

the immoveable dead live a vague, almost extinct life. *Yesterday* means to her *in the past*, and *to-morrow—in the future*, neither of these words denoting to her mind a precise day in relation to to-day, either preceding or following it. This is another example of too extended a meaning, which must be narrowed. There is hardly a word used by children which has not to undergo this operation. Like primitive peoples they are inclined to general and wide ideas; linguists tell us that such is the character of roots and consequently of the first conceptions as they are found in the most ancient documents, especially in the *Rig-Veda*.

Speaking generally, the child presents in a passing state the mental characteristics that are found in a fixed state in primitive civilisations, very much as the human embryo presents in a passing state the physical characteristics that are found in a fixed state in the classes of inferior animals."

IX.—NOTES.

The Meaning of 'Existence' and Descartes' 'Cogito'.—In dealing with very difficult abstractions, logicians inculcate the practice of resolving them into the corresponding particulars. The prescription is well put by Samuel Bailey thus:—

"If the student of philosophy would always, or at least in cases of importance, adopt the rule of throwing the abstract language in which it is so frequently couched into a concrete form, he would find it a powerful aid in dealing with the obscurities and perplexities of metaphysical speculation. He would then see clearly the character of the immense mass of nothings which constitute what passes for philosophy."

Certain abstractions are difficult to handle from their complexity; such is 'Life'. The rule to refer to the particular things is especially called for in this case. Less complex is the notion of 'Force'; still the particulars are so different in their nature, that we must be sure to represent all the classes—mechanical or molar forces, molecular forces, and the forces of voluntary agents. The danger here is that we coin an abstraction distinct from matter altogether, like Plato's 'Ideas' and Aristotle's 'Form'.

If any abstract notion stands in need of all the aids that logic can supply, it is 'Existence'. Try it then by the method of particulars. What are the things that are said to exist? There is no difficulty in finding such things; stars, seas, mountains, minerals, plants, human beings, kingdoms, cities, commerce,—exist. It is not for want of particulars, therefore, that we are in any doubts about the meaning of 'Existence'; it is rather for the opposite reason—we have too many particulars. In fact, the word 'exist' means everything, excludes nothing. In all other notions, there is a division of the universe into objects possessing the attribute, and objects devoid of it; 'Life' both includes and excludes. But 'Existence' is the entire Universe—extended and unextended, matter and mind. Is there not a risk that when you mean everything, you mean nothing?

I have maintained (*Deductive Logic*, p. 59) that 'Existence' is an unreal notion, for the very reason that it has no real negative. According to the Law of Universal Relativity, the *summa genera* of things must be at least two: say mind and not-mind, subject and object. We may in form put the two into one sum, and give it a name 'Existence,' but we cannot thereby construct a new meaning. There still remain the two distinct genera, in mutual contrast.

On this ground, I argued (p. 107) against Mill's including 'Existence' among the Universal Predicates, in the final Import of Propositions. My purpose requires me to quote the passage:—

"With regard to the predicate EXISTENCE, occurring in certain propositions, we may remark that no science, or department of logical method springs out of it. Indeed, all such propositions are more or less abbreviated, or elliptical; when fully expressed they fall under either co-existence or succession. When we say, There *exists* a conspiracy for a particular purpose, we mean that, at the present time, a body of men have formed themselves into a society for a particular object; which is a complex affirmation resolvable into propositions of co-existence and of succession (as causation). The assertion that the dodo does not exist, points to the fact that this animal, once known in a certain place, has disappeared or become extinct; is no longer associated with the locality: all which may be better stated without the use of the verb 'exist'. There is a debated question—Does an Ether exist? but the correcter form would be this—Are heat and light and other radiant influences propagated by an ethereal medium diffused in space? which is a proposition of causation. In like manner the question of the Existence of a Deity cannot be discussed in that form. It is properly a question as to the First Cause of the Universe, and as to the continued exertion of that Cause in providential superintendence."

Fortunately, Mill has furnished us with his reply in the latest edition of his *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 113, n., as follows:—

"I accept fully Mr. Bain's Law of Relativity, but I do not understand by it that, to enable us to apprehend or be conscious of any fact, it is necessary that we should contrast it with some other positive fact. The antithesis necessary to consciousness need not, I conceive, be an antithesis between two positives; it may be between one positive and its negative. Hobbes was undoubtedly right when he said that a single sensation indefinitely prolonged would cease to be felt at all; but simple intermission, without other change, would restore it to consciousness. In order to be conscious of heat, it is not necessary that we should pass to it from a state of no sensation, or from a sensation of some other kind. The relative opposite of Being, considered as a *summm genus*, is Non-entity, or Nothing; and we have, now and then, occasion to consider and discuss things merely in contrast with Non-entity."

"I grant that the *decision* of questions of Existence usually if not always depends on a previous question of either Causation or Co-existence. But Existence is nevertheless a different thing from Causation or Co-existence, and can be predicated apart from them. The meaning of the abstract name of Existence, and the connotation of the concrete name Being, consist, like the meaning of all other names, in sensations or states of consciousness: their peculiarity is that to exist, is to excite, or be capable of exciting, any sensations or states of consciousness: no matter what, but it is indispensable that there should be some. It was from overlooking this that Hegel, finding that Being is

an abstraction reached by thinking away all particular attributes, arrived at the self-contradictory proposition on which he founded all his philosophy, that Being is the same as Nothing. It is really the name of Something, taken in the most comprehensive sense of the word."

The contention here is that the Law of Relativity is sufficiently complied with, through the alternative notion expressed by Non-entity, or Nothing. From this I must still dissent. But I am more concerned at present with Mill's account of the positive meaning of the term, namely, whatever excites in us "any sensations or states of consciousness, no matter what". In other words, when we cannot say of anything that it is either Object or Subject, but still treat it as a reality, we may use the supra-relative terms, 'existence,' 'thing,' 'being'. Now I grant that the occasion may arise for stating a thing in this uncertain fashion; and that a word may be suitably employed for that purpose. But this is different from stating a property common to Object and Subject, and coining a higher genus including both, in the same way that Object includes, as sub-genera, Matter and Space. I regard 'Existence' employed in this way, as having no separate or original meaning; it is merely a short synonym for a complex alternative given in terms of the two highest genera that possess reality—Object and Subject. I contend, in short, that for the meaning of 'Existence,' we need always to refer to some of the other attributes of things; that, as an independent attribute, it is devoid of all real standing.

There must be a certain convenience in the term, otherwise it would not be so often employed in everyday life. I can only repeat my view, that it is an *elliptical* term; it expresses shortly and yet sufficiently, what many words might be needed to express fully. When we ask, Does such a thing exist? we imply a definite set of conditions of time, place, and circumstance. Does there *exist* a cure for hydrophobia? means when fully stated—Will any substance or application, known or accessible to us, cure hydrophobia? There is no meaning specific to the word 'Existence'; what it signifies is already amply expressed in other forms.

To come to the greatest example of all—Being or Existence, as applied to the Deity. Theologians habitually employ the couple—Being and Attributes of God. This seems all very natural. We have first to ask whether there be a God, and, that decided in the affirmative, we next inquire what are His Attributes. On the surface, nothing could be more plausible than this arrangement. It lays down 'Being' or 'Existence' as a fact by itself, apart from every Attribute whatsoever. The natural theologian must substantiate Existence before he venture on any inquiry as to Eternity, Infinity, Wisdom, Power, Goodness. Let us, however, look a little below the surface. After putting forward 'Being' as the thesis, how does the Theologian proceed to establish it? There is a singular uniformity of procedure on the point, so that there is no need to make many references. I will take, as a representative, one of the acutest minds that ever discussed this or any other theological thesis—Thomas Brown. The

habit is to preface the arguments for 'Being' with a re-statement of the position in expanded phraseology: thus says Brown, the proof of the Existence is the proof of "a Creator and Preserver of the Universe". In short, the real inquiry is, how did the Universe commence, and how is it maintained and controlled? More familiarly, it is stated as the question of a First Cause.

If we were to be hypercritical, we might say that the division by theologians into 'Being' and 'Attributes' is faulty, in respect that 'Being' really means two of the 'Attributes'—Creative Agency and Providential Control—these two implying a good deal more, namely, duration in the past (not inaptly called Infinite), extent of agency over space, likewise so vast as to admit the same epithet, together with power and wisdom, on a par with the work involved. We might undoubtedly reserve the *moral* Attributes for a second head; but the first head 'Being' inevitably contains all those now named. Thus, supposing the words 'Being,' 'Existence,' were entirely discarded, there would be nothing lost. The line of argument would be exactly what we now find it. To recur to Brown's treatment. He, as we might expect, scouts the figment of language—'Necessary Existence'; and proceeds, upon the usual argument from Design, to show that the Universe originated with a Mind. This is the real position concealed under the title 'Existence'. Brown's second branch—the 'Attributes'—comprises Unity, Wisdom, Power, Goodness. The proof of these is pretty much a repetition, or at all events, an extension and exhaustion of the argument from Design. If we establish a Mind as the First Cause, we must ascribe to that Mind an amount and character of efficiency comparable to the effect, which is all that is meant by the Attributes.

Dugald Stewart introduces natural theology with the question—"Whence am I, whence the tribes of plants and animals, whence the beautiful fabric of this Universe?" He then uses as a convenient abbreviation—"proof of the existence of the Deity"; otherwise, "the existence of an intelligent and powerful cause from the works of creation". So it always is. We may state the question as 'Being' or 'Existence,' but we must prove it as *Cause and Effect*. Here is another variety of wording—"There is a Divine Being, whose essence is love, grace, and mercy". The expression "Divine Being" is a short summary of all the natural attributes, and the intention of the speaker is to join with these the moral attributes. There is no such thing as Existence in the abstract.

I do not mean to discuss Descartes' mode of establishing Theism, but I may refer to his handling of the question to show that by the existence of God he means the First Cause of the world. "By the name God, I understand a substance infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which myself and all other things were created." The proof is still a proof from Causation, and the idea has no other significance.

I come now to the formula—'*Cogito, ergo sum*'. Mr. Matthew Arnold's criticism of this formula is expended on the '*sum*'. He is

unable to assign any distinct meaning to 'Being' or 'Existence'; and therefore professes himself unable to comprehend the demonstrations given by theologians in general of the existence of God. Partly in earnest, and partly in his inimitable banter, he goes after the etymology of the word 'be,' and the other synonyma. Sometimes, indeed, a reference to the origin of an obscure word throws a light upon the present meaning; the connection of 'just' with 'ordered' has a certain significance. But the great metaphysical abstractions are expressed by terms whose origin only reveals a metaphor. That 'be' signifies to 'breathe' really teaches nothing at all; we could not substitute 'breathing' for 'being'. Mr. Arnold knows well enough that etymology is not likely to solve any serious problem. His more direct course would have been to ask what other things, besides God, 'Being' or 'Existence' is applied to. Present use is the only criterion of meaning. If he had followed this inquiry, he would have encountered the real difficulty, namely, that the word means anything and everything.

How then shall we deal with 'I think, therefore, I exist'? Is 'exist' here elliptical, and, if so, what is the full expression? One would like to have had some various wording of the inference, that would answer the same purpose as the equivalents of the 'Existence' of the Deity. But we have no such help in the present instance. If 'exist' meant to 'live' as opposed to 'death,' the argument would have some meaning, but that is not intended. We may, however, fall back upon Mill's equivalent term—'Something'. It would then be—'I think, therefore, I am something'. I have already admitted that 'Existence' would have meaning in the form of an alternative—either Subject or Object, we do not say which: there being no reality but what is one or other. This is an equivalent of 'something'. The form would then be—'I think, therefore, I am either Subject or Object'. A worse than an undecided inference; for whoever knows the meaning of the word 'think' must know that it is a mental quality; and to throw the question open, whether it be mind or not-mind, is not to go forward, but to go backward; not to extend our knowledge, but to contract it.

The assertion 'I think' would seem, therefore, to entitle us to say at least, 'I am mind'; 'I am not the opposite of mind,' 'I am a definite or precise something,' which is much better for me than being an indefinite or alternative something. To be sure, the inference is unreal; the meaning of 'think' contains the meaning of 'mind,' if we know what thinking is, that is, if we are using the word with a consciousness of meaning. A real inference might be constructed thus: 'I think, therefore I feel, and also will'; experience shows that these three facts are always associated; the association receiving the name 'Mind'.

Another real inference is 'I think, therefore I am not brute matter'; also the fruit of our experience of the kind of organisation that thinking is allied with. But the proposition 'I think' may itself be subjected to analysis and criticism, which will illustrate

farther the illogical character of the whole transaction. Let us separate the proposition into its two parts—subject and predicate; let us inquire what is the precise meaning of the subject, and what of the predicate: we then discover whether it is a real proposition, whether the predicate *adds* anything to the subject. What is 'I'? The answer must be, all that is included in the terms 'man' or 'human being'—all the parts and functions of body and mind that go to make up an individual man or woman. Consequently to say 'I think' is mere redundancy; whoever understands 'I' already knows that much; it is only repeating a part of the meaning of the subject of the proposition. In short, it is a mere verbal or analytic proposition; it may serve a purpose, but that purpose is not to found an inference.

On the whole, as to the '*Cogito, ergo sum*,' I am of opinion that we should cease endeavouring to extract sunbeams from that cucumber.

A. BAIN.

The Logic of "If."—I have lately come across a passage in *Clarissa Harlowe* where Richardson indicates with great clearness a distinction which has long seemed to me to be overlooked by logicians in their treatment of Hypothetical Syllogism. It is in the admirable scene where Morden and Lovelace are first brought together and runs thus:—Morden. "But *if* you have the value for my cousin that you say you have, you must needs think"—Lovelace, "You must allow me, sir, to interrupt you. *If* I have the value I *say* I have. I hope, sir, when I *say* I have that value, there is no cause for that *if*, as you pronounced it with an emphasis." Morden. "Had you heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, you would have found that my *if* was rather an *if* of inference than of doubt."

The question has been much debated among logicians whether the so-called Hypothetical Syllogism of this type

If A is B, C is D
But A is B
∴ C is D

is a *mediate* inference like the common Categorical Syllogism, or whether the conclusion is not *immediately* drawn from the one premiss 'If A is B, C is D'. Prof. Bain, for example, (*Logic* I. p. 116), would deny that the reasoning is mediate, and the reader may consult his work for a short summary of the different arguments urged by Mansel and other distinguished logicians on the same side of the question. Some of the arguments, indeed, are too plainly defective, as when Mansel declares that in the Hypothetical Syllogism "the minor (A is B) and the conclusion (C is D) indifferently change places and each of them is merely one of the two members constituting the major"—which is not the case in Categorical Syllogism. Here he commits a very great blunder, since it is notorious that 'A is B' cannot be got as a conclusion with 'C is D' as second premiss. However the whole weight of authority in favour of the inference being *immediate* is undoubtedly great, and if one takes the other view, some