

from earliest times, with more or less clearness, as the postulate of all philosophy. Mr. Spencer's service consisted—here again—in working out the conception in terms of fact and detail, and in making it a practical rule of thought. To give two instances: it is to him that we chiefly owe the acceptance of a universal interdependence of mind and brain as a working-hypothesis for psychology; and he was the first, I believe, to insist upon a physical and biological interpretation of human conduct. These were, indeed, the consequences of the conception of animal evolution. While human beings were regarded as a unique animal species, sharply differentiated from the beasts by the fact of moral sense and reason, there was no ground for treating human thought and action in the light of more general laws. It was Mr. Spencer by whom, in these regions, the consequences of evolution were enforced; so that it is now an all but universally accepted principle that there is nothing in the higher stages of evolution which is not in some form present in the lower, and nothing in the lower which does not in some form persist in the higher. The introduction of this principle into philosophical studies has made them not only more coherently and comprehensively philosophical, but at the same time more definite and concrete. The older moralist, for example, in his search for the end of human conduct, was limited to the facts of human life, and the range of possible interpretations was indefinitely large. When now he assumes that the same principle of action which governs human life must also be applied to that of the lower animals, the field of discussion is immensely narrowed and the problem is much more clearly defined. The same is true of the psychologist. Professor James has made an analysis of emotion which so far surpasses all others as to be the first really concrete description. But this analysis would never have been suggested except for the hypothesis that in human life we have only a later development of the impulses which govern the lower animals.

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DISCUSSION

TWO RECENT VIEWS OF THE PROBLEM OF REALISM

IN the fifth number of this JOURNAL Doctor Hartley Burr Alexander published an article entitled 'The Concept of Consciousness,' in which, if I understand him correctly, he attempted to disprove the ordinary psychophysical view of consciousness, so far as its relevancy for metaphysics is concerned, and to suggest in its

place a doctrine which might be called naïve or positivistic realism. Doctor Alexander's argument is interesting in itself, and is still more interesting when considered in relation to the theory of Professor C. A. Strong as set forth in his recent book 'Why the Mind has a Body.' For while Professor Strong tries to establish idealism on a psychophysical basis, Doctor Alexander would build up a realistic doctrine on a non-psychophysical basis. There is thus a double contrast between the two views. To limit the scope of immediate or direct perception to the states of the psychophysical organism seems to Doctor Alexander absurd, and to Professor Strong axiomatic. And again, to regard the sensible qualities and physical objects which we directly experience as constituent elements of reality seems to Doctor Alexander quite natural and necessary, while for Professor Strong, on the other hand, those same objects and qualities are viewed as the hopelessly phenomenal states of a set of transcendent (*i. e.*, unperceivable), though quasi-conscious, things-in-themselves.

The dual antithesis of these views is complete and instructive, but in itself it concerns us only as an incident. The main purpose of this paper is to point out the similarity of the two conceptions. I wish to show that the naïve realism of Doctor Alexander and the psychological idealism of Professor Strong both follow from a single false disjunctive judgment, an imperfect dilemma which they both accept as true, though each selects an opposite horn. This supposed dilemma is as follows: *The qualitative contents of our direct or immediate consciousness are either exclusively outside or exclusively inside the psychophysical organism.*

Let us begin by considering the arguments offered by Doctor Alexander in support of the first or realistic alternative. That writer says:¹ "Useful as the psychologist's position may be as a *modus operandi* in his own science, it can only result in irrationality when carried over into metaphysics. . . . We can have immediate experience only of sensations, he says; they furnish all that we know really and at first hand; the apparatus of sense is the proof, . . . *ergo* we can know nothing but conscious states and everything must be consciousness. The amazing thing about this argument is that anyone could fail to see that it is based upon the tacit assumption of knowledge of that very extra-conscious world the possible existence of which it is so strenuous to deny." In short, an idealism which is based upon physiology is self-contradictory. We could not infer the physical unless we experienced the physical, hence if there

¹THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS, March 3, 1904, p. 119.

is a physical world it must be formed out of the stuff which we directly perceive. This is the positive part of Doctor Alexander's thesis, and it seems to us that he has proved it most satisfactorily.

With the second part of his thesis Doctor Alexander is by no means so successful. Not content with proving the objective reality of experienced *qualities*, he proceeds to attack the psychophysical conception of consciousness and to prove that the *particular things* which we experience are not events within the organism. "The common-sense view of consciousness is distinctively from the third person's standpoint. . . . We learn in our physiologies that the brain is the 'seat' of consciousness, and taking this figure to mean that the mind is somehow enclosed within the brain, we accept the solution as sufficient to our need . . . it never occurs to us to question the premise that consciousness is confined within the skull. . . . The view of consciousness current in the psychologies is not very different from that of common sense. . . . Useful as the psychologist's position may be as a *modus operandi* in his own science, it can only result in irrationality when carried over into metaphysics" (pp. 118-119). This view which Doctor Alexander thus describes and condemns as the third person's standpoint, he contrasts with the unreflective feeling of all of us, that in perception we are directly grasping extra-organic objects which are distant from us in time and space. And he accepts this latter naïve and telepathic view of perception first because it is acceptable to naïve consciousness, and second because it is free from the difficulties of subjective idealism and of parallelism, which he conceives as the only alternatives. With regard to the second of these reasons, I hope to show, after considering Professor Strong's view, that Doctor Alexander is wrong in supposing that his telepathic theory of perception is the only alternative to psychological idealism. While, as regards the former of the two arguments, I would call attention to three sets of considerations, anyone of which would justify sufficiently the psychophysical theory of perception against the testimony of naïve consciousness invoked by Doctor Alexander.

First, then, I mention the *a priori* argument against any object affecting directly any thing except what is contiguous to it. If a thing is real it is somewhere. If I am real I am somewhere; to be real I must have a position or place in *rerum natura*. How can I conceive a thing that is at a distance from me making itself known to me, causing in me a perception of it, without projecting itself through the intervening space in the form of an effect upon my organism? If I do not perceive the effects of the fixed stars upon my organism, if I perceive the real stars themselves, remaining all the while here upon the earth, I and they must interact at a dis-

tance, *i, e.*, must be in two places at once which seems to me impossible.

Secondly, if I would escape the contradiction involved in discontinuous influence, or action at a distance, and yet maintain that I perceive objects themselves and not the projections of them on my organism, I must hold that in sight for example, my visual organism is actually as large as my field of view, that when I see a star my consciousness actually rushes out through my eyes and encircles the trillion mile distance that separates me from the star. This is, I suppose, the naïve or unreflective view of the perception of distant objects, that they remain where they are but yet are immediately present to our organs of sight which are thought of as two enormous but impalpable antennae extending far beyond our tactile members. Now this view, aside from its absurdity, can be easily shown to be false because of the element of *time* that is always involved in our perception of objects outside us in space. The astronomer may give us excellent reasons for believing that the star, which we thought we directly perceived, had perished several years previous to the time when we were looking at it. Every stimulus that we know of takes time to affect us, hence if we would justify the naïve belief in the direct perception of happenings at a distance, we must extend our telepathic power to time as well as space. And this would I should suppose be regarded by everybody as frankly impossible.

But thirdly, all the facts of *illusion* constitute in and by themselves an independent refutation of the telepathic view of Doctor Alexander. For an illusion is a case in which there is produced in the organism by some internal cause an effect of the same sort as is usually produced by an external cause. The object perceived is the same in the true and in the illusive perception. The extra-organic circumstance is different hence it follows that it can only be the projection of an event on the organism that is the object of a direct perception.

That naïve consciousness should normally neglect the personal equation is as natural as that a man should forget that he is wearing glasses. As long as the glass remains undimmed, and does not distort our view, we do right to neglect it. As long as the psychophysical mechanism works efficiently, we rightly and inevitably take no account of it, and it is only when something unusual, such as an illusion, makes it go wrong that we are rudely reminded that in sense perception we have to do not with external objects but with the shadows which they cast upon our organism. Doctor Alexander does to be sure make casual reference to some of these things, but seems to feel that for some reason we are at liberty to relegate them

all to the 'special science of the psychologist' and construct a 'metaphysics' of perception on a grandly independent basis. He reminds us that "it has long been plain that the tack followed along the line of the physiological argument results in a sorry course and a loss of wind for all the types of thought involved" (p. 120). We must, however, remember that the invalidity of that part of Doctor Alexander's thesis which deals with perception does not in any way affect this demonstration of the extra-organic *reality* of those qualities which we *perceive* only when they are within the organism.

Now turning from the extreme realism of Doctor Alexander to the psychophysical idealism of Professor Strong, we find that while the first part of his book is a fine vindication of the physiological method of approaching metaphysical problems, yet his second thesis, asserting the exclusively subjective and phenomenal nature of sensible qualities and the correspondingly transcendent and mysterious nature of the real things is by no means so convincing. The chief reasons given by Professor Strong for rejecting the reality of sensible qualities seem to be: I., that the primary qualities can not be conceived apart from the secondary qualities, and that the secondary qualities are intrinsically subjective in their nature and not merely in their exemplification (p. 177); II., that it would be duplicating worlds *præter necessitatem* to believe that the sensible qualities were exemplified both within and without the mind (p. 178); III., that we can not imagine ourselves completely away from objects without their vanishing in our grasp (p. 183).

We may begin with the last argument which appears to us the weakest of the three. It is true that whenever I think of anything, there exists along with the thing thought of my present act of thinking about it, but this either has no significance at all, for the reason that I can perceive my act of thinking to be extrinsically and, therefore, unessentially associated with its object and something to which I can pay more or less attention without the object changing at all, or else it means that I here and now can think of nothing at all as having reality or meaning of any kind that is not a part of my own consciousness at this present moment. Not only the physical world but Socrates, my great grandparents, my own past and future existence, are all nothing but aspects of my present psychosis. No one, and certainly no believer in things-in-themselves, could accept the extreme solipsism which this argument would mean, if it meant anything.

The second argument, which asserts that it would be multiplying essences needlessly to suppose that the external world resembled its intra-organic projection or shadow, flies so directly in the face of all analogies of experience that the realist always feels dumb-

founded when he finds it recurring. If there is one thing more obvious than another in the experienced world, it is the depiction or imitation of one thing by another. The effect to be sure is by no means invariably similar to its cause, yet on every hand we find cases in which there is resemblance, and do we then say that forms are being multiplied beyond necessity? Because I see sky and stars reflected in a mountain lake must I hold that the real sky and stars which cause that reflection are totally unlike the reflection, on pain of multiplying essences *præter necessitatem*? Is a photograph necessarily unlike the original lineaments that are its cause? Whether *præter necessitatem* or not, it is the very nature of qualities to *exist in multiplicata*. Every object projects upon every other object its form or image in as many ways as there are modes of energy, and the projected effect, while it is never perfectly like the cause, is also never totally unlike it. Surely we need not suppose that there is any peculiar distortion of perspective in the case of organisms. It seems to be the main business of an organism to correspond in its sensory affections with the environing objects which cause them. Indeed the differences of the animate and inanimate are largely due to the infinitely greater depictive power of the former. For whereas the dead thing reflects only the present moment (the past producing only a general resultant effect), the live thing on the other hand carries in its present state the *detail* of its own past history and to some degree that of its ancestors, its place in the scale of development being correlated precisely with the degree to which its depicted past is effective in modifying its reactions to present stimuli. Does not this increased *extent* of depictive power in living things carry with it a presumption of increase rather than decrease in the *accuracy* of depiction?

The argument that remains to be considered is stronger than either of the others. If the primary qualities can not be conceived without the secondary qualities and if the secondary necessarily imply a conscious spectator, then indeed there would seem no refuge from idealism. I would answer (1) that the inability to imagine is confused with the inability to conceive. I can conceive of the fourth dimension and of a sixth sense, and might even believe in the existence of those things, just as a man blind from birth conceives of and believes in a world of colors, without being in the least able to imagine them. Hence I can conceive of a temporal and tridimensional order of relations the intrinsic nature or 'secondary qualities' of whose terms remain quite unknown. But (2) it is, after all, by no means certain that the secondary qualities can not be imagined as objective. The exclusively subjective nature of these contents has been accepted as a self-evident dogma for so long that

it never occurs to us to inquire into the very slender basis on which that dogma rests. The era of modern as distinct from medieval thought began with the realization that natural objects were determined *ab extra* to a greater extent than by their own natures. The spatio-temporal relations of a material body govern its behavior, and a knowledge of external, mechanical or quantitative relations gives us the modern or predictive science as opposed to the merely classificatory science of the middle ages, which was always based upon a study of the intrinsic or qualitative rather than the extrinsic or quantitative aspect of things. Now, the secondary qualities are only indirectly correlated with the finite or perceptible spatio-temporal relations and hence they are for predictive or mechanical science of no direct value. For that reason they have been thrown bodily over into the realm of the subjective, and regarded as having their *esse* in their *percipi*. The uselessness of the secondary qualities for purposes of prediction combined with the fact that they are more regularly and markedly associated with feelings of pleasure and pain and hence are somewhat less easy to disentangle from our admittedly subjective processes, than are the primary qualities, is the sole ground (and a very inadequate ground it is) for our modern dogma that the objective world, in so far as it is objective, must be denuded of all colors, sound, odors, etc., and regarded (materialistically), as a mere ghostly nexus of spatio-temporal relations, or else (panpsychically) as a world of transcendent minds for the existence of which there is no shadow of normal or analogical evidence, and for a proof of which we are obliged to appeal to a 'pre-rational instinct.' Restore the ancient right of the secondary qualities to exist apart from the peculiar structure which we call a psychosis or a consciousness, and we take away the main support of idealism either in its Berkeleyan or in its panpsychistic form. For though Professor Strong may be right in assuming that the primary qualities could not merely of themselves subsist apart from some perceiver, yet when reinforced by the secondary qualities they can and do constitute an intelligible world of physical objects which neither precludes nor requires the presence of conscious spectators.

I can not feel that either naïve realism or psychological idealism would win their numerous adherents, were it not for the secret conviction of each school that its own position is the only refuge from the position of its rival. The naïve realist, for example, would never be tempted to fly in the face of commonplace psychological and physiological truths, and maintain a telepathic theory of perception, were he not oppressed with the fear that if a perceived object were once exemplified within the organism, it could not be exemplified

outside as well. Nor would the psychological idealist have any adequate motive to degrade the objective world to the status of a parasite of the percipient ego were he not oppressed with the fear that if he admitted the independent reality of objects in space he would have to ascribe to himself a telepathic power of perception.

These groundless fears are largely due to the distorted form in which, from the time of Descartes, the dualistic theory of knowledge has been presented. The intra-mental and the extra-mental objects are not different in kind as the Cartesians supposed, but rather as Aristotle and the scholastics maintained, they differ only in position and in relational context. Objects of perception—even the so-called ‘particulars’—are always qualities or combinations of qualities, forms, *universals*. As universals they are capable of multiple exemplification—capable of existing in two places at once. We can never perceive a quality except it be exemplified in our psychophysical organism, for we are not telepathic; but this does not prevent us from perceiving directly the intimate stuff of objective reality itself; because a content such as red or green is exemplified in us, and so seen by us, it does not follow that its nature is made by us, that it is dependent upon us as an *exclusively* subjective thing. Perceptual knowledge is certainly objective when regarded *formaliter*, it is certainly subjective when regarded *materialiter*. The naïve realist recognising the formal transcendency of perception, thinks it necessary to make perception also materially transcendent. In disregard of the facts of psychology, he would make each particular mind as large as its field of reference. The psychological idealist, on the other hand, knowing that knowledge is materially limited to what appears within the organism would make it equally limited in its formal scope. In disregard of the needs of logic, he would restrict the extent of objective reality to the spheres of individual minds.

Between these views it is difficult to choose, though in favor of each it may be said that it is capable of refuting the other. Both arguments rest on a false dilemma. Forgetting the important Platonic and Aristotelian truth that any object of cognition is primarily and essentially a universal, and is as such capable of simultaneously existing both within and without the mind, they assume that a perceived object must exist *either* in one realm *or* in another—that if it is externally real (as Doctor Alexander rightly asserts), it is *thereby* prevented from being presented within the psychophysical organism (which he wrongly infers); or that if, as directly perceived, it exists within the psychophysical organism (as Professor Strong rightly asserts), it is *thereby* prevented from being real (which he wrongly infers).

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