DAWES HICKS LECTURE

CONFLICTING APPEARANCES[1]

By M. F. BURNYEAT

Read 1 February 1979

My incapacity to extend the boundary of my 'this', my inability to gain an immediate experience of that in which it is subordinated and reduced—is my mere imperfection. Because I cannot spread out my window until all is transparent, and all windows disappear, this does not justify me in insisting on my window-frame's rigidity. For that frame has, as such, no existence in reality, but only in our impotence.

F. H. Bradley.

I

'FROM the fact that honey appears bitter to some and sweet to others Democritus concluded that it is neither sweet nor bitter, Heraclitus that it is both.' This report from Sextus Empiricus (*PH* ii. 63) testifies that arguments from conflicting appearances came early to the repertoire of philosophy. Democritus' purpose was to establish the view summed up in a famous fragment: 'Sweet exists by convention, bitter by convention, colour by convention; in reality atoms and the void exist' (frag. 125). If we speak of honey as sweet, it is because this is the response sanctioned by custom and convention, especially linguistic convention, to the way certain atoms impinge on our organs of taste, but there is no more to it than that: no more than a response to atomic stimuli. Terms like 'sweet' and 'bitter', 'white' and 'black', correspond to nothing in the collections of atoms which constitute the things in the world around us. Our attributions of what were later to be called secondary qualities are a projection on to that world of our own, merely subjective affections.

Heraclitus' message was quite different: not the empty subjectivity of sensible appearances but their one-sided partiality. It may be questioned whether he actually used the honey example, but there is no doubt that his strange gnomic utterances include others to the same or similar effect.

[1] I am grateful for advice from Jonathan Lear, Gisela Striker, David Wiggins, and Dr G. Berrios.

> Sea is the most pure and the most polluted water: drinkable and salutary for fishes, but undrinkable and destructive for men.
>
> (frag. 61)

Again, 'Donkeys would choose chaff rather than gold' (frag. 9), 'Pigs enjoy mud rather than clean water' for washing in (frag. 13 with Sext. Emp. *PH* i. 56). Are they right or we? The implied answer is that each is right—from his own point of view. It follows that the different but equally valid points of view are one-sided, partial reflections of reality. At some deeper level, from as it were an absolute god's-eye vantage-point, the opposition and contrast is overcome. The sea is both pure and impure; mud is both clean and dirty; rubbish is wealth. It sounds like a contradiction, and so it is—within our human language. Our language is so structured that to call something pure is to imply that it is not impure and vice versa. But that only raises the question, a generalization of the question we met with in Democritus, whether the oppositions and contrasts encoded in our language correspond to anything in reality. Maybe the language which makes us treat the conflict of appearances as a conflict, which makes us say that where appearances conflict both cannot be right, is itself an aspect of our anthropocentric partiality.

But we began with Sextus Empiricus, and Sextus, as a good Pyrrhonian sceptic, has his own moral to draw from the fact that honey appears bitter to some and sweet to others. The sceptical conclusion is that there is no saying which it is; one must suspend judgement on whether it is really sweet or really bitter (*PH* i. 101, 213–14). And Pyrrhonian scepticism extends this pattern of reasoning beyond the field of sensible appearances to every subject of inquiry. In morals, for example, because to some societies or individuals it appears right, to others wrong, for a man to marry his sister or have sexual intercourse in public, the sceptic suspends judgement on whether it is right or wrong (*PH* i. 145–63). Similarly with any question about how things really are—there is always a conflict of appearances and always the sceptic finds himself unable to decide between them.

We now have three different, actually three incompatible conclusions from a single premiss. Which might seem more than enough. But we have yet to reckon with Protagoras. It was probably Protagoras, with some precedent in Heraclitus, who gave currency to the extended notion of appearance whereby one speaks of conflicting appearances not only in the field of

sense-perception but wherever there is disagreement and one view is opposed to another. And the moral Protagoras drew was that each of the conflicting appearances is true *for* the person whose appearance it is. His doctrine that man is the measure of all things recommends a relativistic account of truth which allows the honey to be both sweet and bitter, subject to the qualification that it is sweet *for* (in relation to) some palates and bitter *for* others. By relativizing the attributions of sweet and bitter Protagoras avoids the contradictions embraced by Heraclitus. Similarly in morals, the doctrine that man is the measure of all things asserts that marrying one's sister is right for one individual or society, wrong for another.

So far we have four ancient characters on the stage. We should bring on some of their modern-dress counterparts. And first Berkeley. You do not have to read far into the first of Berkeley's *Three Dialogues* before you find the following:

> That which at other times seems sweet, shall to a distempered palate appear bitter. And nothing can be plainer, than that divers persons perceive different tastes in the same food, since that which one man delights in, another abhors. And how could this be, if the taste was something really inherent in the food? (p. 180)[1]

Berkeley agrees with Democritus in concluding from the conflict of appearances that the food is not inherently sweet or bitter. On the other hand, he sides with Heraclitus and Protagoras against Democritus in wanting to count both appearances veridical. There really is something sweet and something bitter. But since (contrary to Heraclitus) nothing can be both sweet and bitter, the sweet thing and the bitter thing are separate and distinct. The sweetness belongs to an idea perceived by or in the mind of one person, the bitterness to an idea perceived by or in the mind of another (or the same person at another time). This looks like Protagoras, since sweet and bitter alike exist only for one who tastes it, and we shall see that it does have a lot in common with a theory of perceptual relativism which Plato developed out of Protagorean materials in the *Theaetetus*, which theory Berkeley himself thought was exactly like his own (*Siris*, § 311). But there is in fact a difference. When Protagoras says that something exists for the person to whom it appears, he does not intend Berkeley's idealist conclusion that sensible

[1] References to the *Three Dialogues* are by page number in *The Works of George Berkeley*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, vol. ii (London, 1949).

qualities exist in the mind which perceives them.[1] In this lecture I shall be more concerned with the resemblances than with the differences between Berkeley and Protagoras, but in view of the difference just noted we should in principle count Berkeley's a fifth conclusion from the premiss of conflicting appearances. The conclusion, namely, that each appearance reveals a distinct but mental existence.

The issue between Berkeley and Protagoras breaks out again in twentieth-century disputes about whether sense-data are mental or merely dependent for their existence on a mind perceiving them. For in the twentieth century arguments from conflicting appearances have frequently been used to establish that what we perceive is sense-data rather than physical objects. Russell, for example, in *The Problems of Philosophy*, chap. 1, argues that because a table appears to be of different colours and of different shapes from different points of view, as the result of variations in lighting and perspective, therefore we do not see the real colour or the real shape of the table. We may say, for the purposes of ordinary practical life, that the real colour of the table is brown and its real shape rectangular, but all we actually see is a series of appearances (sense-data) no one of which has more right than its competitors to stand as the table's real colour or shape. Other theorists introduce sense-data by way of 'the argument from illusion', but often, in Ayer for example (*The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, p. 3), this is just the same argument under another name. The only difference is that it is presupposed—our more sceptical characters might say gratuitously presupposed—that we know which appearance is correct and which the illusion.

Conflicting appearances continue to be popular in moral philosophy also. Most recently, J. L. Mackie (*Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, chaps. 8 and 10) has appealed to the radical divergences between the moral codes of different groups and societies as support for the thesis that values are not part of the objective fabric of the world. If they were objective, he thinks, it would be hard to explain the divergences and disagreements. Whereas if they are in fact subjective, we can explain the erroneous claim to objectivity which seems to be built into moral language. It is a projection of subjective preferences and local practices which are felt to be in need of external validation.

[1] See my 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy: What Descartes Saw and Berkeley Missed', in G. N. A. Vesey ed., *Idealism Past and Present* (Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures 13 [1978/9], forthcoming).

We are back, it seems, with Democritus, except that the scene has shifted to the moral sphere. And that is no novelty either. For Democritus probably modelled his reasoning on a pattern of argument which originated in fifth-century debates about whether justice and other values are natural or conventional. In one form or another, ancient drama is still being repeated.

That more or less completes my cast of performers. The minor roles can be filled as they are needed. It remains to spotlight the critic in the audience. In *Sense and Sensibilia*, well aware that he is attacking a tradition of thought which goes back to Heraclitus (pp. 1–2), Austin writes:

> What is wrong, what is even faintly surprising, in the idea of a stick's being straight but looking bent sometimes? Does anyone suppose that if something is straight, then it jolly well has to *look* straight at all times and in all circumstances? Obviously no one seriously supposes this. (p. 29)

The fact is, as we have seen, many philosophers have supposed exactly this. They have appealed to cases of conflicting appearances in order to call in question the unqualified language in which we ordinarily attribute sensible qualities, moral properties, and so on, and they have done so in a manner plainly presupposing that it would only be correct to say without further qualification that honey is sweet and the stick straight, or that marrying one's sister is wrong, if it appeared so to all alike.

II

What emerges from this brief historical review is a typical philosophical problem. I do not mean the problem of deciding what does follow from the premiss that appearances conflict. For the answer to that question, I believe, is that nothing follows: nothing of any epistemological significance at all. The problem rather is to discover why so many conflicting conclusions have been thought to follow. Why have some philosophers been so impressed, while others like Austin remain unimpressed, by the familiar fact that appearances conflict? What assumptions, spoken or unspoken, are at work to make the familiar fact seem problematic?

That the answer is to be sought, at least sometimes, at the level of unspoken assumptions may begin to look likely if we return to Austin's remark that no one seriously supposes that if something is straight, then it jolly well has to *look* straight

at all times and in all circumstances. We have already seen that, taken as a claim about the historical record, this is wrong. It has to be wrong because the following two propositions are equivalent by the rule of contraposition:

(1) If something appears *F* to some observers and not-*F* to others, then it is not inherently/really/in itself *F*.

(2) If something is inherently/really/in itself *F*, then it appears *F* to all observers or it appears not-*F* to all.

And for the purposes of the present discussion we may simply bracket off as irrelevant the second disjunct in (2). For no one, or no one except possibly Berkeley's Hylas in a moment of dialectical desperation (*Three Dialogues*, pp. 181–3, 187), is going to propose that for a thing to be really *F* it must appear otherwise to every observer. To be sure, Democritus claims that the real properties of things are hidden, i.e. do not appear to any of us: 'Man must know by this rule, that he is cut off from the real' (frag. 6), 'In reality we know nothing; for the truth is in the depths' (frag. 117). But Democritus claims this, I take it, not from Hylas' motive but because he accepts (1), hence also (2), and he cannot find any instance within human experience where something appears *F* to everyone.[1] Honey and the stick have no properties which appear the same to all observers, so they themselves are merely phenomenal, the effect on human sensibility of the motions of atoms: 'In reality we know nothing of anything, but belief is a flowing in upon each of us' (frag. 7; cf. frag. 9).[2] Thus within the macroscopic world of human experience the second disjunct of (2) is not operative for Democritus either. And (2) without its second disjunct is the very thing that Austin said no one seriously supposes to be the case.

What is true is that a totally explicit text for (2) is remarkably hard to find. In one version or another formulation (1) abounds. The arguments cited from Democritus and Protagoras, Berkeley and Russell, all rest on (1), while Sextus quite frequently applies its epistemic counterpart

(1′) If something appears *F* to some observers and not-*F* to others, then we do not know (cannot determine) whether it is inherently/really/in itself *F*.

(1′) in turn transposes to

[1] See Diels–Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*[6] 68 A 112, A 135 §§ 63–4, 69–70.

[2] See further Diels–Kranz, 67 A 32, 68 A 37, A 57.

(2′) If we know whether something is inherently/really/in itself *F*, then it appears *F* to all observers or it appears not-*F* to all.

But I can find no clear instance of (2′) in the lengthy epistemological disquisitions of Sextus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Adversus Mathematicos*. Once or twice we catch a glimpse of (2) (*PH* i. 177, iii. 179, ? *M* viii. 37), but it is the exception rather than the rule. Similarly with Berkeley, I count some eight instances of (1) in the first *Dialogue*,[1] as against a mere couple of instances of (2), and these last are in any case confused with something different (see V below). As for Russell's treatment of these issues in *The Problems of Philosophy*, it is all based on (1) with not so much as a hint of (2).

We may wonder why people should be shy of taking their stand on formulation (2). And why, for that matter, Austin should seemingly have failed to notice that what he says no one would seriously suppose is just a reformulation of the sort of view he has been shooting at all along. Perhaps the reason is that (2) is *manifestly* implausible in some way that (1) is not. That would imply that (1) has been persuasive because it wraps things up a bit, keeps hidden an influence which comes closer to the surface in (2). I am going to propose that the hidden influence is a certain undeclared picture or model of what perception is or ought to be like. It is an inappropriate picture, even more inappropriate when carried over into the moral sphere, and for that reason it is not something a philosopher will readily acknowledge, even to himself.

There are, I fear, obvious pitfalls in the way of a diagnosis such as this. The history of philosophy must respect its texts and the arguments in those texts, and if one is going to suggest that there is more to an argument than appears in the text one needs to have good grounds in the text itself. We have all known occasions when it was reasonable to say of someone, 'He only maintains that *p* because at some level he thinks that *q*, although he might not accept *q* if he was explicitly asked about it.' But we also know that this type of diagnosis can be abused, and in the history of philosophy it has sometimes been abused. Being mindful, therefore, of the dangers ahead, I propose to set out from a detailed textual examination of one of the arguments from conflicting appearances where, if I am right, the influence of an inappropriate model of perception can be discerned.

[1] pp. 180, 181, 185,? 186, 189 (3 times), 191.

But at once we face a historical problem. We cannot go directly to Protagoras or Democritus, since their arguments survive only in second-hand reports; and Heraclitus preferred gnomic paradox to the mundane process of getting from premises to conclusions. The earliest reasoned argument on our subject which we can study in the original words is an argument in Plato's *Theaetetus* on behalf of Protagorean relativism, occurring in a passage (153 D–154 B) which has never, I think, been given the extended discussion it deserves. Protagoras is the beneficiary of the argument, not its author: there is every reason to think that the argument is a dialectical construction by Plato himself, rather than something extracted from Protagoras' own writings. Consequently we must bear in mind that we shall be viewing the argument in a double perspective, our own and Plato's. This is Plato's attempt to bring out the kind of thinking which leads to a relativistic account of sensible qualities, so it already contains an element of diagnosis. I believe, however, that Plato's diagnosis is on the right lines, and that all we need do is complete the job he began.

III

153 D SOCRATES. Well then, you must think like this. In the case of the eyes, first, you mustn't think of what you call white colour as being some distinct thing outside your eyes, or in your eyes either—in fact E you mustn't assign any place to it; because in that case it would, surely, be at its assigned place and in a state of rest, rather than coming to be.

THEAETETUS. Well, how can I think of it?

SOCRATES. Let's follow what we said just now, and lay it down that nothing is one thing just by itself. On those lines, we'll find that black, white, or any other colour will turn out to have come into being, from 154 A the collision of the eyes with the appropriate motion. What we say a given colour is will be neither the thing which collides, nor the thing it collides with, but something which has come into being between them; something private to each one. Or would you be prepared to insist that every colour appears to a dog, or any other living thing, just the way it appears to you?

THEAETETUS. Certainly not.

SOCRATES. And what about another man? Is the way anything appears to him like the way it appears to you? Can you insist on that? Or wouldn't you much rather say that it doesn't appear the same even to yourself, because you're never in a similar condition to yourself?

THEAETETUS. Yes, I think that's nearer the truth than the first alternative.

B SOCRATES. Surely then, if what we measure ourselves against or

touch had been large, white, or hot, it would never have become different by bumping into a different perceiver, at any rate not if it didn't undergo any change itself. And on the other hand, if what does the measuring or touching had been any of those things, then again, it wouldn't have become different when another thing came up against it, or the thing which came up against it had something happen to it: not if it hadn't, itself, had anything happen to it.[1]

Socrates' aim in this passage is to establish on behalf of Protagoras that sensible qualities like hot and cold, white and black, are essentially relative to the individual perceiving subject. This thesis is expressed in two connected ways. (a) The colour white, for example, is not to be located in (153 D 9–E 1) or identified with (154 A 1–2) either the object perceived or the eye of the perceiver. It is not a distinct thing existing anywhere at all, but when an eye lights on[2] what we would ordinarily describe as a white stick or a white stone,[3] something occurs between them and it is in this transaction that the colour white arises or comes to be. In other words, the colour is a relational happening or occurrence, essentially involving both parties to the perceptual encounter (153 D–154 A). (*b*) Neither the object seen nor the perceiving subject is in itself white (154 B). Indeed, nothing is in itself any one thing at all (153 E 4–5, referring back to 152 D).

These two formulations add up to a proposal to treat terms like 'hot' and 'cold', 'white' and 'black', as incomplete or relational predicates. From formulation (*b*) in its Protagorean context we may gather that no sentence of the form '*x* is white' is true as it stands, without a qualifying clause specifying a perceiver for whom it is true. This gives us the result that the colour white is essentially relational and its occurrences should

[1] Quoted in the translation of John McDowell, *Plato—Theaetetus* (Oxford, 1973), with the following modifications: (*a*) Socrates' last speech at 154 B 1 ff. should begin with an inferential 'Surely then', not McDowell's 'Well now' (the Greek is οὐκοῦν), and should not be spaced off from 154 A as a separate paragraph designed to set a puzzle (McDowell, pp. 19, 131). (*b*) At 154 B 2 McDowell has 'bumping into a different person', where the Greek is not so specific and where we should allow for the animal perceivers cited in 154 A. (*c*) For ἴδιον at 154 A 2 McDowell has 'peculiar', but it is not misleading to use the epistemologically loaded term 'private' (cf. 161 D, 166 C).

[2] I choose this English expression to counterbalance the exaggeratedly somatic overtones of McDowell's translation in terms of colliding and bumping. προσβάλλειν is used of the sun's rays striking the earth and in similar cases.

[3] For the examples, cf. 156 E.

canonically be represented in sentences of the form '*x* is/becomes white for so-and-so'. But now, if that is so, there is no unqualified predicate 'white' to be abstracted from its predicative position and made the subject of the definitional question 'What is white?'. There is no such thing as (being) white *simpliciter*, only white for you and white for me.[1] Hence, finally, formulation (a): white is not a distinct thing existing in the subject or in the object of perception.

We now have a thesis: sensible qualities like hot and cold, white and black, are essentially relative to perceivers. What are the grounds for accepting it? They are not, as commentators sometimes suggest,[2] grounds pertaining to a theory of the mechanism of perception. The thesis is meant to be established independently of any detailed understanding of the commerce between perceiver and perceived;[3] indeed, the thesis will shape the theory of perception to be elaborated in the dialogue (156 A ff.) rather than being shaped by it. The argument for the relativity of sensible qualities is entirely general, and its leading premiss is the conflict of sensible appearances.

Socrates in 154 A mentions three types of variation or conflict between appearances, in a classification that was to become traditional. Colour appearances vary between man and other animals, between one man and another, and between one time and another within the experience of a single man.[4] Socrates actually implies the strongest possible claim, that no two colour appearances are alike, but I want to leave that aside for the moment. It will be sufficient for the argument Socrates has in view to start from the more modest claim that variations do occur. For he asserts at 154 B that this is incompatible with attributing sensible qualities either to the object or to the subject of perception.

We may elucidate his claim as follows. Take, as before, an

[1] The abstraction-move underlying ὃ δὴ ἕκαστον εἶναί φαμεν χρῶμα (153 E 7–154 A 1) is standard in Plato: see G. E. L. Owen, 'Dialectic and Eristic in the Treatment of the Forms', in G. E. L. Owen ed., *Aristotle on Dialectic* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 114–15.

[2] e.g. F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1935), p. 40, McDowell, op. cit., p. 131.

[3] Witness the difficulty (adverted to by McDowell, pp. 130–1) of fitting the language used to describe perception here into the more detailed story that comes later.

[4] The first two types of variation correspond to the first two of the Ten Modes of Pyrrhonian scepticism, the third is expanded in a number of the remaining Modes (Sext. Emp. *PH* i. 36 ff.).

event of the kind we would ordinarily describe as the seeing of a white stone ('measuring ourselves against' is Protagorean for perceiving of any kind). Then, first, the stone cannot be white in itself or else, so long as it suffered no change, it would appear white to any other perceiver. Second, the subject of perception cannot itself be white either, or else, so long as it suffered no change, it would see everything white: including the stone we started with, supposing that to have been painted red.[1] More generally, if sensible qualities inhere in the objects of perception, they ought to make themselves apparent to every perceiver alike, regardless of differences between perceivers or changes in the condition of a single perceiver; if, alternatively, they inhere in the perceiving subject, then conversely their appearance should not be affected by differences and changes in the objects perceived. But it is a fact of experience familiar to us all that sensible appearances vary with differences and changes on either side of the perceptual encounter. So we are invited to draw the desired conclusion: sensible qualities are essentially relative to the individual perceiver.

That is the argument, and at first reading it may not seem a significant advance. The words 'Or would you be prepared to insist . . . ' at 154 A 2–3 indicate that it is the conflict of appearances which is to show that colours are not inherent in the object or the subject, but relational. That is, in 153 E–4 A the argument rests on (1). But then Socrates proceeds in 154 B to spell out his argument in terms of (2). And we have already seen that (2) is just a reformulation of (1); it provides no additional support for the conclusion he wishes to draw.

But this dismissive judgement is premature. In the first place, we should be grateful to Plato for putting the emphasis on formulation (2), the thing Austin said no one would seriously suppose. Given the rarity of (2) in later philosophers, it is not to be assumed that it was prominent in earlier presentations of the line of thought which Plato is reconstructing. We can also thank Plato for making absolutely explicit the important point that with either formulation the argument only applies on the assumption that the thing we are talking about remains unchanged (cf. Ayer. pp. 14–15). Second, (1) and (2) as formulated concern only the object of perception, while Socrates' argument for a relativistic account of sensible

[1] It was, I think, R. Hackforth, 'Notes on Plato's *Theaetetus*', *Mnemosyne* series 4, 10 (1957), p. 130, who first made sense of ἤ τι παθόντος (154 B 5), construing it as a genitive absolute rather than with ἄλλου.

qualities comes in two halves. One half attends to the object of perception, the other tackles the curious-sounding suggestion that the thing which is white in itself, or the thing where the whiteness is to be found, is the perceiving subject. Why should anyone suppose that? And, if he did, what on earth would he mean by it?

In his admirable commentary on the *Theaetetus* John McDowell suggests[1] that the issue is not whether the perceiver is coloured white but whether he is seeing white. A perceiver cannot be said, in the ordinary unqualified way, to be seeing white unless, so long as he undergoes no change, he sees everything white; i.e. it is a condition of his seeing white at all that he sees only white, not also other colours. I do not think this can be the right reading of the text. For one thing, it involves understanding 'any of those things' (154 B 4) as taking up 'measuring or touching', i.e. perceiving, rather than 'large, white, or hot', which is the obvious reference for the phrase. McDowell only makes the suggestion because he finds it obscure 'why anyone might be thought to want to say (except for obviously irrelevant reasons) that an eye is white'; why, in other words, there should be an issue as to whether the subject of perception, as opposed to its object, is in itself coloured. Why indeed? This is exactly the sort of hermeneutic puzzle in the face of which it becomes reasonable to probe for unspoken assumptions underlying the surface text.

With this in mind I want to bring to bear on our text two passages from later writers, one ancient and one modern. In the first chapter of *Appearance and Reality* Bradley presents the following argument against the reality of secondary qualities:

> We assume that a thing must be self-consistent and self-dependent. It either has a quality or has not got it. And, if it has it, it cannot have it only sometimes, and merely in this or that relation. But such a principle is the condemnation of secondary qualities.
>
> It matters very little how in detail we work with it. A thing is coloured, but not coloured in the same way to every eye; and, except to some eye, it seems not coloured at all. Is it then coloured or not? And the eye—relation to which appears somehow to make the quality—does that itself possess colour? Clearly not so, unless there is another eye which sees it. Nothing therefore is really coloured; colour seems only to belong to what itself is colourless. And the same result holds, again, with cold and heat. A thing may be cold or hot according to different parts of my skin; and, without some relation to a skin, it seems without any

[1] op. cit., pp. 131–3.

such quality. And, by a like argument, the skin is proved not itself to own the quality, which is hence possessed by nothing. (pp. 9–10)

The resemblances are striking. Whether Bradley had the *Theaetetus* passage in mind I do not know. If he did, he preferred to change the argument, for Bradley's reason for denying colour to the eye is that it is only coloured when seen by a second eye, which seems to assume the conclusion to be proved. But at least here is one serious philosopher witnessing to the relevance in this sort of context of the thought that the colour of the eye might be the source of the colour we see. And there is another resemblance. Although Bradley endorses the argument, and will later (pp. 12 f.) say that it applies equally to primary qualities, his attitude to it has none the less a certain detachment;[1] his presentation, like Plato's, is mixed with diagnosis. So it is not without interest that he starts off with that rare thing, a clear and explicit version of (2): 'A thing . . . either has a quality or has not got it. And, if it has, it cannot have it only sometimes and merely in this or that relation.'

The second passage for comparison is Sextus on the subject of perception:

Sufferers from jaundice say that things which appear white to us are yellow, and those whose eyes are bloodshot say they are blood-red. Since, then, some animals also have yellow eyes, others bloodshot eyes, others albino, and others eyes of yet another colour, it is likely, I think, that they have a different perception of colours. (*PH* i. 44)

Why is it likely? Do things really look blood-red when you wake up from a heavy drinking-bout with bloodshot eyes? I want to suggest that anyone who thinks it likely is in the grip of a certain picture or model of perception. If one thinks of visual perception as a matter of looking out through the eyes as through a window, then coloured eyes will be like the tinted spectacles favoured by modern philosophers of perception, only further in; just so, on Sextus' explanation of the phenomenon (*PH* i. 126) yellow or red in the eye is an admixture of colour within the field of vision. Some animals look out through a yellow or a blood-red window-pane, and so will you too if your eyes go yellow with jaundice or blood-red from drinking too much. I forbear from quoting Sextus' further remarks

[1] Because he thinks that at the common-sense level it is perfectly correct to say that secondary qualities, no less than primary, are 'an actual part of the physical world' (p. 247). What he is most opposed to is the metaphysical bifurcation of primary and secondary qualities.

(*PH* i. 47) about the shape things must look to animals whose eyes have slanting or elongated pupils.

It should not be thought that this is just a piece of antique physiology. Descartes, no stranger to optics, cites the example of a man with jaundice to whom things look yellow because his eye is tinged with yellow (*Regulae*, XII), and so does Berkeley (*Three Dialogues*, p. 185), who couples it with the example of animals with eyes of a different texture from ours. Russell broadcast the jaundice example from the BBC in 1948.[1] It was still going strong in 1963 when Professor Roderick Chisholm used it in a paper on 'The Theory of Appearing',[2] and it gave evidence for both sides of an Aristotelian Society symposium in 1968.[3] Yet it is quite false that people with jaundice see (white) things yellow. Of this I am assured both by medical authority and by those who have had the condition. As a matter of fact, we all have yellow inside our eyes. In humans and a range of other animals the lens of the eye is yellow. But so far from making things look yellow, this enhances colour contrast and eliminates blur from the differential refractive properties of different wavelengths of light. Red can help too: turtles have red oil droplets in their eyes to improve their vision over the glary surface of the water. But these are relatively recent discoveries.[4] What we have to ask is why for centuries the myth about jaundice should continue to be believed, as it evidently still is believed. (Someone actually said to me, 'But surely, they have yellow eyes', and appealed to the phrase 'a jaundiced view of things'.) For that matter, according to Austin (p. 49), it is equally false to say, with Ayer (p. 6),[5] 'When, as the result of my putting on green spectacles, the white walls of my room appear to be green, my experience is qualitatively the same as if I were perceiving walls that really were green.' Austin does not say why it is false, but I think

[1] See Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian and other essays on religion and related topics* (London, 1957), pp. 161–2.

[2] Cited from Robert J. Swartz ed., *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing* (New York, 1965), p. 183.

[3] F. N. Sibley and Michael Tanner, 'Objectivity and Aesthetics', *Arist. Soc. Suppl. Vol.* 42 (1968), pp. 39 and 60.

[4] Gleaned from the fascinating store of empirical detail in Gordon Lynn Walls, *The Vertebrate Eye and Its Adaptive Radiation*, Cranbrook Institute of Science Bulletin No. 19 (Michigan, 1942), pp. 191 ff. More recent still is knowledge of picrotoxin. Picrotoxin intoxication, I am informed, yellows the skin (but not the eye) and does make things seen assume a yellowish look.

[5] But Ayer is actually retailing examples from other people.

it would be correct to insist that the experience of looking *through* green and the experience of looking *at* green are importantly distinct. So those who cite the jaundice example are committing a double error of fact if they say without qualification that the condition makes things look yellow. First, there is no such yellowing effect; second, if seeing through yellow eyes really were like seeing through yellow-tinted glass, it would still be distinguishable from the experience of seeing a yellow object. But the important point is that the manner in which philosophers through the centuries have repeated this type of example, in defiance of ascertainable fact, is evidence that at some level people are powerfully drawn to the thought that we look through our eyes as through a window.

That we are dealing with an implicit picture or model of perception, not an explicit inference from outmoded physiology, is clear even in antiquity. One early citing of the jaundice example is by Lucretius (iv. 332–6), and on the atomist assumptions of Lucretius' official physiology of perception one might well think that the example should be nonsense. For remember that for an atomist yellow is nothing but the effect of certain atoms impinging on the eye, not a characteristic of the eye or of anything else. Lucretius, however, has an answer. The eyes and body of the jaundiced person emit numerous atomic effluences of the type requisite for him to appear yellow to other people and some of these 'seeds of yellow' return to his own eye mixed up with the effluences from outside objects, with the result that those objects look yellow to him. It is an obvious difficulty for this explanation that it should imply that if someone whose eyes appear a normal healthy white puts on a clean white toga, he will see everything white. Lucretius offers nothing to ease this difficulty, and seems not to have noticed it. Clearly, his belief that yellow eyes produce yellow appearances is not a deduction from physiological theory but a notion independently acquired, which physiology is then made to accommodate. And the influence of the window model shows itself when he adds a reference to 'seeds of yellow' in the eye itself (335)—as if the eye were within the field of vision and the man were looking through it.

This evidence from Lucretius is the more remarkable because at iii. 359–69 he attacks a view which explicitly compared the eyes to windows through which the mind looks out at things.[1]

[1] Lucretius actually says 'doors' (*fores*), not 'windows', but the parallels at Cic. *Tusc.* i. 46, Philo fr. (p. 615 Mang.), Sext. Emp. *M* vii. 129, 350, 364

The point at issue is whether it is the eyes themselves or the mind within which is the proper subject of perception. The window comparison comes from someone advocating a version of Plato's view (see VIII below) that it is a unitary mind, not the separate sense-organs, which does our perceiving.[1] Lucretius disagrees, for it is Epicurean doctrine that the body is endowed by the soul with a perceptual sensitivity of its own. That is, he disavows the window model when it is put to him. But, I claim, he would not have said what he later says about the jaundice example unless at a less concious level he was still susceptible to its influence.

It is not unlikely that similar examples were already current by the time Plato wrote the *Theaetetus*. Perhaps the earliest attested appeal to the jaundice example—the earliest, at any rate, that I have found, and it has a blood-red example to go with it—is due to the Cyrenaic school, who developed a hard-line sceptical epistemology in the second half of the fourth century B.C. By Sextus' account (*M* vii. 192, 197–8), they used these and other examples to argue that we have no knowledge of or access to anything beyond our own experiences. For in such cases it is true that we are 'yellowed' or 'reddened' (the curious terminology for the experience of something's appearing yellow/red is revealingly suited to the examples), but false—as anyone will agree—that the objects seen are yellow or red. So how on any other occasion can we be sure of more than that we are thus 'yellowed' or 'reddened'? It would be interesting to be better informed than we are about the Cyrenaic epistemology,[2] but for present purposes the important thing is that the examples

(quoted by Cyril Bailey, *Lucreti De Rerum Natura* [Oxford, 1947], ii p. 1052) make it likely that *fores* renders θυρίδες, 'windows'.

[1] Who was this someone? Bailey, loc. cit., says, 'The theory which Lucretius here refutes is quite definitely that of the Stoics', and cites the Cicero passage—but Cicero does not name his source. Sextus traces the comparison to Strato of Lampsacus and to Aenesidemus' work on Heraclitus. Sextus wishes to think (*M* vii. 364) that the point of the comparison is to make a claim that the mind can get a direct, unmediated perception of things, in contrast to a view of the senses as obstructively 'in front of' the mind (*M* vii. 352–3). Lucretius and Cicero, however, make it clear that the issue is the one discussed at *Theaet.* 184 B ff., about the subject of perception and its unity; Tertullian, *De Anima* 14 confirms that this was Strato's and Aenesidemus' concern also. To get back from this evidence to Stoic doctrine (whether Posidonius or earlier) is a matter of unravelling the tangled knots of Aenesidemus' work on Heraclitus: see Ulrich Burkhard, *Die angebliche Heraklit-Nachfolge des Skeptikers Aenesidem* (Bonn, 1973).

[2] For a few suggestions, see 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy', op. cit.

would only serve to illustrate and recommend so extreme a theory if they were of a type which the audience was antecedently disposed to accept as familiar and uncontroversial.[1]

I hope this is enough justification—I do not think it is more than enough—for a diagnosis of what is going on in the second half of the argument before us. In terms of the window model, Socrates' point is that if the white were in the eye of the perceiving subject, then he would be looking out, as it were, through a white-tinted pane and so should see everything white.

Now apply the window model to the first half of the argument. If the white were out there in the stone, not in the eye of the beholder, and one looks through the eye as through a window, then one's view of the white must be unobstructed. The window-pane should be transparent, without spot or blemish. Or better, since classical Greek windows were unglazed, the eye should be an open aperture with no pane at all. There is as it were nothing between the perceiver and the thing he perceives. In that case the stone should appear white to every perceiver.

My suggestion, then, is that the window model makes sense of an argument which otherwise is no argument at all. The next step is to look for confirmation of this diagnosis in the wider context of the dialogue as a whole.

IV

The passage under discussion is part of an elaborate dialectical construction designed to unravel the implications and commitments of Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception (151 E).[2] The question at issue is this: if we accept that knowledge is perception, what must we suppose about perception and the world for the definition to hold good? The answer, in broad outline, is that we must accept a Protagorean epistemology and a Heraclitean account of the world. Protagoras said, 'Man is the measure of all things, of those that are, that they are, and of those that are not, that they are not', meaning by this that whatever appearances a person has, they are true for him—things really are, for him, as they appear to him to be—and, conversely, the only things that are real for him are those that appear to him. For the present we can confine ourselves to sensible appearances and to the first half of the double

[1] νενόμισται at *M* vii. 193 reports precisely that the examples are common currency.

[2] For a more textual justification of this reading than I can offer here see 'Idealism and Greek Philosophy', op. cit.

thesis contained in the measure doctrine: whatever sensible appearances a person has, they are true for him. If we adopt this principle, we will postulate a state of affairs matching every sensible appearance, to render that appearance true, and then, if perception is construed in Protagorean terms as the having of sensible appearances (cf. 152 B 11–C 1), every perception will be the unerring apprehension of a particular state of affairs: the state of affairs which consists in something's really being, for the perceiver, as it appears to him to be. By this line of argument every case of perception is a case of knowledge and Theaetetus' definition is so far vindicated.

It is at this point that the argument we have been puzzling over becomes relevant, and we can now see why Socrates makes the very strong suggestion that no two colour appearances are alike. The theory he is elaborating is committed to the view that, if this were so, each appearance should still yield knowledge of a real state of affairs. If the theory is to hold good, it must be able to take in its stride the most extreme variation imaginable in the course of appearances. So we had better suppose, for the sake of the argument, that extreme variation actually obtains. Each appearance is independent of every other appearance, yet each is knowledge.

But now, if each appearance is independent of every other, yet each is knowledge, there must be a matching variation in the states of affairs which correspond. Everything I know and perceive must be characterizable independently of what is the case for any other perceiver, including myself at another time, and indeed independently of what is the case for my other senses at the present time. So we are left with such items as a thing's being white for my eye now. Nothing can be white in itself and white is not a distinct thing in itself, only white for me/my eye now.

Thus the argument is plain sailing if we put it back into its context in the dialogue and add to the premiss of conflicting appearances the Protagorean principle that each and every perceptual appearance is the measure or criterion of what is the case for the perceiver; or, more briefly, that every perception is knowledge. From this combination of premisses it does follow that sensible qualities cannot inhere either in the object or in the subject of perception. But now: what is the Protagorean principle but a cool theoretical formulation of the window model (transparent version)? As Plato puts it elsewhere in the dialogue, what the principle claims is that every perception is 'clear' (179 C).

I think this diagnosis is correct. The Protagorean principle does not challenge the assumptions of the window model but confirms them. It embodies a thesis that perceptual experience is transparent and saves it from the objection raised against transparency at 154 B by making the white private to the eye which sees it (154 A 2) and by denying the distance which separates the eye from its object. The colour white is not in me nor out there but in between, something private to me and the object I see (153 DE, 154 A)—the spatial language may be metaphorical but conflicting appearances are often effects of the intervening medium. The choice of metaphor reveals that the window model is still dominant. Protagorean windows provide a flawless close-up view of the contents of a private world.

Someone may object that this evidence from the wider context of the dialogue actually cuts the other way. To say that a philosopher is in the grip of an inappropriate picture of perception makes it sound as if something rather disreputable is going on. But it has now turned out that, on the contrary, Plato's argument is guided by an entirely explicit, coolly theoretical principle which is quite sufficient to get us from the conflict of appearances to the relativity of sensible qualities. If so, it seems not only rude but unnecessary to bring in this talk of the window model. Never mind that the Protagorean principle can be seen as itself an exemplification of the window model. The question is, why should it be?

But here we must recall the double perspective I spoke of earlier. It is Plato who has contrived that the argument from conflicting appearances comes after the definition of knowledge as perception and after the formulation of the Protagorean principle which supports it. The whole passage, as I noted earlier, is part of an elaborate working out of the implications and commitments of the initial definition. The trouble is that nothing has been said so far as to why anyone would be tempted to think that knowledge is perception, and no motivation has been given for adopting the Protagorean principle except that it is necessary to do so if the definition is to hold good. And even this consideration is not right out into the open yet. The discussion starts from the definition, as Socratic discussions typically do, and Socrates turns at once to argue, in the manner described, that the definition requires to be supported by a Protagorean epistemology and so is effectively equivalent to the doctrine that man is the measure of all things; 'Protagoras said the same thing as Theaetetus but put it a

different way' (152 A). Only later, as the discussion develops, is there an opportunity to go into the philosophical motivations for holding a relativistic view. And 'later' means, in the first instance, the passage we are looking at. That passage plays a double role. Considered as a development of the position already premissed for examination, it may be allowed to presuppose the Protagorean principle that every perceptual appearance is the measure or criterion of what is the case for the perceiver; in which case the argument goes through. But considered as Plato's attempt to bring out the kind of thinking which motivates perceptual relativism, it must stand on its own feet.[1] If, then, we raise the question how Protagoras himself came to the doctrine that man is the measure of all things, if we ask why he maintained that every appearance is the measure or criterion of what is the case for the person whose appearance it is, Plato's answer is that it was his solution to the problem of conflicting appearances. In the *Theaetetus*, indeed, the measure doctrine is initially introduced and explained in terms of what Protagoras would say about an example of conflicting appearances, the example of the wind which feels cold to one person and does not feel cold to another (152 B). And there can hardly be any serious dispute that Plato's answer is right. No philosopher who was not antecedently worried about conflicting appearances would propose a thoroughgoing relativism of the Protagorean kind.

But this means that the window model is not otiose. If we do ask the argument from conflicting appearances to stand on its own feet, it stumbles. Hence it is legitimate to suggest that anyone who finds it persuasive is leaning on some extra support, whether or not he is aware of the fact.

V

Interestingly—and this may help my diagnosis—we encounter a rather similar problem of double perspective in Berkeley's first *Dialogue*. Here we find a whole series of arguments from conflicting appearances: the case of sweet and bitter quoted earlier, the famous example of the water which feels warm to

[1] That the passage has this additional role is confirmed by comparing it with the immediately preceding 153 AD, which performs a parallel function for the Heraclitean component of Plato's dialectical construction. This is a lighthearted collection of Heraclitean considerations, capped by a joking interpretation of Homer, the whole making no contribution to the serious business of developing the implications and commitments of Theaetetus' definition.

one hand and cold to the other, and many more. But before embarking on these and other arguments Berkeley has laid down a notion of immediate perception which turns out to embody a version of the Protagorean principle we have been discussing. Immediate perception is knowledge (cf. Theaetetus' definition), what is immediately perceived must really be as it appears to be, hence the states of affairs (ideas) apprehended in perception must vary to match each and every change in sensible appearances. Or better, where the Protagorean theory has reality change to keep pace with the changing appearances, for Berkeley the states of affairs apprehended in immediate perception simply are the appearances. This notion of immediate perception defines a Berkeleyan perspective granted which the ensuing arguments are impeccable. The trouble is that at the start of the first *Dialogue* the full implications of the notion of immediate perception are not brought into the open, and if we ask why we should accept the notion, why we should adopt the Berkeleyan perspective, the answer is that it is Berkeley's solution to the problem of conflicting appearances. As in the *Theaetetus*, so in the *Three Dialogues*, the notion which comes first in the order of exposition should, in the order of argument, come last.

This is clear if we compare the *Three Dialogues* with Berkeley's earlier work, *The Principles of Human Knowledge*. In that treatise arguments from conflicting appearances are much less prominent, the reason being that they are now not Berkeley's own weapon but part of the armoury of the sceptic whom he takes as his opponent. The conclusion from the premiss of conflicting appearances is not the *Three Dialogues* conclusion but the sceptical conclusion urged by Sextus Empiricus: 'It must be confessed that this method of arguing doth not so much prove that there is no extension or colour in an outward object, as that we do not know by sense which is the true extension or colour of the object' (*Princ.* § 15). (The echo of Sextus is no accident: there is evidence that Berkeley's project for refuting scepticism was connected with his reading of the Pyrrhonian arguments transmitted by Bayle's *Dictionary*.)[1] In Berkeley's view, then, the (Pyrrhonian) sceptic has a good argument to show that 'Things remaining the same, our ideas vary, and which of them, or even whether any of them at all represent the true quality really existing in the thing, it is out of our reach to

[1] Richard Popkin, 'Berkeley and Pyrrhonism', *Review of Metaphysics* 5 (1951/2), pp. 223–46.

determine' (*Princ.* § 87). The only answer is to deny the contrast between how things appear and how they really are: 'Colour, figure, motion, extension and the like, considered only as so many *sensations* in the mind, are perfectly known, there being nothing in them which is not perceived' (*ibid.*) But now: to say there is nothing in the idea which is not perceived and thereby perfectly known is to make explicit, in a cool theoretical formulation, the prime desideratum of the window model—transparent, close-up version (Berkeley is famous for his denial that sensible qualities are at the distance we take them to be). The thesis is that, whatever else may go on in what we would ordinarily describe as the seeing of a white stone, at the core of the process is a transparently clear 'immediate' awareness of white, a white which is not at a distance from the eye.[1] Instead of looking through the eye, we enjoy a more satisfactorily transparent view of the contents of our own minds. To them we look through—nothing at all. This is Berkeley's solution to the challenge of the sceptical use of conflicting appearances.

But the *Three Dialogues* tries to recommend that solution from the perspective of the ordinary man. It is a popular exposition, written to take readers into the principles of Berkeley's philosophy 'in the most easy and familiar manner' (Preface, p. 168). To that end Berkeley appropriates the sceptic's arguments from conflicting appearances and tries to make them prove directly that sensible qualities do not inhere in outward objects. They would prove this if they could call on the notion of immediate perception and the Protagorean principle it embodies. But these, of course, are no part of the ordinary man's perspective. And without that assistance the arguments do no more than assert proposition (1) for a succession of different values of *F*. Once or twice Berkeley transposes (1) into (2). Thus after citing the jaundice example and animals with differently textured eyes to show that colours are not inherent in any outward object, i.e. after an argument which rests on (1), he continues:

> The point will be past all doubt, if you consider, that in case colours were real properties or affections inherent in external bodies, they could admit of no alteration, without some change wrought in the very bodies themselves. (p. 185)

But that transposition, as we have seen, is no help to the cause. And perhaps it only looks as if it might help because Berkeley's formulation is ambiguous as between (2) and the quite different

[1] At *Siris* § 317 Berkeley endorses the *Theaetetus* account of white.

principle that if the colour of something were a real property of it, the colour could not actually change (as opposed to: it could not appear to change) without a change in the thing itself. This principle could well seem plausible, but it is irrelevant here, since the examples Berkeley is talking about are examples of apparent changes in the colour of a thing. The same goes for a later passage on primary qualities:

> No real inherent property of any object can be changed, without some change in the thing itself. . . . But as we approach to or recede from an object, the visible extension varies, being at one distance ten or an hundred times greater than at another. Doth it not therefore follow from hence likewise, that it is not really inherent in the object? (p. 189)

The principle of the argument talks about real change, the illustration about apparent change in size, so what is claimed to follow does not follow at all.

There is no getting away from this distinction. It is one thing to say that the real or inherent features of an object cannot be among those that are affected by changes external to the object, e.g. in the surrounding environment or in the perceiver. This means, roughly, that the real inherent features of an object must not be relational (cf. Sext. Emp. *M* viii. 453–7). It is quite another to suggest that the real inherent features cannot be among those that *appear* to vary with changes outside the object. The latter principle is the one whose persuasiveness we are trying to diagnose; confusion with the former occurs too seldom to explain its pervasive influence in the first *Dialogue*. In the end, I think, if Berkeley or his reader is led by the argument from conflicting appearances to accept the conclusion that sensible qualities do not inhere in outward things, it is in good measure due to the supporting influence of the half-formulated thought—half-formulated because it is suggested but not fully spelt out when the notion of immediate perception is first introduced—that every perceptual experience contains within it a direct awareness of something. Which is to say that Berkeley's rebuttal of scepticism in the first *Dialogue* only works to the extent that an internalized version of the window model is implicitly present all along.

VI

Is it just coincidence that the ambiguities of the *Theaetetus* argument and of Berkeley's first *Dialogue* run parallel? I have already mentioned that Berkeley himself thought the *Theaetetus*

theory exactly like his own. Perhaps, then, the common features can tell us something about why relativistic views have exercised such a strong hold on the philosophy of perception.

Our inheritance from Protagoras and Berkeley is modern sense-datum theory, which has reworked the old materials in a manner which may tend to disguise their essentially relativistic character. But it is quite profitable, I think, to read the seemingly sterile disputes about whether sense-data can exist unsensed, or whether they can be identified with parts of the surfaces of things, as disputes about the possibility of restoring some independence and externality to one term of the Protagorean relation. Better still, we can recognize a rather explicit expression of the window model in the notion, central to sense-datum theory, of sensing or acquaintance or direct awareness—the terminology varies but most theorists are agreed that the relation we have to the object or sense-datum which is presented to us in perceptual experience is a relation of unmediated non-inferential knowing (cf. Theaetetus' definition).[1]

Predictably, it is G. E. Moore who gives the most 'window-like' account of the matter:

> When we refer to introspection and try to discover what the sensation of blue is, it is very easy to suppose that we have before us only a single term. The term 'blue' is easy enough to distinguish, but the other element which I have called 'consciousness'—that which sensation of blue has in common with sensation of green—is extremely difficult to fix. That many people fail to distinguish it at all is sufficiently shown by the fact that there are materialists. And, in general, that which makes the sensation of blue a mental fact seems to escape us: it seems, if I may use a metaphor, to be transparent—we look through it and see nothing but the blue. ('The Refutation of Idealism', *Philosophical Studies*, p. 20.)

So nearly explicit a picture of an internal window may help to make plausible what I said about an internalized version of the window model in Berkeley. Moore comes back to it later:

> When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous. (p. 25)

This 'other element', the sensation or consiousness, Moore says is in fact a 'knowing' or 'being aware of' or 'experiencing' something, viz. blue (p. 24). Admittedly, Moore does not here

[1] See, for example, H. H. Price, *Perception* (London, 1932), pp. 3, 31; C. D. Broad, 'Some Elementary Reflexions on Sense-Preception' (1952), cited from Swartz, op. cit., p. 44.

talk his usual sense-datum language about blue, but his diaphanous awareness of blue is a good preparation for it.

If other sense-datum theorists are less candidly revealing about the pictures which guide their thinking, they tell us more about the philosophical motivation for bringing in the notion of sensing or acquaintance. Russell sums up the results of the first chapter of *The Problems of Philosophy* in these terms:

> What the senses *immediately* tell us is not the truth about the object as it is apart from us, but only the truth about certain sense-data which, so far as we can see, depend upon the relations between us and the object. Thus what we directly see and feel is merely 'appearance', which we believe to be a sign of some 'reality' behind. (p. 16)

This direct seeing and feeling of appearances or sense-data is what he later calls acquaintance or direct awareness, where this is one kind of knowledge of things (p. 46). But remember that chapter 1 of *The Problems of Philosophy* begins with the arguments from conflicting appearances which I cited at the outset of this lecture. So in Russell's case also it is reflection on conflicting appearances which is supposed to lead us to adopt the notion of acquaintance.

The examples of conflicting appearances bring to our attention the fact that, as Russell puts it in the passage just quoted, 'sense-data . . . depend upon the relations between us and the object'. And it is clear from the discussion which precedes that what Russell means by this is that the way things appear to us at a given moment from a given point of view is causally dependent on the state of our sensory apparatus, the condition of the intervening medium, on perspectival effects and so on. All of which is undeniably correct. But unless (1) is true, for which Russell offers no independent argument, none of this shows that the colour or the shape which the table appears to have is not its real colour or shape. It shows only that if and when the table does appear the colour or the shape it really is, it does so thanks to the causal interaction of our sensory apparatus with a variety of environmental factors. And this, I think, is what at bottom Russell is getting at when he invokes the notion of what we directly or immediately see and feel. His idea is that if, *per impossibile*, the senses could tell us about 'the object as it is apart from us', they would have to do so directly or immediately, where 'directly' and 'immediately' can only mean: not by way of a causal interaction between us and the environment.

No doubt Russell would not like this way of putting it. The idea only works because it remains half-formulated. But that it is the idea which guides his thought is confirmed when he says that we do directly and immediately see and feel the sense-data or appearances which themselves depend upon the relation between us and the object. All the causal aspects of the perceptual process having been assigned to the production of sense-data, to the bringing about of the relation of acquaintance, that relation itself is left free of causality.

We are back at *Theaetetus* 154 AB. Causality makes the appearances relative to the conditions of perception, and that wrecks the hope of a transparent view of the external object with its real (inherent) properties. But we can save transparency by making the 'immediate' object of perception private to the perceiver and by abolishing the distance between subject and object; thus Russell locates sense-data in the private (apparent) space of the individual perceiver, again on grounds having to do with conflicting appearances (pp. 29–30).

Notice, therefore, that if there were such a thing as perception without causality, proposition (2) would very likely be true. A great many, at least, of the cases where a thing which is really *F* appears to someone not to be *F* are cases of interference or breakdown in the causal process by which we obtain information through the senses. Moreover, (2) does hold for sense-data. A sense-datum of necessity really is as it appears to be to the one observer who has access to it; (2) holds here just because causality does not get in the way. But Russell's argument rests on (1), which we saw to be equivalent to (2). So the argument has the same ambiguity as we found in Berkeley and the *Theaetetus*. What is supposed to come out of it is a cool theoretical formulation of the window model: the thesis that we have knowledge by acquaintance or direct awareness of sense-data. But the argument only works to the extent that a half-formulated version of the window model is present from the start. It is present because (1), which is formulated, reduces to (2), which contains (in its first disjunct) the unformulated demand for transparency.

I will not venture to assert that what I say three times is true. But at least, if it is true, it can hardly be coincidence that it is true. That is one gain from following the *fortuna* of the window model in modern times. Another gain is that we have come to see that the appeal of the window model is connected with worries about causality. Perception, it is felt, ought not to be

mediated by a causal process.[1] But alas, that cannot be. The truth is that the window model is utterly inappropriate to the real facts of perception. But instead of coming to terms with reality, our theorists find a place for the window model within perception. Let causality do its worst: at the core of the perceptual experience there will still be an unmediated knowing, like Moore's diaphanous awareness of blue, and when a suitable story has been told about the objects of this knowing, the problem of conflicting appearances is solved. It is a phantasy solution, in a quite proper sense. For if my efforts at diagnosis have hit the mark, the conflict of appearances only ever became the problem these theorists took it to be because this was going to be the solution.

VII

At this point, now that we have connected the window model with a desire to cut free from the trammels of causality, we should turn aside briefly to the field of morals. On the face of it, if conflicting appearances are a problem here, it should be a different problem. We do not ascribe moral properties to things, as we ascribe sensible qualities, on the basis of a causal transaction between us and them. That may hold sometimes of predicates like 'nice' and 'nasty', predicates which merely express a reaction to things. But it certainly does not hold of terms like 'right' and 'wrong' or 'loyal', 'honest', 'charitable', and 'brave'. True, the cruder form of emotivist theory assimilates moral predicates to predicates of reaction, but the very implausibility of that assimilation is strong evidence that moral conflict ought

[1] The day after this lecture was delivered, there arrived on my desk a copy of *Mind* 88 (Jan. 1979), containing Maurice Charlesworth's paper, 'Sense-impressions: A New Model'. The 'new model' is none other than the window model, recommended as a means of picturing a role for sensations in perception which does not make them representative of external things. Roughly, if we can perceive the world *through* sensations as through a transparent window-pane, we will not be stuck with the traditionally problematic notion that we perceive sensations *instead of* the world outside (which they merely represent), and by this means we can avoid the dilemmatic choice between representative realism and phenomenalism. It is most instructive to see how, to make the model work, Charlesworth eventually finds it necessary to abandon simple transparency and imagine a *physics* for the glass we look through, a physics which makes its own contribution to the way things appear to us. In other words, he has to make the window a properly causal medium. Just this is what Berkeley and Russell are unwilling to do for immediate awareness.

to be a quite different type of issue, with difficulties of its own and peculiar to itself.

All too often, however, what one finds in the philosophical literature is a repetition of the debate about sensible qualities. The same form of argument is used (in Sextus, as we saw earlier, the parallel is deliberate and explicit, and it was almost certainly that way in Protagoras also); often there is the same reliance on a mythical example which for some reason people want to believe (those distant tribes who have sexual intercourse in public are a recurring presence in Greek literature from Herodotus onwards, and they are still at it in Montaigne).[1] But over and above these parallels with the debate about perception, there is also in the moral debate a preoccupation with perception itself, and it is this that we need to scrutinize.

When Mackie presents 'the argument from relativity' for the thesis that moral values are not objective, not part of the fabric of the world (note the initial choice of metaphor [p. 15]), he starts off by acknowledging that the divergence in moral beliefs between one group and another is in itself merely 'a fact of anthropology which entails neither first order nor second order ethical views' (p. 36). Nevertheless, such divergence requires explanation. The next step is to argue that the divergences in belief would be difficult to explain on the assumption that moral values are objective, whereas on the opposite assumption that values are not objective the divergences can quite reasonably be explained as due (and Mackie must mean they are *all entirely* due) to local or personal differences in the ways of life which give rise (by a process of projection or objectification) to the conflicting value-systems. How, then, is it to be shown that the objectivist will find it difficult to explain moral conflict and disagreement?

For this key step in the argument Mackie offers just two models for understanding disagreement. One is disagreement between scientific investigators in cases where the issue is objective but the evidence is insufficient to decide between the speculative hypotheses favoured by different investigators (p. 36). This, we may agree, is not a plausible parallel for the moral case. The other model is divergence in perception:[2]

[1] *Apologie de Raimond Sebond, Essais* ed. Pierre Villey (Paris, 1922), ii. p. 341. Montaigne also retails, as we would expect, both the honey and the jaundice examples (pp. 348, 362).

[2] Cf. Gilbert Harman, *The Nature of Morality* (New York, 1977), chap. 1, who asks whether moral principles can be tested and confirmed and proceeds

> The argument from relativity has some force simply because the actual variations in the moral codes are more readily explained by the hypothesis that they reflect ways of life than by the hypothesis that they express perceptions, most of them seriously inadequate and badly distorted, of objective values. (p. 37)

But why would the objectivist have no choice but this? Why must he treat moral divergence, like perceptual divergence, as a straightforward indication of error on somebody's part, and then explain moral error on the analogy of perceptual error? Mackie says, and this is his second argument against the objectivity of values, 'the argument from queerness'—

> If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe. Correspondingly, if we were aware of them, it would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else. (p. 38)

It is Mackie who introduces the perceptual model, not his objectivist opponent, Mackie who claims that objectivism must sooner or later turn into intuitionism: 'Intuitionism merely makes unpalatably plain what other forms of objectivism wrap up' (*ibid.*). Not only should the objectivist dispute this assertion, but he should notice that the only substantive argument Mackie offers for it is the following: when people judge that some things are good or right, and others bad or wrong, for the most part they do so 'not because—or at any rate not only because—they exemplify some general principle for which widespread implicit acceptance could be claimed, but because something about those things arouses certain responses immediately in them, though they would arouse radically and irresolvably different responses in others. 'Moral sense' or 'intuition' is an initially more plausible description of what supplies many of our basic moral judgements than 'reason'. With regard to all these starting points of moral thinking the argument from relativity remains in full force' (p. 378) It is the emotivist assimilation to predicates of reaction,[1] overlaid by a perceptual gloss. That is why the argument from relativity

to inquire whether they can be tested and confirmed *by observation*, only to find that 'there does not seem to be any way in which the actual rightness or wrongness of a given situation can have any effect on your perceptual apparatus' (p. 8).

[1] Cf. p. 42 where, to illustrate our projection or objectification of moral attitudes, Mackie uses the analogy of someone who calls a fungus foul because it fills him with disgust.

remains in full force. Moral predicates express an immediate response or reaction to things, so if the objectivist is to make intelligible the notion of a mistaken application of such predicates, he must say that something goes wrong in the transaction between us and them. And for this it is no doubt true that the only decent model we have is the model of misperceiving.

Thus Mackie's whole case rests on the premiss that, for the most part at least, we apply moral predicates to things, as we apply sensory predicates, on the basis of a transaction between us and them. At this point Mackie's account of morals really is parallel to Democritus' account of secondary qualities.[1] Any sensible objectivist who denies the premiss gets off scot free. But what is of interest here is the way Mackie argues that a perceptual model for the supposed transaction breaks down, and can be seen to be absurd, as soon as one tries to fill in a certain amount of as it were 'causal' detail to explain what happens when things go wrong. In effect, Mackie first projects upon the objectivist his own attachment to the window model, transparent distance version (an intuition of non-natural qualities out there in the fabric of the world), and then he complains that the model is unrealistic because it cannot cope with the conflict of appearances. Hence values are subjective. And this does seem remarkably like Democritus concluding that honey is neither sweet nor bitter on the grounds that, while it appears sweet to you and me, it also appears bitter—so Sextus assures us (*PH* i. 101), and Sextus was a doctor—to people with jaundice.

VIII

None of this shows, of course, that moral values are objective or that the objectivist can in fact give a plausible account of moral disagreement. Likewise, my earlier discussion did not attempt to prove that sensible qualities are inherent in the things we ascribe them to. I have not argued that there is no truth in relativism or in subjectivism, whether these are taken as theories about values, about secondary qualities or about primary qualities as well. I have criticized what may in full propriety be called the classical arguments for relativism and subjectivism, but I have criticized them chiefly with a view to understanding their appeal. Anyone who teaches outside the walls of a conventional

[1] Cf. also Mackie's remarks on the extent to which moral values exist by convention, pp. 36, 42 ff.

university philosophy department soon finds that these arguments are a potent force in the wider culture of our society: as potent as they were in ancient Greece. They seem to come naturally, of their own accord, to many people untutored in philosophy, as soon as they engage with Heraclitus' question, how far our language and the ways we ordinarily speak about things can claim absolute validity. Arguments which have that kind of appeal call for diagnosis as much as for straightforward logical appraisal.

I shall return to this matter of diagnosis, but first, to prevent misunderstanding, there are several further points I should mention, if only to make it clear where they fit in and what I do and do not want to say about them.

(1) I have not said, nor do I believe, that the window model is an aberration of philosophers whose worries about conflicting appearances take a relativist or subjectivist turn. Another adherent of the picture is Plato himself.

Plato sets up relativism in the *Theaetetus* in order to argue that when its implications and commitments are followed through it will be seen to lead to multiple absurdities, not the least of which is that in the end those private, relative occurrences of white and other sensible qualities cannot be identified or described as, e.g., white rather than anything else; perceptual relativism makes language impossible. What Plato most objects to in the kind of empiricism represented by Theaetetus' definition and Protagoras' epistemology is that it covertly assigns to perceptual experience as such those functions of thought which are required for the perceiver to identify what his experience is of. His target in this polemic is the Berkeleyan view that one has only to sense white to know it for what it is. Accordingly, when the *Theaetetus* goes on (184 B–7 A) to give Plato's own account of the matter, a very sharp distinction is drawn between perception and judgement. It is one thing to perceive a colour, quite another to judge or be aware that it is the colour white. However, in thus arguing that perception as such cannot be knowledge, because perception on its own has no power of judgement or conceptualization, Plato himself makes heavy use of the window model in the interests of an important thesis about the unity of the perceiving consciousness.[1]

[1] See my 'Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving', *Classical Quarterly* NS 26 (1976), pp. 29–51, to which I must refer for a detailed defence of the interpretation sketched out here.

Plato's contention is that we cannot make sense of perception (whether as philosophers or as perceivers) except in terms of a unitary mind or soul which can think and reason about the objects of different senses and make comparisons between things perceived at different times. It must be one and the same enduring soul which perceives all the objects of the several senses and it must be that same part of ourselves which applies thought to what we perceive. For this thesis Plato offers cool theoretical argument, rather good argument, but in addition he helps the argument along with models and metaphors. If there were no unitary consciousness, the several senses would be like the band of warriors in the wooden horse at Troy, each carrying on his perceptual activity independently of the others and of the whole which contains them. In place of this picture Plato puts another, better one. Colours and other sensible qualities are out there, with a (non-relative) nature or essence of their own; the soul gains access to them through the senses or sense-organs; and we are encouraged to take the preposition 'through', on which much emphasis is laid, as a spatial metaphor.[1] The metaphor of organs or senses as apertures for the soul to perceive through conjures up a picture of a unitary soul which, because it stands back as it were from the individual senses, is able both to perceive the objects of more than one sense and to think about what it perceives in general terms. In a word, a unitary soul, and only a unitary soul, can be *conscious*.

All this stands in powerful contrast to the empiricism initiated by Theaetetus' definition. If the empiricist were to reply by pressing Plato with his own argument at 154 AB, the answer would be that it does not work because the notion of appearing already incorporates the perceiver's thought or judgement (cf. *Sophist* 264 B), and it is thought which applies the predicates '*F*' or 'not-*F*' to things; the perceptual element in appearance can be described in causal terms but that is all there is to say about it.

I give this very summary sketch of Plato's own position, not because I think his final answer satisfactory, but because I think that his use of the window model brings out an important point. So far from being an aberration of certain empiricist philosophers, the picture associated with the model is one compellingly natural expression of the difficulty of coming

[1] It was this, presumably, that inspired the explicit window comparison attacked by Lucretius (III p. 84 above).

to terms with what it is to be both in the world and cognizant of the world. The eyes and the remaining sensory apparatus of the body are entangled in the causal mechanisms which are necessary to perception. In certain philosophical moods it may strike us that they are too much in the world to be cognizant of it. To explain perceptual consciousness it is then tempting to imagine oneself standing off, as it were, from one's own body and its causal involvements, looking through it (to use Plato's ambiguous preposition) at the world beyond. And here too, as in the empiricists, the metaphorical looking is free of causality, because the causality gets used up, so to speak, in the body's interaction with the enviroment.

(2) I have not said anything about the inappropriateness of the window model to senses other than sight. I have not done this because what is interesting and revealing about the model is the way in which it is inadequate to the specific mode of perception, namely sight, by which it is inspired. It has often been remarked that the philosophy of perception has tended to give the primacy to sight, allowing the other senses to provide useful examples of illusion or conflicting appearances but otherwise leaving them to tag along. Perhaps the window model has something to do with this tendency.

In this connection the *Theaetetus* passage we started from is quite revealing. It sets forth its thesis in terms of colour predicates, and when it does come to mention others, the examples given are 'large' and 'hot'. Now 'large' is clearly suggested by the Protagorean image of perceiving as measuring. We are to think of a situation in which we literally measure ourselves against an object in order to estimate its size by comparison with our own. That is, the example invites a visual interpretation again. What is more, it invites us to picture our own body as within the visual field.

It would, however, be perfectly possible to take one's inspiration from a sense other than sight. C. D. Broad once presented the argument from conflicting appearances in images of jumping and grasping:

> In its purely phenomenological aspect *seeing* is ostensibly *saltatory*. It seems to leap the spatial gap between the percipient's body and a remote region of space. Then, again, it is ostensibly *prehensive* of the surfaces of distant bodies as coloured and extended, and of external events as colour-occurrences *localized* in remote regions of space. ('Some Elementary Reflexions on Sense-Perception', op. cit., p. 32.)

Given this imagery to work with, Broad's conclusion from the usual survey of conflicting appearances is that the phenomenology is misleading, the distance to those remote regions cannot be jumped, so we have to say that perceptual experiences are 'prehensions' of non-physical particulars which do really have the qualities of redness, squeakiness, hotness, etc., which they appear to have (p. 42). It is the *Theaetetus* argument again, conducted in terms of movement and the modality of touch.

Now Broad's 'prehensions' have a more embodied precedent in the hand-gestures with which Zeno of Citium illustrated the Stoic theory of the cataleptic or 'grasping' impression (Cicero, *Academica* i. 41, ii. 145), a truth-guaranteeing experience which the Stoics also imaged as a perfect picture of its object (Sext. Emp. *M* vii. 248) and as a clear and distinct impression of it (Diogenes Laertius vii. 46). The difference is that, where Broad has to content himself with a non-physical grasp of a non-physical particular, the Stoics have enough faith in the natural adaptedness of our faculties to the universe we live in to be whole-hearted physicalists. Their grasping, picturing or clear and distinct impression is a causally determined, wholly physical process in which one body, the perceiver, achieves certain truth about another body. What links the bodily grasp of the Stoics to Broad's etherial prehensions is our word 'perception'. It comes from the Latin 'perceptio', meaning 'a taking hold of', which was one of Cicero's translations of the Stoic term 'catalepsis', grasp (cf. Cic. *Acad.* ii. 17). It looks very much as though the idea of perception as a firm grasp of an object is some sort of antithesis to the window model, and perhaps a different, if rather less common, way of coping with the same ultimate problem.

(3) I have not so far said anything about arguments in which the premise of conflicting appearances is overtly and deliberately combined with further premisses. Most of the sceptical arguments in Sextus are of this kind. In his better moments Sextus knows that Berkeley was wrong to say it follows just from the conflict of appearances that 'we do not know by sense which is the true extension or colour of the object'. Of course, if we are told that something appears *F* to one person and not-*F* to another, we cannot decide on that basis alone whether the thing is *F* or not-*F*. But this does not prove that it cannot be determined at all, nor that it cannot be determined by sense.

It is important here not to confuse the perceiver's question 'Is it *F* or not-*F*?' (answer: 'It appears to be *F*') with the outsider's question 'Is it really *F* as it appears to him to be?' It is easy to confuse the two because of course the perceiver himself can step back and ask about himself the outsider's question in the form 'Is it really *F* as it appears to me to be?' Now, in a conflict case the outsider needs a reason to prefer one person's appearances to another's. Nothing has been said so far to show he cannot have it. Suppose he does. Then certainly, *his* knowledge that the thing is really *F* is not based on sense alone. But for all that has been shown so far to the contrary, he is now entitled to say of the person to whom it appears *F* that *he* knows it is *F* because and simply because he perceives it to be so. That is, the outsider may very well reach the conclusion that the conditions are right for the insider to gain knowledge from his perception. Hume's assessment of the sceptical argument from conflicting appearances has it exactly right:

> These sceptical topics, indeed, are only sufficient to prove, that the senses alone are not implicitly to be depended on; but that we must correct their evidence by reason, and by considerations derived from the nature of the medium, the distance of the object, and the disposition of the organ, in order to render them, within their sphere, the proper *criteria* of truth and falsehood. (*Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* XII. 117.)

What is true is that if as outsiders we become convinced that there is never reason to prefer one person's appearances to another's, we shall conclude that under no circumstances does knowledge result when the insider judges that something is *F* because it appears so to him. But, contrary to Berkeley, this cannot be proved by the conflict of appearances alone. Accordingly, much of Sextus' effort goes into arguing, explicitly and in detail, that there is never reason to prefer one appearance to another; or as he puts it, that there is no criterion of truth—neither the senses nor anything else are 'the proper criteria of truth and falsehood'. Add that to the premiss of conflicting appearances and the sceptical argument goes through. For if there is no criterion of truth, all appearances are of equal strength, equally worthy and equally unworthy of belief, and we are forced to suspend judgement.

So put, the sceptical challenge seems to me to deserve something better than the phantasy solutions it has so often received. It calls for a detailed examination and appraisal of the grounds on which we ordinarily prefer some appearances to others.

It is not enough, for example, to talk in a general promissory way about healthy minds in healthy bodies under normal conditions of perception. The justification for taking these as the measure or criterion of what sensible qualities things have must lie in a detailed understanding of the interaction between perceiver and perceived. The question of the reliability of the processes by which we obtain information about the world must be squarely faced in causal terms, not avoided by taking refuge in the window model and its illusory alternative to the causal medium in which perception is immersed.

(4) I have not so far called attention to differences among the three categories of variation or conflict between appearances which Socrates sets out at *Theaetetus* 154 A. But clearly, there are important differences both between and within these categories. In morals, for instance, they are different sorts of difference of outlook and judgement which distinguish a man in his maturity from that same man in adolescence, a man hungry and oppressed from that same man when he has become the leader of his people, and a man inflamed with passion from that same man reflecting next day. And these differences should themselves be contrasted, not equated, with the differences between one man and his contemporaries, which are different again from the differences between him and people of other times and places. Similar points could be made about differences in the import of conflicting appearances for the different sense modalities. But where perception is concerned, it seems to me that the interesting category is the one least attended to in modern discussions, the variation between man and other animals. The interesting problem is not relativity or subjectivity in general, but Heraclitus' problem of anthropocentricity.[1]

Suppose we have been able to justify our practice of preferring the appearances enjoyed by healthy humans in normal conditions of perception over those of human subjects affected by jaundice and other disadvantages. Sextus will argue, and he has both Heraclitus and Protagoras behind him, that even so it is arbitrary to prefer human appearances, however carefully selected, to the conflicting appearances which other animals get from the same things. There is no need to resort to

[1] Compare David Wiggins, 'Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life', *Proc. Brit. Acad.* lxii (1976), pp. 331–78, at pp. 348–9; Thomas Nagel, 'What is it like to be a Bat?', *Philosophical Review* 83 (1974), pp. 435–50.

quaint examples like Heraclitus' pigs enjoying the mire.[1] We know, or have good reason to believe, that a table which normally looks brown to us looks very different to a normal healthy cat, who has only black and white vision and sees everything in gradations of grey. Is it not a kind of epistemological 'speciesism' (cf. *PH* i. 59) to prefer our own perceptions to the cat's?[2]

As it stands, this is not a good argument. We do not in fact prefer in a completely general way our own perceptions to those of other animals. We readily accept, and so does Sextus (*PH* i. 62 ff), that animals are often more sensitive to smells than we are, and in some ways more sensitive to sound. Even in the case of colour, we could believe, and it may actually be the case, that some animals have a spectrum wider than ours. In sum, we have a notion of better or worse perceptual equipment and that notion is not species-specific. It is an empirical question, who is best at perceiving what, and the citing of variations in perception between us and other species does nothing to show that the question cannot ever have a well-grounded answer.

Thus Sextus' argument fails. But Heraclitus will come back to make the charge of anthropocentric partiality at a higher level. It is our human language in which all this has been said, our language in which the scientist's empirical investigation is carried out. The interesting case would be one where it is not just that the other animal is missing something we can pick up or vice versa, but rather that he has an experience of colour, say, which is through and through different from that of any human.[3] Then some of Heraclitus' paradoxes could begin to bite.

[1] Though Berkeley did: *Three Dialogues*, p. 181.

[2] Another way of getting to the problem is by changing human beings. For ways of doing this, see Jonathan Bennett, 'Substance, Reality and Primary Qualities', *Amer. Phil. Quart.* 2 (1965), pp. 1–17, who is concerned to draw a moral about the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Bennett shows that the objectivity of primary qualities is more fundamental, in a certain clear sense, than the objectivity of secondary qualities, but it would be wrong to conclude that this makes my problem disappear. We still have to explain what type of objectivity the secondary qualities can enjoy. And here the variety of animal perceptions (the first Mode of Pyrrhonian scepticism) offers a more radical challenge than, for example, limited colour blindness in human beings.

[3] If I mention here Gerald H. Jacobs and Robert L. Yolton, 'Visual Sensitivity and Colour Vision in Ground Squirrels', *Vision Research* 11 (1971), pp. 511–37, it is without confidence that they intend to describe such a case.

Suppose we had elaborated a scheme of colour predicates to describe the other animal's experience from his point of view. Let one of these predicates be 'huey'. Would it be a contradiction for one and the same thing to be both blue and huey all over at the same time? Must we oppose the colour-qualities things have for us (the Protagorean idiom seeming inescapable as the only alternative to paradox) to those they have for the other creature, insisting that 'blue' and 'huey' be regarded as contraries in the same way as 'blue' and 'red' within our own colour vocabulary? Many will prefer the Democritean solution that the object in itself, absolutely considered, is neither blue nor huey, all colour being equally subjective. But Heraclitus himself was not so despairing.

Heraclitus' version of the absolute god's-eye vantage-point is not designed to show us the world 'as it is apart from us'. On the contrary, when he talks of the god's-eye view, he projects into it all our opposing, relativity-conditioned predicates:

To god all things are fair and just: but men suppose some things just and others unjust. (frag. 102)[1]

I interpret this to mean that our human contrast between justice and injustice has no absolute validity, even though it is necessary to the very meaning of the terms in our language:

For [men] would not know the name of *Dikē* [= Justice] if these things [sc. injustices] did not exist. (frag. 23)

From an absolute vantage point everything is just—but not in a way that contrasts with injustice. For at that level it is equally true that justice is strife, i.e. what men think of as injustice:

What one ought to understand is that war [sc. that which separates] *is* common [sc. that which connects] and justice *is* strife, and that all things which come to pass do so in accordance with strife and what ought to be. (frag. 80)

And what holds for moral predicates holds for the rest of our language:

God is day night, winter summer, war peace, hunger satiety: he changes [sc. becomes many opposite things] in the way that fire [sc. the fire at a sacrifice], when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the scent of each. (frag. 67)

No matter. We can still try to imagine a case and consider what we could say about it.

[1] Text as in M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus*, Editio Maior (Mérida, 1967), pp. 480–2.

In sum, the absolute viewpoint, far from being different from every partial viewpoint, would be one which saw that every partial viewpoint is correct.

All this may seem indulgent mystification, even if I am pardoned for thinking that we might apply what Heraclitus says about opposed predicates within language as it is to the imagined case of 'blue' and 'huey'. What possible alternative to Democritus can Heraclitus offer unless he explains what the overcoming of opposition and contradiction within the god's-eye vantage-point amounts to? But reasonable as it may seem to ask for such an explanation, to expect Heraclitus to say that the predicates are not really opposed, the strife image tells us that of course they are opposed (so too frags. 102 and 23, quoted above); and many other fragments convey the same message with unmistakeable force. Heraclitus' solution to the problem of conflicting appearances is not an explanation but a certain kind of awareness:

To those who are awake the world-order is one, common to all; but the sleeping turn aside each into a private world. (frag. 89)[1]

The world as we ordinarily understand it is from a god's-eye view relative to us and the categories of our language, as a dreamer's world is to him. The trouble is that people are not aware of this. Most men 'fail to notice what they do after they wake up, just as they forget what they do when asleep' (frag. 1). A true awakening would remember the dream world and be aware that it was a private world.

For those who have heard not me but the *Logos* wisdom is agreeing that all things are one. (frag. 50)

Wisdom is becoming aware of the relativity of one's categories and experience, not thereby denying its (partial) validity but putting it into perspective along with other viewpoints. The *Logos* which connects things that our language separates and opposes is itself still language, our own language. The god's-eye view for Heraclitus is simply this: seeing that the human view is the *human* view and no more. One carries on as before—one speaks and can only speak from within one's own language. But the wise man is aware to what he is doing. That is how Heraclitus could sum up his whole philosophy in the words 'I searched out myself' (frag. 101).

[1] For a defence of the authenticity of this fragment see Marcovich, op. cit., pp. 99–100.

What this account of Heraclitus suggests as his answer to our earlier problem is the following. The inclination to regard 'blue' and 'huey' as incompatibly opposed is not to be suppressed but rather recognized for what it is, namely, a manifestation of the fact that we cannot absorb the other creature's colour scheme into our own. To recognize this is to recognize that it lies in the nature of a viewpoint—any viewpoint—to claim the absolute allegiance of the one whose viewpoint it is. Heraclitean wisdom is thus comparable to the stance of a man who recognizes that his morality is one among others, yet does not on that account feel, nor think that he ought to feel, its values to be any the less absolute or binding. There may be difficulties in expressing and maintaining this stance, but it is really no less difficult to conceive a Protagorean or Democritean life which seriously attempted to treat first-order experience and concerns as relative or subjective.[1] And this brings me to the question of diagnosis.

IX

When I was discussing the relation of the *Theaetetus* argument to the Protagorean principle laid down at the beginning of the dialogue, I considered the objection that my window-model diagnosis was both rude and unnecessary. I have, I hope, dealt sufficiently with the claim that it is not necessary. But I have not addressed the complaint that I make it sound as if something rather disreputable is going on in the *Theaetetus* argument and the others we have been looking at. I am very far from thinking this to be so. I have indeed emphasized the pictures and the metaphors, but so that we may see them for what they are. Whether it is the flawless close-up vision or the prehensive grasp, whether it secures a whole object or only some part of the surface of one or just a non-physical substitute for these, such pictures have their origin in our earliest and deepest experience. If they have elicited a smile, it should have been a smile of recognition, not contempt. For if, as Heraclitus advised, we remember our dreams, we will recognize that there was a time in our own lives when the problem of conflicting appearances engaged our strongest feelings; a time, moreover, when perception and valuation were not yet distinguished. We know too little about the psychic roots of creative philosophy to turn our backs on these sources of inspiration. If they are found disreputable, the fault really is, for once, in

[1] For valuable discussion of this and related issues, see Wiggins, op. cit.

the eye of the beholder. Of course the arguments must be criticized. But the point is that the criticism must be joined by respect and understanding.

It is that element of respect, so necessary for real understanding, which I miss in Austin's work as a critic of the tradition which he rightly saw as stemming from Heraclitus. Austin is a third case of double perspective. In his first chapter he explains that he cannot go back to the very earliest texts from before Plato, since they are no longer extant. So he chooses Ayer as his 'chief stalking horse', with subsidiary references to Price and to Warnock's book on Berkeley. These works seem to him 'to provide the best available expositions of the approved reasons for holding theories which are at least as old as Heraclitus—more full, coherent, and terminologically exact than you find, for example, in Descartes or Berkeley' (p. 1). But unfortunately, this was a serious historical mistake on Austin's part.

It was a mistake because the reasons Ayer provides for the introduction of sense-data are *not* the traditionally approved reasons, though Ayer himself claims that they are:

> What the advocates of the sense-datum theory have done is to decide to apply the word 'see' or any other words that designate modes of perception to delusive as well as to veridical experiences, and at the same time to use these words in such a way that what is seen or otherwise sensibly experienced must really exist and must really have the properties that it appears to have. No doubt they also use these words in other, more familiar, senses. But it is this usage that leads them to the introduction of sense-data. (p. 24)[1]

This was wrong as history—neither Protagoras nor Berkeley nor Russell relied on a novel sense of 'see' or 'perceive'—but correct as an account of what Ayer himself wished to do, which was to make the whole issue a question of which language one chooses for the purposes of philosophical theory. On the reading I have offered in this lecture, the traditional argument from conflicting appearances sets up a private substitute object to be perceived in the very same sense of the verb as that in which we originally wanted to perceive whole objects out there in the world. What is changed by adding the relativistic qualifiers

[1] A footnote on the next page refers to G. A. Paul, 'Is there a Problem about Sense-Data?' (1936), in Swartz, op. cit., pp. 271–87, as clearly bringing out the point that the sense-datum theorist is simply recommending a new verbal usage. But Paul denies that the sense-datum theorists themselves would represent their procedure in such terms (pp. 227–9).

'for me', 'immediately', 'directly', and the like, is not the sense of the verb 'perceive' but its object. What guarantees that something really is as it appears to be is not a special sense of the verb but its taking as object something which is itself (an) appearance.[1] And this is completely at variance with Austin's diagnosis in terms of linguistic sleight of hand (cf. pp. 3–5) or the unjustified invention of a special sense of 'perceive' (chap. IX). It is true that Austin tempers his diagnosis from time to time with an acknowledgement that it was Ayer who gave the subject a linguistic turn (cf. p. 102). But that acknowledgement is itself modified by Austin's view that the new linguistic clothing is really just a disguise for the old traditional arguments for an ontological dichotomy between sense-data and material objects (pp. 59–61, 84, 105–7). And despite these qualifications, he continues to discuss the arguments and diagnose their mistakes in predominantly linguistic terms, taking it that Ayer does give 'the approved reasons' for the old theory.[2] The effect, as many readers of *Sense and Sensibilia* have felt, is that Austin's objections fall unhappily between two stools. They neither get to the bottom of the traditional arguments, which require a diagnosis deeper than linguistic methods can achieve, nor are they appropriate to the essentially stipulative, constructive character of Ayer's own enterprise.

It seems to me, then, that as a critic Austin falls short because he did not properly sort out the double perspective he adopted when he decided to look at the history through Ayer's spectacles. He would have done better to go back to the original sources, which he was of course well equipped to handle. Even the earliest sources, prior to Plato, are not completely beyond the reach of historical understanding—as I hope to have shown. In trying to show this, my essential claim has been that a

[1] Let me add that I have nothing to say in this lecture about phenomenalism. Considered as a theory about the analysis of material object statements in terms of statements about perceptual experience, phenomenalism is a separate issue from the introduction of sense-data (just one approach to perceptual experience) with which it has historically been associated.

[2] To mention just one of the historical distortions that result, Price, who really belongs to the prelinguistic phase, gets landed with Ayer's account (as quoted above) of how sense-data are introduced (Austin, p. 103). A footnote seeks to make amends, but it does not make clear that Price only raised the matter of the senses of 'perceive' in chapter 2 of *Perception* (pp. 22 ff.), *after* introducing sense-data in chapter 1 on the basis of an entirely epistemological argument from what we can and cannot doubt (though cf. p. 5 n.).

respectful historical understanding of the original sources is a first step towards realism in our own philosophy.

X

It is only fitting that the epilogue be given to the founder of the series of lectures in which I have the honour to speak. In a philosophically judicious and historically informed paper on 'Appearance and Real Existence'[1]—a paper which treats ancient and modern philosophy as a single continuing story, with equal honours for Plato, Kant, and Hegel—Dawes Hicks has this to say about Russell's version of the argument from conflicting appearances in *The Problems of Philosophy*:

> It is obvious, I think, that this argument is fallacious, and that the conclusion does not follow from the premises. For, in order to test it, suppose that colour of some kind *is* inherent in the table, that the table *has* a specific colour. Then, surely, there would be nothing to conflict with this supposition in the circumstances that such real colour will present a different aspect if another colour be reflected upon it, or if a blue pair of spectacles intervene between it and the eyes of the observer, or if it be enveloped in darkness rather than in daylight. The reasoning would only be valid on the assumption that if the table is really coloured, the real colour *must* appear the same in darkness and in daylight, through a pair of blue spectacles and without them, in artificial light and in the sun's light—an assumption which, on the view I am taking, is at once to be dismissed as untenable. If the colour did appear to be the same in these varying circumstances, then certainly there would be reason, and sufficient reason, for doubting the reliability of visual apprehension.[2] For obviously the conditions mentioned—real, objective conditions, as I take them to be—cannot be without influence upon any real colour the table may be said to possess. (p. 42)

This is where we came in. Russell's argument rests on proposition (1), (1) is equivalent to (2), and (2) is manifestly false. There it is—the logical refutation neatly laid out, clear and conclusive, just one year after the publication of *The Problems of Philosophy*. Why did it make no difference? Why, if straightforward logical refutation is enough, do the arguments from conflicting appearances live on?

[1] *Proc. Arist. Soc.* 14 (1913/14), pp. 1–48.

[2] Compare Augustine, *Contra Academicos* iii, 26: 'If an oar dipped in water looked straight, I would rather accuse my eyes of false testimony'—so far as I can discover, the point is original with Augustine, one of several that make the *Contra Academicos* a pioneering work.