X.—MR. G. E. MOORE ON "THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF PSYCHOLOGY."

By G. DAWES HICKS.

SOME apology is needed for introducing once more a topic for discussion to which already one of our meetings this session has been devoted. The substance of this paper should have been laid before the Society on the same evening as was Mr. Moore's, but, unfortunately, circumstances prevented the carrying out of that intent. On the Secretary's suggestion, I venture now to atone for a broken promise, and I can only trust that interest in the many important issues raised by Mr. Moore is not yet exhausted.

Naturally I shall touch chiefly upon points about which we appear to differ. With what I take to be Mr. Moore's main contention I am, however, in entire agreement, and I should like to express at the outset, if I may, my sense of the extreme value of so careful and thorough a piece of analysis as that which he has given us. Would that the following somewhat discursive remarks were less unworthy of being set beside it!

Mr. Moore begins his inquiry by stating at once what he conceives to be the subject-matter of psychology. In his view, psychology has for its subject-matter all those constituents of the universe, and those only, which are mental or psychical in character. Accordingly, the problem he prescribes for himself is to determine which among the contents of the universe are mental, and how they are distinguished from the non-mental contents of the universe. Briefly, his conclusion is that acts of consciousness, particular qualities of acts of consciousness, and any collection of such acts which have some sort of unity are undoubtedly mental entities, whilst it is doubtful whether the entity (if there be such) which sees and feels and thinks is

mental, doubtful also whether sense-data are mental, and doubtful whether there is any entity of the kind signified by the phrase "content of an act of consciousness," although, if there be, it would undoubtedly be a mental entity. I select for further consideration four questions,—namely (1) whether an individual mind or subject, which *is* rather than *has* its states, and is not a mere aggregate of them, is not mental in a more primary sense than the entities Mr. Moore finds to be undoubtedly mental; (2) whether the threefold distinction between act, content, and object, is not really justifiable, and, if so, whether the content is rightly described as mental; (3) whether it is not possible to define more precisely what is meant by an "act of consciousness," and (4) whether psychology can legitimately be restricted as regards its subject-matter to what is mental or psychical in nature.

One protest I feel impelled to record *in limine*. I am wholly unable to accept the criterion adopted by Mr. Moore in deciding between one or other of two opposing views,—I mean the criterion of immediate assurance yielded by introspective observation. Throughout his paper, Mr. Moore will be found falling back upon this kind of support. To take but one instance. He tells us that it seems to him quite certain that some mental acts differ internally or qualitatively from others. And the certainty apparently is furnished by the seeming. Now, one admits, of course, that at some point in logical procedure the process of offering grounds for what is asserted must come to an end, that we cannot go on indefinitely giving reasons for what we take to be true. But surely introspective observation is a precarious means of obtaining self-evident propositions. Introspection is proverbially difficult, and peculiarly liable, especially in regard to so intricate a matter as the internal nature of a mental act, to illusion. I am not saying that in Mr. Moore's case everything may not have been well, but, at all events, other observers—Mr. Joachim, for example—appear to be equally certain that they cannot, by introspection,

get hold of a mental act at all. And even though there *were* agreement as to what is introspected, I cannot see that this would guarantee freedom from error.

I.

"The sense in which to be a mental entity is to be an act of consciousness is," in Mr. Moore's opinion, "the most fundamental sense of the word 'mental'; it is the one from which all others are derived."

In order that one should be placed in a position for understanding what exactly this contention involves, some explanation of the qualification implied in speaking of mental acts as "*acts of consciousness*" seems imperatively called for. It has now become customary to describe psychology as the science of the mental life rather than, as used formerly to be said, the science of mental facts or phenomena. The change is not without significance. The employment of the term "mental life" indicates an effort at least to resist the tendency of regarding mental activities as distinct, isolated, independent occurrences, and to emphasise, as essentially characteristic of them, a peculiar, unique connectedness due to their being phases or stages in a stream of process constituting a concrete conscious individual. Psychologists are, of course, compelled, for purposes of investigation to make a momentary cross-section, so to speak, of the stream, but the absolute impossibility of dealing psychologically with any state of mind in abstraction from what has preceded and from what succeeds is, at length, I take it, a generally accepted methodological principle. Mr. Moore, on the contrary, is desirous, so I understand, of maintaining the possibility of giving a more or less satisfactory account of each mental act in and for itself. Nevertheless, I confess I am puzzled to find him *both* insisting on Hume's confusion of acts of consciousness with that of which we are conscious *and, at the same time*, admitting the possible truth of

Hume's doctrine of the individual mind as "merely the collection" of all its mental states. Does not the latter of these positions result, in Hume's case at least, from the very confusion which Mr. Moore has made manifest? The entire argument, for instance, about "personal identity" (*Treatise*, iv, § 4) seems to rest upon the assumption that the "succession of perceptions which constitute the mind" is the succession of data of which there is consciousness. Substitute for the phrase a "collection of different perceptions," in Hume's sense, the phrase a "collection of mental acts," in Mr. Moore's sense of "mental act," and the theory has become so transformed that I think Hume would disown any responsibility for it. He would probably require to be informed how a "collection of mental acts," apart from their objects, could in any way be conceived.

There might, Mr. Moore thinks, be acts of consciousness "isolated" in such a manner as not to be "related to any other acts, in the peculiar way in which the mental acts of any one person are related to one another." Professor James once attempted to illustrate the function of cognition by postulating a "little feeling of *q*," "attached to no matter, nor localised at any point of space, but left swinging *in vacuo*, as it were, by the direct creative *fiat* of a god." Could the god be prevailed upon to create a reality outside of the feeling, resembling the feeling's quality *q*, the feeling might then be held to be cognisant of the reality. Considering what he has told us of the sense in which he uses the term "act," I should certainly have imagined Mr. Moore could not mean that an "act," mental or otherwise, might "swing *in vacuo*" after the fashion of "this little feeling of *q*." And if, in calling the isolated acts in question "acts of consciousness" he meant to suggest that each might be the act of a separately existing entity—a bit, so to speak, of mind-dust—capable of just this one act, then I can only say that such a supposition strikes me as though it were on a par with the supposition that there might be fingers or thumbs, and so on,

each springing into being or created separately and living its own life, without forming part of any bodily organism.

Hume has to acknowledge in the end that the conception of the mind as a "collection of perceptions" is an unworkable thought, and to me the conception of a "collection of mental acts" seems a great deal more unworkable. The difficulty, however, is enhanced when the question is pressed how certain "acts of consciousness," as thus understood, can either give rise to the awareness, or become themselves aware, of themselves as *mine*. "There is *some* sense," says Mr. Moore, "in which *my* mental acts are all mine," and on the view that the mind is a collection of mental acts, he thinks a meaning can be given to this and analogous expressions. At the best, the meaning referred to could be a meaning only for a supposed external spectator, not for the subject whose acts are in question. Consider, however, how the matter stands in the latter case. I am often, it is insisted, aware directly of my mental acts as *mine*. Yet, after all, this is a metaphorical mode of stating what is meant. "I" am but a collection (or a series) of mental acts. Are we, then, to say that a *collection* (or a *series*) of mental acts is aware of each or any member of the collection (or series) as a member? Or are we to say that each mental act, as it occurs, besides being aware of an object, may be aware, and directly aware, of itself as belonging to a collection? Both alternatives seem sufficiently paradoxical. Is there, however, any other alternative?

Perhaps I have been labouring this doctrine unduly, for evidently Mr. Moore himself feels it to be unsatisfactory. He passes on to consider another possible view, very different in some ways from the foregoing, yet resembling it, I think, in other ways, and to which on the whole he seems inclined to lean. The mind, he holds, may be an entity distinct from every one of its mental acts and from all of them put together; it may, in other words, be mental in a sense different from that in which they are mental. I gather, from what is

said, that the theory intended is practically that advanced, in recent times, by Lotze. "We come to understand the connexion of our inner life," says Lotze, "only by referring all its events to one ego, lying unchanged alike beneath its simultaneous variety and its temporal succession."

It has always seemed to me that Lotze's own argument against Herbart is conclusive against this doctrine advanced by himself. To refer the maintenance of the unity in succession to the rigid unalterableness of what is ultimately real is, he maintains, an impossible division of labour; "change must find its way to the inside of being." If change be represented as mere sequence, as mere succession, then the contradiction which Herbart found in it would have to be admitted. But mere alteration, mere difference, never constitutes the whole of what is denoted by change. Change, as actually apprehended, is invariably continuous modification in which features of identity or unity are included. In thought, we may distinguish the aspect of identity from the aspect of difference, but we are not justified in taking distinctions of thought to necessarily indicate distinctions in real existence. It does not follow, therefore, that the identical uniting element is a separable constituent of the whole, to which the others are either added or from which they are withdrawn. Such is the general argument. But if these considerations apply to "reals," as Herbart conceived them, how is it that they are not also applicable to psychical existences, as Lotze conceives them?

Moreover, the line of reflexion that proceeds from the fact of the unity of self-consciousness to the notion of a metaphysical oneness of soul-substance is treacherous at every turn. Unity of self-consciousness—the unity which we are aware of in mature experience—evinces itself on psychological examination as no simple original datum of experience, but as a highly complex and derivative result. It cannot, therefore, be conceived as an efficient agent, directing and deter-

mining the relations of states of mind to one another, for it is itself the product of states of mind which are in some way already connected and related. Nor can the contention be sustained that the self of which in mature experience we are conscious is that assumed real ego which was there from the first, but of which in the earlier stages of mental history there was no awareness. Introspective observation here may, or may not, be trustworthy, but it can scarcely be said to yield support to the assertion that what I directly apprehend in and through the act of self-consciousness is a peculiar relation of what I call my mental acts to "some other entity which is me." What I thus apprehend would appear rather to be always a complex of certain more or less habitual trains of feeling, thinking, desiring, which, on account of their relative permanence, have come to form a sort of background to experiences that are relatively transient. As Seckendorf, in *Thorndale* (a sadly neglected book), puts it:—"His thoughts are the *I*, the *Ego* of the mature man. As consciousness develops, thought predominates over sense, and we are especially the thinking, remembering, anticipating being. . . . You and the child both hear the murmur of the brook. What a different *I* it is that hears! In the child the ear hears, and that is all; in you the murmur excites, and is related to, a hundred thoughts: it is this *hundred-thoughted I* that listens to the stream." The "hundred-thoughted *I*" certainly changes, and such change certainly involves identity as well as difference. To determine the nature of the identity is no doubt an important psychological problem. We may, indeed, cut the Gordian knot by picturing the manifold of difference as detached from an assumed identical nucleus, and as conjoined to the latter by a merely external tie; we may then proceed to erect this assumed nucleus into a quasi-substantive entity to which alone the name "I" or "me" is to be given. But, in so doing, we have simply been hypostatizing an abstraction and creating for ourselves fictitious problems instead of solving a real one. As a ground of

explanation, too, the assumption is valueless. Were it really the case that the mental states a_1, a_2, a_3 are produced by the activity of one identical entity A, that would in no way account for the *consciousness* of their unity. The psychological question as to the way in which unity of consciousness comes about would still require an answer, and the hypothesis we are considering would afford us no help in providing it. In fact, we should have on our hands a difficulty of precisely similar character to that which confronted us in the conception of the mind as a collection of mental states.

The truth is there is involved in the mental life a unity and continuity of quite unique and peculiar kind, and any image derived from material things is bound to lead astray. I have myself spoken of a "stream," and I acknowledge the inadequacy of the simile. We know material things only from the outside; we describe a thing as one and continuous if it appears to us one and continuous. Now, from the point of view of an external observer, a mental life need by no manner of means be one and continuous. From *that* point of view, it may well—it certainly would—exhibit gaps or pauses. And from that point of view, we shall always be flying to the assumption of a metaphysical ego to bridge over the gaps, to the assumption of a soul-substance which would look one and continuous if we could gaze upon it. But from the point of view of the conscious subject whose experience is in question, unity and continuity mean something very different. Take any momentary section of that subject's mental life. What do we find? We find, in the first place, as an empirical fact, difficult, if not impossible to account for, that what is experienced is always limited in range, that only a very small portion of what might be experienced actually is experienced. We find, in the second place, that within this limited area there is always a manifold of related elements, of elements, that is to say, the apprehension of which is only possible on account of their difference from and connexion with one another. Some elements of the apprehended whole will

probably occupy a more prominent and dominating position than the rest, and it will be relation to these central elements that will determine the degree of clearness and definiteness with which the rest will be apprehended, so that there will almost invariably be a margin or fringe consisting of features loosely and indistinctly connected with the dominating elements. We find, in the third place, that alteration in what is experienced from one empirical moment to another is only partial, never complete alteration. What happens is a more or less gradual modification of the totality at any specific moment. And we find, in the fourth place, that in what is experienced at any empirical moment there is always involved and implied a reference beyond itself,—a reference, it may be said, to the past and even to the future. In other words, we are here brought to the recognition of retention or revival as an essential and fundamental condition of any conceivable mental life whatsoever. Unless that which has formed the content of a present state of consciousness were capable of retention or revival in subsequent moments of consciousness there could be no apprehension of which we can form the remotest conception. I think psychologists, no less than philosophers—if they must be distinguished—are under a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Shadworth Hodgson for the clear and convincing way in which, in analysing what he calls the “empirical present moment,” he has shown that “the very least and lowest empirical states of consciousness are cases of memory in the sense of retention,” and that retention of a past in a present moment is one of the ultimate facts of experience, being involved in the simplest forms of perception.* It is a fact, this, which is hardly yet fully realised in psychological work. Perception, imagination, thinking, desiring, willing,—all are based upon retention, and all alike would be equally impossible without it. There is not a problem of psychology that does not centre round the nature

* *The Metaphysic of Experience*, Vol. I, pp. 54-71.

of retention, and which would not appear in a new light were we in a position to say how retention and revival are effected. But of retention in its essence we have no psychological account to offer; we have simply to accept the fact itself as lying at the very root of mental existence. Look, now, at this fact from the outside, and you will begin to talk of "residua," and "traces," and "images" stored up in the regions of sub-consciousness, and of an unchanging ego, and conceive that in some inexplicable way you have thus solved the problem involved. Consider it, however, from the point of view of the subject experiencing, and these metaphorical phrases will evince themselves as one and all futile, and it will appear that you have here to do with that which has no parallel, nothing analogous to it, in material nature. This fact of revival or retention affords, too, the basis, or an indispensable part of the basis, on which the unity and continuity of a mental life really depend. Not a relation of all its states to an unchanging ego, to some entity different from each of its states and from all of them put together, but just the fact that through every one of its states there is a revival in part of what has been experienced,—a fact which means the absolute distinction of the states of any one mental life from the states of any other mental life,—this is a true ground and condition of a mental life's unity and continuity. Unity and continuity mean, then, a unity and continuity in *what is experienced*, or, as I should say, in the contents of successive acts of consciousness; they do not mean that the process of experiencing, as it would appear to a hypothetical outside spectator, would be unbroken in its course.

I have been using the phrase "mental life" because I could find no other phrase suitable for my purpose, and now I am prepared to defend what I have done by urging that the term "mental" is primarily and in its most fundamental sense applicable to an individual conscious life, one and continuous in the way I have been indicating, whilst "acts of consciousness"

are "mental" only as modes or phases of an individual conscious life. If there be any truth at all in what I have been contending, it is obvious that no "act of consciousness" can properly be regarded as possessing that degree of independence which would entitle it, for any but special purposes, to be isolated from the concrete whole of mental process to which it belongs, and to be treated as single in the sense of having its being in itself. It would follow that acts of consciousness are only acts of *consciousness* in virtue of the unity and continuity characteristic of their contents. By an abstraction of our own what we call one "act of consciousness" may, it is true, be distinguished from others and contemplated as a unit, but such an abstraction seems to me mischievous if it lead to the conception of a mental life as an aggregate of parts connected by relations of a merely external kind. Upon such a supposition mental growth and development cannot be rendered intelligible. Moreover, the arbitrariness of the distinction we make between different phases of mental process becomes at once apparent so soon as the question is pressed—on what ground do you decide that any so-called "act of consciousness" is rightly described as *one* act? Save the ground of practical convenience, I know of no answer that could be given. "A process of reasoning," says Mr. Moore, "is not itself a 'mental act'; it consists of a number of different mental acts, combined together in some particular way." But why is it not *a* "mental act," and how am I to determine the number of "mental acts" of which it consists?

The conception of the mind as a continuously developing mental life stands, in truth, in much more decided antithesis to Hume's theory of the mind as a collection of mental states than does the conception of a subject as distinct from these states and as affording a bond of union among them. For the latter conception results from conceding Hume's point that mental states would be "entirely loose and separate" did they not "inhere in something simple and individual," whereas the former conception amounts to a direct

denial of that contention. A continuously developing mental life and a mechanical aggregate of parts present probably the strongest contrast discoverable within the world of real existence. It is, then, one thing to say that the conscious subject *is* its states; it is quite another to say that a sum of states is the conscious subject. If, biologically, it be an error to describe a living organism as an aggregate of living cells, one might expect it to prove, psychologically, a still greater error to describe a conscious mind as an aggregate of psychical units. And if it be asked what more is the mind than such an aggregate, the reply is that since it has first got to be an aggregate before it can also be something more, the question is meaningless. At every phase of its development, the conscious subject is, in other words, an organic unity, a unity which develops as a unity and which the several changes as they proceed differentiate and render more complete and real. The mental life is *one*, not as an aggregate of separable parts, but as exhibiting a series of internal changes of the subject that experiences in and through such changes. The conscious subject is an *individual* subject, because its nature is such that in all its several states or phases it is aware of itself, aware of itself not necessarily *as a self*, but aware of all it is aware of in a manner which we, for want of a better expression, can only describe as a mode of "being for self." From the point of view of the experiencing subject, there is a *unity of awareness* which indicates a oneness of nature on the part of the mind in question. That, however, does not mean that the mind is first made and then provided with material to apprehend. It means, rather, that the process of formation is a process of getting such material, a process of developing apprehension of objects. I think, therefore, we are entitled to say, with Adamson,* on the one hand, that the self-consciousness of mature experience could never have arisen if the primitive and

* *Development of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 58.

rudimentary states of mind had not, as essentially belonging to them, this obscure self-reference; and, on the other hand, that neither the primitive self-reference nor the matured self-consciousness indicates a factor distinct from the mental states themselves.

I add a word about the remaining view referred to by Mr. Moore, and against which he can find nothing conclusive,—the view, namely, that the entity which hears and sees and feels and thinks may be the body. I am not sure how Mr. Moore intends this to be interpreted. Reference, however, is made to Locke. Locke speaks of the possibility of “a faculty of thinking” being superadded to matter, and I presume that is not what Mr. Moore means. Yet Locke’s awkward and hesitating mode of expressing himself does suggest a line of reflexion upon what Mr. Moore has said. The hard and fast line usually drawn between the psychical and the corporeal can hardly be maintained in face of the overwhelming evidence pointing to their close connexion. We tend habitually to represent to ourselves the succession of neuro-cerebral changes and the succession of mental states as two independent series of events:—

$$\begin{array}{ccc} A & - & B & - & C \\ | & & | & & | \\ \alpha & & \beta & & \gamma \end{array}$$

A, B, C we picture as a series of physical, α , β , γ as a series of psychical, events. The two series we suppose to go on concomitantly, and to be in some mysterious way in correlation, but, so far as causal relatedness is concerned, we take A to be exhausted in B, and to have, therefore, no opportunity of causing α ; and, similarly, B to be exhausted in C and to be precluded from causing β . I am not going, of course, to discuss Psycho-physical Parallelism, the scientific form of this popular mode of representation. The difficulties of the doctrine are obvious and acknowledged even by those who use it as a convenient working hypothesis. Equally as regards it and the

theory of interaction, I think it legitimate to raise a prior question,—whether, namely, we are really entitled to speak of α , β , γ (or, for a matter of that, of A, B, C) as a distinct series of events at all; whether, in short, we are not in error in looking upon the body and the mental life as belonging to two separate realms of existence which are somehow brought into combination. Why, in other words, should we not conceive the real process of existence, the real sequence of events, in the case of what we call a conscious being, to be rather of the form $A\alpha-B\beta-C\gamma$, where each event of the series would be neither wholly physical nor wholly mental, nor a mere mechanical juxtaposition of the two, but an occurrence in which both factors are mutually implicated and involved? It is quite true, as indeed Locke points out, that we can neither describe the qualitative peculiarity of an act of consciousness in terms of a mechanical arrangement of material particles, nor in any way imagine the latter as giving rise to the former. But this inability indicates in itself nothing exceptional; everywhere in nature the process of real change confronts us with a similar impossibility. Take a specific quantity of the two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, combine them in certain proportions, and you obtain water. Yet by no stretch of imagination can you see, as it were, with the mental eye, the qualitative nature of water—its fluidity for example—gradually being constructed through the mere putting together of the two chemical elements. The truth is, of course, that water is not merely H_2O , but is only real as characterised by qualitative peculiarities of a definite and distinctive kind. And, as we ascend to the more complicated processes of what we call material existence, the same truth is illustrated still more strikingly. If protoplasm be the physical basis of life, it is, I should say, certainly mainly on account of its qualitative character that it is so, and not simply in virtue of that aspect of it which finds expression in terms of mere mechanism. I know, then, of no reason why we should not say that the brain or the bodily organism is conscious, just as we say that water is fluid

or that protoplasm is alive. There is no more difficulty in supposing the consciousness of blue to be an adjunct of a certain configuration of material particles than in conceiving blue itself to be such an adjunct. Only I do not see why I should be any the less a mental entity because I am also something more. Just as it is not inert but moving matter that moves, just as it is not inorganic but organic matter that lives, so it would not be mindless but mentalised matter that is conscious. In other words, we should be simply saying, as Locke did say, that to a highly complex system of material configurations there is superadded the qualitative nature of consciousness; we should in no way be making the one a product of the other. Instead of treating acts of consciousness as so many events to be accounted for, we should treat them exactly as we treat other qualitative determinations, and accept the fact of their mechanical accompaniments in quite the same way as we accept a similar fact in reference (say) to the quality blue. And inasmuch as we cannot represent the mechanical configuration as part of the content of what, on the basis of the more primitive unity of conscious experience, we come to be aware of as the self, we should still be justified, as psychologists, in dealing with the mental life as it presents itself from within, and in trying from that point of view to decipher the laws according to which its growth and development take place.

Along the path just indicated we should be led back, in a sense, to the earliest scientific attempt to treat the mental life as a special topic. In the *De Anima*, Aristotle consistently regards mental activities as falling into line with the processes of animal life, and conceives of them as in the closest relation to bodily changes. It is possible that psychology has been too much influenced by the Cartesian tradition and its sharp antithesis between the mental and the material, between consciousness as the essence of the one and extension as the essence of the other, and that the science may yet become

more concrete, more faithful to actual fact, by a return with newer insight to the larger view of the Aristotelian philosophy.

II.

If any two mental acts differ in respect of the fact that, whereas one is a consciousness of one entity, the other is a consciousness of a different entity, *also* differ in respect of some difference of "content," then, maintains Mr. Moore, the difference of "content" would undoubtedly be a mental entity, and a mental entity in the same sense in which the quality which differentiates belief or volition from mere apprehension is a mental entity.

It must be admitted that Mr. Moore is here expressing the general view in so far as he asserts that a difference of content, if there be such, would be mental, but not, I think, in so far as he goes on to say that it would be mental in the same sense as the quality which differentiates volition from mere apprehension. The Herbartian psychologists, to whom we owe in modern times the introduction of the distinction between act and content, certainly did regard the content of a mental act as mental, but they certainly did not regard it as mental in the same sense as the difference which distinguishes a belief or a volition from mere apprehension.

I am doubtful how far Mr. Moore and I include under the term "content" the same entities. I believe I am using the word with the denotation ordinarily given to it, although doubtless, as I do not agree with the ordinary view that the entities denoted by the term are necessarily mental in character, the connotation will be different. It may be well, at the outset, to refer to two recent writers who have laid emphasis upon the distinction.

Professor Lipps has laboured persistently in various articles of his* to work out a doctrine that does not differ greatly from

* See especially, Theodor Lipps, *Inhalt und Gegenstand*, 1903; *Psychologische Untersuchungen*, Bd. I, Heft 1, "Bewusstsein und Gegenstände," 1905; Bd. I, Heft 4, "Die Erscheinungen," etc., 1907.

that of certain English writers. In sense-experience, he argues, three aspects call for recognition,—the subject experiencing, the sensation as a state of the subject, and the content of the sensation or the *sensum*. *Empfindungsinhalte* are images (*Bilder*), actually present in consciousness as *Bewusstseinsinhalte*. They, and the *Vorstellungsinhalte* corresponding to them, are to be sharply differentiated on the one hand from feelings and on the other hand from the consciousness of objects (*Gegenstandsbewusstsein*). I can say of them, as of feelings, that I “have” them, but I have them as something different from me, whereas I am my feelings, or in my feelings experience myself as in a certain manner determined. A content of sensation is, in fact, that which is immediately experienced on the occasion of stimulation; the sensation as a mental occurrence is a “having,” in the sense of being *ein rezeptives Erlebnis*, on the part of the subject. Thinking, on the other hand, is not a “having” but an act,—an act based, no doubt, upon the having of sense contents, but which consists in calling an object, not indeed in itself but for the subject, into existence. In the sense contents objectivity is implicitly involved, but through the act of thinking what is implicit is made explicit, and an object is recognised as standing over against, and as existing independently of, the subject. The blue which I experience as a content of consciousness and the blue which by “the mental eye” I simultaneously apprehend as an attribute of a thing resemble each other qualitatively in every particular, yet, in respect to *existence*, they belong to two wholly different worlds—the one to the world of subjective reality, the other to the world of objective reality.

The other writer I have in mind is Professor Witasek,* who is largely influenced by Meinong. Presentations (*Vorstellungen*)—including under that term not only the images of memory

* Stephan Witasek, *Grundlinien der Psychologie*, Leipzig, 1908. Cp. by the same author, *Grundzüge der allgemeinen Aesthetik*, p. 192 sqq.

and imagination, but also sensations and sensation-complexes—constitute, according to Witasek, the basis of the whole psychical life; all other mental products—such as thoughts, feelings, desires—are dependent for their existence upon presentations. Every presentation must, however, be regarded from two points of view,—it is at once a mental act and it possesses a certain content. The presentation of a water-drop differs, as a presentation, from the presentation of a flower. Neither the water-drop nor the flower are in any way part of, or contained in, the presentation; the object of a presentation lies altogether outside of the presentation itself. But although presentation and object are essentially separate and distinct—the one always psychical, the other very often physical—yet it cannot be said that they have nothing to do with one another. The presentation refers to the object, brings it into consciousness, is related to it, and the character of a presentation will partly depend upon the nature of the object to which it is related. That portion, then, of the presentation in virtue of which it brings a certain object to consciousness, Witasek names its content. The content, he insists, is invariably a part,—not, indeed, a separable part—of the presentation, and is, therefore, always psychical. Whether object and content resemble one another is, he urges, a question psychology is not called upon to answer. The presentative act is that part of the presentation in respect of which it resembles other presentations and differs from all that is not presentation, not only from everything physical, but also from those psychical processes, such as judgments and feelings, which are not presentations. Presentation, judgment, and feeling are fundamentally different psychical acts; the difference is a difference not reducible to a difference of content. And within the range of presentation itself there are differences, as for instance between a perception and an imagination, which are differences in the quality of the act and not merely of content.

These two ways of interpreting the significance of the term

"content" exhibit sufficiently marked divergencies, but they agree, at all events, in instituting a decided opposition between presentation and thought, and in describing the content of presentation as psychical. It is largely because the assumed generic distinction between presentation and thought seems to me untenable that I conceive the content of presentation is wrongly regarded as psychical.

If presentations are looked upon as so many separate, isolated affections of mind, in some way immediately experienced,—and that seems to be Lipps' view—then, doubtless, whatever "content" they possess must be, to use Mr. Moore's phrase, a mental entity. In that case there would be no resisting the conclusion that "the idea of the extended has extension, the idea of the heavy has weight, the idea of the odorous has smell, and the idea of pleasure exists and is so far pleasant." For "unless a thing has, and to that extent is, a quality," it is certainly pertinent to inquire "how it goes about to show it."* Nor can I see that the description of the "content" as "part" of the presentation in any way helps us to escape the admission of what would seem to be a necessary consequence of regarding the content as psychical.† In a manner that recalls a well-known argument of Berkeley's, Mr. Bradley endeavours to meet the objection that the soul itself must be extended if its states are by answering that what the soul is itself, as a whole or directly, and what again it is indirectly and merely in respect of its parts are not to be confounded. And I suppose a somewhat similar mode of reasoning might be pursued with regard to a presentation. I can only say I do not envy the task of anyone who has this problem on

* F. H. Bradley, "The Intensity of Psychical States," *Mind*, N.S., vol. IV, 1895, p. 21.

† Perhaps, indeed, Witasek does not wish to escape the admission. At any rate, he speaks of presentations as "psychical images (*Bilder*) of objects with which our consciousness is occupied." Here he differs from Meinong.

his hands. I think he would be compelled to abandon the position that act and content are inseparable parts of a presentation, and to conceive of them as two essentially distinct and independent mental entities. The difficulty which comes here to the front is precisely that with which Meinong is struggling when he finds himself forced to draw a three-fold distinction between act, content, and *immanent* object. It is, indeed, excessively hard to make out what exactly Meinong himself means by "content." Although presentations of different objects resemble each other as acts, they cannot, he argues, be wholly alike; however the relation of the presentation to its object be conceived, still the difference of objects must in some way lead back to difference in the respective presentations. The "content," then, is not the object, but "that wherein presentations of different objects differ from one another, notwithstanding the identical nature of those presentations as acts." The content exists and is psychical, whilst the object presented through means of the content may be non-existent, unreal, something that has existed or will exist but does not now; it may be physical and not psychical. Where the object is popularly said to exist only in idea, it is still as "immanent object" to be sharply distinguished from the content (for the same object, though it be immanent only, may be presented in and through different states of mind), but it cannot in strictness be said to exist; at the most we can ascribe to it what may be called pseudo-existence. Whether Meinong means that an "immanent object" is always involved in apprehension, even when a transcendent object is present, is not clear to me, but taking into account the emphasis he lays upon the phenomenal character of what is perceived, I should imagine that to be his view. But, in any case, it cannot be denied that, in spite of Meinong's careful and elaborate analysis, the antithesis between immanent object and content is beset with obscurity. The content, he tells us, tends to pass into the background in favour of the object, and, there-

fore, on his own showing, it is diversity of object and not diversity of content that distinguishes one presentation from another. Meinong, it is true, insists that although not easy to detect the content may still be discerned. "The qualitative peculiarity, which we experience when we see red, or think of red, belongs not to the object but to the content. And that we feel differently when we see now red, now green, is again to be traced not to the objects but to the contents. It is not, however, as though the content were in the one case the red, or even red, or the green, or even green. Red and green are simply not the contents, but what through the contents are apprehended." But when we are afterwards informed that "the same content may be capable of apprehending different objects," we appear to be landed in hopeless contradiction with the very principle from which we started.*

So long as presentation and thought are looked upon as totally disparate mental functions, the obstacles in the way of offering any intelligible psychological analysis of either process seem to me insuperable. That presentation and thought should be so often thus regarded is, I think, readily accounted for. Since in mature experience sense-data come before us as definite, determinate, clearly defined individual facts, in coexistence or succession, and since *we* can consider those facts separately and then put them together and recognise their similarity or difference, the tendency to take this as corresponding to the order of genesis in the development of cognition is well-nigh irresistible. And it needs but another step to assign the apprehension of the distinct independent sense-data and the recognition of similarities or differences amongst them to two special and unique faculties of mind. Not all that Meinong has to say respecting the absolute distinction between presentation and judgment, not all the

* A. Meinong, "Ueber Gegenstände höherer Ordnung," *Z. f. Psych.*, XXI, 3 and 4, 1899, p. 185 *sqq.*; "Ueber die Erfahrungsgrundlagen unseres Wissens," 1906, especially p. 58 *sqq.*

stress he lays upon the *a priori* character of such judgments as the judgment "red differs from green," convinces me that we have in the view itself a really sound psychological hypothesis. The necessity for the explanation he has to offer of the non-empirical elements in knowledge comes from the arbitrary severance which has been effected between completely formed presentations on the one hand and the abstract relations supposed to be recognised by the higher activity of thinking on the other. The consideration is lost sight of that, from the point of view of the apprehending subject, what are called presentations of colours, sounds, odours, and the like, as they come before us in mature experience, may be highly evolved products and as such presuppose a long prior exercise of that very process of thinking which is now regarded as an activity superinduced upon them and using them as the material of its operation. Psychologically it is simply impossible to take any piece of the experience of a developed mind, and to apportion which constituents in such experience are directly, immediately apprehended, and which are introduced by the discursive procedure of thought. And it is impossible because, however carefully we may single out the elements obviously involving reflective thinking, we have no guarantee whatever that the remainder,—a distinct and definite sense-datum, let us say—would be a possible object of apprehension for a consciousness that had not been repeatedly using abstract notions or concepts. That is to say, the presentation of a simple quality, as it occurs in mature experience, is never a simple act of mind. Strip from it, with the utmost nicety, every feature that seems foreign to its nature, and it will still be true that the mind whose presentation it is, is a reflective thinking mind,—a mind that, strive as it may, cannot divest itself of the facilities it has acquired in the course of its history, and whose acts of presentation, therefore, will be interpenetrated with the results which reflective thinking has brought about. Expressed in another way, what has just been said amounts to this. Experience does

not begin with the awareness of separate, distinct, definite sense-data. How isolation, independence, definiteness in the world of sense apprehension come gradually to recognition, how the vague, chaotic, indeterminate whole of primitive experience gradually breaks up into determinate and clearly distinguished sense qualities, is the main problem which genetic psychology has before it. When that problem is fairly faced, when the effort is seriously made to trace the lines along which the development of cognition proceeds, I think it is evident that the assumption of mere passive receptivity, so far as what is ambiguously called sensation is concerned, must be relinquished. Advance in cognition will, I think, be found to take place through a continual process of differentiating and distinguishing features which, although present in reality, are not on that account forthwith accessible to a mind that happens to stand in contact with them. I conceive, then, that not even the crudest apprehension of sense-data can be accounted for as a fact of mind except it be viewed as a process of discriminating and comparing,—a process which, whilst differing, of course, vastly in degree of completeness from those acts which we specifically describe as acts of comparing and relating, yet is in kind identical with them. The presentative act is, that is to say, from the beginning, in essence an act of judgment, although the term judgment, as ordinarily understood, indicates far too developed a form of the one common process to be rashly employed in reference to the earlier phases of the process. What I am trying briefly to say would be very inaccurately expressed by the familiar contention that “judgment enters into perception just as truly as sensation does.” Rather what I am concerned to maintain is that cognition, from its most rudimentary to its most evolved stages, is throughout fundamentally the same in character, that mental development does not involve the introduction of any absolutely new factor, that the earliest mode of sense presentation and the highest modes of thinking are genetically connected and

generically alike. If, then, it be recognised that the elementary functions of discriminating, comparing and relating are involved in apprehension from the outset, there is nothing to be gained by extending unduly the use of the term "judgment." It is only in comparatively late stages of the history of mind, and in consequence of the varied material with which apprehension can then be occupied, that sense apprehension and thinking come to be held apart and to present the aspect of two disparate mental faculties.

The consideration I am urging may, perhaps, be restated in some such terms as these. Whilst it is possible to offer a more or less consistent psychological account of how gradually presentations come to have for the conscious subject the appearance of isolated independent facts upon which an additional operation has afterwards to be performed in order to bring the said facts into relation, it is *not* possible to offer any psychological account either of an act of simple apprehension or of an act of discrimination if it be assumed that these two are really and primordially distinct and separate functions. When, for example, we observe two colours, A and B, of a similar kind, and not only apprehend each for itself, thus holding them apart, but pronounce them to be like one another or different from one another, it is obvious we are using *notions* of likeness or difference—*notions* which are not explicable by reason of the mere presence of A and B alone. It is not part of the content of A that it is like B, or different from B; it is not part of the content of B that it is like A, or different from A. And if it be said that the presentations of A and B, having respectively occurred, give rise to the new idea, C, of their likeness or difference, the language employed does no more than conceal the want of explanation in what is said. A, it is assumed, may be simply apprehended; B, it is assumed, may be simply apprehended. If, however, the question be pressed, what then is it that takes place when A and B are somehow held together in an act vaguely called

an act of comparison, and gives rise to the new idea of their likeness or difference, the predicament confronts us of being able to explain neither the holding of A and B together nor the way in which the new idea of likeness or difference originates. We shall find ourselves simply falling back upon the perfectly barren assertion that it is the nature of the psychical mechanism to hold separate presentations together, and to produce ideas of relation automatically under such circumstances. But to assume that, at any period in the life of consciousness, ideas of relation spring up *de novo* when presentations, already clearly and distinctly marked off from one another, are somehow compared and brought into connexion is, I submit, to assume a wholly inexplicable mode of behaviour on the part of what we call the mind. We could know nothing whatever about the assumed occurrence save the result to which it was supposed to give rise; we should simply be reiterating in our imaginary explanation the very features we were seeking to explain. Naturally, therefore, the inquiry is forced upon us whether the *impasse* before which we are thus brought to a stand ought not to be attributed to a perverse way of framing the problem; whether, in fact, we have not rather created a new and insoluble problem than solved one that really requires solution. Naturally the inquiry is forced upon us whether distinct *ideas* or *notions* of relation, instead of being mysteriously thrown up by a specific and mysterious mental act, are not, in truth, products which a long course of mental evolution has rendered possible; and whether the apparent separateness of the act of discriminating from the content discriminated is not due, in part at least, to the employment of such ideas of relation when at length they are formed. Presented in this shape, the problem opens out, at any rate, a fruitful field of psychological investigation. We may not be, we certainly are not, in a position to furnish an exhaustive analysis of all the factors involved, but we shall be able to retrace in a general way the steps by which the relations would

gradually come to be conceptually separated by the apprehending subject from the related contents and, in being contemplated in and for themselves, inevitably to wear the aspect of being more specially dependent upon subjective function than the elements related. A regressive procedure of this kind would lead us back, that is to say, to rudimentary and primordial acts of discrimination, not involving either self-consciousness on the part of the apprehending subject or recognition, say, of differences as aspects separable from the facts that differed. In other words, the only way, so far as I can see, of rendering psychologically intelligible the elaborate act on the part of a mature mind which Lotze calls an "act of relating" is to view it as a later and higher stage in the process of discrimination—a process which, in the course of its development, will exhibit the most varying degrees of complexity, but which will preserve throughout a generic sameness or unity of character. Following this regressive method, we should have discrimination evincing itself in ever simpler and more rudimentary forms. There would be no avoiding the conclusion that to discriminate contents does not necessarily imply even the faintest recognition of what may be said to be implicit in the act of discriminating, namely, the ideas of relation themselves. To distinguish A from B at all—be it in the vaguest, crudest, and most indefinite manner imaginable—would necessitate doubtless the exercise of a process that under suitable conditions was capable of developing into an act through which the relation might be contemplated in abstraction, but it would not necessitate at the outset the remotest apprehension of such relation as distinct from the related facts. In other words, one is ascribing to the rudimentary consciousness nothing but the barest minimum of what can be called experience. The simplest phase of the inner life, the first dim obscure awareness of a sense quality, may, then, be described without incongruity as in this sense an act of discriminating—an act depending on the presence of

material to be discriminated, but differing wholly from a mere reaction to impression. From the beginning, the material discriminated would be objective fact, although not recognised as such; what was in, or of, the mind, in the sense of being part of the mind's structure, would be the act of discriminating the material.

I have thus, I hope, prepared the way for what I am now concerned to maintain respecting the distinction between object and content. Apprehension, as a process of discriminating, is confronted with a reality infinitely rich in qualitative variety and detail. We know, as a matter of empirical fact, that the range and scope of the mind's discriminative capacity are continually altering. Every increase of knowledge, as I conceive it, just means an increase either in the features discriminated, or in the more accurate determination of the part played in the realm of nature by those already discriminated. Advancing knowledge might be likened to a pattern gradually coming out, or to the gradual emergence from the night, in which all cows are black, to the dawn, in which their colours are visible. Only the process is never completed; there is always more to come out; there is always, in reality, a vastly greater amount of detail than our limited powers of discriminating are capable of discerning; there is always a more elaborate network of connexions than we have been able to trace. In all stages of the development of apprehension, the contrast between what actually has been discriminated and the more remaining to be discriminated holds. What we, in mature experience, familiarly differentiate as sense perception and thought advance, in this respect, along parallel lines. Sense perception and thought are not, I have argued, two disparate functions. As modes of mental activity, they are fundamentally alike in kind, the broad obvious differences with which we are familiar being differences mainly dependent upon what in each case is apprehended. Sense perception, in its more primitive form, certainly precedes

in order of genesis the operation of conceptual thinking, yet when once a conscious subject has become capable of conceptual thinking, sense perception itself no longer continues to be what it was. With the acquirement of general notions, the facilities for perceptual discrimination cannot but be immensely furthered. Psychological analysis has abundantly shown it to be through the help of thoughts or concepts that perceptual discrimination works its way to the apprehension of individual objects, a mode of apprehending with which we are all too prone to imagine experience begins. Experience, starting from what in strictness can be described as neither individual nor general, gradually attains, by means of rudimentary judgments, to notions of individual objects possessing general characteristics and standing in relations expressible only in general terms. Discrimination, that is to say, can proceed but a comparatively little way without the aid of generalisation. Indeed, every discrimination, even from the first, may be said to furnish the basis for what in the course of subsequent development will take the form of a judgment, the subject-term of which will denote the individual and the predicate some general or universal feature. Mere presentative experience, if such a phrase is permissible at all, must be taken to mean experience that involves the least possible amount of discrimination, and consequently the least possible amount of cognitive apprehension. In the light of this consideration, the dictum of Leibniz that sense is confused thought may be interpreted so as to convey an important truth. Sense perception certainly does not reach the stage of clearness and distinctness until it takes the form of an act of judgment. Even then, the span or compass of apprehension in sense perception continues to be more or less limited to what is in immediate connexion with the sense organs, and to what is momentarily stimulating the sense organs. Within its own field, however, there is effected by sense perception a progressive differentiation of the features of individual objects—a progressive recognition of

their multiplicity of detail. Let me use, by way of illustration, Dr. Ward's account of what happens when, in the course of a few minutes, we take half-a-dozen glances at a strange and curious flower. "We have not as many complex presentations which we might symbolise as F_1, F_2, F_3 . But rather, at first only the general outline is noted, next the disposition of petals, stamens, etc., then the attachment of the anthers, form of the ovary, and so on; that is to say, symbolizing the whole flower as $[p^1(ab) s^1(cd) o^1(fg)]$, we first apprehend, say $[p^1 \dots s^1 \dots o^1]$, then $[p^1(ab) s^1 \dots o^1]$ or $[p^1(a \dots) s^1(c \dots) o^1(f \dots)]$, and so forth."* And, far as perceptive discrimination may proceed, the antithesis between the infinite wealth of detail in the real object and so much of that detail as is apparent to the apprehending mind will remain. A similar antithesis presents itself no less manifestly in the higher activity called specifically the activity of thinking. Concepts may be said to be based on the resemblances which perceptive discrimination discovers in the order of experience. Roughly speaking, the concepts of discursive thought result from the reflective treatment of a multiplicity of concrete individual objects that exhibit, amid variety of circumstance, the same kind of determining characteristics. By the ignoring of a mass of sensuous concomitants, irrelevant for the purpose in hand, the span or compass of consciousness in the activity of conceiving is indefinitely extended, as compared with the span or compass of consciousness in sense perception. Great stretches of the real world in space and time are focussed, so to speak, in one view, common features which in reality present themselves as parted, perhaps widely, in time and space, and as imbedded in a host of detail, are extracted from that detail and singled out and known for what they are. What thought thus loses in respect to empirical material is compensated for by range and depth of comprehensiveness. At the same time, thought retains throughout, notwithstanding its mediate

* Art. "Psychology," *Encyclopædia Brit.*, ix ed., vol. xx, p. 47.

character, the most distinct reference to objective fact. This or that individual instance may be left out of sight, but to leave all individual instances out of sight would be tantamount to converting the concept itself into another individual, and to commit the blunder of hypostatizing an abstraction. Both in sense perception and in thought, it seems, then, to me, there is a perfectly legitimate contrast to be drawn between the content of an act of apprehension and the object of that act of apprehension. The object may be either immediately or mediately apprehended, but in either case those features of it which are discriminated, and of which therefore there is awareness, will be at the best but a fraction of the totality of features of which the object itself is composed. The content of the act of apprehension will be the sum of qualities actually discriminated in and through the said act,—a sum of qualities whose being, *as a sum*, has come about through the act of apprehension, and which will be different from the *sum* of features composing the object. Could some god be induced to transform, by a creative fiat, the sum of qualities in question into an existent object, whilst at the same time annihilating the act of apprehension in and through which alone as content merely it has being, then to that god's observation the newly created object would be by no means a reduplication of the original object. Were the god further induced to annihilate the original object and to substitute in its place that which he had just called into existence, then as a constituent of the inter-connected realm of existence, the latter object would not play the same part as the former. As content, however, of an act of apprehension, the sum of qualities we are considering has no separate existence; it is there as defining or specialising the act of consciousness of which it is the content. The content, again, may be, and no doubt often is, hypostatized, and treated as an object. But the content is not rightly treated as an object. In strict accuracy, it is not that *of* which we are aware; what we are aware *of* is the real object. The content is rather the

way in which there is awareness of the object, the way in which the object is known. In short, the content is our knowledge of the object, as distinguished on the one hand from our knowing, and on the other hand from that which is known. If we ask, *what* do we know of the object, the answer will be in terms of the content; if we ask, *of* what do we know, the answer will be the real object. So, too, the varying relations in which, from the point of view of the apprehending subject, the content stands to the object becomes explicable. In sense perception, where the object is being immediately discriminated, content and object will seem to fall together, and the distinction will tend to escape notice; in thought, where the object is being mediately or reflectively discriminated, the content will tend to become hypostatized and to usurp the place of the object. But, so far as the nature of the content, *quâ* content, is concerned, I fail to discern justification for supposing that there is any difference *in kind* between the contents in the two cases; in both the content would be wrongly conceived if regarded as possessing an existential character, in neither would the content be rightly conceived as occupying the position of a *tertium quid* between the object and the knowing mind.

The distinction between content and object, as thus drawn, coincides in large measure with the familiar distinction between appearance and reality. Certainly, as I view the matter, there may be realities that are not objects, and there may be contents it would be misleading to call appearances, but, for the present, we can leave these out of account. It is, I take it, the cardinal error of those theories of cognition that have followed more or less the Kantian tradition to use the term "phenomenon" or "appearance" as though it involved the predication of existence, as though it involved distinction from the real in the sense of being one fact set alongside another fact. That, if the foregoing analysis be so far on the right lines, the term "phenomenon" does not involve. As contrasted with the richness, the fulness, the completeness of real existence, the term "pheno-

menon" carries with it rather the significance of fragmentariness, of incompleteness, of mutilation—peculiarities that point to the abstraction characteristic of apprehension in all its stages. The tendency to hypostatise abstractions dogs the steps of human thinking much more persistently than is usually supposed; constantly our thinking is prone to attribute to the phenomenal contents of acts of apprehension a fictitious existence, and to create baffling perplexities for itself thereby. And as against that tendency, one is entitled, I think, even on psychological grounds, to press the contention that the phenomenal is a way in which reality is known, that we know the real in and through its phenomenal appearance, that the appearance of a thing as contrasted with its reality indicates in truth a partial view of the thing as contrasted with the thing in its entirety. I should be prepared, I confess, to carry the contention further. It would be argued by thinkers of the Hegelian school that the fully developed content would be identical with what is here called the object. Could this thesis be sustained, Hegel's idealism would rest on a firm basis. But the thesis, I am convinced, cannot be sustained. The content belongs to the realm of knowledge, and knowledge, however perfect, of an existent fact can never *be* that existent fact, since it presupposes the existent fact as a condition of its possibility. The antithesis between knowledge and the known admits not of being transcended, because in the very nature of knowledge itself that antithesis is involved. The antithesis, however, implies no inherent defect on the part of knowledge. Exhaustive knowledge of a thing would be obtained if the thing's qualities, properties, and relations were completely discriminated, but the thing's existence is not merely the totality of its qualities, properties, and relations. It is true that the thing does not exist independently of its qualities, properties, and relations; it is equally true that it is excessively difficult to express in terms of knowledge what a thing's existence implies over and above its qualities, properties, and relations.

Exhaustive knowledge would include, no doubt, a solution of that problem also. But even then, and one might say in as much as in order to be known a thing's existence must be distinguished from its qualities, properties, and relations, the concept of its existence would not, and could not, *be* its existence.

Contents of apprehension, or phenomena, as thus distinguished from real existing things, may legitimately enough be said to be mental constructions—products, that is, of mental activity. Yet it does not on that account follow that they are mental entities. Consider those contents which Mr. Moore calls sense-data. Were a red colour, for example, “an ‘appearance’ of an act of consciousness” (p. 40), then, doubtless, it would be an entity rightly described as mental, although, even in that case, as Mr. Moore points out, the appearance would be very different from the reality, and would not be mental in the sense in which an act of consciousness is mental. It would, however, be mental in the sense that its *nature* or *mode of being* was derived from, or emanated from, mind. But if the red colour be not “an ‘appearance’ of an act of consciousness,” if it be an appearance of a real object, the features of which are discriminated by the act of consciousness, then I can find no reason for describing the red colour as in nature mental. The red colour could not, it is true, appear unless there were some reality such as consciousness to which it appeared, but it is equally true that there could be no appearance to consciousness unless there were a reality that appeared. The discriminating, in that case, is the work of consciousness; the red colour discriminated is supplied not by consciousness, but by the object of consciousness. On the other hand, I should not consider that the red colour as content of an act of awareness, —in abstraction, that is to say, from the physical object of which it is a quality—is rightly called physical. Nor do I think there is any occasion to shrink from admitting the conclusion to which we should thus be led. For after all, there

is, in truth, no ground whatever for the assumption that the universe of what Mr. Moore calls entities can be exhaustively divided into mental and physical entities, and we have here, if I mistake not, a class of entities that belongs neither to the one nor the other of these heads.

This position with respect to sense-data differs from each of the alternative positions in regard to which Mr. Moore feels himself unable to come to a decision. He is hesitating, if I correctly understand, between two views, neither of which seems to me to be tenable. On the one hand, he appears to say, it may be true that sense-data are non-mental, and in that case there will fall to be considered simply the act of awareness and the object of which there is awareness. The awareness, that is to say, will be definable in terms of itself, and altogether independently of that of which there is awareness. I think this view breaks down in the face of obvious facts. Apart from the circumstance that no account whatsoever can be rendered of an act of consciousness save simply that it is an act of awareness, awareness being taken in a quite general sense, the serious difficulty seems to confront us of being precluded from offering any intelligible interpretation of mental growth and development. And that is not all. Difficulties meet us at almost every turn, even in dealing with mature apprehension. For example, the varying appearances of one and the same object have to be explained in a manner scarcely to be pronounced satisfactory, whilst the relation of the object to the act of consciousness when the latter is an act of memory or imagination has to be left, so far as I can see, without any explanation. On the other hand, Mr. Moore appears to say, it may be true that sense-data are mental, although not mental in the sense of being acts of consciousness, nor in the sense of being qualities of acts of consciousness, nor in the sense of being related to me in the same manner as my acts of consciousness are related to me. I am not sure in what other sense precisely Mr. Moore

thinks sense-data may be mental. Apparently, however, there are two possibilities. (a) A sense-datum may, I presume he would say, be an "appearance" of an act of consciousness, or, otherwise expressed, a sense-datum may be a quality or property conferred upon the object, or added to the object, by consciousness in and through the act of apprehending. In that case, the act of consciousness would be, at one and the same time, *both* an act of awareness *and* an act of introjecting upon what it is aware of a sense quality,—the sense quality itself making its appearance as part of that of which there is awareness. Clearly, if this be what happens, the latter of the two operations is essentially different from the former. For one thing, whilst the act of consciousness may, according to Mr. Moore's account of it, be aware of itself *as an act of awareness*, it evidently is not aware of itself *as giving rise to a sense quality*. Though the latter be one of the functions of such an act of consciousness, the sense quality makes its appearance, at any rate, unconsciously and automatically. It is proverbially hard to prove a negative, and I do not know that there is any means of doing so in the present instance. What, however, I think, one can insist upon is, that analysis of the factors involved in sense perception yields no confirmation of this manner of regarding it. The consideration that weighs with Mr. Moore I gather to be the following. It may be true, he urges, that "all the sense-data of which anybody is ever conscious are entities which *are* only so long as that person is conscious of them." Good arguments can, he thinks, be furnished for and against this contention, but none such as to justify a certain conclusion either way. Mr. Moore does not tell us what the arguments which he has in mind are, and I can only say that I have searched in vain for any that would lend a measure of probability to the proposition just quoted. (b) A sense-datum may be, I suppose it would be said, a response of the mind to impression or stimulation,—a response distinct from and other than the act of consciousness in and through which

there is awareness of it. Acts of consciousness would, in that case, be one group of mental entities, sense-data would be another and separate group of mental entities, and in sense perception there would be direct awareness of entities belonging to this second group,—entities which in truth would be mental, although they appear to be non-mental. Just as, according to the theory of judgment referred to above, ideas of relation were viewed as springing up automatically in the mind when presentations are somehow held together and compared, so, in like manner, according to this corresponding theory of sense perception, sense-data must be held to spring up automatically in the mind when the mind is acted upon by influences from without. This doctrine is sufficiently familiar, and I repeat not here the criticism I have pressed in previous papers. It lands us, I have contended, in a hopeless position before the problem of knowledge. But on purely psychological grounds it calls, it seems to me, for unreserved rejection. There is, I submit, no evidence entitling us to contemplate sensations as impressions upon, or reactions of, the mind; on the contrary, the moment we come to close quarters with that assumption, the more psychologically unworkable and embarrassing it turns out to be. It presupposes certainly an underlying conception of the mind as a substantive existence, distinct from each and all of its modes of activity,—an implication, it is true, that is generally ignored by those who treat "sensations" as mental entities. And it is responsible for the ascription to presentations of a quite illusory independence, which, as I have been trying to show, conceals from view the really important consideration,—the intimate connectedness and inter-relation among the contents of apprehension.

I believe, then, that along the lines I have been indicating the term "content" (not, I admit, a happily chosen term) expresses a distinction which it is essential to recognise in dealing scientifically with the facts of the mental life, and

which enables us to interpret those facts unencumbered by the perplexities that beset the paths left open by Mr. Moore. The baffling notion of a fundamental difference of kind amongst such operations or processes of mind as perceiving and thinking does not intrude and block the progress of psychological explanation. An intelligible and consistent account can be given of mental growth and development without recourse having to be made to the desperate expedient of postulating, as repeatedly occurring, the introduction or calling forth of new powers or faculties.

III.

"All these things I do (*i.e.*, see, feel, remember, think, etc.); and there is nothing more certain to me than that I do them all. And because, in a wide sense, they are all of them things which I do, I propose to call them all 'mental acts.'"

With this mode of justifying the use of the term "mental act," it is impossible, I think, to rest satisfied. Not only does it ride, as doubtless was intended it should, rough-shod over perhaps the most crucial problem of general psychology, but the excessively ambiguous expressions of ordinary speech to which appeal is made, are laden with implications that ought surely to be avoided in attempting the somewhat ungrateful task of determining what shall be understood by the phrase, act or state of mind. Walking, speaking, writing are "all of them things which I do," but that hardly entitles them to be called "mental acts," and in the relation (whatever it be) which they bear to the "I" there is scarcely to be found a helpful analogy to the relation of seeing, feeling, and thinking to the self that sees, feels, and thinks. But, apart from this mis-giving, I would urge that such familiar phrases as *I see*, *I feel*, *I think*, etc., are popular ways of describing experiences of a highly complex kind—experiences which may, therefore, have nothing corresponding to them in the earlier phases of the mental life. Even supposing, then, that the experience

denoted by these phrases can be taken as trustworthy reports of what actually takes place in the mature mind—even supposing, I mean, that the self-conscious subject is, in some measure, aware of the psychical mechanism through which the experiences he describes as experiences of himself doing something are brought about—still, if so much be granted, to take what is specific to acts of consciousness of this developed type and to argue from it to the nature of an act of consciousness generally would be a precarious mode of reasoning. Throughout his paper, Mr. Moore uses the terms "mind" and "person" as though they were synonymous, and in one place expresses doubt as to whether or no there exist "acts of consciousness which are *not* the acts of any person."* The mental acts of the entire animal world, from the Protozoa to the Mammalia below the genus *Homo*, seem for the moment to have escaped his notice! The objection, at all events, requires to be pressed, that to narrow an inquiry of this generality to the mental lives of self-conscious persons is an important error. That done, the consequence is well-nigh unavoidable, that much will be mistaken for simple and ultimate, which in truth is a complicated product of mental evolution. I confess to feeling that the excellent work of Meinong and his associates suffers not seldom from the defect to which I am now alluding.

Following out the line of reflexion just indicated, I should maintain that into the description of a state of mind as a "mental act" there ought to be imported no implication of an assumed self or ego operating, as an agent, in some way behind the scenes, and manifesting its nature in a state or act exhibiting the same characteristics. And on similar grounds I should dispute the propriety of implying by the term "act of consciousness" the possession on the part of consciousness

* The above was written and in type before I saw the revised form of Mr. Moore's paper. Here, and in other places, he has, I observe, now substituted the word "mind" for "person."

of a power of exerting force, or of trying to conceive of such act as a "form of energy." The reasons I find conclusive against these implications are many. It will suffice here to refer to what follows, as it appears to me, from the position laid down by Mr. Moore at the outset, that "in every case there is always a distinction between that *of* which we are conscious and our consciousness of it." No one questions, of course, the fact of experience to which reference is made in such phrases as "sense of effort" and "consciousness of activity." What one may, however, legitimately question is whether the "effort" or the "activity" *of* which we are, in certain experiences, conscious is not to be distinguished from our consciousness of it,—whether, in other words, we may not say of "activity," what Mr. Moore says of a red colour, that it "is certainly not an act of consciousness in the sense in which my being aware of it is," and that even if it be an "appearance" of an act of consciousness, yet still "the appearance is very different from the reality." I, at least, can discover no valid argument for ignoring this principle in the one case, whilst insisting upon it in the other. Activity when experienced is, it seems to me, as much an object of consciousness (in Mr. Moore's sense of that phrase) as a red colour, when experienced, is an object of consciousness, and if a fundamental distinction is to be drawn between a red colour and the consciousness of it, consistency requires, I think, a like distinction to be drawn between activity and the consciousness of it.* Sense-data are equally involved in both experiences,—visual presentations in the one, motor and muscular presentations in the other—and a precisely similar question as to the mental or non-mental character of these data may be raised in reference to the latter, as is raised in reference to the former. It is quite true that the whole fact—the consciousness of activity—is far

* Is not Mr. Moore virtually admitting this in what he says (p. 38) about passivity?

too complex in nature to be resolved into the awareness of motor and muscular presentations alone. Just as the perception of a physical object implies a multiplicity of factors other than the directly apprehended sense-data, so also the consciousness of activity implies, in addition to motor and muscular elements, a multiplicity of other factors the presence of which can be explained only when account be taken of the history of mind. Our awareness of activity evinces itself, psychologically regarded, as the result of a long repetition of experiences, and as having acquired an appearance of simplicity and directness such as disguises from us its really complicated character. One can understand also why the activity we thus apprehend should appear to us as the putting forth of energy on our part. The experiences that result from movement of the body and its limbs are relatively regular and uniform in character as compared with the indefinite variety of presentations that follow as their consequences, and thus provide one basis at least for the gradual recognition by the subject of a distinction between his own inner life and what is other than, or extraneous to, that life. So, again, and for a similar reason, the intra-organic muscular presentations come to be closely associated with the train of feelings, thoughts, and impulses constituting the content of our consciousness of self, and as the invariable precursors of bodily movement, they naturally tend to awaken memory-images of such movement,—a circumstance of no small significance in this particular reference. I cannot here pursue the matter further, but perhaps I have said enough to indicate why I conceive the demand that it should be shown how the advance is made from the "activity of consciousness" to the "consciousness of activity" may be met by the counter-demand to establish a case for supposing there is any such advance at all,—for supposing, that is to say, that the term "activity" in these two phrases really denotes the same fact, and indeed for supposing that the activity referred to in the latter of them is, in truth, *mental* activity. All this is so

constantly taken for granted, and the crucial problem involved is so often not so much as recognised, that a plea for excessive care in handling the notion "act of consciousness" is surely not uncalled for.

If, then, from the connotation of the term "mental act" the implication of agency, in the ordinary sense of force or energy, be excluded, why, it may be asked, speak of a mental state or occurrence as an "act" at all? I can only indicate in the briefest way the reply I should make. A state of mind may, I think, legitimately be called an "act" in virtue of its essential character as a mode of discriminating and comparing. Whilst bearing, so far as one can discover, no analogy to an exercise of force or a putting forth of energy, to discriminate and compare does involve a process taking place, a change occurring, due in part, at least, to the intrinsic nature of consciousness itself. And in opposition to certain prevalent modes of looking upon conscious experience, it is not unimportant to emphasise this essential characteristic. The function of consciousness may readily enough be carelessly conceived as that of representing, somewhat after the fashion of a mirror, the real order of things, and, especially in dealing with cognition, the notion of passive receptivity is apt to encroach upon our psychological analysis in a variety of unsuspected ways. Even though we have discarded the view of sensations as "impressions," or "affections of the mind," we are liable, for example, to picture consciousness as standing face to face with, and as thus simply knowing, its object. The term "act" seems to me to be of service rather negatively to exclude misconceptions (as I take them to be) of this sort, than positively to clear up the nature of what we call consciousness. If it help to dispel the idea of awareness being merely a given fact, and to indicate that, on the contrary, awareness is a result depending on many conditions, not the least essential being those involved in the mental process itself, the employment of the term serves a useful purpose.

Mr. Moore and I differ as to the nature of a mental act, and the difference comes to the surface with respect to a further contention of his, on which apparently he lays considerable stress. "Of my own mental acts," he writes, "I am very often conscious in that direct manner in which I am conscious of a colour when I actually see it." The position thus clearly expressed is one that is widely held, but I have never been able to persuade myself that it is a tenable position. And what Mr. Moore says in support of it does not convince me. In the first place, I stumble over the word "direct." "By 'direct knowledge,'" we are told, "is here meant the kind of relation which we have to a colour, when we actually see it, or to a sound when we actually hear it." Now, when I actually see a colour, the colour and my awareness of it are, according to Mr. Moore, essentially distinct; the colour is either an appearance of a mental operation which is not aware of itself as giving rise to the appearance, or it is a quality of a physical object, and the awareness of the colour is an act which has nothing to do with constituting the colour. When, however, I am directly aware of my own mental act, then, it would seem, I have an experience in which there is no distinction between my awareness and that of which I am aware. It is difficult, therefore, to understand how the kind of relation can be similar in the two cases, and if in both the knowledge is direct, one wonders how it can be direct *in the same sense*. In the second place, I wholly doubt whether there is *any* sense in which it is true as a psychological fact that our knowledge of mental acts is direct. Were there no other grounds for the doubt, I should be content to rest it on the baffling want of agreement amongst even trained psychological observers as to *what* it is in regard to mental acts that is known in a direct, and therefore presumably certain, manner. From Mr. Moore's description of them, one would gather that mental acts as mental acts present very much the same characteristics in different persons. How comes it, then, if

each person is conscious of his own mental acts in a similarly direct way as that in which he is conscious of a colour, there is such widespread unanimity as to the characteristics of the colour, and such chaotic discrepancy as to the characteristics of a mental act? In the third place, there are, I think, positive reasons against the possibility of the alleged direct knowledge. If an act of consciousness be essentially an act of discriminating, direct awareness, on the part of the act itself, of its own discriminating seems to me to be precluded. For in that case the essence of an act of consciousness consists in discriminating something that is other than the act; one and the same act cannot, therefore, be *at once* a discriminating (say) of a colour *and* a discriminating of the discriminating of a colour. In order to save the situation, it would be necessary, at any rate, to maintain that the latter—the discriminating of the colour—was the object of another act of discriminating. But the contention that one act of mind can directly discriminate the discriminating activity of another act of mind would amount virtually to a resuscitation of the Kantian doctrine of an “inner sense” with many of the old difficulties unremoved, and with not a few new ones added. Not only is there no evidence whatsoever of any means of apprehending mental states that bears the slightest analogy to a “sense,” but an act of consciousness, however it be interpreted, has, I should have thought, none of the simplicity that characterises either a colour or a sound, and would require, therefore, for its apprehension an elaborate exercise of reflective understanding. With respect to the whole matter there are, I am convinced, a variety of circumstances that tend to obscure and confuse the issue. No distinction is more clearly recognised in mature experience than that, for example, between seeing and that which is seen (say, a specific colour). But (a) the distinction need by no means be,—I think certainly is not,—a distinction which in the form in which it is familiar to us would make its appearance in a primitive mental life;

(b) although the awareness of the seeing may appear to us in our mature experience to be direct and immediate awareness, it does not, in the least, follow that it is so as a matter of fact, for repeatedly what appears to be direct and immediate apprehension of something can be shown to be in truth indirect and mediate; (c) the apparently direct apprehension of the seeing may not, and so far as I can discover does not, disclose to us the real nature of the process of seeing. Save for the quite general description of it as a mode of awareness, Mr. Moore himself has no report to give of *what* it is, in regard to the seeing, he has directly and immediately observed. Are we to suppose that the actual process of seeing is as devoid of characteristics as is the seeing which we suppose ourselves to observe and which we are in the habit of distinguishing from that which is seen? It would be strange, indeed, if it were so. The probability is that there is a similarity here to what happens in regard to the physiological processes likewise concerned in mediating the experiences of the mental life. We are dimly, vaguely, conscious of something taking place in the bodily organism, and this consciousness, such as it is, appears to be direct and immediate, yet it conveys no information whatsoever about the nature of the processes in question. In visual apprehension, we are not aware of the image on the retina, nor of the rods and cones, nor of the optic nerve and its changes, nor of the occurrences in the cerebral centres. In like manner, it may well be the fact that psychical processes, correspondingly intricate, mediate the awareness of a coloured object,—psychical processes, the nature of which is no more revealed to the mind they help to constitute than is the nature of the physiological processes that take place contemporaneously with them.

A further question may be raised as to that aspect of conscious experience it has become customary to call feeling-tone. Is a feeling, in this sense, properly described as an "act of consciousness"? Mr. Moore would reply apparently in the affirmative. The question calls up a crowd of difficulties,

and I am very far from wishing to dogmatise. But, as at present advised, I hesitate in expressing concurrence with the affirmative answer. The feeling attitude exhibits peculiarities in virtue of which it may be broadly contrasted with acts of cognition or of conation. In the mature mental life, feeling is emphatically the personal or subjective element of our experience. An agreeable or disagreeable feeling appears to be rather a way in which we experience than something of which we have experience. As subjective in this sense, feeling can scarcely be said to constitute knowledge; we can hardly be said to *apprehend* in and through feeling. And, although I think we should assuredly be wrong in supposing that feelings and the contents of presentations are *ab initio* distinguishable by the conscious subject, yet the foundation for the discrimination between the subjective inner life and the objective world of external reality must be laid by simple and ultimate marks of the experiences included under the term feeling. Moreover, the feelings seem to be invariably conjoined with acts of cognition or conation, and to be in a peculiarly intimate way dependent upon them. So that there appear good grounds for holding (as Witasek does hold) that, whilst feeling is invariably connected with a content, yet feeling itself is never the bearer of such content, but that the content with which feeling is connected is the content of the act of apprehension in conjunction with which the feeling makes its appearance. If this be so, all we know of objects we should know through the process of apprehension; the object to which a feeling attaches itself would be the object of the act of apprehension which the said feeling accompanies or tones. And in that case, a feeling would scarcely be called an "act of consciousness" in the sense in which the phrase has been used with regard to cognition and conation. Indeed, I observe Mr. Moore himself in one place (p. 49) speaks of "that which distinguishes the being pleased with an object from the mere apprehension of the same object without being pleased with

it" as an internal or qualitative difference between the mental acts in question, and it is, I apprehend, at least a possible view that feeling, in all its forms as affective tone, is a qualitative characteristic of mental acts which, in essence, are acts of apprehension.

This leads me to refer to one other point, also of excessive difficulty. Leaving now feeling-tone out of account, what other internal qualitative difference can be constituted between mental acts? On the one hand, Mr. Moore concludes that "the difference which merely consists in the fact that one act of consciousness is a consciousness *of* one entity, whereas another act of consciousness is a consciousness *of* a different entity," is not itself a mental difference. My hearing a sound differs from my seeing a colour, in respect of the fact that when I hear a sound I am conscious of a different entity from that of which I am conscious when I see a colour, but as an act of consciousness the hearing, he would say, probably does not differ qualitatively from the seeing. If mental acts be treated in this way, in abstraction from their objects, then I agree with Mr. Moore it is well-nigh impossible to fix upon any feature wherein as acts they differ. Yet the very statement of the position is enough to awaken the thought of its extreme improbability. There is, I suppose, a correlation of some sort between the sensory mechanism of the body and the mental life of the individual subject; and that there should be elaborately differentiated organs of sense subserving, each of them, specific physiological functions, whilst the acts of consciousness that result from, or are concomitant with, (say) auditory and visual stimulation should, as a matter of fact, be qualitatively alike seems hardly a tenable hypothesis. Whoever adopts it will find himself driven, I should imagine, to the conclusion that sense-data are undoubtedly mental entities. On the other hand, Mr. Moore is convinced that some mental acts do differ qualitatively from others,—that there is an internal difference between, for example, the mental acts of merely thinking of a given pro-

position and believing it, or the mental acts of merely thinking of a future action, and willing that action. I do not question the qualitative difference. I would, however, insist that in these instances we are dealing not with single elementary acts of mind, but with exceedingly complex mental processes, and that the qualitative difference here in question is in large measure, at all events, due to the variety of the component factors that go to constitute the function we are apt to look upon as a specific power or faculty with marks or characteristics of its own. Consider, for example, the attitude of mind which Mr. Moore calls belief, and which, following the tradition of Brentano, he is inclined to differentiate so sharply from perceiving or thinking. I am not in the least concerned to dispute that the distinction between the mere awareness of an object and the judgment that the object exists, or between the mere thought of a given proposition and the assurance of its truth, is a clear and important distinction. I conceive it, however, to be as certain as anything psychologically can be, that that distinction is one which comes about gradually in the history of conscious experience, and that it is only to be met with at a comparatively advanced stage of mental development. I do not think we are entitled to suppose that, in the order of genesis, there is first apprehension of an object *simpliciter*, and later the determination of it as existent or non-existent; that there is first the mere thinking of a given proposition, and later the assurance of its truth or falsity. Rather our separation of the idea of an object from the actual object, or our separation of the mere thinking of a proposition from the assurance of its truth or falsity—our contemplation of the idea or the proposition in and for itself—seems to me to be the result of conceptual thinking, and to presuppose a prior recognition of the distinction between the real and the imaginary—a prior recognition, that is to say, of the distinction, in its rudimentary form, between truth and falsity. I do not know whether Mr. Moore

would assert of "mere thinking" and "believing" what Brentano maintained of *vorstellen* and *urtheilen*, that they are two fundamentally different modes of the consciousness of an object (*zwei grundverschiedene Weisen des Bewusstseins von einem Gegenstande*), or whether in his view the distinction between them is "ultimate and primordial," as J. S. Mill declared the distinction between "thinking of a reality" and "representing to ourselves an imaginary picture" to be. To me, at any rate, the weight of psychological evidence seems decidedly on the other side. In the complex state of mind called belief, I find no factor that can be said to appear there for the first time. Belief involves undoubtedly presentation, imagination, and reasoning. Not less surely are there included in it elements of feeling and conation. One can understand, therefore, why some psychologists should describe it as a purely intellectual act, others as a mode of feeling, others again as a form of conation. There is a certain amount of truth in all these modes of regarding it. But that which is distinctively peculiar to the attitude of belief must be sought, I think, rather in the way in which these factors are severally implicated than in any fundamentally unique qualitative feature. The reference to objective fact, characteristic of belief, has had, I conceive, its history, and even in mature experience varies considerably with the conditions on which it is dependent. I cannot, therefore, ascribe that reference to a special function of mind, the activity of which is called forth by presentations or ideas in themselves devoid of such reference. I add only one further remark in respect to the internal difference of such mental processes as those mentioned by Mr. Moore. Whilst I agree with him that the acts in question almost certainly do differ internally as acts, I imagine that much of what he might describe as internal difference I should put down rather to difference of content. For it is, I take it, chiefly, if not wholly, through difference of content that we are enabled to distinguish one mental act from another.

IV.

"Psychology has a special subject-matter of its own, and this special subject-matter may be defined by saying that it consists of all those among the contents of the universe, and those only, which are 'mental' or 'psychical' in their nature."

The outcome of Mr. Moore's investigation, so far as its bearing upon the science of psychology is concerned, is, it must be confessed, to leave us in an awkward situation. One conclusion only appears to be certain. Acts of consciousness, with such internal differences as they possess, their relations to one another, their modes of uniting to form groups or series—these, at any rate, are subject-matter of a distinct and specific science. Psychology, however, as actually pursued, has never yet been confined to these. Hitherto, what Mr. Moore describes as sense-data have invariably been regarded as subject-matter of psychology, and the treatment of them, in some form or another, has constituted the major part of the work to which the psychologist has devoted himself. Professor Ward expresses, in a couple of well-known sentences, the ordinary view. "As presented," he says, "to an individual, the 'whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth' may belong to psychology. The problem of psychology, in dealing with this complex subject-matter, is in general—first, to ascertain its constituent elements, and, secondly, to ascertain and explain the laws of their combination and interaction." Mr. Moore's demarcation of territory is radically different. He is not sure whether *any* of the "choir of heaven and furniture of earth" belongs to psychology. That depends, so I imagine he would tell us, upon the nature of sense-data. But, unhappily, we are, he thinks, in the predicament of not being able to determine whether sense-data are mental or not. Pending, then, the settlement of that point—and the prospect of settling it is hardly represented as hopeful—what is the unfortunate psycho-

logist to do? His treatment even of the subject-matter which, as Mr. Moore insists, undoubtedly does fall to his province cannot really be uninfluenced by the attitude he adopts towards the important question he is told he has, at all events, at present, no means of answering. The relation of acts of consciousness to sense-data that were mental would be very different from their relation to sense-data that were not mental, and the psychologist who was in suspense about the relation would very soon find himself at a stand so far as acts of consciousness were concerned. One regrets much that Mr. Moore has not given us some indication of how, under the circumstances, he considers psychological work is to be done, and, indeed, what precisely he conceives the psychological problem in reference, for example, to the facts of perception, memory, and imagination, to be.

With admirable precision and lucidity, Mr. Moore has drawn and vindicated the distinction between an act of consciousness and that of which through an act of consciousness there is awareness. The clear recognition of that distinction is, I am convinced, an essential requisite for the successful handling of psychological problems, and in view of the prevalence, in one form or another, of "Presentationism" in psychology, I welcome Mr. Moore's emphatic insistence upon this crucial point. The psychologist who has once realised the import of the distinction will find himself, I imagine, absolutely debarred from forming any such conception of the function of his science as that of which in recent years Münsterberg has probably been the chief exponent. Consciousness, from the psychological standpoint, means, according to Münsterberg, only the general condition for the existence of psychical objects or contents; all variations of consciousness are variations of content, which must be analysed without remainder into elements that are theoretically co-ordinated with the elements of presentations, that is, with sensations; presentations and their elements alone can find a logically

satisfactory description in psychology. So conceived psychology is, it is true, held to be from the necessity of the case an abstract and purely descriptive science; the inner life that forms the object of its treatment is avowedly not the actual inner life, but an artificial reconstruction made by scientific thought for the purpose of grasping a group of psychical phenomena as a causal system. The subject-matter of psychology consists, that is to say, of contents of consciousness, considered in abstraction from consciousness; and these, it is maintained, can be dealt with as objects, and be resolved, as physical objects can be resolved, into their elementary components. But to attempt to build up a science of mind by first of all eliminating from its province the distinctive characteristic of mind is surely to court disaster at the start. Contents, so regarded, become just things, and the *apprehension* of things has been in no way brought within the scope of scientific treatment by the mere device of describing such things as psychical. To repeat a contention already insisted upon, they are certainly not psychical in the sense in which the apprehension of them is psychical. A single illustration will perhaps make my meaning clear. Suppose it be said that one idea is suggested by, and tends to combine with, another which resembles it. Then, even, though it be assumed that that similarity is able to act as a force and to bring together two ideas,—an assumption I find it hopeless to try to understand,—yet the problem of how there comes to be *recognition* of similarity or resemblance in what is in such a case apprehended has not been thereby so much as remotely touched. As against presentationism, I am, then, entirely at one with Mr. Moore in holding that the distinction between an act of consciousness and that of which there is consciousness is a distinction which the psychologist can neglect only at the cost of entirely misconstruing the facts with which he is called upon to deal. But distinction does not necessarily imply complete separation, and in sharply severing, as he

appears to do, the act of apprehension from what is apprehended, Mr. Moore falls, I think, into an error which is, in a sense, the counterpart of that exemplified in presentationism. If acts of consciousness be conceived as not differing in respect to their different objects, but as differing only internally in the way indicated by Mr. Moore, then little else would seem to be left for psychologists to do than to arrange these acts under their respective headings,—to treat each act, that is to say, as a mode of exercise of one of the specific "powers" or "faculties" with which, in that case, the mind must be held to be endowed. I know not how far Mr. Moore is in sympathy with the attempt "to reinstate the old faculty psychology,"* but that I should imagine to be the outcome of the line of reflexion pursued by him in respect to mental acts. The reinstatement would mean, I am persuaded, the abandonment of psychology as a scientific pursuit. Admittedly, the doctrine of faculties has no explanatory worth. "Much," however, it is contended, "is perfectly intelligible which is not explicable."† But how is a mental process made intelligible by referring it to a faculty? The faculty is only a repetition in a single word, and in the very abstract notion of a "power," of the facts that are being dealt with, and if these are not intelligible in themselves, they certainly do not become intelligible by being attributed to a faculty; the notion of the faculty is just abstracted from the special facts which it is supposed to render intelligible. Moreover, on four specific grounds, a faculty psychology would, I submit, be unscientific: (a) characteristic differences would be taken to be simple, when in truth they were very much the reverse; (b) a simplicity would be assumed in the cause or condition of a type of "mental energy" entirely out of harmony with the complexity of the effects it would be thought to

* H. A. Prichard, "A Criticism of the Psychologists' Treatment of Knowledge," *Mind*, N.S., Vol. XVI, p. 53.

† *Ibid.*, p. 52.

produce; (c) the intricate fashion in which the various processes of the mental life are interwoven would have no justice done to it; (d) the part played by development in the mental life would inevitably fail to secure due recognition.

As contrasted, then, with each of the two points of view just referred to, the three-fold distinction of act, content and object provides, it seems to me, a basis for psychology as a scientific study of the concrete facts of mind. Neither contents taken in abstraction nor acts taken in abstraction are the real components of the actual mental life, but acts whose function consists in discriminating features of the real world, and whose nature is partially determined by the features which through them are discriminated and, as discriminated, are held, if one may so express it, in the awareness that thereupon ensues. In other words, presentations apart from the acts of which they are contents would be blind; acts apart from presentations as their contents would be empty. As subject-matter of psychology there is thus retained all that is truly essential in presentationism on the one hand, and in the view of consciousness as a series of acts or processes on the other, but no fictitious independence is ascribed to presentations, and no baffling uniformity of character is ascribed to acts of consciousness. Moreover, the interconnectedness, the relatedness, of the processes of the mental life can be interpreted in a satisfactory way. Mr. Moore himself recognises the difficulty of rendering any account, for example, of the familiar facts of association and suggestion, if no difference of content be admitted between the consciousness of one object and the consciousness of another. He thinks it possible, however, that the effect may be produced neither by the object nor by the act of consciousness, but by the whole fact—the fact that I am conscious of the object. I am wholly at a loss to see how. No doubt “the whole fact—the fact that I am conscious of one object—is always different from the fact that I am conscious of another object.” But *ex hypothesi* the difference

still lies solely on the side of the objects, and if the *consciousness* of A is exactly similar to the *consciousness* of B, and if the different effects are not produced by the different objects, then what can there be in the whole fact, the *consciousness of A*, to give rise (say) to the consciousness of X, that is wanting in the whole fact, the *consciousness of B*, which consequently is not able to give rise to the consciousness of X? It must be, one would have thought, a difference of *awareness* that is in question here, and on the view I am taking, the problem—typical, it seems to me, so far as the particular aspect of it now under consideration is concerned, of the majority of problems respecting the mental life—occasions no such crucial difficulty as that which Mr. Moore has to encounter. Difficulties in abundance unquestionably remain, but I do not find them to be of an insuperable kind. The objection made, for example, by Titchener* can scarcely be reckoned a strong one. If, he argues, in every type of conscious process, act and content are distinguished, one has to duplicate one's psychology; "everything must be treated twice over, from the point of view of act, and from the point of view of content." I fail to discern the alleged necessity. What we are dealing with throughout are complicated mental processes,—processes which, as I have tried to show, cannot be properly treated from the point of view of act alone, or from the point of view of content alone. Both aspects have at every stage to be taken into account, and, since the aspects are essentially different, duplication one would have imagined to be the last thing likely to happen. Further, Titchener complains that what he calls the duplication of treatment leads both to over-articulation and to neglect of analysis. He instances, by way of illustration, Witasek's account of judgment, and the elaborate distinction drawn by Witasek not only between act,

* E. B. Titchener, *Lectures on the Experimental Psychology of the Thought-Process*, N.Y., Macmillan, 1909, p. 56 *sqq.*

content, and object of presentation, but between the two-fold act and quasi-content of judgment. As directed against Witasek, the charge of over-articulation is not, perhaps, without foundation.* But the over-articulation is surely due not to the distinction between act, content, and object, but to the arbitrary severance which Witasek, following Brentano, institutes between presentation and judgment. That severance, however, is one which I have tried to give grounds for thinking the distinction in question ought and does enable us to avoid.

If the line of thought along which I have been proceeding be in principle sound, it follows that the subject-matter of psychology cannot be defined by saying that it consists only of entities that are mental or psychical in their nature. Contents of consciousness, conceived in the manner I have been endeavouring to make clear, would still be what Mr. Moore calls "entities," but, with the possible exception of such of them as arise from introspection of the mind itself, they would not, as I have already insisted, be rightly described as mental entities. They are dependent, it is true, *quod* contents, upon the apprehending mind; but they are dependent, so far as their qualitative character is concerned, upon the external world of fact, in interconnexion with which the life of mind is lived and undergoes development. Yet they, obviously I should say, form part of the subject-matter of psychology. They are the modes of the mind's participation in that which is other than itself, and they are equally the ways in which, through such participation, the mind is a mind at all. A plurality of related contents held together in an act of awareness constitutes, it may be said, the unit of the concrete life of consciousness. And what gives to the act of awareness its concreteness and definiteness, what enables its character as an act to be dealt with and described, is just the variety of content with which it

* Professor Mitchell in his able work, *Structure and Growth of the Mind*, Macmillan, 1907, p. 216, takes exception to Witasek's analysis for a similar reason.

is connected. It is impossible, therefore, that the act should form part of the subject-matter of psychology whilst its content does not. Those contents, then, which Mr. Moore calls sense-data, the psychologist has rightly regarded, according to the view I have been taking of them, as falling within his province. Even though they be not mental entities, yet they are factors in the development of mind—mind, at all events, as we know it—no less essential than those entities about whose mental character there can be no doubt. The view of psychology as having its subject-matter restricted to entities that are mental in character is based, then, so I venture to urge, upon a mistaken conception of the nature of the mind and of its modes of operation. That nothing can enter into the life of mind and become a factor in its development which is not, in essence, akin to the essence of mind as an existing reality is, in truth, a tremendous assumption, and an assumption, I am convinced, which, in the attempt to work out a philosophical realism, we shall have once for all to discard. "We forget," says Adamson "that mind is not an abstraction, that it lives only in and through its concrete expression, and that what we represent as the product of mind might just as fairly be said to be the very making of mind."* Accordingly, whatsoever enters into the life of mind may, it seems to me, legitimately be regarded as part of the subject-matter of psychology. And if it be true that those contents of consciousness which are the ways in which the external world is known are not mental in character, then, in including them, as, in a sense, products of mind, within the province of psychology, we are in fact beginning to do from the start what is ostensibly being done in those departments of research that have recently branched out from what used to be considered as alone the domain of the psychologist. By observation of what may be called collectively the products or the expressions of the mental life

* *Development of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 18.

(including therein all that falls within the wide range of human culture), psychologists have been throwing new light upon the constitution of the individual consciousness and the various stages of its evolution. By a comparative study of the forms of religious beliefs or of the forms of political institutions, they have, for example, been enabled to gain deeper insight into the general character of the order of change in mental development. So, again, by the comparative study of the different forms, earlier and later, of human language they have been still more closely brought into contact with the ways in which intelligence grows and widens. In short, it seems to me inevitable, from the very nature of mind and its function as apprehensive of reality, that in the subject-matter of a science of mind very much must be included beyond the entities which can be described as mental entities. And for this reason, one must admit, I think, the force of Professor Ward's contention that psychology is more accurately defined by the standpoint from which experience is viewed than by reference to a special subject-matter.