

## IX.—ARE PRESENTATIONS MENTAL OR PHYSICAL?

*A reply to PROFESSOR ALEXANDER.**By G. F. STOUT.*

IN proceeding to inquire whether anything is physical or mental, the very first step which we ought to take is to give such an indication of what we mean by the terms *physical* and *mental* as will suffice to guard against ambiguity in the question itself. Mr. Alexander has made no attempt to fulfil this initial requirement. I must therefore attempt to supply the deficiency myself, and this I shall endeavour to do in a manner which is likely to meet his approval, *i.e.*, by a plain unbiassed description of fact. What, then, as a matter of fact, do we ordinarily mean when we say that something is physical or that something is mental? I think that there is general agreement that a physical thing occupies space of three dimensions, and also that no two things can at the same moment occupy the same portion of space. Further, the spaces occupied severally by distinct material things are all parts of one space, each being continuously connected with every other by intervening tracts of space. Whatever has no place within this common space is not a physical thing. Again, physical things partly change, partly endure unchanged in time, and both their persistent states and their changes are constantly being determined by an immensely complex system of interactions, direct and indirect, with other members of the spatial system. The moon, for instance, is at this moment attracting and being attracted by my copy of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and both are attracting and being attracted by Mr. Alexander's hat. Such interactions are interactions of things in space as such, and they are therefore always spatially conditioned. Even action at a distance, according to the law of gravitation, takes place subject to the formula of the inverse square.

A physical thing, then, is a thing occupying space and entering as a factor into the spatially conditioned system of interactions—the executive order of the material world. The conception of physical existence, in general, is wider than that of a physical thing. Under physical existence I include whatever so belongs to the constitution of a physical thing, that change in it is *eo ipso* change in the physical thing, and that the annihilation of the thing would *eo ipso* include its annihilation. Whatever does not conform to this condition is, at any rate, not a physical existent, whether or not it can properly be regarded as psychical.

As regards the meaning of the term *Mind*, I am content to accept, for the purposes of the present discussion, the account offered us by Mr. Alexander. A mind is the subject of activity in the way of conation and attention, and also of feeling in the way of pleasure and pain. Psychical or mental existence will, then, consist in whatever so belongs to the constitution of a mind, that change in it is *eo ipso* change in the mind, and that if the mind ceased to exist it would *eo ipso* cease to exist. Whatever does not conform to this condition is not a psychical existent, whether or not it can properly be regarded as physical.

### *The Question at Issue.*

After these preliminary definitions, we may proceed to fix exactly what the question is which we have to discuss. The question concerns the nature of certain existents; we have to decide whether these are physical or psychical, or both or neither. But what are the existents to be considered? I answer that we are concerned exclusively with those existents which are existentially present to the mind in perceiving material things by way of sense. By existential presence, I mean the way in which my toothache, for instance, is present to me in the moment in which I am actually experiencing it—the way in which it is not present to my dentist. My dentist may know or believe that my toothache exists, but my existent

toothache itself is not actually present to him as it is to me, inasmuch as I am in the act of feeling it.

It is above all things necessary to recognise at the outset that what is thus existentially present in sense-perception is very far indeed from being identical with what common-sense and science ordinarily regard as directly observed or perceived. All our ordinary sense-perceptions—all that we ordinarily call "observations"—are saturated with inferences and interpretations and suggestions which are not recognised as such and may therefore be called unconscious. So far as these inferences, interpretations, and suggestions are not recognised as such, the perception which includes them is naturally taken to be direct apprehension of given fact. For instance, on looking at a man, I say that I directly see or observe that he is pale. But the colour of a man's face as existentially present to a percipient mind "varies," to quote Dr. Venn, "vastly more according as we see it by daylight or candle light, or even according as he stands somewhat more or less in the shade, than it can possibly vary according to the extremest conditions of health or sickness, whilst the light remains the same. Thus our subjective estimate of such a simple and apparently ultimate datum as that of mere colour is in great part a judgment or inference." It involves thought which transcends what is existentially present. Similarly our perception of the size, shape, and distance of bodies continually depends on a highly complex system of what Helmholtz called unconscious inferences, based on a vast and varied system of existentially present elements which can only be disentangled from what belongs to their interpretation by the patient work of reflective analysis—not by any plain description of facts as they stand out before us only waiting to be described.

The apparent relevancy of any such plain description depends entirely on a wrong assumption as to the nature of the question which has to be answered. It is assumed that the question is a familiar one with a familiar answer which can at

once be recognised by common-sense as obvious. But, in fact, the question is quite unfamiliar to ordinary thinking. The plain man makes no attempt, and has no motive for making any attempt to disengage what is existentially present or immediately experienced in sense-perception from the objects which he is ordinarily said to perceive or observe. He is convinced, and rightly convinced, that these objects are physical, not mental. But on this point there is no dispute, and it is quite futile for Mr. Alexander to press it home on us with emphatic reiteration. It is, no doubt, a plain unbiassed statement of facts. But the facts are utterly irrelevant. The real question concerns the nature of what is existentially present to the mind in perceiving physical things. To this question common-sense can give no ready-made answer. By the time the plain man has understood it accurately he has ceased to be a plain man and become a philosopher or psychologist; and it is only as a philosopher or psychologist that he can proceed to discuss it. If Mr. Alexander replies that he is not relying on common-sense, but on his own introspection, I answer that he appeals to common-sense to confirm his findings, and that both in his own analysis and in this appeal to common-sense he fails to keep in view the question which is really at issue, substituting for it one on which there is no dispute.

What we have to investigate, then, is the nature of what is existentially present to consciousness in sense-perception, as a toothache is immediately present to me in the moment in which I am actually feeling it, and not merely remembering or anticipating it.

What is thus existentially present I shall sometimes call, for the sake of brevity, a presentation; I shall also sometimes refer to it as immediately experienced, or given in immediate experience, and in order to distinguish it from what are ordinarily regarded as data by common-sense and science. I shall sometimes describe it as a *datum datissimum*.

There is also another limitation of our problem which is

tacitly implied in Mr. Alexander's argument. What he maintains is not only that what is existentially present in sense-perception is a physical existent, but also that it forms part of the existence of the thing perceived, and not of any other physical object, such, for example, as the body of the percipient. He is bound to assume this, because it is essential to his position that perception is direct and not in any way representative. But if presentations as physical facts form part, not of the thing perceived but of the body of the percipient, perception becomes a highly indirect and representative mode of knowing whatever is external to the body. Moreover, his doctrine, in that case, would obviously become a very difficult and speculative hypothesis, and could not be plausibly offered as a plain description of facts.

*Proof that Presentations are not Physical Existents.*

I now proceed to give a proof that presentations do not form part of the physical things which we perceive in experiencing them.

Such modes of consciousness as conation and attention and emotion are not only psychical but subjective. Just as the word "above" has no meaning apart from its correlative "below," so "desiring" has no meaning apart from the correlative object which is desired, and "attending" has no meaning apart from the correlative object which is attended to. Such processes, then, as desiring and attending belong to the subjective side of the subject-object relation and are meaningless apart from some reference to the corresponding objective side.

It is plain that subjective processes are all mental. They exist only as someone's experiences. If my existence as a conscious being were annihilated, all that I call my attending, hoping, fearing, willing, etc., would *eo ipso* be annihilated. The earth would continue to move round the sun, and corn to grow in the fields after I had ceased to exist. But it is non-

sense to suggest that my thinking and desiring might, in like manner, endure and change after the withdrawal of the mind which thinks and desires.

Subjective processes, then, are mental. But is there anything else which can properly be called mental? Is there anything else which only actually exists in being actually experienced so that the withdrawal of the mind which experiences it would *ipso facto* involve its annihilation. On examination, we find that this is so. We are bound to recognise existents which exist only in being experienced and yet belong to the objective rather than the subjective side of the subject-object relation.

Such objective experiences may all be brought under the general head "presentations." I shall here refer only to the two classes of presentations which are most easily and obviously recognisable—to distinct sensations or sense-presentations and distinct mental images. Besides these, I hold that there are subconscious or undiscriminated presentations, and that these play an immensely important part in our mental life. But I need not deal with these at present.

Under the head "sensations" are included a vast variety of presentations which fall, roughly speaking, into two groups—organic sensations and those of special sense. Among organic sensations are included nausea, neuralgia, toothache, tickling, itching, fatigue, hunger, thirst, and so forth. A plain description of facts as they appear to common-sense would not, I think, class these as physical facts. They are, indeed, generally connected with the thought of that physical thing we call our body, and of its varying states. None the less the pang of a toothache as it is immediately felt is plainly distinguishable from the bodily affection which conditions it. The toothache sensation, itself, is something which exists only in being experienced. If our existence as conscious beings were annihilated it would *eo ipso* disappear, whatever might happen to our body. So, too, a tickly feeling is not ordinarily

supposed to be physically inherent either in the feather which tickles us or in the body as a perceived object.

The case is not so clear, at first sight, when we turn to presentations of special sense, including what are called sound sensations, smell sensations, colour sensations, touch sensations, and temperature sensations. It may be plausibly suggested that in the case of these sensations all that we are aware of consists merely in qualities of bodies existing and persisting independently of our awareness of them. On this view, when I look at a green field sprinkled with buttercups, the qualitative difference between green and yellow as existentially present to my mind is simply a difference between colour qualities inherent respectively in the buttercups and the grass, as these might have existed independently of my awareness of them and independently of any relation to sentient minds. Now, it must be admitted that, in some sense, we do perceive grass as green and buttercups as yellow. It must further be admitted that in strict propriety of language these adjectives can be applied only to external objects as such, and not to any qualities of our own experience,—not to psychical qualities. It does violence to ordinary usage to speak of a green sensation or a coloured sensation,—still more so to speak of a green or a coloured experience. But all that this shows is that if there are qualities existentially present to consciousness which do not belong to the external object, these are not what we name when we call the grass green or the buttercups yellow. In any case, it is easy to show that what we call the colour of the external thing cannot be simply identified with any quality which is existentially present to consciousness when someone looks at it. If a buttercup is seen by the margin, instead of the centre of the retina, or if it is seen by a colour-blind instead of by a normal person, or if it is seen by twilight instead of by daylight, or if contrast effects come into play, the quality immediately presented in viewing it is changed; but, none the less, the buttercup remains a yellow buttercup.

What we mean in calling it yellow is that a person with normal eyes under certain normal conditions would, in viewing it, have a visual presentation of a certain quality, and also that persons with abnormal eyes or viewing it under abnormal conditions would have immediate visual presentations of correspondingly different qualities. If, under certain exceptional conditions, a buttercup yielded the same sensation as it does under normal conditions, it would not be yellow, but some other colour. In general we may say that the greenness of grass and the yellowness of buttercups are not existentially present to the percipient consciousness. They are judged or believed or supposed or unconsciously inferred to exist, but they are not existentially present in immediate experience, as my toothache is when I am actually feeling it.

But it follows from this analysis that, in the visual perception of grass as green in distinction from buttercups as yellow, there must be correspondingly diverse qualities which are immediately experienced, and not merely judged to exist. It is these qualities which I deny to the buttercups and grass as forming part of their physical existence. And I have already incidentally given a proof of this thesis in pointing out that the immediately experienced quality may vary when things seen remain unaltered. If the quality were really inherent in the body seen, a change in the one would be a change in the other.

I may elucidate my general position by a comparison of actual seeing with dream-visions. Whether we actually see or only dream that we see a green meadow sprinkled with yellow buttercups, in both cases we think of the existence of particular grass and particular buttercups, and believe that these exist. In actual seeing these physical things do exist as we believe them to exist; in mere dreaming they do not. But this consideration is, by itself, entirely irrelevant to the question at issue. For whether we believe rightly or wrongly, what we believe to exist is in both cases, equally, a physical thing. The



point which is vitally relevant is this. Besides the belief in the existence of external objects which are real in the one case and unreal in the other, there is present both in dreaming and in actual seeing something which actually exists, in the same sense, in both. In actual seeing, we may call this the visual appearance or visual presentation of the thing seen. In dreams we may call it the dream-picture, or image, or apparition. The dream apparition is not merely believed to exist or supposed to exist, it does actually exist and is existentially present to consciousness in the same way as a felt toothache while we are feeling it. We cannot say that it merely appears to exist; for its appearance and its existence are not separable. The appearance of an apparition is not separable from the reality of the apparition.

The dream apparition then actually exists. But it is certainly not a physical existent. If it is physical, it must either be a physical thing or a state or quality of a physical thing. That it is not itself a physical thing is, I think, self-evident. It does not occupy any portion of the common space in which bodies exist. The impenetrability of matter forbids us to suppose that it exists in a place already preoccupied by any other body. Are we then to suppose that it occupies some vacant space intervening between other bodies? But such occupancy either means nothing or it means that the dream apparition is capable of excluding other bodies from the space in which itself exists and of otherwise acting on them, and being acted on by them in the executive order of the material world. Now, it is plain that this is not so. The dream apparition does not set other things in motion and it is not set in motion by them. It does not attract the earth and it is not attracted by the earth. Further, if it were a physical thing, it would occupy space in three dimensions; there would actually exist another side to it opposite to that which is pictured, and between the two sides there would be either empty space or filled volume. I need not dwell on the absurdity of such suggestions. But if

the dream apparition is not itself a physical thing, its physical existence must consist in its being a state or property of a material thing. And an actual and particular property or state can only have being as belonging to a correspondingly actual and particular thing. Now, in the case of the dream apparition, there is no such actual thing. We interpret the presentation as indicating the existence of a particular meadow with buttercups. But this particular meadow is not actually present to our senses.

The dream apparition is not then a physical fact. But it is perhaps precipitate to infer that it must therefore be a mental fact. This is a point which I shall consider later from another side. At present it is enough to say that if we follow the plan of merely describing facts recognised as obvious by common-sense, dream apparitions must be regarded as existing only in so far as they are existentially present to the dreamer. Their beginning to appear to him and ceasing to appear to him are the beginning and cessation of their existence. If he were annihilated they would *eo ipso* be annihilated. A change in them is a change in his experience and in nothing else. If, then, we appeal to facts as generally recognised, we must regard dream apparitions as psychical or mental existents.

But, in this respect, we can draw no essential distinction between dream presentations, visual, tactual, auditory, motor or olfactory, and the presentations connected with the perception of actually existing physical things. In seeing green grass we have an immediate experience which is essentially of the same nature as in merely dreaming that we see it. The visual apparition is often less distinct and vivid in the dream. But this is only a difference in degree, and even this difference is perhaps absent where dreams are very lively. The same conclusion is forced upon us when we consider that dreams are derivative occurrences. The material, so to speak, of which the dream apparition is composed, is a modified repetition, revival, or copy of the sense-presentations which we have

previously experienced in perceiving external objects. The two kinds of existence cannot therefore be radically disparate in their nature.

Everything which I have said about dream apparitions applies equally to those which occur in hallucinations. It also applies equally to what, in plainly describing facts, we call mental images. The existence of such images is plainly distinct and separate from that of bodies interacting in space. Their waxing and waning in distinctness and vividness, their coming and going, their subtle and peculiar changes of quality, etc., are events that cannot be identified with events happening in the external world. But images are continuous in their existence and history with sense-presentations. They are revivals, reproductions, or continuations of sense-appearitions. This is especially evident in the case of what are called after-images. If we look at a window for a few seconds and then close our eyes, the visual presentation continues to exist. It would continue to exist—actually to exist not merely to appear to exist—even if the window were annihilated when we ceased to look at it. Plainly, therefore, its existence is distinct from that of the window or of any part or property of the window.

Before proceeding further, I shall here turn aside to say a word about terminology. In general, the distinction between sensible qualities of things presupposes correspondingly differentiated qualities of sensation. Ordinary language, being framed with almost exclusive reference to things perceived, has not provided us with ready-made terms for naming these modifications of our sensibility. Hence we have to make good the deficiency, as best we may, by circuitous description or by technical terms. Thus, though we cannot properly speak of a sense-presentation as green or yellow, we may distinguish between sensations *of* green and sensations *of* yellow. Similarly, though we may not call a sensation coloured, we may say that it is a sensation of colour, or a colour-sensation—

not a coloured sensation, but a colour-sensation. Further, we are at liberty to speak of sense-presentation as having colour-quality, *e.g.*, the colour-quality green or the colour-quality yellow.

*Special Reasons for denying that Presentations are Physical.*

The general argument against the physical existence of presentations may be reinforced and driven home by a multitude of special considerations. I have only time to mention a few chief points. The first of these is the law of specific energies, according to which the general nature of a sense-presentation depends not on the nature of the stimulus, but on the structure of the sense-organ and its nervous connexions. Light and colour sensations arise from pressure on the eye, from severance of the optic nerve, or from a narcotic in the blood as well as from vibrations of the ether. The points of the skin peculiarly sensitive to cold yield this sensation and no other; however they may be stimulated. A heat stimulus, applied to such a point, will not occasion a heat sensation, though it may give rise to one of intense cold. Such facts seem irreconcilable with the view that sense-presentations have an independent physical existence which is, so to speak, merely revealed or uncovered, as if by removal of a screen, when the sense-organ is affected. Indeed, there seems little distinctness between Mr. Alexander's position and that of the prosecutor in an action for assault who swore that he saw his assailant by the light produced by a blow which he received in the eye.

In the second place, the sense-presentations involved in the perception of physical things are incessantly varying, while the things remain unaltered. This holds especially for the extensiveness of sensations. The feel due to the application of a pencil point to the skin is bigger or smaller according as this or that part of the skin is touched by it. It is bigger when the pencil point is applied to the tip of the tongue or the drum

of the ear than when it is applied to the back of the neck. Now such differences cannot be identified with any difference in the size of the surface in contact with the skin or in the extent of skin which it touches. For these may remain the same throughout. I might, of course, give abundant further illustration from visual experience. But there is, I hope, no need to do so. The general argument is this: If anything  $x$  exhibits variations which are not shared by  $y$ ,  $x$  and  $y$  must be distinct existences. But sense-presentations are incessantly undergoing variations which are not shared by the physical things that we perceive by means of them. Hence the sensations must have an existence distinct from that of the perceived things.

Finally, I would refer to the point, first made by Protagoras and accepted by Plato, that, when several individuals perceive the same external object, each has his own sense-presentations, which, as such, are incommunicable to the others. This is peculiarly evident where the sensation-qualities are contrary, so that it would involve a contradiction to regard them as inhering in the same thing. The wind, which makes one man who is in health feel warm, makes another, who is feverish, feel cold. There would be a contradiction if these contrary qualities were supposed to inhere simultaneously in the same thing. But A's feeling cold is in no way incompatible with B's feeling warm, just because the qualitative opposition is between qualities belonging to distinct existences, to A's sense-presentation on the one hand and to B's on the other. If we suppose the sense-presentations to be like instead of contrary in quality, it is plain that this can make no essential difference to their mode of existence. They still remain the private and incommunicable experiences of distinct individuals. A experiences his own sensations and not B's, however similar the sensations of A may be to those of B.

*How Mr. Alexander deals with the Difficulties of his Position.*

Mr. Alexander to some extent recognises the difficulty of treating presentations as physical. But I cannot discover that he ever shows any sign of appreciating the precise drift of the objections which he has to meet. Thus, against those who urge that mental imagery must really be mental and not physical, he seems to have nothing to say except that a "remembered person or an imagined event or person is just as physical as the perceived event or person." This is certainly true; but it is totally irrelevant. The real question relates to the image which is imaged, not to the object or event which is remembered. The event has ceased to exist and the object may have ceased to exist at the time when it is remembered. But at that moment the memory-image is actually existing and is existentially present to consciousness. It cannot, therefore, be identical with the remembered object or event. Similarly, if I imagine a castle built of diamonds, what I think of is a possible physical object. But, in thinking of it, I may use an image; and this image is not something merely possible, but something actually existing. I do not make the castle which I think of as a possible existence and I do not make the possibility of it, so far as it is possible; the image, on the contrary, is something produced by me. Finally, the possible castle, if it actually existed, would be built of actual diamonds; but my actual image is not formed of diamonds or of any other assignable physical material. Similarly in the case of error: if anyone believes that a stick seen in water is bent, then, if the stick is really straight, he commits an error concerning a physical object: he believes that a certain physical object is physically bent whereas in reality it is straight. He treats one physical possibility as actual whereas it is another physical possibility which is actual. But, after this error is corrected, the difference between the visual apparitions, as presented when the stick is seen in water and out of water, still remains

unaffected. This is not an error capable of correction, but an ultimate matter of fact, a matter of fact not concerning any physical object, but sense-presentations.

Mr. Alexander says that in such cases the apprehending organ has distorted the real object. I submit that this is not a plain unbiassed description of facts, but a palpable falsehood. When I have double vision of a candle flame, the candle flame itself is not thereby doubled or, in any way, physically altered. What happens is, to use Mr. Alexander's own language, that there are "two appearances of the one real candle." If he urges that the appearances are themselves physical objects, I refer again to my previous argument.

I must also point out that this distortion hypothesis inevitably places him in the very position which he is most vitally interested in avoiding. His central aim is to show that perception is a direct revelation of the thing perceived as it is in itself. But the view to which he is driven by the logic of facts is that perception directly reveals only what he calls "the particular ways in which non-mental objects exist in relation to the apprehending mind." He has been driven into representationism in the very attempt to escape it. This is most obvious when he says that "the object may be vitiated by elements introduced into it by the mind." What can these elements be and whence can the mind derive them? The mind, according to Mr. Alexander, merely consists in the activity of conation and attention and in feelings of pleasure and pain. But the vitiating elements introduced into the physical object by the mind are not activities of conation and attention or feelings of pleasure and pain.

*Mr. Alexander's Reason for denying Presentations to be  
Psychical.*

So far I have only considered Mr. Alexander's treatment of objections to his theory that presentations are physical. I have

yet to consider his positive ground for denying that they are mental.

So far as I can discover, there is only one reason assigned by him throughout his paper. Sensations cannot, he maintains, be psychical because they are always *objects* of consciousness and not modes of being conscious in relation to objects. "Try," he says, "to think of your consciousness as being affected blue, in the same way as you think of how you pass from step to step of a difficult demonstration. You cannot do it. And you cannot do it because there is no such affection there. The blue is outside your mind." This argument would no doubt be conclusive, if it were admitted, at the outset, that being mental or "inside the mind" is identical with being a mode of consciousness in the strict sense in which Mr. Alexander, very properly, uses that term. Presentations certainly are not specific qualities of conation or attention; neither are they modes of cognition, if by this is meant the mental act or state of our being aware of something in distinction from the something of which we are aware. But the real question is whether mental existence is confined merely to consciousness in this sense. Mr. Alexander, in assuming that an individual mind consists merely in conation and attention, assumes precisely the very point at issue. His argument is, therefore, a mere *petitio principii*. There is nothing in it which has any bearing on my contention that there are certain existents so connected with conation and feeling as to form with these part of the single system which we call an individual mind.

Further, even if we admitted the validity of the argument, it would not prove that presentations are physical. It would only prove that they are not mental. The third alternative of their being neither would still remain open. And in view of the difficulties of regarding them as physical, I should myself hold this to be far the most natural conclusion.



*Positive Reasons for regarding Presentations as Psychological.*

Perhaps it may be thought that I have not myself sufficiently considered this third alternative. I shall, therefore, now attempt to supply this lacuna by offering positive reasons for asserting the psychological nature of presentations, independent of those which I have adduced for denying that they are physical.

In the first place, I have to point out that the existential presence of presentations does not merely consist in their being objects of conation or attention or any other subjective state or process. It does not merely consist in our being aware of them in any sense in which we can distinguish between the awareness, on the one hand, and that of which we are aware on the other. For example, we ordinarily localise sounds, as coming from this or that direction, through the peculiar nature of the auditory sensation as determined by differences in the intensity and tone-phase of vibrations which affect the two ears. But we do not attend to the peculiar presentation which fulfils this function. In order to fulfil its function it must be existentially present, but it does not exist for consciousness as an object. Similarly, though we are constantly aware of the position and motion of our limbs by means of muscle, joint, and tendon sensations, yet we rarely attend to or in any way objectify them. Again, the blind man with his stick is incessantly forming precise and definite judgments on the objects with which the stick comes in contact. The judgments are determined by the varying pressure sensations due to the contact of the other end of the stick with his hand. But the blind man need not attend to these sensations so as to discern their subtle variations. He need not be aware of them in any sense in which we can distinguish awareness and its object. Similarly, to quote Lotze, in sewing "we seem to be immediately percipient at the point of the needle, and we feel how it raises the texture to an elevated point before making its way through

with a sudden dart." Again, our ordinary perception of the size, shape, distance, and direction of physical things is constantly determined and specified by a multitude of sense-experiences which themselves escape notice and are not in any way objects of mental activity.

These sense-experiences can often be discerned, and not only their present but also their previous existence can be recognised when attention is directed to them. But, ordinarily, attention is not directed to them except by the artist and psychologist. In like manner, it sometimes happens that we are quite inattentive to words-as articulate sounds or as visible characters. We then attend only to the meaning they convey. To quote James Mill :—" A friend arrives from a distant country, and brings me the first intelligence of the last illness, the last words, the last acts, and the death of my son. The sound of the voice, the articulation of every word, makes its sensation in my ear ; but it is to the ideas that my attention flies. It is my son that is before me, suffering, acting, speaking, dying. The words which have introduced the ideas, and kindled the affections, have been as little heeded as the respiration which has been accelerated while the ideas were received."

It would seem, then, that the existential presence of presentations to or in the mind does not essentially consist in their being objects to a subject. I can discover no possible alternative except the simple identification of their existential presence with their present existence. And this can only be made intelligible if we ascribe psychical existence to them in the same sense as we ascribe it to conation and feeling. Conation and feeling are not merely known through experience as a tree may be. They are themselves experiences. The difference is comparable to the difference between jumping a jump and jumping a ditch. We may have experience of a tree ; but we cannot experience the tree as we experience a painful emotion. Similarly, though we are, as Locke says, conversant with external objects through sensation, yet we

cannot *sense* the external object as we sense the sensations. A heat-sensation is an experience which we experience; the heat of the fire is not an experience, but only something which we know by experience.

To clench this point, we may refer to a class of case, of the utmost importance, which is entirely neglected by Mr. Alexander, the cases in which we have sympathetic insight into the experience of others through our own analogous or related experiences. For this, it is by no means necessary that we should take note of or know anything about the workings of our own mind which gives us the key to the minds of others. For example, the spectator of a football match may feel a sympathetic excitement which he reveals by imitative movements. Now neither the movements nor the mental excitement which they express need be noticed by the man himself. His attention may be wholly absorbed on watching the game, so that he is entirely heedless of his own mental states and processes as such. Yet his sympathetic excitement supplies him with a means of entering into the experience of the players. Itself unnoted, it yet specifies and determines his apprehension of the objects in which he is interested. Now what I have called his sympathetic excitement is very complex. It contains conation and feeling; but it also contains, as part of the same continuous whole, pressure sensations, together with muscle, joint, and tendon sensations. All these elements seem to be existentially present in the same way, and it seems quite arbitrary and indefensible to affirm that in this respect some of them are fundamentally disparate from the others, conation and attention existing *in* the mind, the sensations merely as *objects for* the mind.\*

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\* I have not time to follow Mr. Alexander in the discussion of self-knowledge given in his appendix. I would here remark, however, that his treatment of this topic is marred by his isolation of the problem of self-knowledge from that of the knowledge which one mind has of others. This obscures for him not only the knowledge of self, but also the knowledge of external objects.

Sensations cannot be merely objects if they are capable of being mentally presented without being objects at all. *A fortiori* they cannot be merely objects if they are capable of entering into the constitution of properly subjective states. Now, if there is any truth whatever in James' theory of emotion, sensations do enter, at least as contributory factors, into such states as anger and fear. If, then, we admit such sensations to be primarily subjective modes of consciousness, we must admit that sensations may be subjective also. Doubtless all emotion involves conation and feelings of pleasure and pain, and it is ultimately to these elements that its subjective character is due. But these elements are so blended in a continuous unity with organic sensations in the total emotional state that it seems quite arbitrary to contrast them as subjective with the organic sensations as objective. *A fortiori* it seems arbitrary and indefensible to rank the organic sensations as physical in contrast with pleasure-pain and conation as mental.

Sensations, then, may be, in the proper sense, *subjective*. On the other hand, there seems to be good ground for asserting that pleasure and pain, at least, if not conation, may be objective. Ferdinand delighted in the pain of carrying logs in the service of Miranda. His delight was a subjective attitude: it was a being pleased with something. But the painfulness of the muscular effort and fatigue were rather part of the object which he was pleased with than of the subjective state of being pleased with it. Similarly, in psychological experiments in pain-sensations, the person experimented on, in his anxiety for the success of the experiments, may feel pleased when a stimulus causes pain and displeased when it does not. His being pleased with the pain is then a subjective attitude; but the pain at which he is pleased seems to be primarily an object of the subjective state, and not part of it. In general, I submit that the painfulness of wounds, scalds and burns, of neuralgia, headache, and cramp would, in a plain unbiassed

description of facts, be ranked as presentations, and not as modes of being conscious in relation to presentations. But no one, I presume, will maintain that pain is ever a physical fact or that it is ever anything but a mental fact. Hence it would seem that presentations may be mental and not physical facts. Further, it seems arbitrary to make a fundamental distinction, in this respect, between other characters of a pain-sensation and its painfulness. The two are so blended that if the pain is admitted to be mental, we can scarcely avoid admitting that the whole sensation is mental.

*Can Retentiveness be explained if Presentations are Physical ?*

In conclusion, I would draw attention to a difficulty in Mr. Alexander's doctrine which I am inclined to regard as more serious than any other. How, on his hypothesis, can he give any intelligible account of the admitted facts of retentiveness, association, and reproduction. If the immediate experiences involved in the perception of physical objects are mental in their nature, they may have a subsequent mental history separate from that of the physical objects. Hence, they may persist or be reproduced by association or otherwise. And if we also assume, as I do, that it is the essential function of immediate experience to specify and determine the direction of thought to objects transcending immediate experience, we have a fairly satisfactory theory of psychical retentiveness. But if the immediate experience in perception is part and parcel of the physical existence of perceived things, I fail to see how retentiveness is possible at all. The mind on this view is merely an activity which skips or hops from one external object to another, but its own nature remains unmodified by the external things to which it is successively directed. When it leaves one thing A and passes to another B, its previous connexion with A is entirely cut off. How, then, can it renew this connexion with A independently of actual perception by means of the senses ?

Perhaps Mr. Alexander might fall back on his peculiar theory that subjective activity is localised in the brain, and might say that its various directions correspond to the various directions of revivable brain-processes. But this does not help me; it only adds to my bewilderment when I try to work out the details. If, for example, the brain motion is forward in the direction of the face, it would follow that I cannot ideally recall the corresponding object when I have my back turned to it instead of my face. Spatial direction, taken literally, as Mr. Alexander proposes to take it, is of no use. If it be taken metaphorically, Mr. Alexander ought to tell us plainly what the literal fact is which the metaphor is meant to illustrate.

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