

# **History of Philosophy**

***~ Reader ~***

Budapest Semester in Cognitive Science  
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# Parmenides: *Fragments*

## Proemium

The horses which bear me conducted me as far as desire may go, when they had brought me speeding along to the far-famed road of a divinity who herself bears onward through all things the man of understanding. Along this road I was borne, along this the horses, wise indeed, bore me hastening the chariot on, and maidens guided my course. The axle in its box, enkindled by the heat, uttered the sound of a pipe (for it was driven on by the rolling wheels on either side), when the maiden daughters of Helios hastened to conduct me [Page 89] to the light, leaving the realms of night, pushing aside with the hand the veils from their heads. There is the gate between the ways of day and night lintel above it, and stone threshold beneath, hold it in place, and high in air it is fitted with great doors; retributive Justice holds the keys that open and shut them. However, the maidens addressed her with mild words, and found means to persuade her to thrust back speedily for them the fastened bolt from the doors; and the gate swinging free made the opening wide, turning in their sockets the bronze hinges, well fastened with bolts and nails; then through this the maidens kept horses and chariot straight on the high-road. The goddess received me with kindness, and, taking my right hand in hers, she addressed me with these words:-- Youth joined with drivers immortal, who hast come with the horses that bear thee, to our dwelling, hail! since no evil fate has bid thee come on this road (for it lies far outside the beaten track of men), but right and justice. 'Tis necessary for thee to learn all things, both the abiding essence of persuasive truth, and men's opinions in which rests no true belief. But nevertheless these things also thou shalt learn, since it is necessary to judge accurately the things that rest on opinion, passing all things carefully in review.

## Concening Truth

Come now I will tell thee-and do thou hear my word and heed it-what are the only ways of enquiry that lead to knowledge. The one way, [Page 91] assuming that being is and that it is impossible for it not to be, is the trustworthy path, for truth attends it. The other, that not-being is and that it necessarily is, I call a wholly incredible course, since thou canst not recognise not-being (for this is impossible), nor couldst thou speak of it, for thought and being are the same thing.

It makes no difference to me at what point I begin, for I shall always come back again to this.

It is necessary both to say and to think that being is; for it is possible that being is, and it is impossible that not-being is; this is what I bid thee ponder. I restrain thee from this first course of investigation; and from that course also along which mortals knowing nothing wander aimlessly, since helplessness directs the roaming thought in their bosoms, and they are borne on deaf and like-wise blind, amazed, headstrong races, they who consider being and not-being as the same and not the same; and that all things follow a back-turning course.

That things which are not are, shall never prevail, she said, but do thou restrain thy mind from this course of investigation.

[Page 93] And let not long-practised habit compel thee along this path, thine eye careless, thine ear and thy tongue overpowered by noise; but do thou weigh the much contested refutation of their words, which I have uttered.

There is left but this single path to tell thee of: namely, that being is. And on this path there are many proofs that being is without beginning and indestructible; it is universal, existing alone, immovable and without end; nor ever was it nor will it be, since it now is, all together, one, and continuous. For what generating of it wilt thou seek out? From what did it grow, and how? I will not permit thee to say or to think that it came from not-being; for it is impossible to think or to say that not-being is. What thine would then have stirred it into activity that it should arise from not-being later rather than earlier? So it is necessary that being either is absolutely or is not. Nor will the force of the argument permit that anything spring from being except being itself. Therefore justice does not slacken her fetters to permit generation or destruction, but holds being firm.

(The decision as to these things comes in at this point.)

**[Page 95]** Either being exists or it does not exist. It has been decided in accordance with necessity to leave the unthinkable, unspeakable path, as this is not the true path, but that the other path exists and is true. How then should being suffer destruction? How come into existence? If it came into existence, it is not being, nor will it be if it ever is to come into existence. . . . So its generation is extinguished, and its destruction is proved incredible.

Nor is it subject to division, for it is all alike; nor is anything more in it, so as to prevent its cohesion, nor anything less, but all is full of being; therefore the all is continuous, for being is contiguous to being.

Farther it is unmoved, in the hold of great chains, without beginning or end, since generation and destruction have completely disappeared and true belief has rejected them. It lies the same, abiding in the same state and by itself accordingly it abides fixed in the same spot. For powerful necessity holds it in confining bonds, which restrain it on all sides. Therefore divine right does not permit being to have any end; but it is lacking in nothing, for if it lacked anything it would lack everything.

Nevertheless, behold steadfastly all absent things as present to thy mind; for thou canst not separate **[Page 97]** being in one place from contact with being in another place; it is not scattered here and there through the universe, nor is it compounded of parts.

Therefore thinking and that by reason of which thought exists are one and the same thing, for thou wilt not find thinking without the being from which it receives its name. Nor is there nor will there be anything apart from being; for fate has linked it together, so that it is a whole and immovable. Wherefore all these things will be but a name, all these things which mortals determined in the belief that they were true, viz. that things arise and perish, that they are and are not, that they change their position and vary in colour.

But since there is a final limit, it is perfected on every side, like the mass of a rounded sphere, equally distant from the centre at every point. For it is necessary that it should neither be greater at all nor less anywhere, since there is no not-being which can prevent it from arriving at equality, nor is being such that there may ever be more than what is in one part and less in another, since the whole is inviolate. For if it is equal on all sides, it abides in equality within its limits.

# **Plato**

# **Parmenides**

126a – 136e

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<http://classics.mit.edu>

# Parmenides

By Plato

Written 370 B.C.E

Translated by Benjamin Jowett

We had come from our home at Clazomenae to Athens, and met Adeimantus and Glaucon in the Agora. Welcome, Cephalus, said Adeimantus, taking me by the hand; is there anything which we can do for you in Athens?

Yes; that is why I am here; I wish to ask a favour of you.

What may that be? he said.

I want you to tell me the name of your half brother, which I have forgotten; he was a mere child when I last came hither from Clazomenae, but that was a long time ago; his father's name, if I remember rightly, was Pyrilampes?

Yes, he said, and the name of our brother, Antiphon; but why do you ask?

Let me introduce some countrymen of mine, I said; they are lovers of philosophy, and have heard that Antiphon was intimate with a certain Pythodorus, a friend of Zeno, and remembers a conversation which took place between Socrates, Zeno, and Parmenides many years ago, Pythodorus having often recited it to him.

Quite true.

And could we hear it? I asked.

Nothing easier, he replied; when he was a youth he made a careful study of the piece; at present his thoughts run in another direction; like his grandfather Antiphon he is devoted to horses. But, if that is what you want, let us go and look for him; he dwells at Melita, which is quite near, and he has only just left us to go home.

Accordingly we went to look for him; he was at home, and in the act of giving a bridle to a smith to be fitted. When he had done with the smith, his brothers told him the purpose of our visit; and he saluted me as an acquaintance whom he remembered from my former visit, and we asked him to repeat the dialogue. At first he was not very willing, and complained of the trouble, but at length he consented. He told us that Pythodorus had described to him the appearance of Parmenides and Zeno; they came to Athens, as he said, at the great Panathenaea; the former was, at the time of his visit, about 65 years old, very white with age, but well favoured. Zeno was nearly 40 years of age, tall and fair to look upon; in the days of his youth he was reported to have been beloved by Parmenides. He said that they lodged with Pythodorus in the Ceramicus, outside the wall, whither Socrates, then a very young man, came to see them, and many others with him; they wanted to hear the writings of Zeno, which had been brought to Athens for the first time on the occasion of their visit. These Zeno himself read to them in the absence of Parmenides, and had very nearly finished when Pythodorus entered, and with him Parmenides and Aristoteles who was afterwards one of the Thirty, and heard the little that remained of the dialogue. Pythodorus had heard Zeno repeat

them before.

When the recitation was completed, Socrates requested that the first thesis of the first argument might be read over again, and this having been done, he said: What is your meaning, Zeno? Do you maintain that if being is many, it must be both like and unlike, and that this is impossible, for neither can the like be unlike, nor the unlike like-is that your position?

Just so, said Zeno.

And if the unlike cannot be like, or the like unlike, then according to you, being could not be many; for this would involve an impossibility. In all that you say have you any other purpose except to disprove the being of the many? and is not each division of your treatise intended to furnish a separate proof of this, there being in all as many proofs of the not-being of the many as you have composed arguments? Is that your meaning, or have I misunderstood you?

No, said Zeno; you have correctly understood my general purpose.

I see, Parmenides, said Socrates, that Zeno would like to be not only one with you in friendship but your second self in his writings too; he puts what you say in another way, and would fain make believe that he is telling us something which is new. For you, in your poems, say *The All is one*, and of this you adduce excellent proofs; and he on the other hand says *There is no many*; and on behalf of this he offers overwhelming evidence. You affirm unity, he denies plurality. And so you deceive the world into believing that you are saying different things when really you are saying much the same. This is a strain of art beyond the reach of most of us.

Yes, Socrates, said Zeno. But although you are as keen as a Spartan hound in pursuing the track, you do not fully apprehend the true motive of the composition, which is not really such an artificial work as you imagine; for what you speak of was an accident; there was no pretence of a great purpose; nor any serious intention of deceiving the world. The truth is, that these writings of mine were meant to protect the arguments of Parmenides against those who make fun of him and seek to show the many ridiculous and contradictory results which they suppose to follow from the affirmation of the one. My answer is addressed to the partisans of the many, whose attack I return with interest by retorting upon them that their hypothesis of the being of many, if carried out, appears to be still more ridiculous than the hypothesis of the being of one. Zeal for my master led me to write the book in the days of my youth, but some one stole the copy; and therefore I had no choice whether it should be published or not; the motive, however, of writing, was not the ambition of an elder man, but the pugnacity of a young one. This you do not seem to see, Socrates; though in other respects, as I was saying, your notion is a very just one.

I understand, said Socrates, and quite accept your account. But tell me, Zeno, do you not further think that there is an idea of likeness in itself, and another idea of unlikeness, which is the opposite of likeness, and that in these two, you and I and all other things to which we apply the term many, participate-things which participate in likeness become in that degree and manner like; and so far as they participate in unlikeness become in that degree unlike, or both like and unlike in the degree in which they participate in both? And may not all things partake of both opposites, and be both like and unlike, by reason of this participation?-Where is the wonder? Now if a person could prove the absolute like to become unlike, or the absolute unlike to become like, that, in my opinion, would indeed be a wonder; but there is nothing extraordinary, Zeno, in showing that the things which only partake of likeness and

unlikeness experience both. Nor, again, if a person were to show that all is one by partaking of one, and at the same time many by partaking of many, would that be very astonishing. But if he were to show me that the absolute one was many, or the absolute many one, I should be truly amazed. And so of all the rest: I should be surprised to hear that the natures or ideas themselves had these opposite qualities; but not if a person wanted to prove of me that I was many and also one. When he wanted to show that I was many he would say that I have a right and a left side, and a front and a back, and an upper and a lower half, for I cannot deny that I partake of multitude; when, on the other hand, he wants to prove that I am one, he will say, that we who are here assembled are seven, and that I am one and partake of the one. In both instances he proves his case. So again, if a person shows that such things as wood, stones, and the like, being many are also one, we admit that he shows the coexistence the one and many, but he does not show that the many are one or the one many; he is uttering not a paradox but a truism. If however, as I just now suggested, some one were to abstract simple notions of like, unlike, one, many, rest, motion, and similar ideas, and then to show that these admit of admixture and separation in themselves, I should be very much astonished. This part of the argument appears to be treated by you, Zeno, in a very spirited manner; but, as I was saying, I should be far more amazed if any one found in the ideas themselves which are apprehended by reason, the same puzzle and entanglement which you have shown to exist in visible objects.

While Socrates was speaking, Pythodorus thought that Parmenides and Zeno were not altogether pleased at the successive steps of the argument; but still they gave the closest attention and often looked at one another, and smiled as if in admiration of him. When he had finished, Parmenides expressed their feelings in the following words:-

Socrates, he said, I admire the bent of your mind towards philosophy; tell me now, was this your own distinction between ideas in themselves and the things which partake of them? and do you think that there is an idea of likeness apart from the likeness which we possess, and of the one and many, and of the other things which Zeno mentioned?

I think that there are such ideas, said Socrates.

Parmenides proceeded: And would you also make absolute ideas of the just and the beautiful and the good, and of all that class?

Yes, he said, I should.

And would you make an idea of man apart from us and from all other human creatures, or of fire and water?

I am often undecided, Parmenides, as to whether I ought to include them or not.

And would you feel equally undecided, Socrates, about things of which the mention may provoke a smile?-I mean such things as hair, mud, dirt, or anything else which is vile and paltry; would you suppose that each of these has an idea distinct from the actual objects with which we come into contact, or not?

Certainly not, said Socrates; visible things like these are such as they appear to us, and I am afraid that there would be an absurdity in assuming any idea of them, although I sometimes get disturbed, and begin to think that there is nothing without an idea; but then again, when I have taken up this position, I run away, because I am afraid that I may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense, and perish; and so I return to the ideas of which I was just now speaking, and



occupy myself with them.

Yes, Socrates, said Parmenides; that is because you are still young; the time will come, if I am not mistaken, when philosophy will have a firmer grasp of you, and then you will not despise even the meanest things; at your age, you are too much disposed to regard opinions of men. But I should like to know whether you mean that there are certain ideas of which all other things partake, and from which they derive their names; that similars, for example, become similar, because they partake of similarity; and great things become great, because they partake of greatness; and that just and beautiful things become just and beautiful, because they partake of justice and beauty?

Yes, certainly, said Socrates that is my meaning.

Then each individual partakes either of the whole of the idea or else of a part of the idea? Can there be any other mode of participation?

There cannot be, he said.

Then do you think that the whole idea is one, and yet, being one, is in each one of the many?

Why not, Parmenides? said Socrates.

Because one and the same thing will exist as a whole at the same time in many separate individuals, and will therefore be in a state of separation from itself.

Nay, but the idea may be like the day which is one and the same in many places at once, and yet continuous with itself; in this way each idea may be one; and the same in all at the same time.

I like your way, Socrates, of making one in many places at once. You mean to say, that if I were to spread out a sail and cover a number of men, there would be one whole including many-is not that your meaning?

I think so.

And would you say that the whole sail includes each man, or a part of it only, and different parts different men?

The latter.

Then, Socrates, the ideas themselves will be divisible, and things which participate in them will have a part of them only and not the whole idea existing in each of them?

That seems to follow.

Then would you like to say, Socrates, that the one idea is really divisible and yet remains one?

Certainly not, he said.

Suppose that you divide absolute greatness, and that of the many great things, each one is great in virtue of a portion of greatness less than absolute greatness-is that conceivable?

No.

Or will each equal thing, if possessing some small portion of equality less than absolute equality, be equal to some other thing by virtue of that portion only?

Impossible.

Or suppose one of us to have a portion of smallness; this is but a part of the small, and therefore the absolutely small is greater; if the absolutely small be greater, that to which the part of the small is added will be smaller and not greater than before.

How absurd!

Then in what way, Socrates, will all things participate in the ideas, if they are unable to participate in them either as parts or wholes?

Indeed, he said, you have asked a question which is not easily answered.

Well, said Parmenides, and what do you say of another question?

What question?

I imagine that the way in which you are led to assume one idea of each kind is as follows: - You see a number of great objects, and when you look at them there seems to you to be one and the same idea (or nature) in them all; hence you conceive of greatness as one.

Very true, said Socrates.

And if you go on and allow your mind in like manner to embrace in one view the idea of greatness and of great things which are not the idea, and -to compare them, will not another greatness arise, which will appear to be the source of all these?

It would seem so.

Then another idea of greatness now comes into view over and above absolute greatness, and the individuals which partake of it; and then another, over and above all these, by virtue of which they will all be great, and so each idea instead of being one will be infinitely multiplied.

But may not the ideas, asked Socrates, be thoughts only, and have no proper existence except in our minds, Parmenides? For in that case each idea may still be one, and not experience this infinite multiplication.

And can there be individual thoughts which are thoughts of nothing?

Impossible, he said.

The thought must be of something?

Yes.

Of something which is or which is not?

Of something which is.

Must it not be of a single something, which the thought recognizes as attaching to all, being a single form or nature?

Yes.

And will not the something which is apprehended as one and the same in all, be an idea?

From that, again, there is no escape.

Then, said Parmenides, if you say that everything else participates in the ideas, must you not say either that everything is made up of thoughts, and that all things think; or that they are thoughts but have no thought?

The latter view, Parmenides, is no more rational than the previous one. In my opinion, the ideas are, as it were, patterns fixed in nature, and other things are like them, and resemblances

of them-what is meant by the participation of other things in the ideas, is really assimilation to them.

But if, said he, the individual is like the idea, must not the idea also be like the individual, in so far as the individual is a resemblance of the idea? That which is like, cannot be conceived of as other than the like of like.

Impossible.

And when two things are alike, must they not partake of the same idea?

They must.

And will not that of which the two partake, and which makes them alike, be the idea itself?

Certainly.

Then the idea cannot be like the individual, or the individual like the idea; for if they are alike, some further idea of likeness will always be coming to light, and if that be like anything else, another; and new ideas will be always arising, if the idea resembles that which partakes of it?

Quite true.

The theory, then that other things participate in the ideas by resemblance, has to be given up, and some other mode of participation devised?

It would seem so.

Do you see then, Socrates, how great is the difficulty of affirming the ideas to be absolute?

Yes, indeed.

And, further, let me say that as yet you only understand a small part of the difficulty which is involved if you make of each thing a single idea, parting it off from other things.

What difficulty? he said.

There are many, but the greatest of all is this:-If an opponent argues that these ideas, being such as we say they ought to be, must remain unknown, no one can prove to him that he is wrong, unless he who denies their existence be a man of great ability and knowledge, and is willing to follow a long and laborious demonstration; he will remain unconvinced, and still insist that they cannot be known.

What do you mean, Parmenides? said Socrates.

In the first place, I think, Socrates, that you, or any one who maintains the existence of absolute essences, will admit that they cannot exist in us.

No, said Socrates; for then they would be no longer absolute.

True, he said; and therefore when ideas are what they are in relation to one another, their essence is determined by a relation among themselves, and has nothing to do with the resemblances, or whatever they are to be termed, which are in our sphere, and from which we receive this or that name when we partake of them. And the things which are within our sphere and have the same names with them, are likewise only relative to one another, and not to the ideas which have the same names with them, but belong to themselves and not to them.

What do you mean? said Socrates.

I may illustrate my meaning in this way, said Parmenides:-A master has a slave; now there is

nothing absolute in the relation between them, which is simply a relation of one man to another. But there is also an idea of mastership in the abstract, which is relative to the idea of slavery in the abstract. These natures have nothing to do with us, nor we with them; they are concerned with themselves only, and we with ourselves. Do you see my meaning?

Yes, said Socrates, I quite see your meaning.

And will not knowledge-I mean absolute knowledge-answer to absolute truth?

Certainly.

And each kind of absolute knowledge will answer to each kind of absolute being?

Yes.

But the knowledge which we have, will answer to the truth which we have; and again, each kind of knowledge which we have, will be a knowledge of each kind of being which we have?

Certainly.

But the ideas themselves, as you admit, we have not, and cannot have?

No, we cannot.

And the absolute natures or kinds are known severally by the absolute idea of knowledge?

Yes.

And we have not got the idea of knowledge?

No.

Then none of the ideas are known to us, because we have no share in absolute knowledge?

I suppose not.

Then the nature of the beautiful in itself, and of the good in itself, and all other ideas which we suppose to exist absolutely, are unknown to us?

It would seem so.

I think that there is a stranger consequence still.

What is it?

Would you, or would you not say, that absolute knowledge, if there is such a thing, must be a far more exact knowledge than our knowledge; and the same of beauty and of the rest?

Yes.

And if there be such a thing as participation in absolute knowledge, no one is more likely than God to have this most exact knowledge?

Certainly.

But then, will God, having absolute knowledge, have a knowledge of human things?

Why not?

Because, Socrates, said Parmenides, we have admitted that the ideas are not valid in relation to human things; nor human things in relation to them; the relations of either are limited to their respective spheres.

Yes, that has been admitted.

And if God has this perfect authority, and perfect knowledge, his authority cannot rule us, nor

his knowledge know us, or any human thing; just as our authority does not extend to the gods, nor our knowledge know anything which is divine, so by parity of reason they, being gods, are not our masters, neither do they know the things of men.

Yet, surely, said Socrates, to deprive God of knowledge is monstrous.

These, Socrates, said Parmenides, are a few, and only a few of the difficulties in which we are involved if ideas really are and we determine each one of them to be an absolute unity. He who hears what may be said against them will deny the very existence of them-and even if they do exist, he will say that they must of necessity be unknown to man; and he will seem to have reason on his side, and as we were remarking just now, will be very difficult to convince; a man must be gifted with very considerable ability before he can learn that everything has a class and an absolute essence; and still more remarkable will he be who discovers all these things for himself, and having thoroughly investigated them is able to teach them to others.

I agree with you, Parmenides, said Socrates; and what you say is very much to my mind.

And yet, Socrates, said Parmenides, if a man, fixing his attention on these and the like difficulties, does away with ideas of things and will not admit that every individual thing has its own determinate idea which is always one and the same, he will have nothing on which his mind can rest; and so he will utterly destroy the power of reasoning, as you seem to me to have particularly noted.

Very true, he said.

But, then, what is to become of philosophy? Whither shall we turn, if the ideas are unknown?

I certainly do not see my way at present.

Yes, said Parmenides; and I think that this arises, Socrates, out of your attempting to define the beautiful, the just, the good, and the ideas generally, without sufficient previous training. I noticed your deficiency, when I heard you talking here with your friend Aristoteles, the day before yesterday. The impulse that carries you towards philosophy is assuredly noble and divine; but there is an art which is called by the vulgar idle talking, and which is of imagined to be useless; in that you must train and exercise yourself, now that you are young, or truth will elude your grasp.

And what is the nature of this exercise, Parmenides, which you would recommend?

That which you heard Zeno practising; at the same time, I give you credit for saying to him that you did not care to examine the perplexity in reference to visible things, or to consider the question that way; but only in reference to objects of thought, and to what may be called ideas.

Why, yes, he said, there appears to me to be no difficulty in showing by this method that visible things are like and unlike and may experience anything.

Quite true, said Parmenides; but I think that you should go a step further, and consider not only the consequences which flow from a given hypothesis, but also the consequences which flow from denying the hypothesis; and that will be still better training for you.

What do you mean? he said.

I mean, for example, that in the case of this very hypothesis of Zeno's about the many, you should inquire not only what will be the consequences to the many in relation to themselves and to the one, and to the one in relation to itself and the many, on the hypothesis of the being of the many, but also what will be the consequences to the one and the many in their relation to themselves and to each other, on the opposite hypothesis. Or, again, if likeness is or is not, what will be the consequences in either of these cases to the subjects of the hypothesis, and to other things, in relation both to themselves and to one another, and so of unlikeness; and the same holds good of motion and rest, of generation and destruction, and even of being and not-being. In a word, when you suppose anything to be or not to be, or to be in any way affected, you must look at the consequences in relation to the thing itself, and to any other things which you choose-to each of them singly, to more than one, and to all; and so of other things, you must look at them in relation to themselves and to anything else which you suppose either to be or not to be, if you would train yourself perfectly and see the real truth.

That, Parmenides, is a tremendous business of which you speak, and I do not quite understand you; will you take some hypothesis and go through the steps?-then I shall apprehend you better.

That, Socrates, is a serious task to impose on a man of my years.

Then will you, Zeno? said Socrates.

Zeno answered with a smile:-Let us make our petition to Parmenides himself, who is quite right in saying that you are hardly aware of the extent of the task which you are imposing on him; and if there were more of us I should not ask him, for these are not subjects which any one, especially at his age, can well speak of before a large audience; most people are not aware that this round-about progress through all things is the only way in which the mind can attain truth and wisdom. And therefore, Parmenides, I join in the request of Socrates, that I may hear the process again which I have not heard for a long time.

# **St. Anselm of Canterbury**

## **Proslogium**

Chapters I – IV

Provided by the Internet Medieval Sourcebook  
Full text available at  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html>

# Saint Anselm of Canterbury:

## Proslogium

### CHAPTER I.

Exhortation of the mind to the contemplation of God. --It casts aside cares, and excludes all thoughts save that of God, that it may seek Him. Man was created to see God. Man by sin lost the blessedness for which he was made, and found the misery for which he was not made. He did not keep this good when he could keep it easily. Without God it is ill with us. Our labors and attempts are in vain without God. Man cannot seek God, unless God himself teaches him; nor find him, unless he reveals himself. God created man in his image, that he might be mindful of him, think of him, and love him. The believer does not seek to understand, that he may believe, but he believes that he may understand: for unless he believed he would not understand.

Up now, slight man! flee, for a little while, your occupations; hide yourself, for a time, from your disturbing thoughts. Cast aside, now, your burdensome cares, and put away your toilsome business. Yield room for some little time to God; and rest for a little time in him. Enter the inner chamber of your mind; shut out all thoughts save that of God, and such as can aid you in seeking him; close your door and seek him. Speak now, my whole heart! speak now to God, saying, I seek your face; your face, Lord, will I seek (Psalms xxvii. 8). And come you now, O Lord my God, teach my heart where and how it may seek you, where and how it may find you.

Lord, if you are not here, where shall I seek you, being absent? But if you are everywhere, why do I not see you present? Truly you dwell in unapproachable light. But where is unapproachable light, or how shall I come to it? Or who shall lead me to that light and into it, that I may see you in it? Again, by what marks, under what form, shall I seek you? I have never seen you, O Lord, my God; I do not know your form. What, O most high Lord, shall this man do, an exile far from you? What shall your servant do, anxious in his love of you, and cast out afar from your face? He pants to see you, and your face is too far from him. He longs to come to you, and your dwelling-place is inaccessible. He is eager to find you, and knows not your place. He desires to seek you, and does not know your face. Lord, you are my God, and you are my Lord, and never have I seen you. It is you that hast made me, and has made me anew, and has bestowed upon me all the blessing I enjoy; and not yet do I know you. Finally, I was created to see you, and not yet have I done that for which I was made.

O wretched lot of man, when he has lost that for which he was made! O hard and terrible fate! Alas, what has he lost, and what has he found? What has departed, and what remains? He has lost the blessedness for which he was made, and has found the misery for which he was not made. That has departed without which nothing is happy, and that remains which, in itself, is only miserable. Man once did eat the bread of angels, for which he hungers now; he eateth now the bread of sorrows, of which he knew not then. Alas! for the mourning of all mankind,



for the universal lamentation of the sons of Hades! He choked with satiety, we sigh with hunger. He abounded, we beg. He possessed in happiness, and miserably forsook his possession; we suffer want in unhappiness, and feel a miserable longing, and alas! we remain empty.

Why did he not keep for us, when he could so easily, that whose lack we should feel so heavily? Why did he shut us away from the light, and cover us over with darkness? With what purpose did he rob us of life, and inflict death upon us? Wretches that we are, whence have we been driven out; whither are we driven on? Whence hurled? Whither consigned to ruin? From a native country into exile, from the vision of God into our present blindness, from the joy of immortality into the bitterness and horror of death. Miserable exchange of how great a good, for how great an evil! Heavy loss, heavy grief heavy all our fate!

But alas! wretched that I am, one of the sons of Eve, far removed from God! What have I undertaken? What have I accomplished? Whither was I striving? How far have I come? To what did I aspire? Amid what thoughts am I sighing? I sought blessings, and lo! confusion. I strove toward God, and I stumbled on myself. I sought calm in privacy, and I found tribulation and grief, in my inmost thoughts. I wished to smile in the joy of my mind, and I am compelled to frown by the sorrow of my heart. Gladness was hoped for, and lo! a source of frequent sighs!

And you too, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord, do you forget us; how long do you turn your face from us? When will you look upon us, and hear us? When will you enlighten our eyes, and show us your face? When will you restore yourself to us? Look upon us, Lord; hear us, enlighten us, reveal yourself to us. Restore yourself to us, that it may be well with us, -- yourself, without whom it is so ill with us. Pity our toilings and strivings toward you since we can do nothing without you. You do invite us; do you help us. I beseech you, O Lord, that I may not lose hope in sighs, but may breathe anew in hope. Lord, my heart is made bitter by its desolation; sweeten you it, I beseech you, with your consolation. Lord, in hunger I began to seek you; I beseech you that I may not cease to hunger for you. In hunger I have come to you; let me not go unfed. I have come in poverty to the Rich, in misery to the Compassionate; let me not return empty and despised. And if, before I eat, I sigh, grant, even after sighs, that which I may eat. Lord, I am bowed down and can only look downward; raise me up that I may look upward. My iniquities have gone over my head; they overwhelm me; and, like a heavy load, they weigh me down. Free me from them; unburden me, that the pit of iniquities may not close over me.

Be it mine to look up to your light, even from afar, even from the depths. Teach me to seek you, and reveal yourself to me, when I seek you, for I cannot seek you, except you teach me, nor find you, except you reveal yourself. Let me seek you in longing, let me long for you in seeking; let me find you in love, and love you in finding. Lord, I acknowledge and I thank you that you has created me in this your image, in order that I may be mindful of you, may conceive of you, and love you; but that image has been so consumed and wasted away by vices, and obscured by the smoke of wrong-doing, that it cannot achieve that for which it was made, except you renew it, and create it anew. I do not endeavor, O Lord, to penetrate your sublimity, for in no wise do I compare my understanding with that; but I long to understand in some degree your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe, --that unless I believed, I should not understand.

## CHAPTER II.

Truly there is a God, although the fool has said in his heart, There is no God.

AND so, Lord, do you, who do give understanding to faith, give me, so far as you knowest it to be profitable, to understand that you are as we believe; and that you are that which we believe. And indeed, we believe that you are a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Or is there no such nature, since the fool has said in his heart, there is no God? (Psalms xiv. 1). But, at any rate, this very fool, when he hears of this being of which I speak -- a being than which nothing greater can be conceived -- understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding; although he does not understand it to exist.

For, it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform, he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.

Hence, even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood, exists in the understanding. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater.

Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.

## CHAPTER III.

God cannot be conceived not to exist. --God is that, than which nothing greater can be conceived. --That which can be conceived not to exist is not God.

AND it assuredly exists so truly, that it cannot be conceived not to exist. For, it is possible to conceive of a being which cannot be conceived not to exist; and this is greater than one which can be conceived not to exist. Hence, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, can be conceived not to exist, it is not that, than which nothing greater can be conceived. But this is an irreconcilable contradiction. There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being you are, O Lord, our God.

So truly, therefore, do you exist, O Lord, my God, that you can not be conceived not to exist; and rightly. For, if a mind could conceive of a being better than you, the creature would rise above the Creator; and this is most absurd. And, indeed, whatever else there is, except you

alone, can be conceived not to exist. To you alone, therefore, it belongs to exist more truly than all other beings, and hence in a higher degree than all others. For, whatever else exists does not exist so truly, and hence in a less degree it belongs to it to exist. Why, then, has the fool said in his heart, there is no God (Psalms xiv. 1), since it is so evident, to a rational mind, that you do exist in the highest degree of all? Why, except that he is dull and a fool?

#### CHAPTER IV.

How the fool has said in his heart what cannot be conceived. --A thing may be conceived in two ways: (1) when the word signifying it is conceived; (2) when the thing itself is understood. As far as the word goes, God can be conceived not to exist; in reality he cannot.

BUT how has the fool said in his heart what he could not conceive; or how is it that he could not conceive what he said in his heart? since it is the same to say in the heart, and to conceive.

But, if really, nay, since really, he both conceived, because he said in his heart; and did not say in his heart, because he could not conceive; there is more than one way in which a thing is said in the heart or conceived. For, in one sense, an object is conceived, when the word signifying it is conceived; and in another, when the very entity, which the object is, is understood.

In the former sense, then, God can be conceived not to exist; but in the latter, not at all. For no one who understands what fire and water are can conceive fire to be water, in accordance with the nature of the facts themselves, although this is possible according to the words. So, then, no one who understands what God is can conceive that God does not exist; although he says these words in his heart, either without any or with some foreign, signification. For, God is that than which a greater cannot be conceived. And he who thoroughly understands this, assuredly understands that this being so truly exists, that not even in concept can it be non-existent. Therefore, he who understands that God so exists, cannot conceive that he does not exist.

I thank you, gracious Lord, I thank you; because what I formerly believed by your bounty, I now so understand by your illumination, that if I were unwilling to believe that you do exist, I should not be able not to understand this to be true.

**St. Thomas Aquinas**

# **Summa Theologica**

**First Part, Treatise on The One God, Question 2**

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# Summa Theologica

by St. Thomas Aquinas

Translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province [1947]

## First Part, Treatise on The One God (QQ[2-26])

### Question. 2: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD (THREE ARTICLES)

Because the chief aim of sacred doctrine is to teach the knowledge of God, not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the beginning of things and their last end, and especially of rational creatures, as is clear from what has been already said, therefore, in our endeavor to expound this science, we shall treat: (1) Of God; (2) Of the rational creature's advance towards God; (3) Of Christ, Who as man, is our way to God.

In treating of God there will be a threefold division, for we shall consider: (1) Whatever concerns the Divine Essence; (2) Whatever concerns the distinctions of Persons; (3) Whatever concerns the procession of creatures from Him.

Concerning the Divine Essence, we must consider: (1) Whether God exists? (2) The manner of His existence, or, rather, what is NOT the manner of His existence; (3) Whatever concerns His operations---namely, His knowledge, will, power.

Concerning the first, there are three points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether the proposition "God exists" is self-evident?
- (2) Whether it is demonstrable?
- (3) Whether God exists?

#### Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

**Objection 1:** It seems that the existence of God is self-evident. Now those things are said to be self-evident to us the knowledge of which is naturally implanted in us, as we can see in regard to first principles. But as Damascene says (De Fide Orth. i, 1,3), "the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all." Therefore the existence of God is self-evident.

**Objection 2:** Further, those things are said to be self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher (1 Poster. iii) says is true of the first principles of demonstration. Thus, when the nature of a whole and of a part is known, it is at once recognized that every whole is greater than its part. But as soon as the signification of the word "God" is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this word is signified that thing than which nothing greater can be conceived. But that which exists actually and mentally is greater than that which exists only mentally. Therefore, since as soon as the word

"God" is understood it exists mentally, it also follows that it exists actually. Therefore the proposition "God exists" is self-evident.

**Objection 3:** Further, the existence of truth is self-evident. For whoever denies the existence of truth grants that truth does not exist: and, if truth does not exist, then the proposition "Truth does not exist" is true: and if there is anything true, there must be truth. But God is truth itself: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" ([Jn. 14:6](#)) Therefore "God exists" is self-evident.

**On the contrary,** No one can mentally admit the opposite of what is self-evident; as the Philosopher (Metaph. iv, lect. vi) states concerning the first principles of demonstration. But the opposite of the proposition "God is" can be mentally admitted: "The fool said in his heart, There is no God" ([Ps. 52:1](#)). Therefore, that God exists is not self-evident.

**I answer that,** A thing can be self-evident in either of two ways: on the one hand, self-evident in itself, though not to us; on the other, self-evident in itself, and to us. A proposition is self-evident because the predicate is included in the essence of the subject, as "Man is an animal," for animal is contained in the essence of man. If, therefore the essence of the predicate and subject be known to all, the proposition will be self-evident to all; as is clear with regard to the first principles of demonstration, the terms of which are common things that no one is ignorant of, such as being and non-being, whole and part, and such like. If, however, there are some to whom the essence of the predicate and subject is unknown, the proposition will be self-evident in itself, but not to those who do not know the meaning of the predicate and subject of the proposition. Therefore, it happens, as Boethius says (Hebdom., the title of which is: "Whether all that is, is good"), "that there are some mental concepts self-evident only to the learned, as that incorporeal substances are not in space." Therefore I say that this proposition, "God exists," of itself is self-evident, for the predicate is the same as the subject, because God is His own existence as will be hereafter shown (Q[3], A[4]). Now because we do not know the essence of God, the proposition is not self-evident to us; but needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature--- namely, by effects.

**Reply to Objection 1:** To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature, inasmuch as God is man's beatitude. For man naturally desires happiness, and what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him. This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists; just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching, even though it is Peter who is approaching; for many there are who imagine that man's perfect good which is happiness, consists in riches, and others in pleasures, and others in something else.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Perhaps not everyone who hears this word "God" understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word "God" is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the word signifies exists actually, but only that it exists mentally. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought; and this precisely is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist.

**Reply to Objection 3:** The existence of truth in general is self-evident but the existence of a Primal Truth is not self-evident to us.

## Whether it can be demonstrated that God exists?

**Objection 1:** It seems that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated. For it is an article of faith that God exists. But what is of faith cannot be demonstrated, because a demonstration produces scientific knowledge; whereas faith is of the unseen ([Heb. 11:1](#)). Therefore it cannot be demonstrated that God exists.

**Objection 2:** Further, the essence is the middle term of demonstration. But we cannot know in what God's essence consists, but solely in what it does not consist; as Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.* i, 4). Therefore we cannot demonstrate that God exists.

**Objection 3:** Further, if the existence of God were demonstrated, this could only be from His effects. But His effects are not proportionate to Him, since He is infinite and His effects are finite; and between the finite and infinite there is no proportion. Therefore, since a cause cannot be demonstrated by an effect not proportionate to it, it seems that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says: "The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" ([Rom. 1:20](#)). But this would not be unless the existence of God could be demonstrated through the things that are made; for the first thing we must know of anything is whether it exists.

**I answer that,** Demonstration can be made in two ways: One is through the cause, and is called "a priori," and this is to argue from what is prior absolutely. The other is through the effect, and is called a demonstration "a posteriori"; this is to argue from what is prior relatively only to us. When an effect is better known to us than its cause, from the effect we proceed to the knowledge of the cause. And from every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated, so long as its effects are better known to us; because since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist. Hence the existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.

**Reply to Objection 1:** The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated.

**Reply to Objection 2:** When the existence of a cause is demonstrated from an effect, this effect takes the place of the definition of the cause in proof of the cause's existence. This is especially the case in regard to God, because, in order to prove the existence of anything, it is necessary to accept as a middle term the meaning of the word, and not its essence, for the question of its essence follows on the question of its existence. Now the names given to God are derived from His effects; consequently, in demonstrating the existence of God from His effects, we may take for the middle term the meaning of the word "God".

**Reply to Objection 3:** From effects not proportionate to the cause no perfect knowledge of that cause can be obtained. Yet from every effect the existence of the cause can be clearly

demonstrated, and so we can demonstrate the existence of God from His effects; though from them we cannot perfectly know God as He is in His essence.

### **Whether God exists?**

**Objection 1:** It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the word "God" means that He is infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist.

**Objection 2:** Further, it is superfluous to suppose that what can be accounted for by a few principles has been produced by many. But it seems that everything we see in the world can be accounted for by other principles, supposing God did not exist. For all natural things can be reduced to one principle which is nature; and all voluntary things can be reduced to one principle which is human reason, or will. Therefore there is no need to suppose God's existence.

**On the contrary,** It is said in the person of God: "I am Who am." ([Ex. 3:14](#))

**I answer that,** The existence of God can be proved in five ways.

The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e. that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.

The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause. In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither



will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence---which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.

The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things. Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like. But "more" and "less" are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest, something best, something noblest and, consequently, something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph. ii*. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the maximum heat, is the cause of all hot things. Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.

The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world. We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.

**Reply to Objection 1:** As Augustine says (*Enchiridion xi*): "Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil." This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Since nature works for a determinate end under the direction of a higher agent, whatever is done by nature must needs be traced back to God, as to its first cause. So also whatever is done voluntarily must also be traced back to some higher cause other than human reason or will, since these can change or fail; for all things that are changeable and capable of defect must be traced back to an immovable and self-necessary first principle, as was shown in the body of the Article.

**John Locke**

# **An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding**

**BOOK II – IDEAS**

Chapter I: Ideas in general, and the question 'Does the soul of man always think?'

Chapter II: Simple ideas

Chapter III: Ideas of one sense

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# BOOK II: Locke's ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

## Of Ideas

### Chapter I

#### Of Ideas in general, and their Original

-1. *Idea is the object of thinking.* Every man being conscious to himself that he thinks; and that which his mind is applied about whilst thinking being the ideas that are there, it is past doubt that men have in their minds several ideas,- such as are those expressed by the words whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others: it is in the first place then to be inquired, How he comes by them?

-I know it is a received doctrine, that men have native ideas, and original characters, stamped upon their minds in their very first being. This opinion I have at large examined already; and, I suppose what I have said in the foregoing Book will be much more easily admitted, when I have shown whence the understanding may get all the ideas it has; and by what ways and degrees they may come into the mind;- for which I shall appeal to every one's own observation and experience.

-2. *All ideas come from sensation or reflection.* Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas:- How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either, about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring.

-3. *The objects of sensation one source of ideas.* First, our Senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them. And thus we come by those ideas we have of yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet, and all those which we call sensible qualities; which when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions. This great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION.

-4. *The operations of our minds, the other source of them.* Secondly, the other fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas is,- the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got;- which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be had from things without. And such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own

minds;- which we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense. But as I call the other SENSATION, so I Call this REFLECTION, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself. By reflection then, in the following part of this discourse, I would be understood to mean, that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them, by reason whereof there come to be ideas of these operations in the understanding. These two, I say, viz. external material things, as the objects of SENSATION, and the operations of our own minds within, as the objects of REFLECTION, are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings. The term operations here I use in a large sense, as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind about its ideas, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them, such as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thought.

-5. *All our ideas are of the one or the other of these.* The understanding seems to me not to have the least glimmering of any ideas which it doth not receive from one of these two. External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us; and the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations.

-These, when we have taken a full survey of them, and their several modes, combinations, and relations, we shall find to contain all our whole stock of ideas; and that we have nothing in our minds which did not come in one of these two ways. Let any one examine his own thoughts, and thoroughly search into his understanding; and then let him tell me, whether all the original ideas he has there, are any other than of the objects of his senses, or of the operations of his mind, considered as objects of his reflection. And how great a mass of knowledge soever he imagines to be lodged there, he will, upon taking a strict view, see that he has not any idea in his mind but what one of these two have imprinted;- though perhaps, with infinite variety compounded and enlarged by the understanding, as we shall see hereafter.

-6. *Observable in children.* He that attentively considers the state of a child, at his first coming into the world, will have little reason to think him stored with plenty of ideas, that are to be the matter of his future knowledge. It is by degrees he comes to be furnished with them. And though the ideas of obvious and familiar qualities imprint themselves before the memory begins to keep a register of time or order, yet it is often so late before some unusual qualities come in the way, that there are few men that cannot recollect the beginning of their acquaintance with them. And if it were worth while, no doubt a child might be so ordered as to have but a very few, even of the ordinary ideas, till he were grown up to a man. But all that are born into the world, being surrounded with bodies that perpetually and diversely affect them, variety of ideas, whether care be taken of it or not, are imprinted on the minds of children. Light and colours are busy at hand everywhere, when the eye is but open; sounds and some tangible qualities fail not to solicit their proper senses, and force an entrance to the mind;- but yet, I think, it will be granted easily, that if a child were kept in a place where he never saw any other but black and white till he were a man, he would have no more ideas of scarlet or green, than he that from his childhood never tasted an oyster, or a pine-apple, has of those particular relishes.

-7. *Men are differently furnished with these, according to the different objects they converse with.* Men then come to be furnished with fewer or more simple ideas from without, according

as the objects they converse with afford greater or less variety; and from the operations of their minds within, according as they more or less reflect on them. For, though he that contemplates the operations of his mind, cannot but have plain and clear ideas of them; yet, unless he turn his thoughts that way, and considers them attentively, he will no more have clear and distinct ideas of all the operations of his mind, and all that may be observed therein, than he will have all the particular ideas of any landscape, or of the parts and motions of a clock, who will not turn his eyes to it, and with attention heed all the parts of it. The picture, or clock may be so placed, that they may come in his way every day; but yet he will have but a confused idea of all the parts they are made up of, till he applies himself with attention, to consider them each in particular.

- 8. *Ideas of reflection later, because they need attention.* And hence we see the reason why it is pretty late before most children get ideas of the operations of their own minds; and some have not any very clear or perfect ideas of the greatest part of them all their lives. Because, though they pass there continually, yet, like floating visions, they make not deep impressions enough to leave in their mind clear, distinct, lasting ideas, till the understanding turns inward upon itself, reflects on its own operations, and makes them the objects of its own contemplation. Children when they come first into it, are surrounded with a world of new things, which, by a constant solicitation of their senses, draw the mind constantly to them; forward to take notice of new, and apt to be delighted with the variety of changing objects. Thus the first years are usually employed and diverted in looking abroad. Men's business in them is to acquaint themselves with what is to be found without; and so growing up in a constant attention to outward sensations, seldom make any considerable reflection on what passes within them, till they come to be of riper years; and some scarce ever at all.

-9. *The soul begins to have ideas when it begins to perceive.* To ask, at what time a man has first any ideas, is to ask, when he begins to perceive;- having ideas, and perception, being the same thing. I know it is an opinion, that the soul always thinks, and that it has the actual perception of ideas in itself constantly, as long as it exists; and that actual thinking is as inseparable from the soul as actual extension is from the body; which if true, to inquire after the beginning of a man's ideas is the same as to inquire after the beginning of his soul. For, by this account, soul and its ideas, as body and its extension, will begin to exist both at the same time.

-10. *The soul thinks not always; for this wants proofs.* But whether the soul be supposed to exist antecedent to, or coeval with, or some time after the first rudiments of organization, or the beginnings of life in the body, I leave to be disputed by those who have better thought of that matter. I confess myself to have one of those dull souls, that doth not perceive itself always to contemplate ideas; nor can conceive it any more necessary for the soul always to think, than for the body always to move: the perception of ideas being (as I conceive) to the soul, what motion is to the body; not its essence, but one of its operations. And therefore, though thinking be supposed never so much the proper action of the soul, yet it is not necessary to suppose that it should be always thinking, always in action. That, perhaps, is the privilege of the infinite Author and Preserver of all things, who "never slumbers nor sleeps;" but is not competent to any finite being, at least not to the soul of man. We know certainly, by experience, that we sometimes think; and thence draw this infallible consequence,- that there is something in us that has a power to think. But whether that substance perpetually thinks or no, we can be no further assured than experience informs us. For, to say that actual thinking is essential to the soul, and inseparable from it, is to beg what is in question, and not to prove it by reason;- which is necessary to be done, if it be not a self-evident proposition. But whether

this, "That the soul always thinks," be a self-evident proposition, that everybody assents to at first hearing, I appeal to mankind. It is doubted whether I thought at all last night or no. The question being about a matter of fact, it is begging it to bring, as a proof for it, an hypothesis, which is the very thing in dispute: by which way one may prove anything, and it is but supposing that all watches, whilst the balance beats, think, and it is sufficiently proved, and past doubt, that my watch thought all last night. But he that would not deceive himself, ought to build his hypothesis on matter of fact, and make it out by sensible experience, and not presume on matter of fact, because of his hypothesis, that is, because he supposes it to be so; which way of proving amounts to this, that I must necessarily think all last night, because another supposes I always think, though I myself cannot perceive that I always do so.

-But men in love with their opinions may not only suppose what is in question, but allege wrong matter of fact. How else could any one make it an inference of mine, that a thing is not, because we are not sensible of it in our sleep? I do not say there is no soul in a man, because he is not sensible of it in his sleep; but I do say, he cannot think at any time, waking or sleeping: without being sensible of it. Our being sensible of it is not necessary to anything but to our thoughts; and to them it is; and to them it always will be necessary, till we can think without being conscious of it.

-11. It is not always conscious of it. I grant that the soul, in a waking man, is never without thought, because it is the condition of being awake. But whether sleeping without dreaming be not an affection of the whole man, mind as well as body, may be worth a waking man's consideration; it being hard to conceive that anything should think and not be conscious of it. If the soul doth think in a sleeping man without being conscious of it, I ask whether, during such thinking, it has any pleasure or pain, or be capable of happiness or misery? I am sure the man is not; no more than the bed or earth he lies on. For to be happy or miserable without being conscious of it, seems to me utterly inconsistent and impossible. Or if it be possible that the soul can, whilst the body is sleeping, have its thinking, enjoyments, and concerns, its pleasures or pain, apart, which the man is not conscious of nor partakes in,- it is certain that Socrates asleep and Socrates awake is not the same person; but his soul when he sleeps, and Socrates the man, consisting of body and soul, when he is waking, are two persons: since waking Socrates has no knowledge of, or concernment for that happiness or misery of his soul, which it enjoys alone by itself whilst he sleeps, without perceiving anything of it; no more than he has for the happiness or misery of a man in the Indies, whom he knows not. For, if we take wholly away all consciousness of our actions and sensations, especially of pleasure and pain, and the concernment that accompanies it, it will be hard to know wherein to place personal identity.

-12. *If a sleeping man thinks without knowing it, the sleeping and waking man are two persons.* The soul, during sound sleep, thinks, say these men. Whilst it thinks and perceives, it is capable certainly of those of delight or trouble, as well as any other perceptions; and it must necessarily be conscious of its own perceptions. But it has all this apart: the sleeping man, it is plain, is conscious of nothing of all this. Let us suppose, then, the soul of Castor, while he is sleeping, retired from his body; which is no impossible supposition for the men I have here to do with, who so liberally allow life, without a thinking soul, to all other animals. These men cannot then judge it impossible, or a contradiction, that the body should live without the soul; nor that the soul should subsist and think, or have perception, even perception of happiness or misery, without the body. Let us then, I say, suppose the soul of Castor separated during his sleep from his body, to think apart. Let us suppose, too, that it chooses for its scene of thinking the body of another man, v.g. Pollux, who is sleeping without a soul. For, if Castor's

soul can think, whilst Castor is asleep, what Castor is never conscious of, it is no matter what place it chooses to think in. We have here, then, the bodies of two men with only one soul between them, which we will suppose to sleep and wake by turns; and the soul still thinking in the waking man, whereof the sleeping man is never conscious, has never the least perception. I ask, then, whether Castor and Pollux, thus with only one soul between them, which thinks and perceives in one what the other is never conscious of, nor is concerned for, are not two as distinct persons as Castor and Hercules, or as Socrates and Plato were? And whether one of them might not be very happy, and the other very miserable? Just by the same reason, they make the soul and the man two persons, who make the soul think apart what the man is not conscious of. For, I suppose nobody will make identity of persons to consist in the soul's being united to the very same numerical particles of matter. For if that be necessary to identity, it will be impossible, in that constant flux of the particles of our bodies, that any man should be the same person two days, or two moments, together.

-13. *Impossible to convince those that sleep without dreaming, that they think.* Thus, methinks, every drowsy nod shakes their doctrine, who teach that the soul is always thinking. Those, at least, who do at any time sleep without dreaming, can never be convinced that their thoughts are sometimes for four hours busy without their knowing of it; and if they are taken in the very act, waked in the middle of that sleeping contemplation, can give no manner of account of it.

-14. That men dream without remembering it, in vain urged. It will perhaps be said,- That the soul thinks even in the soundest sleep, but the memory retains it not. That the soul in a sleeping man should be this moment busy a thinking, and the next moment in a waking man not remember nor be able to recollect one jot of all those thoughts, is very hard to be conceived, and would need some better proof than bare assertion to make it be believed. For who can without any more ado, but being barely told so, imagine that the greatest part of men do, during all their lives, for several hours every day, think of something, which if they were asked, even in the middle of these thoughts, they could remember nothing at all of? Most men, I think, pass a great part of their sleep without dreaming. I once knew a man that was bred a scholar, and had no bad memory, who told me he had never dreamed in his life, till he had that fever he was then newly recovered of, which was about the five or six and twentieth year of his age. I suppose the world affords more such instances: at least every one's acquaintance will furnish him with examples enough of such as pass most of their nights without dreaming.

-15. Upon this hypothesis, the thoughts of a sleeping man ought to be most rational. To think often, and never to retain it so much as one moment, is a very useless sort of thinking; and the soul, in such a state of thinking, does very little, if at all, excel that of a looking-glass, which constantly receives variety of images, or ideas, but retains none; they disappear and vanish, and there remain no footsteps of them; the looking-glass is never the better for such ideas, nor the soul for such thoughts. Perhaps it will be said, that in a waking man the materials of the body are employed, and made use of, in thinking; and that the memory of thoughts is retained by the impressions that are made on the brain, and the traces there left after such thinking; but that in the thinking of the soul, which is not perceived in a sleeping man, there the soul thinks apart, and making no use of the organs of the body, leaves no impressions on it, and consequently no memory of such thoughts. Not to mention again the absurdity of two distinct persons, which follows from this supposition, I answer, further,- That whatever ideas the mind can receive and contemplate without the help of the body, it is reasonable to conclude it can retain without the help of the body too; or else the soul, or any separate spirit, will have but

little advantage by thinking. If it has no memory of its own thoughts; if it cannot lay them up for its own use, and be able to recall them upon occasion; if it cannot reflect upon what is past, and make use of its former experiences, reasonings, and contemplations, to what purpose does it think? They who make the soul a thinking thing, at this rate, will not make it a much more noble being than those do whom they condemn, for allowing it to be nothing but the subtilist parts of matter. Characters drawn on dust, that the first breath of wind effaces; or impressions made on a heap of atoms, or animal spirits, are altogether as useful, and render the subject as noble, as the thoughts of a soul that perish in thinking; that, once out of sight, are gone forever, and leave no memory of themselves behind them. Nature never makes excellent things for mean or no uses: and it is hardly to be conceived that our infinitely wise Creator should make so admirable a faculty which comes nearest the excellency of his own incomprehensible being, to be so idly and uselessly employed, at least a fourth part of its time here, as to think constantly, without remembering any of those thoughts, without doing any good to itself or others, or being any way useful to any other part of the creation, If we will examine it, we shall not find, I suppose, the motion of dull and senseless matter, any where in the universe, made so little use of and so wholly thrown away.

-16. On this hypothesis, the soul must have ideas not derived from sensation or reflection, of which there is no appearance. It is true, we have sometimes instances of perception whilst we are asleep, and retain the memory of those thoughts: but how extravagant and incoherent for the most part they are; how little conformable to the perfection and order of a rational being, those who are acquainted with dreams need not be told. This I would willingly be satisfied in, - whether the soul, when it thinks thus apart, and as it were separate from the body, acts less rationally than when conjointly with it, or no. If its separate thoughts be less rational, then these men must say, that the soul owes the perfection of rational thinking to the body: if it does not, it is a wonder that our dreams should be, for the most part, so frivolous and irrational; and that the soul should retain none of its more rational soliloquies and meditations.

-17. *If I think when I know it not, nobody else can know it.* Those who so confidently tell us that the soul always actually thinks, I would they would also tell us, what those ideas are that are in the soul of a child, before or just at the union with the body, before it hath received any by sensation. The dreams of sleeping men are, as I take it, all made up of the waking man's ideas; though for the most part oddly put together. It is strange, if the soul has ideas of its own that it derived not from sensation or reflection, (as it must have, if it thought before it received any impressions from the body,) that it should never, in its private thinking, (so private, that the man himself perceives it not,) retain any of them the very moment it wakes out of them, and then make the man glad with new discoveries. Who can find it reason that the soul should, in its retirement during sleep, have so many hours' thoughts, and yet never light on any of those ideas it borrowed not from sensation or reflection; or at least preserve the memory of none but such, which, being occasioned from the body, must needs be less natural to a spirit? It is strange the soul should never once in a man's whole life recall over any of its pure native thoughts, and those ideas it had before it borrowed anything from the body; never bring into the waking man's view any other ideas but what have a tang of the cask, and manifestly derive their original from that union. If it always thinks, and so had ideas before it was united, or before it received any from the body, it is not to be supposed but that during sleep it recollects its native ideas; and during that retirement from communicating with the body, whilst it thinks by itself, the ideas it is busied about should be, sometimes at least, those more natural and congenial ones which it had in itself, underived from the body, or its own operations about them: which, since the waking man never remembers, we must from this hypothesis conclude either that the soul remembers something that the man does not; or else



that memory belongs only to such ideas as are derived from the body, or the mind's operations about them.

-18. How knows any one that the soul always thinks? For if it be not a self-evident proposition, it needs proof. I would be glad also to learn from these men who so confidently pronounce that the human soul, or, which is all one, that a man always thinks, how they come to know it; nay, how they come to know that they themselves think when they themselves do not perceive it. This, I am afraid, is to be sure without proofs, and to know without perceiving. It is, I suspect, a confused notion, taken up to serve an hypothesis; and none of those clear truths, that either their own evidence forces us to admit, or common experience makes it impudence to deny. For the most that can be said of it is, that it is possible the soul may always think, but not always retain it in memory. And I say, it is as possible that the soul may not always think; and much more probable that it should sometimes not think, than that it should often think, and that a long while together, and not be conscious to itself, the next moment after, that it had thought.

-19. "That a man should be busy in thinking, and yet not retain it the next moment," very improbable. To suppose the soul to think, and the man not to perceive it, is, as has been said, to make two persons in one man. And if one considers well these men's way of speaking, one should be led into a suspicion that they do so. For they who tell us that the soul always thinks, do never, that I remember, say that a man always thinks. Can the soul think, and not the man? Or a man think, and not be conscious of it? This, perhaps, would be suspected of jargon in others. If they say the man thinks always, but is not always conscious of it, they may as well say his body is extended without having parts. For it is altogether as intelligible to say that a body is extended without parts, as that anything thinks without being conscious of it, or perceiving that it does so. They who talk thus may, with as much reason, if it be necessary to their hypothesis, say that a man is always hungry, but that he does not always feel it; whereas hunger consists in that very sensation, as thinking consists in being conscious that one thinks. If they say that a man is always conscious to himself of thinking, I ask, How they know it? Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind. Can another man perceive that I am conscious of anything, when I perceive it not myself? No man's knowledge here can go beyond his experience. Wake a man out of a sound sleep, and ask him what he was that moment thinking of. If he himself be conscious of nothing he then thought on, he must be a notable diviner of thoughts that can assure him that he was thinking. May he not, with more reason, assure him he was not asleep? This is something beyond philosophy; and it cannot be less than revelation, that discovers to another thoughts in my mind, when I can find none there myself, And they must needs have a penetrating sight who can certainly see that I think, when I cannot perceive it myself, and when I declare that I do not; and yet can see that dogs or elephants do not think, when they give all the demonstration of it imaginable, except only telling us that they do so. This some may suspect to be a step beyond the Rosicrucians; it seeming easier to make one's self invisible to others, than to make another's thoughts visible to me, which are not visible to himself. But it is but defining the soul to be "a substance that always thinks," and the business is done. If such definition be of any authority, I know not what it can serve for but to make many men suspect that they have no souls at all; since they find a good part of their lives pass away without thinking. For no definitions that I know, no suppositions of any sect, are of force enough to destroy constant experience; and perhaps it is the affectation of knowing beyond what we perceive, that makes so much useless dispute and noise in the world.

-20. No ideas but from sensation and reflection, evident, if we observe children. I see no reason, therefore, to believe that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas to think on; and as those are increased and retained, so it comes, by exercise, to improve its faculty of thinking in the several parts of it; as well as, afterwards, by compounding those ideas, and reflecting on its own operations, it increases its stock, as well as facility in remembering, imagining, reasoning, and other modes of thinking.

-21. State of a child in the mother's womb. He that will suffer himself to be informed by observation and experience, and not make his own hypothesis the rule of nature, will find few signs of a soul accustomed to much thinking in a new-born child, and much fewer of any reasoning at all. And yet it is hard to imagine that the rational soul should think so much, and not reason at all. And he that will consider that infants newly come into the world spend the greatest part of their time in sleep, and are seldom awake but when either hunger calls for the teat, or some pain (the most importunate of all sensations), or some other violent impression on the body, forces the mind to perceive and attend to it; - he, I say, who considers this, will perhaps find reason to imagine that a foetus in the mother's womb differs not much from the state of a vegetable, but passes the greatest part of its time without perception or thought; doing very little but sleep in a place where it needs not seek for food, and is surrounded with liquor, always equally soft, and near of the same temper; where the eyes have no light, and the ears so shut up are not very susceptible of sounds; and where there is little or no variety, or change of objects, to move the senses.

-22. The mind thinks in proportion to the matter it gets from experience to think about. Follow a child from its birth, and observe the alterations that time makes, and you shall find, as the mind by the senses comes more and more to be furnished with ideas, it comes to be more and more awake; thinks more, the more it has matter to think on. After some time it begins to know the objects which, being most familiar with it, have made lasting impressions. Thus it comes by degrees to know the persons it daily converses with, and distinguishes them from strangers; which are instances and effects of its coming to retain and distinguish the ideas the senses convey to it. And so we may observe how the mind, by degrees, improves in these; and advances to the exercise of those other faculties of enlarging, compounding, and abstracting its ideas, and of reasoning about them, and reflecting upon all these; of which I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.

-23. A man begins to have ideas when he first has sensation. What sensation is. If it shall be demanded then, when a man begins to have any ideas, I think the true answer is, - when he first has any sensation. For, since there appear not to be any ideas in the mind before the senses have conveyed any in, I conceive that ideas in the understanding are coeval with sensation; which is such an impression or motion made in some part of the body, as produces some perception in the understanding. It is about these impressions made on our senses by outward objects that the mind seems first to employ itself, in such operations as we call perception, remembering, consideration, reasoning, &c.

-24. *The original of all our knowledge.* In time the mind comes to reflect on its own operations about the ideas got by sensation, and thereby stores itself with a new set of ideas, which I call ideas of reflection. These are the impressions that are made on our senses by outward objects that are extrinsical to the mind; and its own operations, proceeding from powers intrinsical and proper to itself, which, when reflected on by itself, become also objects of its contemplation - are, as I have said, the original of all knowledge. Thus the first capacity of human intellect is, - that the mind is fitted to receive the impressions made on it; either

through the senses by outward objects, or by its own operations when it reflects on them. This is the first step a man makes towards the discovery of anything, and the groundwork whereon to build all those notions which ever he shall have naturally in this world. All those sublime thoughts which tower above the clouds, and reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that great extent wherein the mind wanders, in those remote speculations it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas which sense or reflection have offered for its contemplation.

-25. In the reception of simple ideas, the understanding is for the most part passive. In this part the understanding is merely passive; and whether or no it will have these beginnings, and as it were materials of knowledge, is not in its own power. For the objects of our senses do, many of them, obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or not; and the operations of our minds will not let us be without, at least, some obscure notions of them. No man can be wholly ignorant of what he does when he thinks. These simple ideas, when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the images or ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce. As the bodies that surround us do diversely affect our organs, the mind is forced to receive the impressions; and cannot avoid the perception of those ideas that are annexed to them.

## Chapter II

### Of Simple Ideas

-1. *Uncompounded appearances.* The better to understand the nature, manner, and extent of our knowledge, one thing is carefully to be observed concerning the ideas we have; and that is, that some of them are simple and some complex.

-Though the qualities that affect our senses are, in the things themselves, so united and blended, that there is no separation, no distance between them; yet it is plain, the ideas they produce in the mind enter by the senses simple and unmixed. For, though the sight and touch often take in from the same object, at the same time, different ideas;- as a man sees at once motion and colour; the hand feels softness and warmth in the same piece of wax: yet the simple ideas thus united in the same subject, are as perfectly distinct as those that come in by different senses. The coldness and hardness which a man feels in a piece of ice being as distinct ideas in the mind as the smell and whiteness of a lily; or as the taste of sugar, and smell of a rose. And there is nothing can be plainer to a man than the clear and distinct perception he has of those simple ideas; which, being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but one uniform appearance, or conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different ideas.

-2. *The mind can neither make nor destroy them.* These simple ideas, the materials of all our knowledge, are suggested and furnished to the mind only by those two ways above mentioned, viz. sensation and reflection. When the understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make at pleasure new complex ideas. But it is not in the power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways before mentioned: nor can any force of the understanding destroy those that are there. The dominion of man, in this little world of his own understanding being much what the same as it is in the great world of visible

things; wherein his power, however managed by art and skill, reaches no farther than to compound and divide the materials that are made to his hand; but can do nothing towards the making the least particle of new matter, or destroying one atom of what is already in being. The same inability will every one find in himself, who shall go about to fashion in his understanding one simple idea, not received in by his senses from external objects, or by reflection from the operations of his own mind about them. I would have any one try to fancy any taste which had never affected his palate; or frame the idea of a scent he had never smelt: and when he can do this, I will also conclude that a blind man hath ideas of colours, and a deaf man true distinct notions of sounds.

-3. *Only the qualities that affect the senses are imaginable.* This is the reason why- though we cannot believe it impossible to God to make a creature with other organs, and more ways to convey into the understanding the notice of corporeal things than those five, as they are usually counted, which he has given to man- yet I think it is not possible for any man to imagine any other qualities in bodies, howsoever constituted, whereby they can be taken notice of, besides sounds, tastes, smells, visible and tangible qualities. And had mankind been made but with four senses, the qualities then which are the objects of the fifth sense had been as far from our notice, imagination, and conception, as now any belonging to a sixth, seventh, or eighth sense can possibly be;- which, whether yet some other creatures, in some other parts of this vast and stupendous universe, may not have, will be a great presumption to deny. He that will not set himself proudly at the top of all things, but will consider the immensity of this fabric, and the great variety that is to be found in this little and inconsiderable part of it which he has to do with, may be apt to think that, in other mansions of it, there may be other and different intelligent beings, of whose faculties he has as little knowledge or apprehension as a worm shut up in one drawer of a cabinet hath of the senses or understanding of a man; such variety and excellency being suitable to the wisdom and power of the Maker. I have here followed the common opinion of man's having but five senses; though, perhaps, there may be justly counted more;- but either supposition serves equally to my present purpose.

### **Chapter III Of Simple Ideas of Sense**

-1. *Division of simple ideas.* The better to conceive the ideas we receive from sensation, it may not be amiss for us to consider them, in reference to the different ways whereby they make their approaches to our minds, and make themselves perceivable by us.

-First, then, There are some which come into our minds by one sense only.

- Secondly, There are others that convey themselves into the mind by more senses than one.

-Thirdly, Others that are had from reflection only.

-Fourthly, There are some that make themselves way, and are suggested to the mind by all the ways of sensation and reflection.

-We shall consider them apart under these several heads.

-*Ideas of one sense.* There are some ideas which have admittance only through one sense, which is peculiarly adapted to receive them. Thus light and colours, as white, red, yellow, blue; with their several degrees or shades and mixtures, as green, scarlet, purple, sea-green, and the rest, come in only by the eyes. All kinds of noises, sounds, and tones, only by the ears. The several tastes and smells, by the nose and palate. And if these organs, or the nerves which are the conduits to convey them from without to their audience in the brain,- the mind's presence-room (as I may so call it)- are any of them so disordered as not to perform their functions, they have no postern to be admitted by; no other way to bring themselves into

view, and be perceived by the understanding.

-The most considerable of those belonging to the touch, are heat and cold, and solidity: all the rest, consisting almost wholly in the sensible configuration, as smooth and rough; or else, more or less firm adhesion of the parts, as hard and soft, tough and brittle, are obvious enough.

-2. *Few simple ideas have names.* I think it will be needless to enumerate all the particular simple ideas belonging to each sense. Nor indeed is it possible if we would; there being a great many more of them belonging to most of the senses than we have names for. The variety of smells, which are as many almost, if not more, than species of bodies in the world, do most of them want names. Sweet and stinking commonly serve our turn for these ideas, which in effect is little more than to call them pleasing or displeasing; though the smell of a rose and violet, both sweet, are certainly very distinct ideas. Nor are the different tastes, that by our palates we receive ideas of, much better provided with names. Sweet, bitter, sour, harsh, and salt are almost all the epithets we have to denominate that numberless variety of relishes, which are to be found distinct, not only in almost every sort of creatures, but in the different parts of the same plant, fruit, or animal. The same may be said of colours and sounds. I shall, therefore, in the account of simple ideas I am here giving, content myself to set down only such as are most material to our present purpose, or are in themselves less apt to be taken notice of though they are very frequently the ingredients of our complex ideas; amongst which, I think, I may well account solidity, which therefore I shall treat of in the next chapter.

**Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz**

**New Essays on  
Human Understanding**

**BOOK II – IDEAS**

Chapter I: Ideas in general, and the question 'Does the soul of man always think?'

Chapter II: Simple ideas

Chapter III: Ideas of one sense

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## Chapter i: Ideas in general, and the question 'Does the soul always think?'

**Philalethes:** 1 Having examined whether ideas are innate, let us consider what they are like and what varieties of them there are. Isn't it true that an idea is the object of thinking?

**Theophilus:** I agree about that, provided that you add that  
 •an idea is an immediate inner object, and that

•this object expresses the nature or qualities of things.  
 If the idea were the *form* of the thought—i.e. if it were the case that *thinking of a certain idea* is just *thinking in a certain manner* rather than *aiming one's thought at a certain object*—the idea would come into and go out of existence with the actual thoughts that correspond to it; but since the idea is the *object* of thought it can exist before and after the thoughts. Outer things that we perceive by our senses are immediate objects, not immediate ones, because they can't act immediately on the soul. God is the only immediate outer object—the only thing outside us that acts immediately on our souls. One might say that the soul itself is its own immediate inner object; but it is an *object* of thought only to the extent that it contains ideas—I can't direct my thought immediately onto *my soul* other than by directing it onto *the ideas that my soul contains*. Those ideas correspond to things. For the soul is a little world in which distinct ideas represent God and confused ones represent the universe.

**Phil:** 2 Taking the soul to be initially a blank page with no writing on it, i.e. with no ideas, Locke asks: How does it come to be furnished? Where does it get its vast store of ideas from? To this he answers: from *experience*.

**Theo:** This empty page of which one hears so much is a fiction, in my view. Nature doesn't allow of any such thing, and it's purely a product of philosophers' *incomplete*

*notions*—such as

•vacuum, •atoms, •the state of rest (one thing not moving, or two things not moving in relation to one another), and •'prime matter', which is supposed to have *no form*.

Things that are uniform, containing no variety, are *always* mere abstractions: for instance, time, space and the other entities of pure mathematics. There is no body whose parts are at rest, and no substance that doesn't have something distinguishing it from every other. Human souls differ not only from non-human ones but also from one another. . . . And I think I can demonstrate that every substantial thing, whether a soul or a body, differs from every other substantial thing

in respect of how it *relates* to everything else, and also in respect of its *intrinsic* (non-relational) nature.

And another point: those who hold forth about the mind as an empty page can't say what is left of it once the ideas have been taken away—like the Scholastics whose 'prime matter' has nothing left in it after its 'form' has been removed. It may be said that this 'empty page' of the philosophers means that the soul naturally and inherently possesses nothing but bare *faculties* or capacities. But inactive faculties. . . are also mere fictions: you can have an abstract thought of them, but they don't occur in nature. For where in the world will one ever find a faculty consisting in sheer power without performing any act? There is always a particular disposition to action, and towards one action rather than another. And as well as the disposition there is an endeavour towards action—indeed there is an infinity of them in any thing at any moment, and these endeavours are never without some

effect. I admit that experience is necessary if the soul is to be given such-and-such ·specific· thoughts, and if it is to *attend* to the ideas that are within us. But how could experience and the senses *provide* the ideas? Does the soul have windows? Is it similar to writing-paper or like wax? Clearly, those who take this view of the soul are treating it as basically a material thing. You may confront me with this accepted philosophical axiom: *There is nothing in the soul that doesn't come from the senses*. But an exception must be made of the soul itself and its states:

Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, excipie: nisi ipse intellectus.

[The 'philosophical axiom' was a Scholastic slogan, which is why Theophilus gives it in Latin. In English: Nothing is in the intellect that wasn't ·first· in the senses—except the intellect itself.] Now, the soul includes *being*, *substance*, *one*, *same*, *cause*, *perception*, *reasoning*, and many other notions that the senses cannot provide. That agrees pretty well with Locke, for he looks for a good proportion of ideas in the mind's reflection on its own nature.

**Phil:** I hope then that you will concede to him that all ideas come through sensation or through reflection; that is, through our observation either of ·external, sensible objects or ·the internal operations of our soul.

**Theo:** In order to keep away from an argument on which we have already spent too long, let me say in advance that when you say that *ideas* come from one or other of those causes, I shall take that to mean ·that the senses prompt the *actual perception of the ideas* ·but don't provide the ideas themselves·. For I think I have shown that in so far as they have something distinct about them they are in us before we are aware of them.

**Phil:** With that in mind, let us see when the soul should

be said to start perceiving and actually thinking of ideas. **9** Some philosophers have held that the soul always thinks, and that ·actual thinking is as inseparable from the ·soul as ·actual extension is from the ·body. **10** But I can't see that it is any more necessary for ·the soul always to think than it is for ·the body always to move; the perception of ideas is to the soul what motion is to the body, ·namely, something that comes and goes·. That appears to me quite reasonable, anyway, and I would greatly like to have your opinion on it.

**Theo:** You have said it! Action is no more ·and no less· inseparable from the soul than it is from the body, ·because it is utterly essential to each·. It seems to me that a ·thoughtless state of the soul and ·absolute rest [= 'immobility'] in a body are equally contrary to nature, and never occur in the world. A substance that is in action at some time will be in action forever after, for all the effects linger on, merely being mixed with new ones. When you strike a body you cause (or rather *induce*) an infinity of swiris, as in a liquid—for fundamentally every solid is in some degree liquid, every liquid in some degree solid—and there's no way of ever entirely stopping this internal turbulence. Now, given that the body is never without movement it is credible that the soul that corresponds to it is never without perception. . . .

**Phil:** There is something in us that has a power to think. But that doesn't imply that thinking is always occurring in us.

**Theo:** True powers are never mere possibilities; there is always endeavour, and action.

**Phil:** But *that the soul always thinks* is not a self-evident proposition.

**Theo:** I don't say that it is. Digging it out requires a little attention and reasoning: the common man is no more aware



of it than of the pressure of the air or the roundness of the earth.

**Phil:** The question ‘Did I think all through last night?’ is a question about a matter of fact, and must be settled by sensible experience.

**Theo:** We settle it in the same way that we prove that there are imperceptible bodies and invisible movements, though some people make fun of them, namely by showing how much they strengthen theories. In the same way there are countless inconspicuous perceptions which don’t stand out enough for one to be aware of them or remember them but which show themselves through their consequences.

**Phil:** One author has objected that we ·Lockeans· maintain that the soul goes out of existence ·each night· because we aren’t aware of its existence while we sleep. But that objection can only arise from a strange misconception. We don’t say there is no soul in a man because he isn’t aware of it in his sleep; but we do say that he cannot think without being aware of it.

**Theo:** I haven’t read the book where that objection occurs. But there would have been nothing wrong with objecting against you in this way:

Thought needn’t stop just because one isn’t aware of it; for if it did, then by parity of argument we could say that there is no soul while one isn’t aware of it.

To meet *that* objection you must show that it is of the essence of thought *in particular* that one must be aware of it.

**Phil:** 11 It is hard to conceive that anything should think and not be conscious of it.

**Theo:** That is undoubtedly the crux of the matter—the difficulty that has troubled some able people. But the way to escape from it is to bear in mind that we *do* think of many

things all at once while attending only to the thoughts that stand out most distinctly. That is inevitable; to take note of everything we would have to direct our attention to an infinity of things at the same time—things that impress themselves on our senses and are all sensed by us. And I would go further: something remains of all our past thoughts, none of which can ever be entirely wiped out. When we are in dreamless sleep, or when we are dazed by some blow or a fall or a symptom of an illness or other mishap, an infinity of small, confused sensations occur in us. Death itself can’t affect the souls of animals in any way but that; they must certainly regain their distinct perceptions sooner or later, for in nature everything is orderly. I admit that in that confused ·unnoticing· state the soul would be without pleasure and pain, for they are *noticeable* perceptions.

**Phil:** 12 Isn’t it true that the men we are dealing with here, namely the Cartesians who believe that the soul always thinks, hold that non-human animals are *alive* but don’t have a thinking and knowing soul? And that they see no difficulty in saying that the soul can think without being joined to a body?

**Theo:** My own view is different. I share the Cartesians’ view that the soul always thinks, but I part company with them on the other two points. I believe that beasts have imperishable souls, and that no soul—human or otherwise—is ever without some body. I hold that God alone is entirely exempt from this because he is pure ·act·, and having a body involves being in some respect ·passive·.

**Phil:** If you had accepted ·all three items in· the Cartesian view, I would have drawn the following conclusion from your position. Since ·the bodies of Castor and of Pollux can stay alive while sometimes having a soul and sometimes not, and since ·a soul can stay in existence while sometimes being

in a given body and sometimes out of it, one might suppose that •Castor and Pollux shared a single soul which acted in their bodies by turn, with each being asleep while the other was awake. In that case, that •one soul would make •two persons as distinct as Castor and Hercules could be.

**Theo:** Here is a different imagined case—one that seems to be less fanciful. Don't we have to agree that after some passage of time or some great change a person might suffer a total failure of memory?... Now, suppose that such a man were made young again, and learned everything anew—would that make him a different man? •Obviously not! So it isn't memory that makes the very same man. But as for the fiction about a soul that animates different bodies turn about, with the things that happen to it in one body being of no concern to it in the other: that is one of those fictions that go against the nature of things—like space without body, and body without motion—arising from the incomplete notions of philosophers. These fictions vanish when one goes a little deeper. Bear in mind that each soul retains all its previous impressions, and *couldn't* be separated into two halves in the manner you have described: within each substance there is a perfect bond between the future and the past, which is what creates the identity of the individual. Memory isn't necessary for this, however, and sometimes it isn't even possible because *so many* past and present impressions jointly contribute to our present thoughts....

**Phil:** 13 No-one can be convinced that his thoughts were busy during a period when he was asleep and not dreaming.

**Theo:** While one is asleep, even without dreams, one always has some faint *sensing* going on. Waking up is itself a sign of this: when someone is easy to wake, that is because he has more sense of what is going on around him, even when

it isn't strong enough to cause him to wake.

**Phil:** 14 It seems very hard to conceive that the soul in a sleeping man could be at one moment busy thinking and the next moment, just after he has woken, not be remembered.

**Theo:** Not only is it easy to •conceive, but something like it can be •observed every day of our waking lives! There are *always* objects that affect our eyes and ears, and therefore touch our souls as well, without our attending to them. Our attention is held by other objects, until a given object becomes powerful enough to attract our attention its way, either by acting more strongly on us or in some other way. It is as though we had been *selectively asleep* with regard to that object; and when we withdraw our attention from everything all at once the sleep becomes general. It is also a way of getting to sleep—dividing one's attention so as to weaken it.

**Phil:** 15 Thinking often without retaining for a single moment the memory of what one thinks—a useless sort of thinking!

**Theo:** Every impression has an effect, but the effects aren't always noticeable. When I turn one way rather than another it is often because of a series of tiny impressions that I am not aware of but which make one movement slightly harder than the other. All our casual unplanned actions result from a conjunction of tiny perceptions; and even our customs and passions, which have so much influence when we *do* plan and decide, come from the same source. For these •behavioural• tendencies come into being gradually, and so without our tiny perceptions we wouldn't have acquired these noticeable dispositions. I have already remarked that anyone who excluded these effects from moral philosophy would be copying the ill-informed people who exclude insensible corpuscles from natural science....

**Phil:** Perhaps it will be said that when a man is awake his body plays a part in his thinking, and that the memory is preserved by traces in the brain; whereas when he sleeps the soul has its thoughts separately, in itself.

**Theo:** I would say nothing of the sort, since I think that there is always a perfect correspondence between the body and the soul, and since I use bodily impressions of which one isn't aware, whether in sleep or waking states, to prove that there are similar impressions in the soul. I even maintain that something happens in the soul corresponding to the circulation of the blood and to every internal movement of the viscera, although one is unaware of such happenings, just as those who live near a water-mill are unaware of the noise it makes. The fact is that if during sleep or waking there were impressions in the body that didn't touch or affect the soul in any way at all, and others that *did*, there would have to be limits to the union of body and soul, as though bodily impressions needed a certain shape or size if the soul was to be able to feel them. And that is indefensible if the soul is not a material thing, for there is no way of bringing an immaterial substance and a portion of matter under a common measure that would let us say that a certain state of the matter wasn't adequate for a certain event in the immaterial substance. In short, many errors can flow from the belief that the only perceptions in the soul are the ones of which it is aware.

**Phil:** 17 Since you are so confident that the soul always actually thinks, I wish that you would tell me what ideas there are in the soul of a child just *before* or just *at* its union with the child's body, before it has received any through sensation.

**Theo:** It is easy to satisfy you on my principles. The perceptions of the soul always correspond naturally to the state of

the body; and when there are many confused and indistinct motions in the brain, as happens with those who have had little experience, it naturally follows that the thoughts of the soul can't be distinct either. But the soul is never deprived of the aid of sensation; for it always expresses its body, and this body is always affected in infinitely many ways by surrounding things, though often they provide only a confused impression.

**Phil:** 18 Here is another question of Locke's: 'To those who so confidently maintain that the human soul always thinks, or (the same thing) that a man always thinks, I say: How do you know this?'

**Theo:** [What follows somewhat expands Theophilus's answer, in ways that small dots can't easily indicate.] I suggest that it needs even more confidence to maintain that nothing happens in the soul that we aren't aware of. For anything that *is* noticeable must be made up of parts that *are not*. One reason for saying this is that nothing, whether thought or motion, can come into existence suddenly; from which it follows that a barely-noticeable perception must gradually build up in the mind from earlier, lesser stages of itself, and these must be unnoticeable perceptions. In short, we know there are mental events of which one isn't aware because their existence is required to make sense of the given facts. The question of how we know this is like the question 'How do we know about insensible particles?', and these days no intelligent person wants to ask *that*.

**Phil:** 19 I don't remember anyone who says that *the soul* always thinks telling us that *a man* always thinks.

**Theo:** I suppose that is because they are talking not just about the embodied soul but also about the soul that is separated from its body, and that they would readily admit

that the man always thinks while his soul and body are united. As for my own views: I have reason to hold that the soul is never completely separated from all body, so I think it can be said outright that the man does and will always think.

**Phil:** 'A body is extended without having parts'—'Something thinks without being aware that it does so'—these two assertions seem equally unintelligible.

**Theo:** . . . Your contention that there is nothing in the soul of which it isn't aware has already held sway all through our first meeting, when you tried to use it to tear down innate ideas and truths. If I conceded it, I would not only be flying in the face of experience and of reason, but would also be giving up my own view—a view for which I think I have made a good enough case—without having any reason to do so. My opponents, accomplished as they are, have offered no proof of their own firmly and frequently repeated contention on this matter; and anyway there is an easy way of showing them that they are wrong, i.e. that it is *impossible* that we should always reflect explicitly on all our thoughts. If we did, the mind would reflect on each reflection, ad infinitum, without ever being able to move on to a new thought. For example, in being aware of some present feeling, I should have always to think that I think about that feeling, and further to think that I think of thinking about it, and so on ad infinitum. It *must* be that I stop reflecting on all these reflections, and that eventually some thought is allowed to occur without being thought about; otherwise I would dwell for ever on the same thing.

**Phil:** But wouldn't it be just as reasonable to say that *a man* is *always hungry*, adding that he can be hungry without

being aware of it?

**Theo:** There is a big difference: hunger arises from special conditions that don't always obtain. Still, it is true that even when one is hungry one doesn't think about the hunger all the time; but when one thinks about it, one is aware of it, for it is a very noticeable disposition: there are always disturbances in the stomach, but they don't cause hunger unless they become strong enough. One should always observe this distinction between thoughts in general and noticeable thoughts. Thus, a point that you offered in mockery of my view really serves to confirm it.

**Phil:** 23 'When does a man begin to have any ideas?' The right reply, it seems to me, is *When he first has any sensation*.

**Theo:** That is my view too, though only for a somewhat special reason. For I think we are never without ideas, never without thoughts, and never without sensations either. But I distinguish ideas from thoughts. For we always have all our pure or distinct ideas independently of the senses, but thoughts always correspond to some sensation.

**Phil:** 25 But the mind is merely passive in the perception of simple ideas, which are the beginnings or materials of knowledge; whereas in the forming of composite ideas it is active.

**Theo:** How can it be wholly passive in the perception of all simple ideas, when by your own admission some simple ideas are perceived through *reflection*? The mind must at least give itself its thoughts of reflection, since it is the mind that reflects. . . .

## Chapter ii: Simple ideas

**Philalethes:** 1 I hope you'll still agree that some ideas are simple and some composite. Thus, the warmth and softness of wax, the hardness and coldness of ice, provide simple ideas; for of these the soul has a uniform ·or same-all-over· conception that isn't distinguishable into different ideas.

**Theophilus:** I think it can be maintained that these sensible ideas *appear* simple because they are confused and thus don't provide the mind with any way of separately noticing their ·different· parts; just like distant things that appear rounded because one can't see their angles, even though one is receiving some confused impression from them. It is obvi-

ous that green, for instance, comes from a mixture of blue and yellow; which makes it credible that the idea of green is composed of the ideas of those two colours, although the idea of green appears to us as simple as that of blue, or as that of warmth. So these ideas of blue and of warmth should *also* be regarded as simple only in appearance. I freely admit that we treat them as simple ideas, because we aren't aware of any divisions within them; but we try to analyse them—thus revealing their so-far-hidden complexities—doing this by means of ·further experiments, and by means of ·reason insofar as we can make them more capable of being treated by the intellect.

## Chapter iii: Ideas of one sense

**Philalethes:** 1 Now we can classify simple ideas according to how we come to perceive them, namely (1) by one sense only, (2) by more senses than one, (3) by reflection, or (4) by all the ways of sensation and reflection. The simple ideas that get in through just one sense that is specially adapted to receive them are:

light and colours that come in only by the eyes,  
all kinds of noises, sounds, and tones only by the ears,  
the various tastes only by the palate, and  
smells only by the nose.

The organs or nerves convey them to the brain, and if one of the organs comes to be out of order, the sensations belonging to that organ can't reach the brain by any detour. The most

considerable of the ideas belonging to the ·sense of· touch are heat and cold, and solidity. The rest consist either in the arrangement of sensible parts, as smooth and rough; or else in the way the parts hold together—e.g. hard and soft, tough and brittle.

**Theophilus:** I'm pretty much in agreement with what you say. But I might remark that it seems, judging by Mariotte's experiment on the blind spot in the region of the optic nerve, that ·membranes receive the sensation more than ·nerves do; and that there is a detour for hearing and for taste, since the teeth and the cranium contribute to the hearing of sounds, and tastes can be experienced in a fashion through the nose because the organs are connected. . . .

**Martin Heidegger**

# **What is Metaphysics?**

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## ***Martin Heidegger***

### **What is Metaphysics?**

The basic text of Heidegger's inaugural lecture at the U. of Freiburg in 1929

Based on a translation by David Farrell Krell

“What is metaphysics?” The question awakens expectations of a discussion about metaphysics. This we will forgo. Instead we will take up a particular metaphysical question. In this way it seems we will let ourselves be transposed directly into metaphysics. Only in this way will we provide metaphysics the proper occasion to introduce itself. Our plan begins with the unfolding of a metaphysical inquiry, then tries to elaborate the question, and concludes by answering it.

#### **The Unfolding of a Metaphysical Inquiry**

From the point of view of sound common sense philosophy is in Hegel's words “the inverted world.” Hence the peculiar nature of our undertaking requires a preliminary sketch. This will take shape about a twofold character of metaphysical interrogation.

First, every metaphysical question always encompasses the whole range of metaphysical problems. Each question is itself always the whole. Therefore, second, every metaphysical question can be asked only in such a way that the questioner as such is present together with the question, that is, is placed in question. From this we conclude that metaphysical inquiry must be posed as a whole and from the essential position of the existence [Dasein] that questions. We are questioning, here and now, for ourselves. Our existence—in the community of researchers, teachers, and students—is determined by science. What happens to us, essentially, in the grounds of our existence, when science becomes our passion?

The scientific fields are quite diverse. The ways they treat their objects of inquiry differ fundamentally. Today only the technical organization of universities and faculties consolidates this burgeoning multiplicity of disciplines; the practical establishment of goals by each discipline provides the only meaningful source of unity. Nonetheless, the rootedness of the sciences in their essential ground has atrophied.

Yet when we follow their most proper intention, in all the sciences we relate ourselves to beings themselves. Precisely from the point of view of the sciences or disciplines no field takes precedence over another, neither nature over history nor vice versa. No particular way of treating objects of inquiry dominates the others. Mathematical knowledge is no more rigorous than philological-historical knowledge. It merely has the character of “exactness,” which does not coincide with rigor. To demand exactness in the study of history is to violate the idea of the specific rigor of the humanities. The relation to the world that pervades all the sciences as such lets them — each according to its particular content and mode of being — seek beings themselves in order to make them objects of investigation and to determine their grounds.

According to the idea behind them, in the sciences we approach what is essential in all things. This distinctive relation to the world in which we turn toward beings themselves is supported and guided by a freely chosen attitude of human existence. To be sure, man's prescientific and extrascientific activities also are related to beings. But science is exceptional in that, in a way peculiar to it, it gives the matter itself explicitly and solely the first and last word. In such impartiality of inquiring, determining, and grounding, a peculiarly delineated submission to beings themselves obtains, in order that they may reveal themselves. This position of service in research and theory evolves in such a way as to become the ground of the possibility of a proper though limited leadership in the whole of human existence. The special relation science sustains to the world and the attitude of man that guides it can of course be fully grasped only when we see and comprehend what happens in the relation to the world so attained. Man — one being among others — "pursues science." In this "pursuit," nothing less transpires than the irruption by one being called "man" into the whole of beings, indeed in such a way that in and through this irruption beings break open and show what they are and how they are. The irruption that breaks open in its way helps beings above all to themselves.

This trinity—relation to the world, attitude, and irruption—in its radical unity brings a luminous simplicity and aptness of Dasein to scientific existence. If we are to take explicit possession of the Dasein illuminated in this way for ourselves, then we must say: That to which the relation to the world refers are beings them-selves—and nothing besides. That from which every attitude takes its guidance are beings themselves—and nothing further. That with which the scientific confrontation in the irruption occurs are beings themselves—and beyond that nothing. But what is remarkable is that, precisely in the way scientific man secures to himself what is most properly his, he speaks of something different. What should be examined are beings only, and besides that — nothing; beings alone, and further — nothing; solely beings, and beyond that — nothing.

What about this nothing? The nothing is rejected precisely by science, given up as a nullity. But when we give up the nothing in such a way don't we just concede it? Can we, however, speak of concession when we concede nothing? But perhaps our confused talk already degenerates into an empty squabble over words. Against it science must now reassert its seriousness and soberness of mind, insisting that it is concerned solely with beings. The nothing — what else can it be for science but an outrage and a phantasm? If science is right, then only one thing is sure: science wishes to know nothing of the nothing. Ultimately this is the scientifically rigorous conception of the nothing. We know it, the nothing, in that we wish to know nothing about it.

Science wants to know nothing of the nothing. But even so it is certain that when science tries to express its proper essence it calls upon the nothing for help. It has recourse to what it rejects. What incongruous state of affairs reveals itself here? With this reflection on our contemporary existence as one determined by science we find ourselves enmeshed in a controversy. In the course of this controversy a question has already evolved. It only requires explicit formulation: How is it with the nothing?



## The Elaboration of the Question

The elaboration of the question of the nothing must bring us to the point where an answer becomes possible or the impossibility of any answer becomes clear. The nothing is conceded. With a studied indifference science abandons it as what “there is not.”

All the same, we shall try to ask about the nothing. What is the nothing? Our very first approach to this question has something unusual about it. In our asking we posit the nothing in advance as something that “is” such and such; we posit it as a being. But that is exactly what it is distinguished from. Interrogating the nothing — asking what and how it, the nothing, is — turns what is interrogated into its opposite. The question deprives itself of its own object. Accordingly, every answer to this question is also impossible from the start. For it necessarily assumes the form: the nothing “is” this or that. With regard to the nothing question and answer alike are inherently absurd.

But it is not science’s rejection that first of all teaches us this. The commonly cited ground rule of all thinking, the proposition that contradiction is to be avoided, universal “logic” itself, lays low this question. For thinking, which is always essentially thinking about something, must act in a way contrary to its own essence when it thinks of the nothing. Since it remains wholly impossible for us to make the nothing into an object have we not already come to the end of our inquiry into the nothing — assuming that in this question “logic” is of supreme importance, that the intellect is the means, and thought the way, to conceive the nothing originally and to decide about its possible exposure?

But are we allowed to tamper with the rule of “logic”? Isn’t intellect the taskmaster in this question of the nothing? Only with its help can we at all define the nothing and pose it as a problem — which, it is true, only devours itself. For the nothing is the negation of the totality of beings; it is nonbeing pure and simple. But with that we bring the nothing under the higher determination of the negative, viewing it as the negated. However, according to the reigning and never challenged doctrine of “logic,” negation is a specific act of the intellect. How then can we in our question of the nothing, indeed in the question of its questionability, wish to brush the intellect aside? Are we altogether sure about what we are presupposing in this matter? Do not the “not,” negatedness, and thereby negation too represent the higher determination under which the nothing falls as a particular kind of negated matter? Is the nothing given only because the “not,” i. e., negation, is given? Or is it the other way around? Are negation and the “not” given only because the nothing is given? That has not been decided; it has not even been raised expressly as a question. We assert that the nothing is more original than the “not” and negation.

If this thesis is right, then the possibility of negation as an act of the intellect, and thereby the intellect itself, are somehow dependent upon the nothing. Then how can the intellect hope to decide about the nothing? Does the ostensible absurdity of question and answer with respect to the nothing in the end rest solely in a blind conceit of the far-ranging intellect? But if we do not let ourselves be misled by the formal impossibility of the question of the nothing; if we pose the question in spite of this; then we must at least satisfy what remains the basic demand for the possible advancing of every question. If the nothing itself is to be questioned as we have been questioning it, then it must be given beforehand. We must be able to encounter it.

Where shall we seek the nothing? Where will we find the nothing? In order to find something must we not already know in general that it is there? Indeed! At first and for the most part man can seek

only when he has anticipated the being at hand of what he is looking for. Now the nothing is what we are seeking. Is there ultimately such a thing as a search without that anticipation, a search to which pure discovery belongs?

Whatever we may make of it, we do know the nothing, if only as a word we rattle off every day. For this common nothing that glides so inconspicuously through our chatter, blanched with the anemic pallor of the obvious, we can without hesitating furnish even a "definition": The nothing is the complete negation of the totality of beings. Doesn't this characterization of the nothing ultimately provide an indication of the direction from which alone the nothing can come to meet us? The totality of beings must be given in advance so as to be able to fall prey straightaway to negation — in which the nothing itself would then be manifest.

But even if we ignore the questionableness of the relation between negation and the nothing, how should we who are essentially finite make the whole of beings penetrable in themselves and especially for us? We can of course conjure up the whole of beings in an "idea," then negate what we have imagined in our thought, and thus "think" it negated. In this way we do attain the formal concept of the imagined nothing but never the nothing itself. But the nothing is nothing, and, if the nothing represents total indistinguishability, no distinction can obtain between the imagined and the "genuine" nothing. And the "genuine" nothing itself — isn't this that camouflaged but absurd concept of a nothing that is? For the last time now the objections of the intellect would call a halt to our search, whose legitimacy, however, can be demonstrated only on the basis of a fundamental experience of the nothing.

As surely as we can never comprehend absolutely the ensemble of beings in themselves we certainly do find ourselves stationed in the midst of beings that are revealed somehow as a whole. In the end an essential distinction prevails between comprehending the ensemble of beings in themselves and finding oneself in the midst of beings as a whole. The former is impossible in principle. The latter happens all the time in our existence. It does seem as though we cling to this or that particular being, precisely in our everyday preoccupations, as though we were completely abandoned to this or that region of beings. No matter how fragmented our everyday existence may appear to be, however, it always deals with beings in a unity of the "whole," if only in a shadowy way. Even and precisely then when we are not actually busy with things or ourselves this "as a whole" overcomes us — for example in genuine boredom. Boredom is still distant when it is only this book or that play, that business or this idleness, that drags on. It irrupts when "one is bored." Profound boredom, drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things and men and oneself along with it into a remarkable indifference. This boredom reveals beings as a whole.

Another possibility of such revelation is concealed in our joy in the present existence — and not simply in the person — of a human being whom we love. Such being attuned, in which we "are" one way or another and which determines us through and through, lets us find ourselves among beings as a whole. The founding mode of attunement [die Befindlichkeit der Stimmung] not only reveals beings as a whole in various ways, but this revealing — far from being merely incidental — is also the basic occurrence of our Dasein.

What we call a "feeling" is neither a transitory epiphenomenon of our thinking and willing behavior nor simply an impulse that provokes such behavior nor merely a present condition we have to put up with somehow or other. But just when moods of this sort bring us face to face with beings as a whole

they conceal from us the nothing we are seeking. Now we come to share even less in the opinion that the negation of beings as a whole that are revealed to us in mood places us before the nothing. Such a thing could happen only in a correspondingly original mood which in the most proper sense of unveiling reveals the nothing.

Does such an attunement, in which man is brought before the nothing itself, occur in human existence? This can and does occur, although rarely enough and only for a moment, in the fundamental mood of anxiety. By this anxiety we do not mean the quite common anxiousness, ultimately reducible to fearfulness, which all too readily comes over us. Anxiety is basically different from fear. We become afraid in the face of this or that particular being that threatens us in this or that particular respect. Fear in the face of something is also in each case a fear for something in particular. Because fear possesses this trait of being “fear in the face of” and “fear for,” he who fears and is afraid is captive to the mood in which he finds himself. Striving to rescue himself from this particular thing, he becomes unsure of everything else and completely “loses his head.”

Anxiety does not let such confusion arise. Much to the contrary, a peculiar calm pervades it. Anxiety is indeed anxiety in the face of... ,but not in the face of this or that thing. Anxiety in the face of . . . is always anxiety for . . . , but not for this or that. The indeterminateness of that in the face of which and for which we become anxious is no mere lack of determination but rather the essential impossibility of determining it. In a familiar phrase this indeterminateness comes to the fore.

In anxiety, we say, “one feels ill at ease [es ist einem un-heimlich].” What is “it” that makes “one” feel ill at ease? We cannot say what it is before which one feels ill at ease. As a whole it is so for him. All things and we ourselves sink into indifference. This, however, not in the sense of mere disappearance. Rather in this very receding things turn toward us. The receding of beings as a whole that closes in on us in anxiety oppresses us. We can get no hold on things. In the slipping away of beings only this “no hold on things” comes over us and remains. Anxiety reveals the nothing.

We “hover” in anxiety. More precisely, anxiety leaves us hanging because it induces the slipping away of beings as a whole. This implies that we ourselves — we who are in being — in the midst of beings slip away from ourselves. At bottom therefore it is not as though “you” or “I” feel ill at ease; rather it is this way for some “one.” In the altogether unsettling experience of this hovering where there is nothing to hold onto, pure Dasein is all that is still there.

Anxiety robs us of speech. Because beings as a whole slip away, so that just the nothing crowds round, in the face of anxiety all utterance of the “is” falls silent. That in the malaise of anxiety we often try to shatter the vacant stillness with compulsive talk only proves the presence of the nothing. That anxiety reveals the nothing man himself immediately demonstrates when anxiety has dissolved. In the lucid vision sustained by fresh remembrance we must say that that in the face of which and for which we were anxious was “really — nothing. Indeed: the nothing itself — as such — was there.

With the fundamental mood of anxiety we have arrived at that occurrence in human existence in which the nothing is revealed and from which it must be interrogated. How is it with the nothing?

## The Response to the Question

We have already won the answer which for our purposes is at least at first the only essential one when we take heed that the question of the nothing remains actually posed. This requires that we actively complete that transformation of man into his Dasein which every instance of anxiety occasions in us, in order to get a grip on the nothing revealed there as it makes itself known. At the same time this demands that we expressly hold at a distance those designations of the nothing that do not result from its claims.

The nothing reveals itself in anxiety — but not as a being. Just as little is it given as an object. Anxiety is no kind of grasping of the nothing. All the same, the nothing reveals itself in and through anxiety, although, to repeat, not in such a way that the nothing becomes manifest in our malaise quite apart from beings as a whole. Rather we said that in anxiety the nothing is encountered at one with beings as a whole. What does this “at one with” mean?

In anxiety beings as a whole become superfluous. In what sense does this happen? Beings are not annihilated by anxiety, so that nothing is left. How could they be, when anxiety finds itself precisely in utter impotence with regard to beings as a whole? Rather the nothing makes itself known with beings and in beings expressly as a slipping away of the whole.

No kind of annihilation of the ensemble of beings as such takes place in anxiety; just as little do we produce a negation of beings as a whole in order to attain the nothing for the first time. Apart from the consideration that the expressive function of a negating assertion remains foreign to anxiety as such, we also come always too late with such a negation which should produce the nothing. The nothing rises to meet us already before that. We said it is encountered “at one with” beings that are slipping away as a whole.

In anxiety occurs a shrinking back before . . . which is surely not any sort of flight but rather a kind of bewildered calm. This “back before” takes its departure from the nothing. The nothing itself does not attract; it is essentially repelling. But this repulsion is itself as such a parting gesture toward beings that are submerging as a whole. This wholly repelling gesture toward beings that are in retreat as a whole, which is the action of the nothing that oppresses Dasein in anxiety, is the essence of the nothing: nihilation. It is neither an annihilation of beings nor does it spring from a negation. Nihilation will not submit to calculation in terms of annihilation and negation. The nothing itself nihilates.

Nihilation is not some fortuitous incident. Rather, as the repelling gesture toward the retreating whole of beings, it discloses these beings in their full but heretofore concealed strangeness as what is radically other — with respect to the nothing. In the clear night of the nothing of anxiety the original openness of beings as such arises: that they are beings — and not nothing. But this “and not nothing” we add in our talk is not some kind of appended clarification. Rather it makes possible in advance the revelation of beings in general. The essence of the originally nihilating nothing lies in this, that it brings Dasein for the first time before beings as such.

Only on the ground of the original revelation of the nothing can human existence approach and penetrate beings. But since existence in its essence relates itself to beings — those which it is not and that which it is — it emerges as such existence in each case from the nothing already revealed. Dasein means: being held out into the nothing.

Holding itself out into the nothing, Dasein is in each case already beyond beings as a whole. This being beyond beings we call "transcendence." If in the ground of its essence Dasein were not transcending, which now means, if it were not in advance holding itself out into the nothing, then it could never be related to beings nor even to itself. Without the original revelation of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom.

With that the answer to the question of the nothing is gained. The nothing is neither an object nor any being at all. The nothing comes forward neither for itself nor next to beings, to which it would, as it were, adhere. For human existence the nothing makes possible the openedness of beings as such. The nothing does not merely serve as the counterconcept of beings; rather it originally belongs to their essential unfolding as such. In the Being of beings the nihilation of the nothing occurs.

But now a suspicion we have been suppressing too long must finally find expression. If Dasein can relate itself to beings only by holding itself out into the nothing and can exist only thus; and if the nothing is originally disclosed only in anxiety; then must we not hover in this anxiety constantly in order to be able to exist at all? And have we not ourselves confessed that this original anxiety is rare? But above all else, we all do exist and relate ourselves to beings which we may or may not be — without this anxiety. Is this not an arbitrary invention and the nothing attributed to it a flight of fancy?

Yet what does it mean that this original anxiety occurs only in rare moments? Nothing else than that the nothing is at first and for the most part distorted with respect to its originality. How, then? In this way: we usually lose ourselves altogether among beings in a certain way. The more we turn toward beings in our preoccupations the less we let beings as a whole slip away as such and the more we turn away from the nothing. Just as surely do we hasten into the public superficialities of existence. And yet this constant if ambiguous turning away from the nothing accords, within certain limits, with the most proper significance of the nothing. In its nihilation the nothing directs us precisely toward beings. The nothing nihilates incessantly without our really knowing of this occurrence in the manner of our everyday knowledge.

What testifies to the constant and widespread though distorted revelation of the nothing in our existence more compellingly than negation? But negation does not conjure the "not" out of itself as a means for making distinctions and oppositions in whatever is given, inserting itself, as it were, in between what is given. How could negation produce the not from itself when it can make denials only when something deniable is already granted to it? But how could the deniable and what is to be denied be viewed as something susceptible to the not unless all thinking as such has caught sight of the not already? But the not can become manifest only when its origin, the nihilation of the nothing in general, and therewith the nothing itself, is disengaged from concealment. The not does not originate through negation; rather negation is grounded in the not that springs from the nihilation of the nothing. But negation is also only one way of nihilating, that is, only one sort of behavior that has been grounded beforehand in the nihilation of the nothing.

In this way the above thesis in its main features has been proven: the nothing is the origin of negation, not vice versa. If the power of the intellect in the field of inquiry into the nothing and into Being is thus shattered, then the destiny of the reign of "logic" in philosophy is thereby decided. The idea of "logic" itself disintegrates in the turbulence of a more original questioning.

No matter how much or in how many ways negation, expressed or implied, permeates all thought, it is by no means the sole authoritative witness for the revelation of the nothing belonging essentially to Dasein. For negation cannot claim to be either the sole or the leading nihilative behavior in which Dasein remains shaken by the nihilation of the nothing. Unyielding antagonism and stinging rebuke have a more abysmal source than the measured negation of thought. Galling failure and merciless prohibition require some deeper answer. Bitter privation is more burdensome.

These possibilities of nihilative behavior — forces in which Dasein bears its thrownness without mastering it — are not types of mere negation. That does not prevent them, however, from speaking out in the “no” and in negation. Indeed here for the first time the barrenness and range of negation betray themselves. The saturation of existence by nihilative behavior testifies to the constant though doubtlessly obscured manifestation of the nothing that only anxiety originally reveals. But this implies that the original anxiety in existence is usually repressed. Anxiety is there. It is only sleeping. Its breath quivers perpetually through Dasein, only slightly in those who are jittery, imperceptibly in the “Oh, yes” and the “Oh, no” of men of affairs; but most readily in the reserved, and most assuredly in those who are basically daring. But those daring ones are sustained by that on which they expend themselves — in order thus to preserve a final greatness in existence.

The anxiety of those who are daring cannot be opposed to joy or even to the comfortable enjoyment of tranquilized bustle. It stands outside all such opposition — in secret alliance with the cheerfulness and gentleness of creative longing. Original anxiety can awaken in existence at any moment. It needs no unusual event to rouse it. Its sway is as thoroughgoing as its possible occasionings are trivial. It is always ready, though it only seldom springs, and we are snatched away and left hanging.

Being held out into the nothing — as Dasein is on the ground of concealed anxiety makes man a place-holder of the nothing. We are so finite that we cannot even bring ourselves originally before the nothing through our own decision and will. So profoundly does finitude entrench itself in existence that our most proper and deepest limitation refuses to yield to our freedom. Being held out into the nothing — as Dasein is — on the ground of concealed anxiety is its surpassing of beings as a whole. It is transcendence.

Our inquiry concerning the nothing should bring us face to face with metaphysics itself. The name “metaphysics” derives from the Greek *meta ta physika*. This peculiar title was later interpreted as characterizing the inquiry, the meta or trans extending out “over” beings as such. Metaphysics is inquiry beyond or over beings which aims to recover them as such and as a whole for our grasp.

In the question concerning the nothing such an inquiry beyond or over beings, as being as a whole, takes place. It proves thereby to be a “metaphysical” question. At the outset we ascribed a two-fold character to such questions: first, each metaphysical question always encompasses the whole of metaphysics; second, every metaphysical question implicates the interrogating Dasein in each case in the question. To what extent does the question concerning the nothing permeate and embrace the whole of metaphysics?

For a long time metaphysics has expressed the nothing in a proposition clearly susceptible of more than one meaning: *ex nihilo nihil fit* — from nothing, nothing comes to be. Although in discussions of the proposition the nothing itself never really becomes a problem, the respective views of the nothing nevertheless express the guiding fundamental conception of beings. Ancient metaphysics

conceives the nothing in the sense of nonbeing, that is, unformed matter, matter which cannot take form as an informed being that would offer an outward appearance or aspect (eidos). To be in being is to be a self-forming form that exhibits itself as such in an image (as a spectacle). The origins, legitimacy, and limits of this conception of Being are as little discussed as the nothing itself. On the other hand, Christian dogma denies the truth of the proposition *ex nihilo nihil fit* and thereby bestows on the nothing a transformed significance, the sense of the complete absence of beings apart from God: *ex nihilo fit — ens creatum* [From nothing comes—created being]. Now the nothing becomes the counterconcept to being proper, the *summum ens*, God as *ens increatum*. Here too the interpretation of the nothing designates the basic conception of beings. But the metaphysical discussion of beings stays on the same level as the question of the nothing. The questions of Being and of the nothing as such are not posed. Therefore no one is bothered by the difficulty that if God creates out of nothing precisely He must be able to relate Himself to the nothing. But if God is God he cannot know the nothing, assuming that the “Absolute” excludes all nothingness.

This cursory historical review shows the nothing as the counter-concept to being proper, that is, as its negation. But if the nothing becomes any problem at all, then this opposition does not merely undergo a somewhat more significant determination; rather it awakens for the first time the genuine formulation of the metaphysical question concerning the Being of beings. The nothing does not remain the indeterminate opposite of beings but reveals itself as belonging to the Being of beings.

“Pure Being and pure Nothing are therefore the same.” This proposition of Hegel’s (*Science of Logic*, vol. I, *Werke* III, 74) is correct. Being and the nothing do belong together, not because both — from the point of view of the Hegelian concept of thought — agree in their indeterminateness and immediacy, but rather because Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of *Dasein* which is held out into the nothing.

Assuming that the question of Being as such is the encompassing question of metaphysics, then the question of the nothing proves to be such that it embraces the whole of metaphysics. But the question of the nothing at the same time pervades the whole of metaphysics, since it forces us to face the problem of the origin of negation, that is, ultimately, to face up to the decision concerning the legitimacy of the rule of “logic” in metaphysics.

The old proposition *ex nihilo nihil fit* is therefore found to contain another sense, one appropriate to the problem of Being itself, that runs: *ex nihilo omne ens qua ens fit* [From the nothing all beings as beings come to be]. Only in the nothing of *Dasein* do beings as a whole, in accord with their most proper possibility — that is, in a finite way — come to themselves. To what extent then has the question of the nothing, if it is a metaphysical question, implicated our questioning *Dasein*? We have characterized our existence, experienced here and now, as essentially determined by science. If our existence so defined is posed in the question of the nothing, then it must have become questionable through this question.

Scientific existence possesses its simplicity and aptness in that it relates to beings themselves in a distinctive way and only to them. Science would like to dismiss the nothing with a lordly wave of the hand. But in our inquiry concerning the nothing it has by now become manifest that scientific existence is possible only if in advance it holds itself out into the nothing. It understands itself for what it is only when it does not give up the nothing. The presumed soberness of mind and superiority of science become laughable when it does not take the nothing seriously. Only because the nothing

is manifest can science make beings themselves objects of investigation. Only if science exists on the base of metaphysics can it advance further in its essential task, which is not to amass and classify bits of knowledge but to disclose in ever-renewed fashion the entire region of truth in nature and history.

Only because the nothing is manifest in the ground of Dasein can the total strangeness of beings overwhelm us. Only when the strangeness of beings oppresses us does it arouse and evoke wonder. Only on the ground of wonder — the revelation of the nothing — does the “why?” loom before us. Only because the “why” is possible as such can we in a definite way inquire into grounds, and ground them. Only because we can inquire and ground is the destiny of our existence placed in the hands of the researcher. The question of the nothing puts us, the questioners, in question. It is a metaphysical question.

Human existence can relate to beings only if it holds itself out into the nothing. Going beyond beings occurs in the essence of Dasein. But this going beyond is metaphysics itself. This implies that metaphysics belongs to the “nature of man.” It is neither a division of academic philosophy nor a field of arbitrary notions. Metaphysics is the basic occurrence of Dasein. It is Dasein itself. Because the truth of metaphysics dwells in this groundless ground it stands in closest proximity to the constantly lurking possibility of deepest error. For this reason no amount of scientific rigor attains to the seriousness of metaphysics. Philosophy can never be measured by the standard of the idea of science.

If the question of the nothing unfolded here has actually questioned us, then we have not simply brought metaphysics before us in an extrinsic manner. Nor have we merely been “transposed” to it. We cannot be transposed there at all, because insofar as we exist we are always there already. “For by nature, my friend, man’s mind dwells in philosophy” (Plato, Phaedrus, 279a). So long as man exists, philosophizing of some sort occurs. Philosophy — what we call philosophy — is metaphysics getting under way, in which philosophy comes to itself and to its explicit tasks. Philosophy gets under way only by a peculiar insertion of our own existence into the fundamental possibilities of Dasein as a whole. For this insertion it is of decisive importance, first, that we allow space for beings as a whole; second, that we release ourselves into the nothing, which is to say, that we liberate ourselves from those idols everyone has and to which he is wont to go cringing; and finally, that we let the sweep of our suspense take its full course, so that it swings back into the basic question of metaphysics which the nothing itself compels: ‘Why are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?’



**Rudolf Carnap**

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Metaphysics Through  
Logical Analysis of  
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# The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language<sup>1</sup>

By *RUDOLF CARNAP*

(TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR PAP)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

THERE HAVE BEEN many opponents of metaphysics from the Greek skeptics to the empiricists of the 19th century. Criticisms of very diverse kinds have been set forth. Many have declared that the doctrine of metaphysics is false, since it contradicts our empirical knowledge. Others have believed it to be uncertain, on the ground that its problems transcend the limits of human knowledge. Many antimetaphysicians have declared that occupation with metaphysical questions is sterile. Whether or not these questions can be answered, it is at any rate unnecessary to worry about them; let us devote ourselves entirely to the practical tasks which confront active men every day of their lives!

The development of modern logic has made it possible to give a new and sharper answer to the question of the validity and justification of metaphysics. The researches of applied logic or the theory of knowledge, which aim at clarifying the cognitive content of scientific statements and thereby the meanings of the terms that occur in the statements, by means of logical analysis, lead to a positive and to a negative result. The positive result is worked out in the domain of empirical science; the various concepts of the various branches of science are clarified; their formal-logical and epistemological connections are made explicit. In the domain of metaphysics, including all philosophy of value and normative theory, logical analysis yields the negative result that the alleged statements in this domain are entirely meaningless. Therewith a radical elimination of metaphysics is attained, which was not yet possible from the earlier antimetaphysical standpoints. It is true that related ideas may be found already in several earlier trains of thought, e.g. those of a nominalistic kind; but it is only now when the development of logic during recent decades provides us with a sufficiently sharp tool that the decisive step can be taken.

In saying that the so-called statements of metaphysics are meaningless, we intend this word in its strictest sense. In a loose sense of the word a statement or a question is at times called meaningless if it is entirely sterile to assert or ask it. We might say this for instance about the question "what is the average weight of those inhabitants of Vienna whose telephone number ends with '3'?" or about a statement which is quite obviously false like "in 1910 Vienna had 6 inhabitants" or about a statement which is not just empirically, but logically false, a contradictory statement such as "persons A and B are each a year older than the other." Such sentences are really meaningful, though they are pointless or false; for it is only meaningful sentences that are even divisible into (theoretically) fruitful and sterile, true and false. In the strict sense, however, a sequence of words is meaningless if it does not, within a specified language, constitute a statement. It may happen that such a sequence of words looks like a statement at first glance; in that case we call it a pseudostatement. Our thesis, now, is that logical analysis reveals the alleged statements of metaphysics to be pseudo-statements.

A language consists of a vocabulary and a syntax, i.e. a set of words which have meanings and rules of sentence formation. These rules indicate how sentences may be formed out of the various sorts of words. Accordingly, there are two kinds of pseudo-statements: either they contain a word which is erroneously believed to have meaning, or the constituent words are meaningful, yet are put together in a counter-syntactical way, so that they do not yield a meaningful statement. We shall show in terms of examples that pseudo-statements of both kinds occur in metaphysics. Later we shall have to inquire into the reasons that support our contention that metaphysics in its entirety consists of such pseudo-statements.

## 2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A WORD

A word which (within a definite language) has a meaning, is usually also said to designate a concept; if it only seems to have a meaning while it really does not, we speak of a "pseudo-concept." How is the origin of a pseudo-concept to be explained? Has not every word been introduced into the language for no other purpose than to express something or other, so that it had a definite meaning from the very beginning of its use? How, then, can a traditional language contain meaningless words? To be sure, originally every word (excepting rare cases which we shall illustrate later) had a meaning. In the course of historical development a word frequently changes its meaning. And it also happens at times that a word loses its old sense without acquiring a new one. It is thus that a pseudo-concept arises. What, now, is the meaning of a word? What stipulations concerning a word must be made in order for it to be significant? (It does not matter for our investigation whether these stipulations are explicitly laid down, as in the case of some words and symbols of modern science, or whether they have been tacitly agreed upon, as is the case for most words of traditional language.) First, the syntax of the word must be fixed, i.e. the mode of its occurrence in the simplest sentence form in which it is capable of occurring; we call this sentence form its elementary sentence. The elementary sentence form for the word "stone" e.g. is "x is a stone"; in sentences of this form some designation from the category of things occupies the place of "x," e.g. "this diamond," "this apple." Secondly, for an elementary sentence S containing the word an answer must be given to the following question, which can be formulated in various ways:

1. What sentences is S deducible from, and what sentences are deducible from S?
2. Under what conditions is S supposed to be true, and under what conditions false?
3. How is S to be verified?
4. What is the meaning of S?

(1) is the correct formulation; formulation (2) accords with the phraseology of logic, (3) with the phraseology of the theory of knowledge, (4) with that of philosophy (phenomenology). Wittgenstein has asserted that (2) expresses what philosophers mean by (4): the meaning of a sentence consists in its truth-condition. ((1) is the "metalogical" formulation; it is planned to give elsewhere a detailed exposition of metalogic as the theory of syntax and meaning, i.e. relations of deducibility.)

In the case of many words, specifically in the case of the overwhelming majority of scientific words, it is possible to specify their meaning by reduction to other words ("constitution," definition).

E.g. "arthropodes' are animals with segmented bodies and jointed legs." Thereby the above-mentioned question for the elementary sentence form of the word "arthropode," that is for the sentence form "the thing x is an arthropode," is answered: it has been stipulated that a sentence of this form is deducible from premises of the form "x is an animal," "x has a segmented body," "x has jointed legs," and that conversely each of these sentences is deducible from the former sentence. By means of these stipulations about deducibility (in other words: about the truth-condition, about the method of verification, about the meaning) of the elementary sentence about "arthropode" the meaning of the word "arthropode" is fixed. In this way every word of the language is reduced to other words and finally to the words which occur in the so-called "observation sentences" or "protocol sentences." It is through this reduction that the word acquires its meaning.

For our purposes we may ignore entirely the question concerning the content and form of the primary sentences (protocol sentences) which has not yet been definitely settled. In the theory of knowledge it is customary to say that the primary sentences refer to "the given"; but there is no unanimity on the question what it is that is given. At times the position is taken that sentences about the given speak of the simplest qualities of sense and feeling (e.g. "warm," "blue," "joy" and so forth); others incline to the view that basic sentences refer to total experiences and similarities between them; a still different view has it that even the basic sentences speak of things. Regardless of this diversity of opinion it is certain that a sequence of words has a meaning only if its relations of deducibility to the protocol sentences are fixed, whatever the characteristics of the protocol sentences may be; and similarly, that a word is significant only if the sentences in which it may occur are reducible to protocol sentences.

Since the meaning of a word is determined by its criterion of application (in other words: by the relations of deducibility entered into by its elementary sentence-form, by its truth-conditions, by the method of its verification), the stipulation of the criterion takes away one's freedom to decide what one wishes to "mean" by the word. If the word is to receive an exact meaning, nothing less than the criterion of application must be given; but one cannot, on the other hand, give more than the criterion of application, for the latter is a sufficient determination of meaning. The meaning is implicitly contained in the criterion; all that remains to be done is to make the meaning explicit.

Let us suppose, by way of illustration, that someone invented the new word "teavy" and maintained that there are things which are teavy and things which are not teavy. In order to learn the meaning of this word, we ask him about its criterion of application: how is one to ascertain in a concrete case whether a given thing is teavy or not? Let us suppose to begin with that we get no answer from him: there are no empirical signs of teavyness, he says. In that case we would deny the legitimacy of using this word. If the person who uses the word says that all the same there are things which are teavy and there are things which are not teavy, only it remains for the weak, finite intellect of man an eternal secret which things are teavy and which are not, we shall regard this as empty verbiage. But perhaps he will assure us that he means, after all, something by the word "teavy." But from this we only learn the psychological fact that he associates some kind of images and feelings with the word. The word does not acquire a meaning through such associations. If no criterion of application for the word is stipulated, then nothing is asserted by the sentences in which it occurs, they are but pseudo-statements. Secondly, take the case when we are given a criterion of application for a new word, say "toovy"; in particular, let the sentence "this thing is toovy" be true if and only if the thing is quadrangular (It is irrelevant in this context whether the criterion is explicitly stated or whether we derive it by observing the affirmative and the negative uses of the word). Then we will say: the word "toovy" is synonymous with the word "quadrangular." And we will not allow its users to tell us that nevertheless they "intended" something else by it than "quadrangular"; that though every quadrangular thing is also toovy and conversely, this is only because quadrangularity is the visible manifestation of toovyness, but that the latter itself is a hidden, not itself observable property. We would reply that after the criterion of application has been fixed, the synonymy of "toovy" and "quadrangular" is likewise fixed, and that we are no further at liberty to "intend" this or that by the word. Let us briefly summarize the result of our analysis. Let "a" be any word and "S(a)" the elementary sentence in which it occurs. Then the sufficient and necessary condition for "a" being meaningful may be given by each of the following formulations, which ultimately say the same thing:

1. The empirical criteria for a are known.
2. It has been stipulated from what protocol sentences "S(a)" is deducible.
3. The truth-conditions for "S(a)" are fixed.
4. The method of verification of "S(a)" is known.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>For the logical and epistemological conception which underlies our exposition, but can only briefly be intimated here, cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1922, and Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, 1928.

### **3. METAPHYSICAL WORDS WITHOUT MEANING**

Many words of metaphysics, now, can be shown not to fulfill the above requirement, and therefore to be devoid of meaning.

Let us take as an example the metaphysical term "principle" (in the sense of principle of being, not principle of knowledge or axiom). Various metaphysicians offer an answer to the question which is the (highest) "principle of the world" (or of "things," of "existence," of "being"), e.g. water, number, form, motion, life, the spirit, the idea, the unconscious, activity, the good, and so forth. In order to discover the meaning of the word "principle" in this metaphysical question we must ask the metaphysician under what conditions a statement of the form "x is the principle of y" would be true and under what conditions it would be false. In other words: we ask for the criteria of application or for the definition of the word "principle." The metaphysician replies approximately as follows: "x is the principle of y" is to mean "y arises out of x," "the being of y rests on the being of x," "y exists by virtue of x" and so forth. But these words are ambiguous and vague. Frequently they have a clear meaning; e.g., we say of a thing or process y

that it "arises out of" x when we observe that things or processes of kind x are frequently or invariably followed by things or processes of kind y (causal connection in the sense of a lawful succession). But the metaphysician tells us that he does not mean this empirically observable relationship. For in that case his metaphysical theses would be merely empirical propositions of the same kind as those of physics. The expression "arising from" is not to mean here a relation of temporal and causal sequence, which is what the word ordinarily means. Yet, no criterion is specified for any other meaning. Consequently, the alleged "metaphysical" meaning, which the word is supposed to have here in contrast to the mentioned empirical meaning, does not exist. If we reflect on the original meaning of the word "principium" (and of the corresponding Greek word ἀρχή), we notice the same development. The word is explicitly deprived of its original meaning "beginning"; it is not supposed to mean the temporally prior any more, but the prior in some other, specifically metaphysical, respect. The criteria for this "metaphysical respect," however, are lacking. In both cases, then, the word has been deprived of its earlier meaning without being given a new meaning; there remains the word as an empty shell. From an earlier period of significant use, it is still associatively connected with various mental images; these in turn get associated with new mental images and feelings in the new context of usage. But the word does not thereby become meaningful; and it remains meaningless as long as no method of verification can be described.

Another example is the word "God." Here we must, apart from the variations of its usage within each domain, distinguish the linguistic usage in three different contexts or historical epochs, which however overlap temporally. In its mythological use the word has a clear meaning. It, or parallel words in other languages, is sometimes used to denote physical beings which are enthroned on Mount Olympus, in Heaven or in Hades, and which are endowed with power, wisdom, goodness and happiness to a greater or lesser extent. Sometimes the word also refers to spiritual beings which, indeed, do not have manlike bodies, yet manifest themselves nevertheless somehow in the things or processes of the visible world and are therefore empirically verifiable. In its metaphysical use, on the other hand, the word "God" refers to something beyond experience. The word is deliberately divested of its reference to a physical being or to a spiritual being that is immanent in the physical. And as it is not given a new meaning, it becomes meaningless. To be sure, it often looks as though the word "God" had a meaning even in metaphysics. But the definitions which are set up prove on closer inspection to be pseudo-definitions. They lead either to logically illegitimate combinations of words (of which we shall treat later) or to other metaphysical words (e.g. "primordial basis," "the absolute," "the unconditioned," "the autonomous," "the self-dependent" and so forth), but in no case to the truth-conditions of its elementary sentences. In the case of this word not even the first requirement of logic is met, that is the requirement to specify its syntax, i.e. the form of its occurrence in elementary sentences. An elementary sentence would here have to be of the form "x is a God"; yet, the metaphysician either rejects this form entirely without substituting another, or if he accepts it he neglects to indicate the syntactical category of the variable x. (Categories are, for example, material things, properties of things, relations between things, numbers etc.).

The theological usage of the word "God" falls between its mythological and its metaphysical usage. There is no distinctive meaning here, but an oscillation from one of the mentioned two uses to the other. Several theologians have a clearly empirical (in our terminology, "mythological") concept of God. In this case there are no pseudo-statements; but the disadvantage for the theologian lies in the circumstance that according to this interpretation the statements of theology are empirical and hence are subject to the judgment of empirical science. The linguistic usage of other theologians is clearly metaphysical. Others again do not speak in any definite way, whether this is because they follow now this, now that linguistic usage, or because they express themselves in terms whose usage is not clearly classifiable since it tends towards both sides. Just like the examined examples "principle" and "God," most of the other specifically metaphysical terms are devoid of meaning, e.g. "the Idea," "the Absolute," "the Unconditioned," "the Infinite," "the being of being," "non-being," "thing in itself," "absolute spirit," "objective spirit," "essence," "being-in-itself," "being-in-and-for-itself," "emanation," "manifestation," "articulation," "the Ego," "the non-Ego," etc. These expressions are in the same boat with "teavy," our previously fabricated example. The metaphysician tells us that empirical truth-conditions cannot be specified; if he adds that nevertheless he "means" something, we know that this is merely an allusion to associated images and feelings which, however, do not bestow a meaning on the word. The alleged statements of metaphysics which contain such words have no sense, assert nothing, are mere pseudo-statements. Into the explanation of their historical origin we shall inquire later.

#### **4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A SENTENCE**

So far we have considered only those pseudo-statements which contain a meaningless word. But there is a second kind of pseudostatement. They consist of meaningful words, but the words are put together in such a way that nevertheless no meaning results. The syntax of a language specifies which combinations of words are admissible and which inadmissible. The grammatical syntax of natural languages, however, does not fulfill the task of elimination of senseless combinations of words in all cases. Let us take as examples the following sequences of words:

1. " Caesar is and"
2. " Caesar is a prime number"

The word sequence (1) is formed countersyntactically; the rules of syntax require that the third position be occupied, not by a conjunction, but by a predicate, hence by a noun (with article) or by an adjective. The word sequence "Caesar is a general," e.g., is formed in accordance with the rules of syntax. It is a meaningful word sequence, a genuine sentence. But, now, word sequence (2) is likewise syntactically correct, for it has the same grammatical form as the sentence just mentioned. Nevertheless (2) is meaningless. "Prime number" is a predicate of numbers; it can be neither affirmed nor denied of a person. Since (2) looks like a statement yet is not a statement, does not assert anything, expresses neither a true nor a false proposition, we call this word sequence a "pseudo-statement." The fact that the rules of grammatical syntax are not violated easily seduces one at first glance into the erroneous opinion that one still has to do with a statement, albeit a false one. But "a is a prime number" is false if and only if a is divisible by a natural number different from a and from 1; evidently it is illicit to put here "Caesar" for "a." This example has been so chosen that the nonsense is easily detectable. Many so-called statements of metaphysics are not so easily recognized to be pseudo-statements. The fact that natural languages allow the formation of meaningless sequences of words without violating the rules of grammar, indicates that grammatical syntax is, from a logical point of view, inadequate. If grammatical syntax corresponded exactly to logical syntax, pseudo-statements could not arise. If grammatical syntax differentiated not only the wordcategories of nouns, adjectives, verbs, conjunctions etc., but within each of these categories made the further distinctions that are logically indispensable, then no pseudo-statements could be formed. If, e.g., nouns were grammatically subdivided into several kinds of words, according as they designated properties of physical objects, of numbers etc., then the words "general" and "prime number" would belong to grammatically different word-categories, and (2) would be just as linguistically incorrect as (1). In a correctly constructed language, therefore, all nonsensical sequences of words would be of the kind of example (1). Considerations of grammar would already eliminate them as it were automatically; i.e. in order to avoid nonsense, it would be unnecessary to pay attention to the meanings of the individual words over and above their syntactical type (their "syntactical category," e.g. thing, property of things, relation between things, number, property of numbers, relation between numbers, and so forth). It follows that if our thesis that the statements of metaphysics are pseudo-statements is justifiable, then metaphysics could not even be expressed in a logically constructed language. This is the great philosophical importance of the task, which at present occupies the logicians, of building a logical syntax.

#### **5. METAPHYSICAL PSEUDO-STATEMENTS**

Let us now take a look at some examples of metaphysical pseudostatements of a kind where the violation of logical syntax is especially obvious, though they accord with historical-grammatical syntax. We select a few sentences from that metaphysical school which at present exerts the strongest influence in Germany.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The following quotations (original italics) are taken from M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* 1929. We could just as well have selected passages from any other of the numerous metaphysicians of the present or of the past; yet the selected passages seem to us to illustrate our thesis especially well.

"What is to be investigated is being only and--nothing else; being alone and further--nothing; solely being, and beyond being-nothing. What about this Nothing? . . . Does the Nothing exist only because the Not, i.e. the Negation, exists? Or is it the other way around? Does Negation and the Not exist only because the Nothing exists? . . . We assert: the Nothing is prior to the Not and the Negation. . . . Where do we seek the Nothing? How do we find the Nothing. . . . We know the Nothing. . . . Anxiety reveals the Nothing. . . .

That for which and because of which we were anxious, was 'really'--nothing. Indeed: the Nothing itself--as such--was present. . . . What about this Nothing?--The Nothing itself nothings."

In order to show that the possibility of forming pseudo-statements is based on a logical defect of language, we set up the schema below. The sentences under I are grammatically as well as logically impeccable, hence meaningful. The sentences under II (excepting B3) are in grammatical respects perfectly analogous to those under I. Sentence form IIA (as question and answer) does not, indeed, satisfy the requirements to be imposed on a logically correct language. But it is nevertheless meaningful, because it is translatable into correct language. This is shown by sentence IIIA, which has the same meaning as IIA. Sentence form IIA then proves to be undesirable because we can be led from it, by means of grammatically faultless operations, to the meaningless sentence forms IIB, which are taken from the above quotation. These forms cannot even be constructed in the correct language of Column III. Nonetheless, their nonsensicality is not obvious at first glance, because one is easily deceived by the analogy with the meaningful sentences IB. The fault of our language identified here lies, therefore, in the circumstance that, in contrast to a logically correct language, it admits of the same grammatical form for meaningful and meaningless word sequences. To each sentence in words we have added a corresponding formula in the notation of symbolic logic; these formulae facilitate recognition of the undesirable analogy between IA and IIA and therewith of the origin of the meaningless constructions IIB.

I.	II.	III.
Meaningful	Transition from	
Sentences of	Sense to	
Ordinary	Nonsense in	Logically
Language	Ordinary	Correct
	Language	Language
A. What is outside?	A. What is outside?	A. There is nothing
Ou(?)	Ou(?)	(does not exist any-
Rain is outside	Nothing is outside	thing) which is
Ou(r)	Ou(no)	outside.
		$\sim(\exists x).Ou(x)$
B. What about this rain?	B. "What about this	B. None of these forms
(i.e. what does the	Nothing?"?(no)	can even be
rain do? or:		what constructed.
else can be said		
about this rain?		
?(r)		

1. We know the rain

K(r)

2. The rain rains

R(r)

1. "We seek the

Nothing"

"We find the

Nothing"

"We know the

Nothing"

K(no)

2. "The Nothing

nothings"

No(no)

3. "The Nothing

exists only

because . . ."

Ex(no)

On closer inspection of the pseudo-statements under IIB, we also find some differences. The construction of sentence (1) is simply based on the mistake of employing the word "nothing" as a noun, because it is customary in ordinary language to use it in this form in order to construct a negative existential statement (see IIA). In a correct language, on the other hand, it is not a particular name, but a certain logical form of the sentence that serves this purpose (see IIIA). Sentence IIB2 adds something new, viz. the fabrication of the meaningless word "to nothing." This sentence, therefore, is senseless for a twofold reason. We pointed out before that the meaningless words of metaphysics usually owe their origin to the fact that a meaningful word is deprived of its meaning through its metaphorical use in metaphysics. But here we confront one of those rare cases where a new word is introduced which never had a meaning to begin with. Likewise sentence IIB3 must be rejected for two reasons. In respect of the error of using the word "nothing" as a noun, it is like the previous sentences. But in addition it involves a contradiction. For even if it were admissible to introduce "nothing" as a name or description of an entity, still the existence of this entity would be denied in its very definition, whereas sentence (3) goes on to affirm its existence. This sentence, therefore, would be contradictory, hence absurd, even if it were not already meaningless.

In view of the gross logical errors which we find in sentences IIB, we might be led to conjecture that perhaps the word "nothing" has in Heidegger's treatise a meaning entirely different from the customary one. And this presumption is further strengthened as we go on to read there that anxiety reveals the Nothing, that the Nothing itself is present as such in anxiety. For here the word "nothing" seems to refer to a certain emotional constitution, possibly of a religious sort, or something or other that underlies such emotions. If such were the case, then the mentioned logical errors in sentences IIB would not be committed. But the first sentence of the quotation at the beginning of this section proves that this interpretation is not possible. The combination of "only" and "nothing else" shows unmistakably that the word "nothing" here has the usual meaning of a logical particle that serves for the formulation of a negative existential statement. This introduction of the word "nothing" is then immediately followed by the leading question of the treatise: "What about this Nothing?"

But our doubts as to a possible misinterpretation get completely dissolved as we note that the author of the treatise is clearly aware of the conflict between his questions and statements, and logic. "Question and answer in regard to the Nothing are equally absurd in themselves. . . . The fundamental rule of thinking commonly appealed to, the law of prohibited contradiction, general 'logic,' destroys this question." All the worse for logic! We must abolish its sovereignty: "If thus the power of the understanding in the field of questions concerning Nothing and Being is broken, then the fate of the sovereignty of 'logic' within philosophy is thereby decided as well. The very idea of 'logic' dissolves in the whirl of a more basic questioning." But will sober science condone the whirl of counterlogical questioning? To this question too there is a ready answer: "The alleged sobriety and superiority of science becomes ridiculous if it does not



take the Nothing seriously." Thus we find here a good confirmation of our thesis; a metaphysician himself here states that his questions and answers are irreconcilable with logic and the scientific way of thinking.

The difference between our thesis and that of the earlier antimetaphysicians should now be clear. We do not regard metaphysics as "mere speculation" or "fairy tales." The statements of a fairy tale do not conflict with logic, but only with experience; they are perfectly meaningful, although false. Metaphysics is not "superstition"; it is possible to believe true and false propositions, but not to believe meaningless sequences of words. Metaphysical statements are not even acceptable as "working hypotheses"; for an hypothesis must be capable of entering into relations of deducibility with (true or false) empirical statements, which is just what pseudo-statements cannot do.

With reference to the so-called limitation of human knowledge an attempt is sometimes made to save metaphysics by raising the following objection: metaphysical statements are not, indeed, verifiable by man nor by any other finite being; nevertheless they might be construed as conjectures about the answers which a being with higher or even perfect powers of knowledge would make to our questions, and as such conjectures they would, after all, be meaningful. To counter this objection, let us consider the following. If the meaning of a word cannot be specified, or if the sequence of words does not accord with the rules of syntax, then one has not even asked a question. (Just think of the pseudo-questions: "Is this table **teavy?**", "is the number 7 holy?", "which numbers are darker, the even or the odd ones?"). Where there is no question, not even an omniscient being can give an answer. Now the objector may say: just as one who can see may communicate new knowledge to the blind, so a higher being might perhaps communicate to us metaphysical knowledge, e.g. whether the visible world is the manifestation of a spirit. Here we must reflect on the meaning of "new knowledge." It is, indeed, conceivable that we might encounter animals who tell us about a new sense. If these beings were to prove to us Fermat's theorem or were to invent a new physical instrument or were to establish a hitherto unknown law of nature, then our knowledge would be increased with their help. For this sort of thing we can test, just the way even a blind man can understand and test the whole of physics (and therewith any statement made by those who can see). But if those hypothetical beings tell us something which we cannot verify, then we cannot understand it either; in that case no information has been communicated to us, but mere verbal sounds devoid of meaning though possibly associated with images. It follows that our knowledge can only be quantitatively enlarged by other beings, no matter whether they know more or less or everything, but no knowledge of an essentially different kind can be added. What we do not know for certain, we may come to know with greater certainty through the assistance of other beings; but what is unintelligible, meaningless for us, cannot become meaningful through someone else's assistance, however vast his knowledge might be. Therefore no god and no devil can give us metaphysical knowledge.

## **6. MEANINGLESSNESS OF ALL METAPHYSICS**

The examples of metaphysical statements which we have analyzed were all taken from just one treatise. But our results apply with equal validity, in part even in verbally identical ways, to other metaphysical systems. That treatise is completely in the right in citing approvingly a statement by Hegel ("pure Being and pure Nothing, therefore, are one and the same"). The metaphysics of Hegel has exactly the same logical character as this modern system of metaphysics. And the same holds for the rest of the metaphysical systems, though the kind of phraseology and therewith the kind of logical errors that occur in them deviate more or less from the kind that occurs in the examples we discussed.

It should not be necessary here to adduce further examples of specific metaphysical sentences in diverse systems and submit them to analysis. We confine ourselves to an indication of the most frequent kinds of errors.

Perhaps the majority of the logical mistakes that are committed when pseudo-statements are made, are based on the logical faults infecting the use of the word "to be" in our language (and of the corresponding words in other languages, at least in most European languages). The first fault is the ambiguity of the word "to be." It is sometimes used as copula prefixed to a predicate ("I am hungry"), sometimes to designate existence ("I am"). This mistake is aggravated by the fact that metaphysicians often are not clear about this ambiguity. The second fault lies in the form of the verb in its second meaning, the meaning of existence.

The verbal form feigns a predicate where there is none. To be sure, it has been known for a long time that existence is not a property (cf. Kant's refutation of the ontological proof of the existence of God). But it was not until the advent of modern logic that full consistency on this point was reached: the syntactical form in which modern logic introduces the sign for existence is such that it cannot, like a predicate, be applied to signs for objects, but only to predicates (cf. e.g. sentence IIIa in the above table). Most metaphysicians since antiquity have allowed themselves to be seduced into pseudo-statements by the verbal, and therewith the predicative form of the word "to be," e.g. "I am," "God is."

We meet an illustration of this error in Descartes' "cogito, ergo sum." Let us disregard here the material objections that have been raised against the premise--viz. whether the sentence "I think" adequately expresses the intended state of affairs or contains perhaps an hypostasis--and consider the two sentences only from the formallogical point of view. We notice at once two essential logical mistakes. The first lies in the conclusion "I am." The verb "to be" is undoubtedly meant in the sense of existence here; for a copula cannot be used without predicate; indeed, Descartes' "I am" has always been interpreted in this sense. But in that case this sentence violates the above-mentioned logical rule that existence can be predicated only in conjunction with a predicate, not in conjunction with a name (subject, proper name). An existential statement does not have the form "a exists" (as in "I am," i.e. "I exist"), but "there exists something of such and such a kind." The second error lies in the transition from "I think" to "I exist." If from the statement "P(a)" ("a has the property P") an existential statement is to be deduced, then the latter can assert existence only with respect to the predicate P, not with respect to the subject a of the premise. What follows from "I am a European" is not "I exist," but "a European exists." What follows from "I think" is not "I am" but "there exists something that thinks."

The circumstance that our languages express existence by a verb ('to be' or 'to exist') is not in itself a logical fault; it is only inappropriate, dangerous. The verbal form easily misleads us into the misconception that existence is a predicate. One then arrives at such logically incorrect and hence senseless modes of expression as were just examined. Likewise such forms as "Being" or "Not-Being," which from time immemorial have played a great role in metaphysics, have the same origin. In a logically correct language such forms cannot even be constructed. It appears that in the Latin and the German languages the forms "ens" or "das Seiende" were, perhaps under the seductive influence of the Greek example, introduced specifically for use by metaphysicians; in this way the language deteriorated logically whereas the addition was believed to represent an improvement.

Another very frequent violation of logical syntax is the so-called "type confusion" of concepts. While the previously mentioned mistake consists in the predicative use of a symbol with non-predicative meaning, in this case a predicate is, indeed, used as predicate yet as predicate of a different type. We have here a violation of the rules of the so-called theory of types. An artificial example is the sentence we discussed earlier: "Caesar is a prime number." Names of persons and names of numbers belong to different logical types, and so do accordingly predicates of persons (e.g. "general") and predicates of numbers ("prime number"). The error of type confusion is, unlike the previously discussed usage of the verb "to be," not the prerogative of metaphysics but already occurs very often in conversational language also. But here it rarely leads to nonsense. The typical ambiguity of words is here of such a kind that it can be easily removed.

Example: 1. "This table is larger than that." 2. "The height of this table is larger than the height of that table." Here the word "larger" is used in (1) for a relation between objects, in (2) for a relation between numbers, hence for two distinct syntactical categories. The mistake is here unimportant; it could, e.g., be eliminated by writing "larger1" and "larger2"; "larger1" is then defined in terms of "larger2" by declaring statement form (1) to be synonymous with (2) (and others of a similar kind).

Since the confusion of types causes no harm in conversational language, it is usually ignored entirely. This is, indeed, expedient for the ordinary use of language, but has had unfortunate consequences in metaphysics. Here the conditioning by everyday language has led to confusions of types which, unlike those in everyday language, are no longer translatable into logically correct form. Pseudo-statements of this kind are encountered in especially large quantity, e.g., in the writings of Hegel and Heidegger. The latter has adopted many peculiarities of the Hegelian idiom along with their logical faults (e.g. predicates which should be applied to objects of a certain sort are instead applied to predicates of these objects or to "being" or to "existence" or to a relation between these objects).

Having found that many metaphysical statements are meaningless, we confront the question whether there is not perhaps a core of meaningful statements in metaphysics which would remain after elimination of all the meaningless ones. Indeed, the results we have obtained so far might give rise to the view that there are many dangers of falling into nonsense in metaphysics, and that one must accordingly endeavor to avoid these traps with great care if one wants to do metaphysics. But actually the situation is that meaningful metaphysical statements are impossible. This follows from the task which metaphysics sets itself: to discover and formulate a kind of knowledge which is not accessible to empirical science.

We have seen earlier that the meaning of a statement lies in the method of its verification. A statement asserts only so much as is verifiable with respect to it. Therefore a sentence can be used only to assert an empirical proposition, if indeed it is used to assert anything at all. If something were to lie, in principle, beyond possible experience, it could be neither said nor thought nor asked.

(Meaningful) statements are divided into the following kinds. First there are statements which are true solely by virtue of their form ("tautologies" according to Wittgenstein; they correspond approximately to Kant's "analytic judgments"). They say nothing about reality. The formulae of logic and mathematics are of this kind. They are not themselves factual statements, but serve for the transformation of such statements. Secondly there are the negations of such statements ("contradictions"). They are self-contradictory, hence false by virtue of their form. With respect to all other statements the decision about truth or falsehood lies in the protocol sentences. They are therefore (true or false) empirical statements and belong to the domain of empirical science. Any statement one desires to construct which does not fall within these categories becomes automatically meaningless. Since metaphysics does not want to assert analytic propositions, nor to fall within the domain of empirical science, it is compelled to employ words for which no criteria of application are specified and which are therefore devoid of sense, or else to combine meaningful words in such a way that neither an analytic (or contradictory) statement nor an empirical statement is produced. In either case pseudo-statements are the inevitable product.

Logical analysis, then, pronounces the verdict of meaninglessness on any alleged knowledge that pretends to reach above or behind experience. This verdict hits, in the first place, any speculative metaphysics, any alleged knowledge by pure thinking or by pure intuition that pretends to be able to do without experience. But the verdict equally applies to the kind of metaphysics which, starting from experience, wants to acquire knowledge about that which transcends experience by means of special inferences (e.g. the neo-vitalist thesis of the directive presence of an "entelechy" in organic processes, which supposedly cannot be understood in terms of physics; the question concerning the "essence of causality," transcending the ascertainment of certain regularities of succession; the talk about the "thing in itself"). Further, the same judgment must be passed on all philosophy of norms, or philosophy of value, on any ethics or esthetics as a normative discipline. For the objective validity of a value or norm is (even on the view of the philosophers of value) not empirically verifiable nor deducible from empirical statements; hence it cannot be asserted (in a meaningful statement) at all. In other words: Either empirical criteria are indicated for the use of "good" and "beautiful" and the rest of the predicates that are employed in the normative sciences, or they are not. In the first case, a statement containing such a predicate turns into a factual judgment, but not a value judgment; in the second case, it becomes a pseudo-statement. It is altogether impossible to make a statement that expresses a value judgment.

Finally, the verdict of meaninglessness also hits those metaphysical movements which are usually called, improperly, epistemological movements, that is realism (insofar as it claims to say more than the empirical fact that the sequence of events exhibits a certain regularity, which makes the application of the inductive method possible) and its opponents: subjective idealism, solipsism, phenomenalism, and positivism (in the earlier sense).

But what, then, is left over for philosophy, if all statements whatever that assert something are of an empirical nature and belong to factual science? What remains is not statements, nor a theory, nor a system, but only a method: the method of logical analysis. The foregoing discussion has illustrated the negative application of this method: in that context it serves to eliminate meaningless words, meaningless pseudo-statements. In its positive use it serves to clarify meaningful concepts and propositions, to lay logical foundations for factual science and for mathematics. The negative application of the method is necessary and important in the present historical situation. But even in its present practice, the positive application is

more fertile. We cannot here discuss it in greater detail. It is the indicated task of logical analysis, inquiry into logical foundations, that is meant by "scientific philosophy" in contrast to metaphysics.

The question regarding the logical character of the statements which we obtain as the result of a logical analysis, e.g. the statements occurring in this and other logical papers, can here be answered only tentatively: such statements are partly analytic, partly empirical. For these statements about statements and parts of statements belong in part to pure metalogic (e.g. "a sequence consisting of the existence-symbol and a noun, is not a sentence"), in part to descriptive metalogic (e.g. "the word sequence at such and such a place in such and such a book is meaningless"). Metalogic will be discussed elsewhere. It will also be shown there that the metalogic which speaks about the sentences of a given language can be formulated in that very language itself.

## ***7. METAPHYSICS AS EXPRESSION OF AN ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE***

Our claim that the statements of metaphysics are entirely meaningless, that they do not assert anything, will leave even those who agree intellectually with our results with a painful feeling of strangeness: how could it be explained that so many men in all ages and nations, among them eminent minds, spent so much energy, nay veritable fervor, on metaphysics if the latter consisted of nothing but mere words, nonsensically juxtaposed? And how could one account for the fact that metaphysical books have exerted such a strong influence on readers up to the present day, if they contained not even errors, but nothing at all? These doubts are justified since metaphysics does indeed have a content; only it is not theoretical content. The (pseudo) statements of metaphysics do not serve for the description of states of affairs, neither existing ones (in that case they would be true statements) nor non-existing ones (in that case they would be at least false statements). They serve for the expression of the general attitude of a person towards life ("Lebenseinstellung, Lebensgefühl").

Perhaps we may assume that metaphysics originated from mythology. The child is angry at the "wicked table" which hurt him. Primitive man endeavors to conciliate the threatening demon of earthquakes, or he worships the deity of the fertile rains in gratitude. Here we confront personifications of natural phenomena, which are the quasi-poetic expression of man's emotional relationship to his environment. The heritage of mythology is bequeathed on the one hand to poetry, which produces and intensifies the effects of mythology on life in a deliberate way; on the other hand, it is handed down to theology, which develops mythology into a system. Which, now, is the historical role of metaphysics? Perhaps we may regard it as a substitute for theology on the level of systematic, conceptual thinking. The (supposedly) transcendent sources of knowledge of theology are here replaced by natural, yet supposedly trans-empirical sources of knowledge. On closer inspection the same content as that of mythology is here still recognizable behind the repeatedly varied dressing: we find that metaphysics also arises from the need to give expression to a man's attitude in life, his emotional and volitional reaction to the environment, to society, to the tasks to which he devotes himself, to the misfortunes that befall him. This attitude manifests itself, unconsciously as a rule, in everything a man does or says. It also impresses itself on his facial features, perhaps even on the character of his gait. Many people, now, feel a desire to create over and above these manifestations a special expression of their attitude, through which it might become visible in a more succinct and penetrating way. If they have artistic talent they are able to express themselves by producing a work of art. Many writers have already clarified the way in which the basic attitude is manifested through the style and manner of a work of art (e.g. Dilthey and his students). [In this connection the term "world view" ("Weltanschauung") is often used; we prefer to avoid it because of its ambiguity, which blurs the difference between attitude and theory, a difference which is of decisive importance for our analysis.] What is here essential for our considerations is only the fact that art is an adequate, metaphysics an inadequate means for the expression of the basic attitude. Of course, there need be no intrinsic objection to one's using any means of expression one likes. But in the case of metaphysics we find this situation: through the form of its works it pretends to be something that it is not. The form in question is that of a system of statements which are apparently related as premises and conclusions, that is, the form of a theory. In this way the fiction of theoretical content is generated, whereas, as we have seen, there is no such content. It is not only the reader, but the metaphysician himself who suffers from the illusion that the metaphysical statements say something, describe states of affairs. The metaphysician believes that he travels in territory in which truth and falsehood are at stake. In reality, however, he has not asserted anything, but only expressed something, like

an artist. That the metaphysician is thus deluding himself cannot be inferred from the fact that he selects language as the medium of expression and declarative sentences as the form of expression; for lyrical poets do the same without succumbing to self-delusion. But the metaphysician supports his statements by arguments, he claims assent to their content, he polemicizes against metaphysicians of divergent persuasion by attempting to refute their assertions in his treatise. Lyrical poets, on the other hand, do not try to refute in their poem the statements in a poem by some other lyrical poet; for they know they are in the domain of art and not in the domain of theory. Perhaps music is the purest means of expression of the basic attitude because it is entirely free from any reference to objects. The harmonious feeling or attitude, which the metaphysician tries to express in a monistic system, is more clearly expressed in the music of Mozart. And when a metaphysician gives verbal expression to his dualistic-heroic attitude towards life in a dualistic system, is it not perhaps because he lacks the ability of a Beethoven to express this attitude in an adequate medium? Metaphysicians are musicians without musical ability. Instead they have a strong inclination to work within the medium of the theoretical, to connect concepts and thoughts. Now, instead of activating, on the one hand, this inclination in the domain of science, and satisfying, on the other hand, the need for expression in art, the metaphysician confuses the two and produces a structure which achieves nothing for knowledge and something inadequate for the expression of attitude. Our conjecture that metaphysics is a substitute, albeit an inadequate one, for art seems to be further confirmed by the fact that the metaphysician who perhaps had artistic talent to the highest degree, viz. Nietzsche, almost entirely avoided the error of that confusion. A large part of his work has predominantly empirical content. We find there, for instance, historical analyses of specific artistic phenomena, or an historical-psychological analysis of morals. In the work, however, in which he expresses most strongly that which others express through metaphysics or ethics, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he does not choose the misleading theoretical form, but openly the form of art, of poetry.