in that they admit one set of experiences to be the states of the self but deny the other set of experiences to be parts of the self on the ground that selves can have no parts. Part of the reason for this unwillingness to admit that the self has parts, stems, says McTaggart, from the supposition that the peculiar kind of unity which characterizes a self is incompatible with its having parts. McTaggart however denies that there is any such incompatibility. A substance, he points out, must have parts (see above), and so if a self (which is a substance on McTaggart's definition) exists at all, it must have parts, irrespective of whether its cognitions are these parts or not. In fact, he adds, a self would have not only pleasures and pains as its parts (as is admitted even by the opponents), but also would have parts in the temporal dimension, if it (the self) existed in time.

(ii) McTaggart's second point is that pleasures and pains are very closely bound up with cognitions. For example, we often say about a memory that it is painful, or about an anticipation that it is pleasurable. Such utterances must imply, going by the view under consideration, that when we enter into a certain cognitive relation (whether of remembering or of anticipating with an object, a certain state, painful or pleasurable, is excited in the mind. Now it cannot be literally true, especially in the opinion of the theory that denies that selves can have cognitions as their parts, that the "memory" is painful or that the "anticipation" is pleasurable. There are only facts, the fact of a self entering into a relation of remembering

with one object, or into that of anticipating with another. And facts cannot literally be painful or pleasurable. Now McTaggart believes that what we call a "painful memory" or a "pleasurable anticipation" is not simply a memory or an anticipation causing pain or pleasure respectively. It is memory *qualified* by painfulness or an anticipation *qualified* by pleasurableness. Pleasure and pain, according to McTaggart, are not separate bits of mental content, but qualities which belong, like emotions, to states of cognitions and to them alone.<sup>122</sup> So McTaggart concludes that cognitions including perceptions are part of the self. Cognition indeed implies a certain definite relation between the cognizing self and the cognized object, but that does not mean that cognition and the relation are identical,<sup>123</sup> though that also does not mean that the relation is a non-entity. There can be both a relation and a state.

Lest there be any misapprehension on the point, McTaggart is quick to point out that the doctrine that cognitions including perceptions are parts of the cognizing self does by no means imply that when, e.g., I perceive an object *O*, it is only the perception which I know directly and that my cognition of *O* is mediated by my perception of my perception of *O*. This, he says, would be absolutely incorrect. My knowledge of *O*, he would say, is immediate and consists in my perception of *O*. It is in no way 'dependent' on my perception of my perception of *O* which "may or may not accompany" my perception of *O*<sup>124</sup>

### Misperception

We are now almost at the end of this rather long winding discussion. And it would be well if, before we close, we devote some consideration to McTaggart's view of misperception.

There is a dread associated with misperception and the error born thereof. It can make philosophers run for their lives and look for securer homes. The history of modern Western philosophy in particular is a standing testimony to this observation. We already find a Descartes reeling under the severity of the dread as he introduces his famous device of Doubt which through various of its forms - viz: complete distrust of the testimony of the senses (for they have a way of deceiving us), the involved dreaming argument, the myth of the malicious demon, and other more particular kinds of illusions - renders radically insecure (and vulnerable) every existential claim about the world, until, that is, we are put in possession of

an apodictically certain and necessary truth : the Cogito. And although it is true that Descartes does not stop there and does finally come to regard himself enabled, albeit through his faith in the existence of a benevolent God who ensures against pervasive and systematic error, to recover his belief (provisionally suspended) in the reality of the external world and in the general reliability of the senses, his method leaves set in motion a crusade for the indubitable - the crusade getting specially frenzied with those who are not lucky to have a benign God on their side guarding against universal illusion, and therefore who end up finally, and presumably by the logic of it, torn between the Cartesian *concern* (though not necessarily his findings) for the indubitable (which they share) and scepticism, not able to break free or find their exit. Or the dread may lead to phenomenalist scepticism (coupled with solipsism) of a Hume finding its anchor in his characteristic immanentism. It may again lead a Husserl to suspend, as part of his programme of phenomenological reduction (reminiscent in certain ways - though I leave the details of the comparison open - of the Cartesian reduction), philosophic judgement about the existential status of the "natural" world (given to us in "natural attitude") and seek 'epistemic security' in (absolute) pure consciousness (left only - but to Husserl significantly - with its immanently constituted objective "essences" and the "meant" world), free, since purified, of categorial/ metaphysical commitments (though reflecting nevertheless Husserl's indictment of the objective world). Or the dread may lead, as it evidently did, many men of repute in our age to introduce, in their quest for the indubitable, some third entities, the sense-data, between mind and the world leaving one wondering as to what earthly good an indubitability was which left one shut up within one's own consciousness and which in effect rendered the external world in its bareness ever unreachable, desperate devices to the contrary notwithstanding.

These brief remarks, apparently superficial but made in all earnestness, are not in the nature of animadversions. The philosophers referred to above represented movements of thought which make up a sizeable slice of what goes by the name of modern philosophy and which have considerably determined its subsequent course. My purpose was only to highlight how deep can the dread go into a philosopher's soul and how much profoundly can it effect his way of regarding the world. It is surely a measure of McTaggart's sagacity (as indeed it was of Kant before him) that he was able to maintain, even though surrounded by ideologies (inherited or otherwise) born (at least partly) of the fear psychosis hinted

above, his level-headedness and declined the security provided by those ideologies. He just epigrammatically believed - what may to some seem a pragmatic procedure but was with him a philosophic principle - that men are capable both of knowledge and error and that they are also, in principle, capable of effecting an entasis unless the error is of the nature of such 'phenomenal' (not 'real') truth as infects the view of all thinking beings (as, for example is the case with Time whose metaphysical reality McTaggart rejected,). It is surely pathological to dismiss all our beliefs as false; and it is equally unwholesome to hold, a la Protagoras, that all human beliefs are true and hence beyond question. Human beings, McTaggart firmly held, generally live in a mixed state of knowledge and error.<sup>125</sup> The problems of scepticism, 'indubitably certain' knowledge and the like, while they agitated (even emotionally) his contemporaries in England and elsewhere, seemed to have worried McTaggart very little. And behind this unruffledness there was something more than a mere obstinacy (if obstinacy there was).

Now if, as McTaggart believes, there is both knowledge and error, and if perception gives knowledge, then there must somewhere be some room for misperception too. McTaggart's pronouncements on misperception are of a piece with his views on perception but are not for that reason likely to be less resisted. In fact the temptation to oppose McTaggart may perhaps here be greater. McTaggart belongs to that breed of philosophers who visualize the possibility of error in perceptions<sup>126</sup> themselves and not necessarily or always in judgements. It has been an article of faith with some thinkers that it is in our judgements that we go astray, not in our perceptions. One well-articulated version of this latter doctrine - with which McTaggart's may perhaps be servicably contrasted - is to be found in Kant. The following passage from Kant nearly sums up his view in the matter.

Truth or illusion is not in the object, in so far as it is intuited, but in the *judgment about it*, in so far as it is thought. It is therefore correct to say that *the senses do not err* - not because they always judge rightly but *because they do not judge at all*. Truth and error, therefore, and consequently also illusion as leading to error, are only to be found in the judgement, i.e. only in the relation of the object to our understanding. In any knowledge which completely accords with the laws of understanding there is no error. In a representation of the senses - as containing no judgement whatsoever - there is also no error.<sup>127</sup>

McTaggart here would be one with Kant in holding that error is to

be looked for in the (erring) subject, regardless of whether the error is one of judgement or of perception. "Whatever the cause of the error can be found, the error itself can only be found in one place - in the observing subject."<sup>128</sup> He would however differ with the Kantian view that error characterises judgements alone. McTaggart by no means denies that error can belong to judgements too; only he sees nothing extraordinary or exceptionable in the view that our perceptions too can err. One can see that Kant gives no reason why senses can never go wrong. He only avoids the question by stipulating (so to say) that senses do not err because they cannot judge and that error, properly, is to be found "in the relation of the object to our understanding." The view therefore that it is only our judgements that go awry is, to McTaggart, nothing more than a dogma born of prejudice. It is to be noted that McTaggart's view of misperception is a natural, nay a necessary corollary of his view of perception as knowledge of something as having characteristics, and the latter's difference from the knowledge (i.e. judgement) *that* something has characteristics. The point simply is: If we can (correctly) perceive (i.e., without necessarily judging) things as having a certain character, why can't we misperceive them, without bringing in the element of judgement, as having a character which they do not have. (In fact, given his premises, even Kant's view seems consistent. He sees the possibility of even Kant's view seems consistent. He sees the possibility of error in our judgements because he finds truth also only in judgements.)

The admission of erroneous perception, however, be it noted, should not lead to the (illicit) conclusion that it is possible (at least on some occasions) that "nothing" in fact exists, and that something is only *misperceived as* existing. This, says McTaggart, would land us in complete scepticism. When we misperceive there is no doubt, McTaggart holds, that *something does exist*;<sup>129</sup> it is with regard to *what* that 'something' is that we err in misperception.<sup>130</sup> Misperception always consists in investing this real, contrary to our own intentions, with features which do not in fact belong to it. When, for example, I mistake a rope for a snake (or a treestump for a man), I definitely see something as existing; only I wrongly ascribe the snake-character (or the man-character) to the perceived existent i.e. rope (or the tree-stump). It is in this false ascription of a character to perceived object that misperception is supposed to consist. In fact it is this distinctive feature of misperception which marks it off from experiences such as hallucinations (or dreams) where the error is primarily in regard to the *existence* of things (and not their character).

To make a slight additional comment, the 'mistaking of the character' in illusion talked of above, while it may owe its occurrence to any number of reasons, takes generally the form of erroneous identification of two objects of different sorts ('objects' here being used in the widest possible sense) : e.g. the rope and the snake or the tree-stump and the man. This misidentification cannot however serve as the paradigm of the whole range of such experiences. There may be cases - e.g. (mis)perception of double moon - which do not fit into the misidentification model and where the error is not necessarily or always discovered in a subsequent (falsifying) perceptual experience. The terms of analysis of these cases would naturally have to be different.

While some philosophers - e.g. A.J. Ayer<sup>131</sup> - would agree with McTaggart that perceptual illusion is always with regard to the character or the nature of what is perceived, and not with regard to whether something exists or not, those like D.M. Armstrong, who, even though they share McTaggart's view that perception yields knowledge about the objects perceived (and not of the sense-data which Armstrong rejects) would not accept McTaggart's analysis of erroneous perception. The analysis that Armstrong offers of what he calls 'sensory illusion' is in terms of false belief or inclination to believe falsely that we are (veridically) perceiving some physical objects or state of affairs<sup>132</sup> (just as to have perception or sense-impression is (in Armstrong's view) to believe, or be inclined to believe, that we are immediately perceiving something, some physical object or state of affairs).<sup>133</sup> And so Armstrong concludes :

When (or in so far as ) we suffer from sensory illusion there is *no* object at all, physical or non-physical, which we are perceiving in any possible sense of the word 'perceiving'. There is simply the (completely) false belief that ordinary perceiving is taking place.<sup>134</sup>

Now without going into the details of Armstrong's view, we may note that in conceiving perceptual illusion merely in terms of false beliefs or inclination to such beliefs Armstrong neglects what is perhaps the most pronounced character of perceptual illusion: that it is an act of 'perceiving'. I may, for example, *believe falsely* that *X* has gone to Calcutta; while I may *misperceive* a rope for a snake (due perhaps to darkness). The former (false) belief may well be a result of lack of full information on my part, namely, that though *X* told me about his plans to go to Calcutta, he changed his programme at the last moment due to some emergency. The latter illusion, on the other hand, has an *obvious* (and therefore indisputable) perceptual character. It is not that Armstrong does not realise the difference

between perceptual illusion and mere false belief, but this, he says, is nothing "more than an *additional* false belief."<sup>135</sup> And this 'additional' false belief consists, according to Armstrong, in our falsely believing that our illusory experience had a perceptual character.<sup>136</sup>

A brief critical comment here is certainly called for. It is one thing to maintain that the illusory character of our perceptual experience does not come to be discovered unless it has been annulled or falsified by a subsequent correcting perception, and quite another to hold that we mistake *even* about the *perceptual* character of that illusion. The perceptual character of our experience announces itself in the very act of perception of or at least in the succeeding introspective act. It is therefore plainly false to entertain the possibility of our going wrong on this count.

Turning now to Armstrong's view that in misperception we are mistaken even with regard to the 'existence' of something, that in fact "there is no object at all, physical or non-physical" we may remark that this on the face of it is false, and that Armstrong neglects the very obvious distinction between a case of illusion and a case of hallucination. After all - and there seems to be general consensus on this - the illusory nature of our perception consists precisely in the fact that something is (mis)perceived as different from what it is, so that the conviction that there *is* something which is being perceived can never be deemed as open to question. It is concerning the character or features of that something that our perception may turn out to be mistaken as is revealed by a subsequent (correcting) perception.

Before we close our discussion of misperception it is perhaps needful to point out how unintelligible can McTaggart's theory of misperception become if one were to follow Broad's practice of replacing 'perception' every where by 'prehension'. It is because the word 'prehension' was used by Cambridge philosophers of the time to denote the way we are supposed to apprehend our sense-data that Broad finds himself flabbergasted by the teaching that perception can err.<sup>137</sup>

### **Presumptive Correctness of all Perception**

I would like to conclude the present discussion by drawing attention to one of McTaggart's extremely important doctrines which is not only integral to his treatment of perception but which also enables us to see the

whole issue of perceptual aberrations (such as misperception, etc.) in perspective. I choose this occasion specifically to allude to the doctrine because I feel that our foregoing discussion has proceeded from this doctrine as an unstated premise, and that the reader must have prepared by now to receive it and comprehend more fully its implications. This is the doctrine of the 'presumptive'<sup>138</sup> correctness of all perception. The doctrine concerns the recognition that *all* perception *prima facie* *presumes* itself to be correct.<sup>139</sup> Now what does it mean? Having maintained that error can belong to perception proper (and not merely to judgements), McTaggart feels obliged to give an account of error which would make for both veridical and illusory perceptions. I cite below two important statements by McTaggart which indicate his view on the question.

- (i) "When I contemplate any case in which I perceive any perceptum *A* as having a quality *X*, it seems to me self-evident, not only that *A* *then* (my emphasis) exists, but that it *then* (my emphasis) has the quality *X*."<sup>140</sup>
- (ii) "And, when in general I contemplate what is the nature of perception, and what is the nature of the relation of a perception to its perceptum, it seems to me self-evident that such a self-evident correctness belongs to all perceptions."<sup>141</sup>

The view under reference has caused Broad considerable consternation and led him to conclude in despair: "...it is unfortunate that I must confess that I cannot make sense of his doctrine."<sup>142</sup> Considerations of space prevent me from considering Broad's objections<sup>143</sup> in detail and showing the specific points at which Broad seems completely to miss the full import of McTaggart's principle. So I will remain content by just pointing out what seems to me the spirit of McTaggart's principle. (I quite concede, though, that certain of McTaggart's expressions are likely to appear misleading. It is perhaps partly because of the context in which McTaggart's statement of the doctrine appears for the first time. But let us leave that aside.) What McTaggart means by the 'self-evident' correctness of perception is *not* that it is a *self-evident truth* that all perception is correct: that would without doubt involve him in a blatant self-contradiction. For McTaggart does not even regard it to be true, let alone self-evidently true, that perceptions are without fail correct. Doesn't he hold, as we saw above, that there can be error in perception? Doesn't he also maintain - what does not form part of the present discussion - that all our perception of objects as in time is fundamentally erroneous, for on his view there is really no time. It does not therefore require much insight, rather a bit of common sense, to see what McTaggart is truly aiming at. A slight rephrasing of his language reveals beyond a shred of doubt that what McTaggart means is

that perception, to use Geach's words, "has of its nature a *presumptive* correctness."<sup>144</sup> That is, every perception *prima facie* lays a claim to correctness (and hence reliability). It is this presumption of being correct which is a self-evident and essential feature of every perception. The presumption is surely very much and always capable of being shown to be false (in some subsequent experience), and so disbelieved, but it stands so long as it has not been *actually* falsified. It is then only proper that McTaggart proceeds to put one limit - a *temporal* limit - on the self-evident correctness of perception. And a proper linguistic form of a perception's presumptive correctness as subject to a temporal limit would, to use McTaggart's own words, be: "This that I perceive is as I perceive it *while I now perceive it*."<sup>145</sup> Notice that here there is no general presumption or claim that this that I perceive is as I perceive it *before* or *after* I perceive it.

This principle, I think, must be granted. In fact better account, and even better statement, of this primary feature of perception seems inconceivable. And once we have grasped the truth embodied in this principle we can begin to perceive why perceptual errors (e.g. illusions, etc.) are what they are. Perceptual errors, it deserves to be emphasized, are as errors entirely and unqualifiedly retrospective discoveries. Question this self-evident presumption of perception and you are faced up with major consequences. If every perceptual error were able to discover itself as such at the very moment of its occurrence there would never be any error at all. Secondly, if all perception were to disbelieve itself from the first it would just not get started and so all optimism about the knowability of the world would founder on the rocks. And this in turn would land us in a scepticism which would be total.<sup>146</sup>

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#### Notes

1. J.M.E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, ed. C.D. Broad, 2 vols. 91921-27; reprint, Cambridge : At the University Press, 1968). (Hereafter cited as *NE*)

2. *NE*, I, sec. 44, Italics mine. (in case of *NE* I have throughout referred to section numbers, and occasionally, also page numbers alongside.)
3. Plato, *Theaetetus* as included in *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, trans. with a running commentary by F.M. Cornford (1935; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 151E (p.29).
4. Merleau-Ponty goes further. His primary perception, as a mode of cognitive behaviour, is primary not only because it is the way in which we become aware of objects as such but also because it is "the basic experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression." Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (1962; reprint, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), p. VIII. On the relationship between the common-sense view and the scientific view of the physical world, Professor Strawson, echoing a view similar to Ponty's, says: "Science is not only the off-spring of common sense; it remains its dependent." P.F. Strawson, "Perception and its Objects", in *Perception and Identity: Essays Presented to A. J. Ayer with his Replies to them*, ed. G. F. Macdonald (1979; reprint, London and Basingstoke : The Macmillan Press, 1981), p. 59.
5. Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays*, 2nd ed. (London : George Allen & Unwin , 1917), chapter 10.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 209, Italics mine.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 209-210.
8. *Ibid.*, p.212.
9. *NE*, I, sec. 44.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p.41, footnote 2.
12. *Ibid.*, II, sec. 299.
13. *Ibid.* We may here contrast, in passing, McTaggart's view with the views, for example, of Stout and Blanshard. Both include under objects of perception (Stout's 'simple perception') not only things but also (what are not properly things but) qualities (and relations). Thus G.F. Stout, *Analytic Psychology*, 2 vols., 4th ed. (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1918), II, p. 4, says: "By *simple perception* is meant the immediate identification and distinction of an object presented to the senses, whether this be a simple sensible quality, like red or

blue, or a complex thing, having a multiplicity of parts and of sensible qualities, each of which is capable of being separately identified". Brand Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought*. 2 vols. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1939), I, pp. 52-53, says; "Perception is that experience in which, on the warrant of something given in sensation at the time, we unreflectingly take some object to be before us ....'Object' is a wide term here; it may mean a certain *thing*, a certain *kind* of thing, or what is not properly a thing at all, but quality or relation."

14. *NE*, I, sec. 44.
15. There are philosophers - e.g. A.J. Ayer - who hold that if "acquaintance" is taken to mean 'direct awareness' then it is properly application only to sense-data, and not to material things especially if the latter are taken to be existing independently of our knowledge of them. Ayer denies that awareness of sense-data is a kind of 'knowing' which word he wants to restrict to its 'propositional sense'. For Ayer it is a necessary and sufficient condition of the existence of sense-data that they should *in fact* be experienced. And if sense-data cannot exist unless experienced, Ayer hesitates to call awareness of them knowledge. See A. J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (1940; reprint, London: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 78-79.
16. *Mysticism and Logic* p. 210; cf. also p. 212.
17. *NE* I, sec. 5.
18. *Ibid.*, secs. 59, 60.
19. *Ibid.*, sec. 59.
20. *Ibid.* Compare Nelson Goodman, *Ways of World - making* (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 1978), p.6: "Talk of unstructured content ....or a substratum without properties is self-defeating."
21. C. D. Broad, *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*, 3 vols. (vol. 2 in 2 parts) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933-1938; New York: Octagon Books, 1976), I,p. 128 (hereafter cited as *Examination*).
22. *NE* I, sec. 60.
23. *Ibid.* But quality, though indefinable, can, however, be understood by pointing to certain examples, viz., redness, goodness, wisdom, happiness, etc.
24. *Ibid.*, chapter 8, sec. 78. A relation, however, says McTaggart (*Ibid.*, sec. 79),

can even have only one term, "at any rate in the ordinary sense of the word." Thus a subject can have a relation to itself, e.g. the relation of identity with itself. But even in such cases the term that stands in a relation, has without doubt an aspect of plurality - though not a plurality of substances.

25. J.M.E. McTaggart, "An Ontological Idealism," in *Contemporary British Philosophy*. 1st ser, ed. J.H. Muirhead (1924; reprint, London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1925), p. 253. It would appear that W.E. Johnson's conception of what calls 'substantive' comes, in certain ways, close to McTaggart's notion of substance. Johnson's substantive also covers, like McTaggart's substance, both 'continuants' and 'occurents'. A 'substantive', again, must have characteristic without itself being a characteristic. For details see W.E. Johnson, *Logic*, 3 pts. (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1921-1924; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964), II, secs. 1-3.
26. P.T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality: An Introduction to McTaggart's Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles : Univ. of Callifornia Press, 1979), p. 44.
27. *Ibid.*
28. When I say "what are called physical/ material objects" I have in mind the protest voiced by J. L. Austin against certain philosophers calling the external objects 'material things'. See his *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 8.
29. *NEI*, sec. 167
30. Although G.E. Moore's talk of 'direct' and 'indirect' apprehension in *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* (London George Allen & Unwin, New York : Humanities Press Inc., 1953), pp. 67-71, comes close to 'acquaintance' and 'description' distinction, his subsequent view as expressed in a note added to the above-mentioned book is that 'knowledge by acquaintance' can neither properly be called 'knowledge' nor 'acquaintance'. "There is no common use," he says, "of 'know' such that from the mere fact that I am seeing a person it follows that I am knowing him" (*ibid.*, p. 77, n. 1). Moore is surely wrong here, for in perceiving a person we do come to notice certain (physical or otherwise) characteristics of him. And that *is* knowledge, even if it is not complete knowledge of that person. But the latter is not entailed by the proposition that perception does give us knowledge of substances or objects. C. S. Peirce too held to the theory of 'direct' perception of (independently existing) objects. Endorsing the Kantian viewpoint, he says : "We have *direct experience of things in themselves*. Nothing can be more completely false than that we can experience only our own ideas. That is indeed without

exaggeration the very epitome of *all* falsity ... (A) If experience and all knowledge is knowledge of that which is, independently of being represented." See Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vol. 6 (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1935), 6.95 (p. 73).

The view that perception gives knowledge has been challenged by philosophers like H.A. Prichard. Prichard refuses to grant (any variety of) perception the status of knowledge. He even denies that we can ever 'directly see' physical bodies : the very existence of perceptual illusions (says Prichard) suffices to undermine the possibility of direct perception. See H. A. Prichard, "Perception," in *Knowledge and Perception* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1950).

31. Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 61.
32. Mortke S. Gram, *Direct Realism : A Study of Perception*. Nijhoff International Philosophy Series, vol. 12 (The Hague, Boston, Lancaster : Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), p. 4.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 5. C. S. Peirce too rejects the idea of 'deputy'. "It (the chair, for example) obtrudes itself upon my gaze; but not as a deputy for anything else, not 'as' anything. It simply knocks at the portal of my soul and stands there in the doorway." Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vols. 7-8 (in one), ed. Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1974), 7.619. For a comprehensive attempt to expose the basic instability of the conception of a 'perceptual representative', see Gustav Bergmann, *Realism: A Critique of Brentano and Meinong* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), pt. 2, *passim*.
34. Making out a strong case for Direct Realism (or what he calls 'real realism of common sense'), Professor Strawson argues that it is "inappropriate" to represent that realism as having the status of a 'theory' (as A. J. Ayer, according to him, does). P.F. Strawson, "Perception and its Objects," in G. F. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff. Indeed Strawson goes on to call this realism 'pre-theoretical' (*ibid.*, p.51): its acceptance constitutes *the* condition for sensible experience to be recognized for what it is, namely that which supplies the data or evidence for such a theory; this evidence, consequently, cannot be allowed to be construed as another theory. This realist view (which is in fact evidence and not a theory based on it) comes to be as Dummett puts it, "knowing it as God knows it." See Michael Dummett, "Common sense and Physics," in G. F. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
35. *NE*, II, sec. 300. Also cf. *ibid.*, I, sec. 55, where McTaggart says : "It would

be possible ....without discussing this [i.e. the question whether something exists?] to consider what characteristics are implied in the characteristic of existence, and then to say conditionally, that, if anything does exist, it has these characteristics."

36. *Ibid.*, II, sec. 300. Last italics mine.
37. The phrase "metaphysics of knowledge" is here taken from the title of Book I of T. H. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* ed. A. C. Bradley, 5th ed. with a Preface by E. Caird (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1906).
38. The doctrine of 'bare particulars' is now generally out of favour. For a scathing and well-reasoned attack on 'bare particulars' see Willfrid Sellars, "Particulars" in *Science, Perception and Reality*, chapter 9.
39. Russell, be it noted, omits from view one important consideration, viz., that if we cannot *otherwise* distinguish one particular from another, 'proper names' serve no purpose in a language one is to speak with others or even oneself. Therefore, as Bergmann remarks, "In this sense as well as in some others, ideal languages are not really languages." G. Bergmann, *Logic and Reality* (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 93.
40. Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgement*, rev. and enl ed. Ludwig Landgrebe, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 29; cf. pp. 28-31 for further elucidation of the theme.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
42. Strawson, "Perception and its Objects," in G. G. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, p. 47
43. Our talk of "the given" should be seen as free from such (unsavoury) associations which the word conjures up when some philosophers mean by the objects 'immediately and directly given' (to consciousness in sense perception) only sense-data. "Freedom", however, need not mean arbitrariness.
44. "Freedom", however, need not mean arbitrariness.
45. For details of Bradley's view see his "On our Knowledge of Immediate Experience", in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), chapter 6.
46. Franz Brentano, "The Distinction between Mental and Physical Phenomena", in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. Oskar Kraus and trans. Antos C. Rancurello, D. B. Terrell and Linda L. McAlister (London :

Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 88.

47. G. E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism," in *Philosophical Studies* (1922; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 17.
48. *NE* II, sec. 301. Italics mine.
49. We should be on guard against regarding McTaggart's final rejection of the reality of judgements into the distinction he is attempting to draw here.
50. *NE* II, sec. 301.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Consistent with this view of his, McTaggart prefers to use the words 'correct' and 'erroneous' for those perceptions which yield knowledge and those which are infected with error, respectively, thus reserving, in deference to the tradition, the words 'true' and 'false' for judgements. See *NE*, II, sec. 517.
53. Carl Ginet, *Knowledge, Perception and Memory*, p. 119, seems to argue to a somewhat similar conclusion, though on different grounds. "It cannot be maintained that ... to perceive is, necessarily, to make a perceptual judgement or to have some epistemic attitude towards some sort of proposition having to do with that perception." George Pitcher, *A Theory of Perception* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1917), pp. 70-71, also opposes the 'absurd thesis' that "sense-perception consists, either wholly or in part, of entertaining propositions and assenting to them, of making (conscious) judgements, or anything of that sort."
54. *NE*, II, sec. 418.
55. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, pp. 55, 125.
56. This sobriquet for McTaggart I take from C.D. Broad who used it in admiration of the lawyer-like care and clarity with which McTaggart used to set forth his arguments.
57. Izchak Miller, *Husserl, Perception, and Temporal Awareness* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1984), p. 33. I have here generally followed Miller's interpretation.
58. *Ibid.* By "singular meaning" Miller means a meaning "which could be expressed by a singular term", and by "singular term" he means "a term which,

when made subject of a sentence, the verb of that sentence is inflected in the singular' (*Ibid.*, p. 55, footnote 2).

59. Husserl's 'experience', even while including, in a good measure, perceptual experience, has wider connotations. Husserl takes experience as a generic name designating such "functions" of the mind as present before the entities which it apprehends. These entities may even include (e.g.) numbers. Cf. Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 33f.
60. Husserl, *Experience and Judgement*, "Introduction" passim, esp. pp. 27 ff, 45ff, 52ff, 64 ff.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 27. Husserl further says: "An object, as the possible substrate of a judgement, can be self-evidently given without having to be judged about in a predicative judgement. On the other hand, a self-evident predicative judgement concerning this object is not possible unless the object itself is given with self-evidence" (*Ibid.*, p. 20). For further details see *ibid.*, pp. 20 f.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.
63. For explication of Husserl's distinction between 'pre-predicative' and "predicative" acts, see Izchak Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 ff. The act of perception, says Miller, is the paradigm case of the "pre-predicative" act, while the act of judging is of the "predicative" act. (*Ibid.*, p. 48)
64. In fact Husserl maintains that even in cases of perceptual "manipulation" (which in its most basic form means "singling out" of individuals (i.e. objects) in what is hypothetically presumed to be genetically prior and not yet (mentally) "organized" perceptual field - which latter contains various "prominences" which attract the Ego's "interest" (*Experience and Judgement*, p. 104) - the objects singled out are already apprehended as having at least *some* physical properties. Husserl designates this way of apprehending an object's properties perceptual "explication" (*ibid.* p. 105), and goes on to emphasize that perceptual explication is a purely "attributive" process and not a "predicative" one, (Cf. Izchak Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 48) (Also see *Experience and Judgement*, pp. 104 - 123, esp. 123 for Husserl's use of the term "attribute").  
And to call it an attributive process is, according to Miller, to mean that it does not involve judgements (Miller *op. cit.*, p. 48). For Husserl's distinction between "attribution" and "predication" on which in turn depends his distinction between "pre-predicative" and "predicative" acts, see his *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague; Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), Appendix II, p. 313; also p. 52. Also see Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

65. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (1931; reprint, London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., New York : Humanities Press, 1976), pp. 240-243. Italics mine. (First German ed. Published 1913). Quoted in Miller, *op. cit.*, p.25.
66. *NE*, II, sec. 407. Compare Gram, *Direct Realism*, p. 59: "We need not perceive all of the properties of perceptual particular in order directly to perceive any of its properties."
67. *NE*, I, sec. 221, p. 234.
68. *Ibid.* This is roughly what A. N. Whitehead too has in mind when he talks of 'the solidarity of the universe'. As he observes: "The difficulty which arises in respect to internal relations is to explain how any particular truth is possible. In so far as there are internal relations, everything must depend upon everything else. But if this be the case, we cannot know about anything till we equally know everything else. Apparently, therefore, we are under the necessity of saying everything at once. This supposed necessity is palpably untrue. Accordingly it is incumbent on us to explain how there can be internal relations, seeing that we admit finite truths." *Science and the Modern World* (1926; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1953), p. 203. Whitehead therefore goes on to provide solution out of this impasse. See *Ibid.*, chapter 10.
69. For McTaggart's notion of Original Qualities and Relational Qualities see *NE*, I, sec. 86.
70. *Ibid.*, II, sec. 407
71. For McTaggart's full statement of the principle see *NE*, I, chapter 11.
72. *Ibid.*, I, sec. 99. for McTaggart's enunciation of the principle see *ibid.*, chapter 10.
73. That is, Exclusive description is one "which applies only to one substance, so that the substance is absolutely identified by the description." *Ibid.*, I, sec. 101, p.102. An exclusive description of a term however differs from a 'Complete Description' of it. Cf. *Ibid.*, sec. 101.
74. *Ibid.*, secs. 104, 105.
75. *Ibid.*, sec. 102.
76. *Ibid.*, sec. 105. For Broad's restatement of the principle which facilitates our comprehension of it, see his Examination, I, pp. 182-183.

77. *NE*, II, sec. 407.
78. *Ibid.*, sec. 301.
79. W. E. Johnson, *Logic*, pt. 2, p. 29.
80. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912; reprint London : Oxford Univ. press, 1964), p. 138. This 'self-evidence', however, adds Russell, is a matter of degrees (*Ibid.*, pp. 138-139).
81. In all empirical (i.e. phenomenal) experiences the mind and the self remain indistinguishably fused so that the mind can properly be regarded as the subject of knowledge and experience.
82. I am aware that the idea of 'the mind streaming out towards the object' is not likely to find ready acceptance even among those in the West who do not subscribe to the Lockean suggestion that the mind is a *tabula rasa* or to Russell's view (cf. *The Analysis of Mind* [1921; reprint, London: Allen & Unwin, 1922] p. 130). that in a perceptual situation the standpoint of the observer is the "passive" place in contrast to that of the object which is "active" place. The dominant view in the West - which is shared by even Kant (as per his conception of 'sensitivity') who otherwise proposed the idea of the knowing subject's own contribution in knowledge - emphasizes on the whole the idea that the mind does not go out to meet the object, but only receives (passively) the stimuli coming from it. While it cannot be my purpose here to defend the *Vedānta* view - considerations of relevance rule that out - I think one can still make bold to submit that there is nothing inherently extraordinarily grotesque about the mind's alleged active participation in the perceptual situation.
83. One notices here a certain affinity between McTaggart's view and some of Hume's statements concerning the inner world of sun, moon and stars, towns, houses, mountains, etc. and the outer world of the very same things. This alleged parallelism between two 'systems of beings' (as he calls it), Hume uses to refute the idea of the simplicity of the Subject or soul. (McTaggart's self is however complex consisting as it does of mental states. A self's perceptions themselves are complex according as they represent the perceived object as complex.) Hume is however far from formulating the principle in express and precise terms. See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3 vols. (in one) (1888; reprint, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1958), bk. 1, pt. 4. sec. 5 (pp. 242f.)

84. Cf. *NE*, II, sec. 413.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*, II, sec.236.
87. *Ibid.*, II, sec. 413, p. 96.
88. Broad, *Examination*, II, pt. 1, p. 48.
89. *Ibid.*, 49
90. *NE*, II, sec. 413
91. *Examination*, II, pt. I, p. 50.
92. *NE*, II, sec. 413.
93. *An Enquiry into Meaning and Truth* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1940), p. 128. Explaining, Russell points out that the 'datum which appears as subject in a judgement of perception is a complex whole whose complexity we do not 'necessarily' perceive." *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.
94. *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 211. It would seem, though no finality is claimed here, that within McTaggart's framework a whole - atleast in so far as this whole is a self - is ontologically prior to its states or parts, even though the states or parts are all there is to the whole.
95. *NE*, I, sec. 175.
96. For McTaggart's meaning of 'compound characteristics', see *Ibid.*, sec. 64.
97. *Ibid.*, sec. 175.
98. Cf. *Ibid.*, chapter 22 for McTaggart's enunciation of the principle.
99. 'Content' is defined by McTaggart as that plurality which is identical in the different sets of parts of a whole. *Ibid.*, sec. 125.
100. The proposition that every substance has content and, therefore, parts McTaggart regards synthetic, for the conclusion is *not* implied in the definition.
101. Some of these formulations, though slightly modified by me, I owe to C. D.

- Broad. Cf. Broad's *Examination*, II, pt. I, p. 54.
102. G. F. Stout, *Analytic Psychology*, I, p. 78. Italics mine.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
104. *Ibid.* For details see *ibid.*, chapter 4, esp. secs. 4-5 (pp. 92-95).
105. *Ibid.*, II, p. 22.
106. *NE*, II, sec. 412.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
108. *Ibid.* Italics mine.
109. *Ibid.*, sec. 401.
110. *Ibid.*
111. The phrase is Broad's. See his *Emamination*, II, pt. I, p.40.
112. *NE*, II, sec. 412, p. 93.
113. *Examination*, II, pt. I, p. 40.
114. *Ibid.*
115. Robert Leet Patterson, "A Critical Account of Broad's Estimate of McTaggart," in *The Philosophy of C.D. Broad*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (New York : Tudor Publishing Co., 1959), p. 144.
116. *Ibid.*
117. *NE*, II, sec. 412, p. 93.
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*, sec. 412. See details there.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 94
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

122. *Ibid.*, sec. 481
123. *Ibid.*, sec. 412.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
125. *NE*, II, secs. 508, 511.
126. *Ibid.*, secs. 302, 508, 513.
127. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (1929; reprint, London : Macmillan, 1973), p. 297. All italics mine. Also cf. Kant's *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that will be able to present itself as a science*, trans. With Introduction and Notes by Peter G. Lucas (Manchester Univ. Press, 1953), pp. 47-48. The same doctrine Russell expresses as follows: "There are in fact no illusions of the senses, but only mistakes in interpreting sensational data as signs of things other than themselves. Or, to speak more exactly, there is no evidence that there are illusions of the senses." *Bertrand Russell, Human Knowledge : Its Scope and Limits* (London :George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1948), p. 182. In fact , the doctrine goes back vary far. It would be of profit to reproduce here a few lines from the conversation between Socrates and Theaetetus.  
 Socr..."We have advanced so far as to see that we must not look for it in sense-perception at all, but in what goes on when the mind is occupied with thing by itself, whatever name you give to that.:  
 Theaet. "Well, Socrates, the name for that, I imagine, is 'making judgements."  
 Socr." You are right, my friend. ... Tell us once more what knowledge is."  
 Theaet." I cannot say it is judgement as a whole, because there is false judgement; but perhaps true judgement is knowledge."  
 See Plato, *Theaetetus* in F. M. Cornford, , op. cit., 187A - 187B.
128. *NE*, II, sec. 520, p. 206.
129. *Ibid.*, sec. 517. Cf. what Socrates says : "when I become percipient, I must become percipient of something for I cannot have a perception and have it of nothing." Plato, *Theaetetus*, in F.M. Cornford, op. cit., 160A
130. *NE*, II, sec. 517. This principle seems to find an echo in the principle - namely that in order to be something or to have any predicate it is necessary to exist - which modern Western logic expresses in the form

- :  $Fa(Ex) (x = a)$ . See Bernard Williams, *Descartes : The Project of Pure Enquiry* (New Jersey : Humanities Press, 1978), p. 92. J. Hintikka, "Cogito, Ergo Sum: Inference or Performance" *Philosophical Review* 71 (1962) : 3-32, reprinted in W. Doney, ed. *Descartes : A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, New York : Anchor Books, 1967) pp. 113-14, attempts to illustrate through an example - 'Hamlet thought, but Hamlet did not exist' - the possible plausibility or consistency of ' $Fa$ , but  $a$  does not exist'. For a reply to Hintikka see A. Kenny, *Descartes: A Study of his Philosophy* (New York : Random House, 1968), p. 61.
131. A. J. Ayer observes: "If I perceive a physical object in any way it will follow that it seems to me that I perceive something in that way, though not necessarily the same thing as I do perceive." *The Problem of Knowledge* (Penguins, 1956), p. 103.
132. D. M. Armstrong, *Perception and the Physical World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), chapter 7.
133. George Pitcher, *A Theory of Perception*, pp. 67 ff, also equates sense perception with acquiring of beliefs and so looks upon (nay, identifies) certain perceptual states of a person with his being in "a certain kind of belief state" (p. 69). Further Pitcher regards illusions also as consisting in "our automatically *believing*, or assuming, or having an immediate impulse or inclination to believe" (p. 70) that  $X$  is the case rather than  $Y$ . Pitcher, however, does not, unlike Armstrong (see below), question the 'perceptual' character of illusions.
134. *Op. cit.*, p. 83.
135. *Ibid.* p. 82.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
137. See Broad's *Examination*, II, pt. I, pp. 332-333.
138. This is P.T. Geach's word and seems very apt. See his *Truth, Love, and Immortality*, p. 140.
139. Detailed treatment of the doctrine is to be found in *NE*, II, secs. 513-514.
140. *Ibid.*, II, sec. 513, p. 200.
141. *Ibid*

142. *Examination*, II, pt. I, p. 333.

143. For Broad's detailed objections to McTaggart's doctrine see *Ibid.*, pp. 332-340.

144. P. T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, p. 140. it is indeed a significant coincidence that Husserl too explicitly talks of what he calls "empirical" "presumptive" certainty of external perception, with which he contrasts "the opposing mode of apodictic certainty". (*Experience and Judgement*, p. 306). "The certainty of external experience", says Husserl, "is always, so to speak, on notice, presumptive," even while this certainly "is repeatedly confirmed in the progress of experience" (*Ibid.*). Husserl advises us to guard against confusing "this confirmed, presumptive certainty," either with a mere 'conjecture' or with 'probability'. "The insight that the certainty of the world of external experience is only presumptive in no way implies, therefore, that it is a mere conjecture or probability" (*Ibid.*)

145. *NE*. II, sec. 634. Italics mine. Cf. also sec. 514.

146. *Ibid.*, sec. 513.

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