

XI.—THE NATURE OF JUDGMENT.

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THERE seems to be no reason why the problem of the nature of judgment should not be settled to the satisfaction of every competent person by direct analysis. So far as one can gather from theories of the nature of judgment hitherto suggested, the problem is simple as compared with many problems of the natural and mathematical sciences which have been satisfactorily solved, or which we may reasonably hope to solve. This is so, notwithstanding the fact that most theories of the nature of judgment have erred on the side of simplicity: most attempts at physical problems have done the same. I do not, of course, intend to suggest that the problem of judgment is like the elementary problems of mechanics and physics, in which the student has already at his command conceptions adequate to their solution—that is, where the student is merely tackling some particular instance or application of a problem the correct analysis of which has already been done for him. I mean problems in which at least one further element is involved, or in which what is involved is more complex than has hitherto been supposed, as shown by the fact that we cannot give an adequate account of the facts with which we have to deal in terms of those physical conceptions which are at our command, or which have hitherto been supposed to cover all the facts. It is probably the case that the simple elements which it is the business of the philosopher to exhibit as involved in the

problems which he proposes for solution are harder to come by than the elements involved in physical and mathematical problems. But it seems equally probable that this is so, not on account of the intrinsic difficulty of philosophical problems, since, to judge from what has been offered us hitherto, they are not so complicated as problems of the physical sciences on which something like general agreement has been attained, but on account of the lack of a suitable propædæutic. So, then, although we may admit that philosophical problems demand a higher degree of insight and more strenuous powers of analysis, there seems no reason to suppose that they are so different from physical and mathematical problems that a radically different method of procedure is necessary for their solution, nor that philosophical acumen is different in kind from scientific acumen. No doubt the number of those who think it worth while to make any serious effort to grapple with the problems of philosophy is insignificant as compared with those engaged in scientific research, but it seems clear that a training in the natural sciences is the best propædæutic for the serious study of philosophy, and that we may hope for progress in philosophy when we succeed in persuading those who have some acquaintance with physical and mathematical problems to attempt the solution of philosophical problems.

It is because of the difficulty of the task of apprehending clearly the elements involved in the fact of judgment that Mr. Russell and, following him, Professor Stout have prefixed to their recent treatments of the nature of judgment and truth a list of the conditions which a sound theory of judgment must satisfy. Now, such a list will be two things. First, it will be of the nature of a preliminary analysis before getting on to a more precise and careful analysis. For example, Professor Stout's insistence that the correspondence which constitutes truth must be a correspondence between actual fact and something which is before the judging mind, just as the non-correspondence which constitutes falsity must be or involve

non-correspondence between actual fact and something which in belief is before the mind, is simply an appreciation at the outset, as against Mr. Russell, of one very obvious element involved in judgment—namely, that in every judgment the person judging must have before him as object what it is that he is believing. In the second place, such a list of conditions which must be fulfilled by a sound theory of judgment has, at the same time, reference to what one regards as the errors and omissions contained in accounts of judgment offered by others, or to errors likely to be committed by others; and as such the list might be multiplied indefinitely, since there seems to be no end to the confusions possible in philosophical discussion. But it is clear that we can only convict another of error or confusion on the topic of the nature of judgment by direct reference to the fact of judgment. In the case of the fact of judgment there seems no room for the postulation of anything beyond what can be immediately discerned, so that we should be able to clear up the problem of the nature of judgment in a way in which it is probably not possible to settle the problem of determinism or indeterminism, for example (although even here it should be possible to arrive at agreement as to exactly what is involved in asking whether determinism is a fact or not). But this is in turn a statement which can only be confirmed by a direct appeal to the fact of judgment. I propose, therefore, in this paper to attempt first such a direct analysis of judgment, and then to go on from this analysis to consider certain difficulties which seem to be involved in other accounts of judgment.

I should say at the outset that the account of judgment which I shall try to give is one which I cannot suppose to be entirely new to members of this Society. So far as I am aware it has not been set forth in print by any other writer, but I expect it must have occurred to many who are acquainted with the work of Meinong, or who have followed with interest Mr. Russell's theory of the nature of truth and

the criticisms of that theory made by Professor Stout and others. There is, I take it, a brief reference to this account of judgment in the chapter on "Truth and Falsehood," p. 194, in Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*.

The elements involved in judgment seem to be these: (1) There is the act of judgment on the part of the judging mind, a psychical fact occurring as part of some one's mental history. (2) There are the objects on which the judging mind passes judgment. In simple forms of judgment these facts are given immediately, and such judgments seem obviously to be the basis of all knowledge of what exists. For example, I may judge that the fire at which I am sitting is burning brightly. Here we have my act of judging or my belief, on the one hand, the psychical factor, and on the other, the physical facts immediately before me on which I pass judgment. It seems, therefore, that judgment is not co-extensive with cognition in general, either in the sense that all cognition is judgment, or in the sense that judgment is an element necessarily involved in cognition. So far as the evidence of introspection goes, it is, I think, clear that direct acquaintance with the immediately given constantly occurs without the judgment of what is so given. To be directly aware of the existence of the facts which I call the fire and its brightness is a different thing from *asserting that* the fire is bright, even if, as constantly happens, one only make this assertion for one's own benefit. And even if the evidence of introspection showed that the human mind never refrained from judging what is immediately given, there seems no reason why other minds should not directly apprehend what is given without judging the given. What seems to be impossible is that we should have judgment without a basis of direct experience of the immediately given. In more advanced types of judgment the facts concerning which we judge are not thus given immediately in experience, but are judged to exist by previously formed judgment. For example, a realist may judge that real

physical objects (by which he means objects permanently existing and incapable of direct presentation to the mind) have relations which correspond to the relations directly observed in the immediately given. Or I may judge that the statue of Liberty in New York Harbour must often be a welcome object to the traveller to America. Here the facts which are judged are clearly not immediately apprehended, unless the conception of the philosopher as the spectator of all time and all existence is true in a sense which would make foreign travel an unnecessarily expensive proceeding.

But now, having gone so far, it seems obvious that we must go farther. If the facts judged are not immediately apprehended by the mind in the act of judgment, it seems difficult to understand how they can be objects of the mind at all. Either the statue of Liberty and New York Harbour are my objects or they are not, and between the two there seems to be no third possibility. But yet it is equally clear that the statue of Liberty is involved in my judgment that it is a welcome object to the traveller to America, as well as in our present discussion of the nature of judgments other than those of the most rudimentary type, since we have taken a judgment about the statue of Liberty as an illustration of such judgments; and it is clearly illegitimate to deny to the former judgment what we ourselves claim in the series of judgments which constitute our present discussion. The term "object of the judgment" must therefore be ambiguous. We have, on the one hand, what is presented to the eye when one is entering New York Harbour. It is about this very appearance that I now make a judgment, otherwise my judgment could neither represent direct experience of New York Harbour on the part of myself or of others, nor be confirmed by such experience. At the same time I now judge that that visual appearance which I am judging is not present to my mind. So then we have, on the other hand, what is present to the mind in virtue of the fact that, although I am now some

thousands of miles beyond the range of direct presentation of the statue of Liberty to my mind, I am yet making judgments about it. We seem, then, driven (3) to recognise something over and above the act of judgment—the psychical fact involved, and the physical facts concerning which we judge. It is such a third thing which is the object of our minds when we set out to judge about the statue of Liberty, and it is such a third thing (only more complex than the *tertium quid* with which we start) which is our object when we have completed our judgment.

Now if there is such a third thing involved in judgment we ought to be able to detect it directly in the simplest form of judgment, quite apart from any difficulty into which we get ourselves when we consider less elementary forms of judgment. If we cannot detect such a *tertium quid* in the case of simple judgments of perception, we are making a radical difference between such judgments and judgments like that about the statue of Liberty; and we ought seriously to consider whether our not mentioning a *tertium quid* in the case of judgments of perception was not implicitly to deny their claims to be considered judgments at all. If we failed to detect this third element in the simplest type of judgment, and only returned to look for it when we got into difficulties on trying to do without it in the case of judgments about what is not directly presented that is only due to our defective powers of analysis. Moreover, although we may reasonably come to the conclusion from the consideration of judgments about what is not directly presented that some *tertium quid* is necessarily involved, yet we may easily be led into error as to the exact nature of this *tertium quid* if we consider only one type of judgment, and that a more complex type. It seems wise, therefore, to return to the simple judgment of perception with which we started. In my judgment that the fire is burning brightly is there a third element involved besides the psychical fact of my act of judgment and the facts immediately apprehended about which I judge?

We seem clearly able to detect such an element—namely, that the fire is burning brightly, that which is judged concerning the immediately apprehended objects. And that the fire is now burning brightly is not the fire nor its brightness nor bright nor burning, just as in legal judgment we have, over and above the prisoner judged and the belief of the jurymen and the judge, that which is judged of the prisoner in the belief of the judge and jury—namely, that the prisoner is not guilty. And that the prisoner is not guilty is not the prisoner nor his innocence nor innocent. Let us follow Meinong and call this third element involved in judgment the Objective. It is the Objective which is really the object of the judgment as such, since we can apprehend the facts immediately given without judging as to their nature.

In other words, the really important distinction involved in the fact of judgment is not that between the object with which, in order to judge, one begins, whatever may be the psychical process by means of which one is enabled to begin with it, and the object with which, in virtue of having judged, one winds up (the distinction Meinong marks by means of the terms "Objekt" and "Objektiv," and his pupil, Dr. Ernst Mally, by means of the terms "Bestimmungsgegenstand" and "Eigenschaftsgegenstand"). This is not the important distinction, because in simple judgments of perception all the facts to which the judgment refers can be given immediately to the mind by means of the senses; and in judgments about what is not given immediately to the mind, the object with which one starts is already the distinctive object of a judgment, that is to say, an Objective. In such cases, therefore, we have at the finish merely a more complex Objective than we had at the start, or an Objective relating to a different aspect of the same complex of facts as that with which we began. We have not, therefore, anything like the gulf which separates what is given immediately and is existent and in time, and that which is necessarily timeless and non-existent, the apprehension of

which involves more than the proper use of the sense organs.

Now it is the Objective to which we can most appropriately attribute truth and falsity. If I say "It looks like rain," it is clear that the weather conditions are neither true nor false. And my immediate acquaintance with the weather conditions given is likewise neither true or false. Either I am directly aware of what is given or I am not, but in neither case can I be in error, although I may be fortunate or unfortunate to be directly apprehending some particular object. On the other hand, it is, of course, the case that we apply the predicates true and false to my act of judging that it looks like rain. But my act of judging is called true or false not on account of its own intrinsic character as an act of the mind, but because it is a belief in what is true or false of the facts about which I make a judgment, *i.e.*, in an Objective. A false belief is a belief in a false Objective, whereas a true belief is a belief in a true Objective. This is borne out when we consider what takes place when one verifies a judgment, either on the part of another or of oneself, by an appeal to the facts about which the judgment is made. In such a case, instead of beginning with the facts and going on to an Objective which shall be true of the facts, the order is reversed and we proceed from the Objective, if we have understood the medium in which the judgment is expressed, to the facts which are to lead us to accept or reject the Objective. Now in such a case, as when, *e.g.*, the story of an accused person is investigated, one may quite well believe that the person whose statements one is investigating does not really believe in these statements. But the question what is going on in his mind is entirely irrelevant to the verification of his story. An act of judgment can no more be verified, even by the person making the judgment, than the greenness of grass. What can be verified is that A is lying, but that A is lying is neither A nor his lying.

It will not, of course, do to identify the Objective with the image. It may be the case that when I make a judgment such as that about the statue of Liberty and New York Harbour, a visual or some other kind of image crosses my mind. On many occasions with most of us it would be the auditory or articulatory image which thus appears; the judgment is about the statue of Liberty in the harbour of the town called "New York." It seems impossible to make a judgment, when the facts judged are not immediately given, without the occurrence of an image. But it is clear that, so far as judgment is concerned, the function of the image is not to replace the facts immediately apprehended, although, so far as one merely imagines and does not judge, one may respond to an image as one responds to what is immediately given in sensation. When I make a judgment about the statue of Liberty I am not judging my visual or auditory or articulatory image of the statue or of the traveller or America. The image is what makes it possible for me to judge, not that concerning which I judge, nor what I judge about the facts on which I pass judgment.

It is now possible to deal with certain difficulties which beset alternative theories of the nature of judgment. The difficulties of the "idealist" doctrine that every predicate asserted in judgment is an aspect of the mental process of judging, or that judgment consists in the divorce of an ideal content from its existence in the mind and its application to reality, have been insisted upon often enough. As Professor Taylor has recently pointed out, it follows from this view of judgment that either everything is made up of mental states and that all things think, or that there are unthinking thoughts. When one recoils from the subjectivism of this view there are two courses which seem open. (1) One may stoutly assert that since the mind cannot make truth, and the whole notion of judgment as being an ideal construction is simply metaphor, it follows that even when I make a judgment about the statue of Liberty, we

have the mind's direct detection of the nature of an object or of a relation between objects. All knowledge must be a direct relation of the mind to an object, otherwise it could not be knowledge at all. The mind is either aware of an object or it is not, and there the matter ends. In this way no radical difference is made between judgment and direct acquaintance with sense-data, but the former is reduced to the latter. Or (2) it may be said that the error of the "idealist" theory of judgment lies in asserting that a predicate is part of the content of a psychological idea. This theory involves a vicious infinite, in that one must already have concepts at one's command in order to know what part of the content of one's psychological idea is to be divorced from its existence. All that we have to do, then, is to insist on the independent character of predicates or concepts. When I make a simple judgment like "This fire is burning brightly," I am not applying part of the content of my idea to the fire, nor applying to reality or any other third thing part of the content of my idea of the fire and of brightness. What I am asserting is not anything which concerns my mental process, but a relation between concepts. A concept neither exists nor forms part of anything that exists. On the contrary it is presupposed in the thought of anything that exists. In the case of a judgment like that about the statue of Liberty we have merely the clearest example of the fact that knowledge does consist in the appreciation of relations between concepts, and what we have called direct acquaintance with the immediately given is also of this nature, since concepts are the only objects of knowledge. Further, the truth or falsity of a judgment cannot consist in a relation to an existent or to anything outside the judgment, since to know that a thing exists and to know that a proposition has a relation to an existent are themselves to know a proposition, that is, a relation between concepts, and the truth of these propositions must be independent. And since this is so, there seems to be no reason why we should not regard the truth of other judgments as

independent also. We must, then, regard the existent world as constituted of concepts only. On this view we have resolved direct acquaintance with what is immediately presented into judgment.

(1) Now, if we adopt the former of these two positions, we are confronted with the difficulty of non-existent and impossible objects and of false judgments about existent things. If a person believes that witches are to be feared, then it follows at once that there are witches, otherwise the person in question could not have them and their powers for mischief as his objects. Again one may believe correctly that the round square is contradictory. It follows, therefore, that there is a round square, otherwise it seems that a sound judgment is equivalent to thinking of nothing, which in turn seems like not thinking at all. And finally it will not do to say that every judgment of the form "A is B" means the detection of the fact of A's being B, because the whole point of saying that the judgment is false is that there is no such fact as A's being B, even if there is such a thing as A. This account of judgment might stand a better chance of being accepted if all our judgments were true, although even in that case questions might very easily be raised which would show it to be false. For example it would still remain impossible to contemplate directly more than a small area of the physical world at a time, since this depends on our sense organs. So that a philosopher might happen to notice the difference between direct acquaintance with what is given and judgment about what is not at the moment of judgment so given, even though as a matter of fact judgments were never disproved by direct appeal to the facts. He might, therefore, succeed in convincing his contemporaries that judgment is not quite so simple a fact as it looks at first sight. But in view of the notorious fact that some judgments are false, the unsoundness of this account of judgment is sufficiently obvious. And this seems sufficient answer to the objection that the Objective simply repeats the objects to which

it refers. If I judge that A is B, then according to the doctrine of Objectives there is, over and above A and its being B, that A is B. But, it is often felt, that A is B is only A's being B over again. The fact of erroneous judgments about A makes it quite evident that there is something else involved than A and its being B, on the one hand, and our mental process, on the other, even in cases where the judgment that A is B is true; otherwise we shall have to deny that a false judgment is a judgment at all.

On the other hand, the doctrine of Objectives seems to many people to be a prize example of a solution *ad hoc*. No doubt, it is said, your account of judgment gets you over the difficulty of non-existent and impossible objects and of false judgments, but this is only because you have postulated just what will you get over this difficulty. Since the facts to which the judgment relates can only be what they are, and the psychical act of belief is indubitable whether the judgment be true or false, you have invented an order of being which is just to be the medium of truth and falsity. Now if this objection means that Objectives have been postulated in view of the difficulty of any theory of judgment which works merely in terms of the object of the mind, on the one hand, and the psychical act of judgment on the other, the necessity of recognising some further complication would remain, even though we could not specify anything further as to the exact nature of this further complication. As a matter of fact, the necessity of drawing upon a *tertium quid* can be shown, as we have seen, from the fact that judgment has a wider range than the senses. But the real answer to objections of this sort is to say, as I have already insisted, that the question whether there are Objectives and the question as to the exact nature of Objectives are questions which can only be decided by direct appeal to the fact of judgment.

Of course, when confronted with the difficulty of non-existent and impossible objects and the fact of error, one may

try to save one's face by saying that witches and the round square and A's being B, when really A is not B, are *in some sense*, or *in the mind*, or *in the judgment*. But when one is pressed, whatever contortions one may go through, one has to admit either that these qualifications mean nothing at all, or that a theory of judgment which can only be stated in terms of such qualifications involves a vicious infinite, since what is only *in the mind* or *in the judgment* means what is judged to be but really is not. And in any case such qualifications will not serve to extricate us from the difficulties in view of which they were invented. Now this is an extremely awkward consequence of a theory of judgment, the beauty of which is its simplicity, so that one may reasonably doubt whether it is not precisely its simplicity which is its weakness.

(2) If, on the other hand, we adopt the second position, and say that the world is made up of concepts, and that all knowledge is judgment, it seems impossible to give any account of that which distinguishes true judgments, as such, from those which are false. Some Objectives are true, and others are false, just as some peas are green and others are yellow, and there the matter ends. This seems to be in conflict with two facts far more certain than any theory of the nature of judgment. (i) We cannot tell in many cases by mere inspection of a judgment whether it is true or false, as we can tell whether a pea is green or yellow. This seems certainly the case with judgments relating to the existent. In other words, truth and falsity are not intrinsic characters of such judgments, as green and yellow are intrinsic characters of peas. Nevertheless (ii) such judgments can be verified or shown to be false, *i.e.*, we can show in detail that they are true, or point out in detail wherein they are false and substitute true judgments for them. Since this is so it must be possible to state wherein in general truth and falsity consist, by reference to something beyond the judgment, so that a theory which expressly denies that what is meant by the truth and falsity of a judgment refers to

anything but the judgment is false. Of course, this view of judgment would insist that what we have called the verification of a judgment by direct appeal to the facts to which the judgment relates is itself nothing but to make the judgment in question. But it seems certainly to demand explanation why under certain circumstances it is possible to make a judgment and know beyond doubt that it is true, and under other circumstances to make exactly the same judgment and be quite unable to know that it is true, if the truth of the judgment is an intrinsic character of it. It would be more plausible to argue that we don't know what it is we believe until we know beyond doubt that what we believe is true.

However, the argument that the truth of a judgment is independent can be shown to be untrue for other reasons. The argument runs something like this: If you make the truth of a judgment consist in a relation to an existent, then to know that a judgment is true is to know that it has this relation to an existent. But this in turn means to know a proposition; and even if we go a step further, and make the truth of this proposition consist in a relation to something else, then to know that the proposition has this relation to the thing in question is again to know a proposition. Beyond propositions, then, we cannot go, and truth and falsehood can only attach to judgments independently of anything else. In this argument there seems to be more than one confusion. The fact that, on the theory which denies that truth attaches to Objectives independently of anything else, we can only know that an Objective is true by knowing that it has a certain relation to something else, is no reason why the truth of an Objective should not consist in such a relation. The judgment that the truth of a given judgment consists in a relation to an existent is again about something not itself—namely, the truth of the first judgment and an existent, and it is on the real nature of this something else that the truth of this second judgment in turn depends. If, therefore, the judgment that the truth of the given judgment consists

in a relation to an existent itself refers to something other than itself, there seems to be no reason why we should not admit that the truth of the first judgment also involves such a reference. It is, of course, true that I can only know *that* a judgment is true by knowing another judgment about it, but that does not mean that the truth of the given judgment can only be defined by reference to itself, so that there is no vicious indefinite regress involved.

Moreover, it seems possible to know directly the truth of a judgment, without judging *that* it is true, just as I can be directly aware of the relation between the table at which I am writing and the fire without asserting *that* the latter is to the right of the former. In this connection we must not let ourselves be misled by the fact of language. Since we cannot convey information one to another by passing round an eye like the Grææ, to understand any communication from another is to apprehend an Objective. It follows, therefore, that although we can be directly aware of the nature of what is immediately given and of its existence, and of relations between parts of what is immediately given, yet when we inform another what it is that is given, or that something is given, what the other person apprehends as the result of understanding the judgment, as opposed to making use of his sense organs for himself, is an Objective about the facts directly apprehended. *E.g.*, if I tell you what is now immediately given to me, what you gather is *that* there is a fire to the right of my table. So it is in our present discussion of the whole question of judgment and Objectives. When I say that the relation between an Objective and the facts to which it relates may be apprehended directly, what you gather on understanding my words (whether you believe them or not) is *that* there are Objectives, *that* there are things to which Objectives correspond, and *that* the relation between the latter and the former can be directly apprehended. What you gather from my very statement that the truth of an Objective depends on a relation to something not an Objective

is itself an Objective ; but that does not mean that there are not other things than Objectives to which Objectives refer, and upon which the truth of Objectives depends. The sounds or the written characters or the gestures by means of which information is conveyed are at any rate existent things.

The essential nature of Objectives, then, is to refer to something other than themselves. This does not mean that the reference of an Objective to that to which it refers is another Objective or another judgment. Although, of course, instead of understanding the judgment simply, or of apprehending directly the relation of an Objective to the facts to which it refers, I can judge *that* an Objective has this reference to something outside it, just as I can judge not only that A is B, but that it is true that A is B.

Judgment is sometimes represented as the arrangement by the mind of its objects. (Much the same notion seems to be contained in the statement that a judgment is an ideal construction.) When the arrangement of the objects in the judgment corresponds with the actual arrangement of these objects the judgment is true, when this is not the case it is false. Now in discussing this view there are certain considerations we must bear in mind at the outset. There is one arrangement of the objects of the mind which the judging mind as such certainly does not arrange. When I put on my boots or poke the fire I arrange the objects of my mind, but to do these things is not judgment. Nor, on the other hand, will any judgment serve in lieu of the actual manipulation on the part of my fingers. The whole point of saying that the judgment that I have put on my boots is true, is that what it announces is so whether I judge it to be so or not. The objects of my judgment, in other words, are arranged among themselves, and it is such arrangements which it is the business of the mind in judgment to assert. The mind may with its objects form a wider arrangement. But such an arrangement is not necessarily judgment, for I may perceive my boots without

making a judgment about them. Also there is often an arrangement between my mind and other things when they are not my objects at all, for there is certainly a connection between my mind and my body, and I am not always aware of objects behind my back, for example. It is clear, then, that the arrangement between the objects of the mind *is* relevant to the question of the nature of judgment and truth, but that there is another arrangement which is likewise involved. This present view of judgment itself distinguishes between the objects as arranged in the judgment and the actual arrangement of the objects. Now we have already noticed the ambiguity of the term "object of judgment," an ambiguity we cleared up by the theory of the Objective as opposed to the facts to which the Objective refers, and with which, if the judgment is true, it corresponds. It is, therefore, scarcely necessary to insist that my boots, the object of the judging mind in one sense, are not in my mind, but in this house, which in turn is in this city, and so on. Nor need we stay to consider specially the vicious infinite involved in a theory of judgment which can only be stated in terms of a distinction between the objects in the judgment and these objects in their actual order, since this is only due to the failure to clear up the ambiguity to which we have drawn attention. What it is worth while to point out is that the correspondence between two "arrangements" on which the truth of a judgment turns cannot be a correspondence between two factual arrangements, like the arrangements of two clocks. If two clocks correspond exactly that is an interesting fact which I might assert of them, but it is not a judgment. If there were an exact correspondence between the mental process of some mind and the physiological processes going on in its body, for example, that would be interesting because it would support the theory of psycho-physical parallelism. But we should not necessarily have judgment, for such a mind might be capable only of sentience. When we ask what it is the

correspondence of which with a given factual complex A B yields a true judgment, the only answer is that it is that A is B, an Objective. And it is an arrangement, a complex, which corresponds to the given factual arrangement in the sense that it can be split up into a number of simpler Objectives, each of which is true of part of the factual complex.
