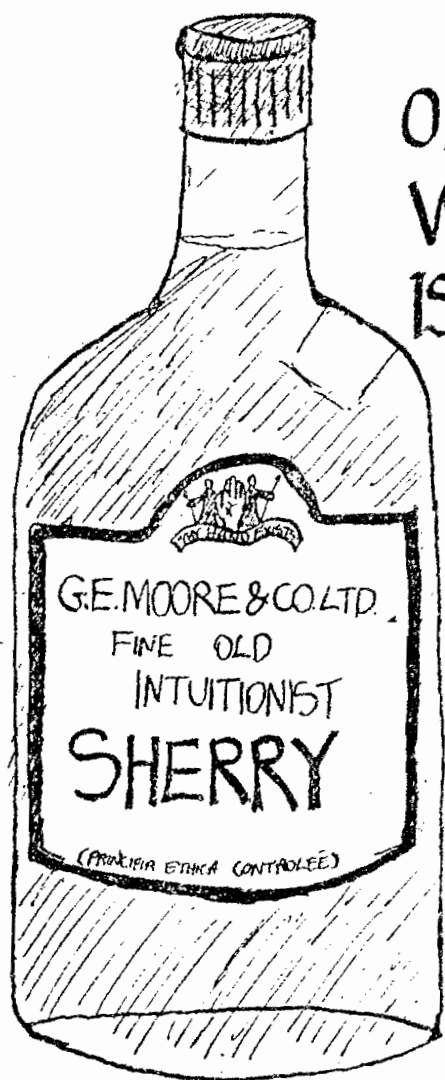
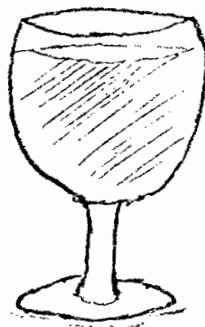
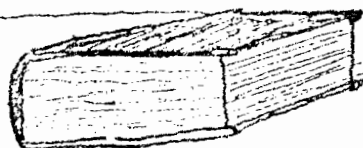


Pv~P



ONE INSTINCTIVELY KNOWS
WHEN SOMETHING
IS RIGHT



A Mackee

THE PHILOSOPHY FACULTY MAGAZINE

MICHAELMAS 1983

FOR
REFERENCE ONLY

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MICHAELMAS 1983.

Declan O'Dempsey (Clare)

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A FIFTH CAUSE?

One of the things Aristotle is famous for is the delineation of the four causes: material, formal, efficient and final (see Physics II, 2 and Metaphysics V, 2). After the sixteenth century, Aristotelian science went into a decline, and efficient causes came to be regarded as the only one of the four which is both properly a "cause" and of interest. In recent years, there have been two developments in this field. One is a mild resurgence of some of Aristotle's beliefs: especially a) that a factor is a cause if and only if it is explanatory; and b) that causes are properties intrinsic to things. The other has taken place on the fringes of science and centres on the question of whether there is not a fifth sort of causation. This fifth sort has been considered as a response to findings which seem to show that, once a thing has been done once, it can be more easily done again, even when there is no apparent efficient causation linking the two events.

Consider the following as a dummy-example of what has come to be called "formative causation". Two geographically distant laboratories, A and B, have been seeking to produce a particular sort of crystal, x. A and B are using entirely different methods; both seem far from success. But, one day, x crystallizes at A. On a subsequent day, soon after, the workers at B come to the laboratory and find that x has appeared, or that it has suddenly become easy to form x. Though it had seemed hard to form x right up until the workers at A met with success, all of a sudden and all over the world, x has taken to crystallizing with very little cajoling.

I wish to contend that, though phenomena of this sort may have been documented, it is misleading to say that they are instances of "formative causation". One reason is that appeal to formative causation does not answer any sense of the question "Why?", i.e. if one asked why x formed at B, it is insufficient to point to the earlier crystallization at A. The crystallization at A seems irrelevant, and pointing to it merely deepens the mystery. In this sense "formative causation" is just the name of a problem. And it is perhaps unmannerly to observe that science-for-idiots writers who have an axe to grind are the ones who most readily take serious the facts in these cases (e.g. Lyall Watson & Arthur Koestler). In books such as theirs, the answer given may be of a mildly paranormal or psychical sort. Here, again, these are just names for the source of the problem.

Less extravagantly, some suppose that an explanation should be looked for, in the first instance, in some general shift in the nature of things. Thus, either the crystallization at A has some (unknown but efficient) cause shared with that at B, or x at A changed the conditions at B in some ordinary (though equally unknown) way. Both of these lines of thought concede that "formative causation" is not an addition to Aristotle's four, but a sub-set of efficient causation.

But my second reason for doubting "formative causation" is that it would have to be a sort of causation that made essential reference to time. By "essential reference" I mean that the formation of the crystal at B depends on the time at which x formed at A. If there is causation, we would expect x at B to be less likely if there had been no x at A. The occurrence of x at B is not due only to the formal, material and efficient conditions at A and at B, but also to the occurrence at B's being simultaneous or subsequent to the occurrence at A.

If causes are properties of objects and formative causation is a cause, then formative causation is a property of objects. We have learnt from Goodman's New Riddle of Induction (Fact, Fiction & Forecast, p.72ff.) to be wary of properties which, like "grue", make essential reference to time. Hence I think that we ought to be very wary of treating this form of causation as if it made essential reference to time.

The general reason for supposing that properties, including causes, remain stable irrespective of the times at which they are instantiated is that we suppose that there are (in some loose sense) natural kinds that, to some extent, nature has to divide up and has to combine in the way that it does. The more fanciful interpretations of "formative causation" would violate this belief. Hence, I am sceptical about anybody's winning a

\$10,000 prize (announced in New Scientist, 27th October 1983), which will be given for work establishing that phenomena, like that of my crystal, comes about "by nature".

Moreover, I think that it is necessary to be aware of just how large a conceptual price would have to be paid in terms both of the meaning of "causation" and of the possibility of finding a solution to the problem of induction (if there is one). Explanation would be out and "grue" would be in.

Richard Davies, Trinity.

WITTY APHORISM 9869

The incontinent man lets his temper get the better of him;
the virtuous man lets the better get the temper of him.

Shirley O'Socrates

REAL ESSENCE

There has been much philosophical debate about whether things have "essences", and, if they do, what exactly the nature of essence is. One idea (which, in effect, equates "essence" with "substance") might be of a bare particular, that which "has" all the properties we predicate of a thing, and is distinct from all those properties. Such a notion has been attacked - soundly, I think; it rests on the recognition of the distinctness of any property from whatever it is a property of, but goes too far in postulating something over and above all the properties: this distinctness, after all, may be no more than that between a property and all the other properties with which it is co-instantiated not in, but as, a particular thing.

Alternatively, it is tempting to regard "essences" as a construct, and explain talk of essences in terms of the meanings of words (as opposed to natures of things). Some feature is called an essential feature of a thing, it is argued, only because it is part of the definition of the word denoting that thing that it has the said feature. The necessity here is linguistic, not natural, and is the necessity of logical analyticity. If one appeals to some proposition - say, "no cat is born of a dog" - which is seemingly synthetic and necessary, one will either be told that part of the meaning of the word "cat" is "not born of a dog" (or something from which that is deducible), so that the proposition is in fact analytic (which is difficult to maintain), or that there is no necessity about it, and it is, if true, merely contingently so. Clearly, the conceivability test is not in order here, since it is only a test of logical, not natural, necessity (and not an entirely reliable one at that).

Rather than simply trying to think of examples which would dissuade from the above view, the proponent of "real essence" would do better to give a definition of "essence", a definition for example which might support his intuitions as to what the essences of things in fact were. I think that such a definition is available, one which, it is true, could only establish the possibility of essences, but which would be even to that extent useful, since it would mean postulations of essences need not be regarded as empty tautologies of linguistic necessity.

I am assuming only one thing for the sake of this definition, which is that there are (in the real world) properties. I shall use the word "feature" to cover properties, conjunctions of properties, and disjunctions of properties, for reasons which will become apparent. The word "predicate" can of course cover anything that is predicated of a thing, not just its properties (e.g. relations of which it is a member).

A class of things may be picked out by reference to a group of shared predicates (i.e. at least one) - for example, the predicates "brother" and "taller than 6ft.". I shall be concentrating on classes defined by reference to shared features. The question to ask about any such class is: is there (at least) one feature amongst the features defining it which is necessitated by all the others together? If so, such a feature is an (or the) essential feature of that class. All the classes which share (all) essential features together form a class which is a natural kind. For example, a class defined by such features as "furry", "stripy", "sighted" etc. etc. (picking out sighted tabbies), would share the same essential features as one defined by: "material", "black", "neutered" etc. etc. (to pick out neutered black cats) and the natural kind to which both these classes belong in consequence would be that of "being a cat". (If there are natural kinds, cats are surely an example of one.)

Two further points need to be made. First, for the definition to work, a class we want to examine for essential features must not simply be picked out by a list of features sufficient to pick it out, but rather must be defined by all the features shared by the members of the class. After all, we could probably pick out the class of neutered tabbies without using the basic features which are essential to them (whatever these include: stuff to do with DNA?), relying only on features which, as it were contingently, could in fact pick out the class - so that the question as to the essentiality of the genuine essential features couldn't present itself. We have to take the actual extension of a class first and then formulate its intensional definition by a complete, not merely adequate, group of properties, so that it may be inquired into which properties, of all the properties shared by members, happen to be essential.

Secondly, the view of properties necessarily taken here is that they are logically distinct - more strictly, that the predicates denoting different properties are logically distinct. For otherwise we could include, amongst the features defining a class, disjunctions or conjunctions with other features of the class as their elements. In which case, those disjunctions or conjunctions, being (logically) necessitated by the rest of the class-defining features, would have to be regarded as essential features. For instance, we could call "being furry and sighted" an essential feature amongst a group of features including "furry", "sighted", and "furry and sighted". The objections to such complex properties (which aren't, of course, objections to complex predicates) have been well put, e.g. by Ramsey, who amongst other things pointed out the absurdity of calling "Fa & Ga", if true, a different fact from the fact "(F&G)a".

But as long as we have a criterion for logical distinctness to prevent this sort of thing, we need no disallow disjunctions and conjunctions as parts of our class-definitions. Indeed, it would be a little self-crippling to do so, for (as above instances like "furry" and "black" show) many useful predicates denote spectra, i.e. exclusive disjunctions of determinate values within a range. Obviously, stipulation of precise limits to such spectra does not make them less spectra, though it may be necessary anyway. And it could actually turn out that a disjunction of properties not just a simple property, was an essential feature. Complex features are allowed, then, always remembering the requisite of logical distinctness between the class-defining features; we don't want to come up with something like "Redness is an essential feature of all scarlet objects". (What's been lighted on here, of course, is not an essential feature, but a definitional feature.)

What should be clear in all the above is that our empirical observations in this field will not consist in taking classes of things and finding the "necessitating influences" exerted by various features of those things on other features of them - such "influences", after all, are not really just certain types of glue, with a distinct existence. Though it might be of interest to consider the essential features of classes - "taking" classes in that sense.

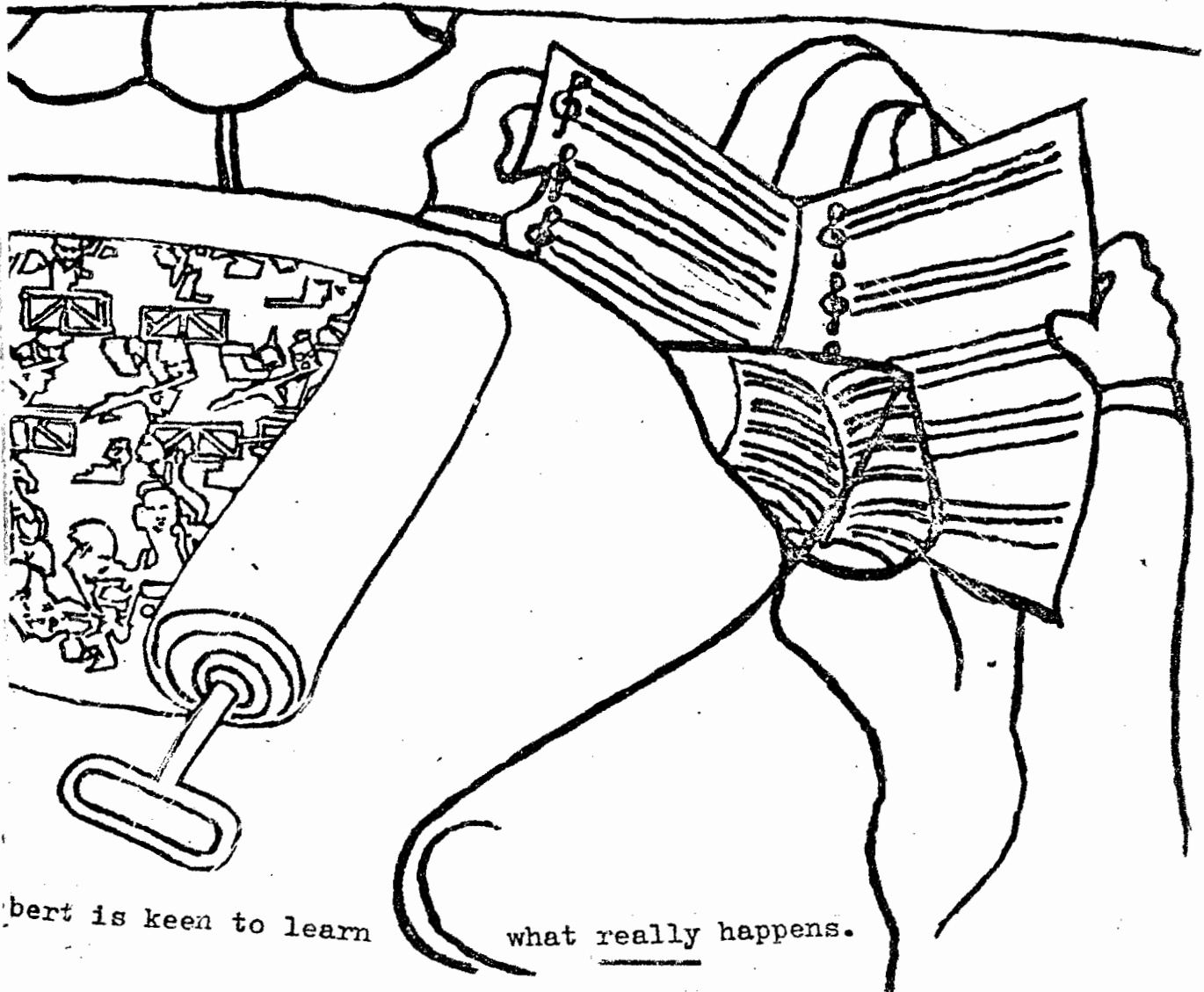
Real empirical observation, scientific investigation for example, does, I think, lend support to the view that is put forward here. Any investigation into the "nature of x" will tend to aim at arriving at a small group of features, perhaps only one feature, which seems to be necessitated by -

i.e. seems to be a necessary condition for - the various groupings of features that we find as defining sub-classes of some class which we hypothesize exists as a natural kind. In effect, language co-operates in such hypothesis: a common name like "gold" doesn't mean a disjunction or conjunction of various features by which we identify the substance, but these features instead fix the reference to an assumed kind rightly designated by the term "gold" (to use Kripkean theory). If scientists tell us that what makes an element that element is its atomic number, surely what they mean is that an atomic number is a necessary condition for the various combinations of features that are instances of that element. And because the sharing of a host of features such as conductivity, malleability etc. is taken as defining classes which are classes of instances of some element, then the discovery of samples differing in atomic number yet identical in all these other respects would refute the scientists.

The difficulties in approaching the question "What is the essence of this thing?" stem partly from the fact that the thing must be thought of as an example of some type before the question can be answered; and whether a particular word successfully denotes any feature-defined type (class) at all - rather than, say, embodying a "cluster-concept" - is often a matter for debate before the essence question can get going. What should really be remembered is that, if there are essences, they are in things, not words, and so any argument that they do exist will be empirical and inductive in nature.

Roger Teichmann (Trinity Hall)

From the Ryle files...



bert is keen to learn

what really happens.

REFLECTIONS AFTER A VISIT TO INDIA THIS SUMMER

The conflicting claims of the various world religions presents a problem not only to the religious believer, but also to the serious philosopher. It is possible to avoid the problem. One might say that a religion, being a creation of man, is determined by the culture and history of the people for whom it is an expression; and thus seek to explain the differences between religions as merely reflecting differences of race and civilisation. Alternatively, one might, if one was a participating member of one of the religious traditions, say that this was true of other religions, but one's own was an exception, it being the only 'true' one. Both of these views deal quite neatly, if a little summarily, with the questions raised by rival claims.

But what if one were to take seriously the devotion and spirituality of at least some people in every religious tradition? They seem to have a genuine knowledge and experience of the Transcendent, expressed in their simple faith and childlike unpretentious piety. I'm not talking now about those so-called religious leaders who gather a following around them and publish widely their right to be listened to. There would be no problem if this was what all 'religious people' were like. It is the ones who, you have a feeling, know what they are talking about, that raise the questions. And the question is: *could all religious believers of whatever tradition, who have a genuine experience of something transcendent, be experiencing the same thing, although they give such differing descriptions of it?*

Since religious experience is by its nature impossible to describe, or test empirically, the question has to be decided if it can be at all, on philosophical grounds. I can do no more than suggest some possible ways in which this question might be answered, and leave them for you to take up if you want to.

1.) Whatever is transcendent or infinite is bound to be experienced in a very inadequate, and limited way by finite beings. Also, this experience could be infinitely varied and no one experience of the transcendent be similar to any other. If we do not know antecedently what the transcendent is like, then no experience, which on other grounds seemed genuine, could be ruled out as being of something different. This would mean that experiences of a so-called 'evil power' could be reconciled with the traditional Christian claim that God is 'good'. Someone who believed that God had revealed himself in such a way that, although not the whole picture, the revelation was complete in the sense that nothing which directly contradicted it could be true; such a person would reject this alternative.

2.) Rather than say that experiences of the transcendent vary from person to person, one could say that people just interpret them differently according to their religious tradition. Or, more subtly, to combine the two, one could say that the religious tradition which forms your mind also determines what you experience when you come into contact with the transcendent. Thus what the Christian experiences as forgiveness and acceptance by God, the Hindu might experience as a foretaste of the eventual mergance of his soul with the Absolute. The advantages of this view are that it allows for a great appreciation of other religious traditions among those who have had such experiences. One's own experience can be greatly enriched if one is prepared to recognise other interpretations of it than one's own tradition.

3.) We may, however, be too hasty in assuming that rival descriptions of religious experience can be reconciled in either of these two ways. To go back to the example of the experience of something dark and frightening: this may be an experience of the transcendent, as a Hindu would freely admit, but a Christian might be inclined to say that it was an experience of the 'demonic', for it conflicts with the traditional Christian view of God. Here the problem of conflicting religious claims is introduced once more, but this time with a complicat

g factor: the possibility that religious experience might be genuine, and
t not be of the divine.

Paul Martin (Trinity Hall)

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUBJECTIVISM.

It is a common tendency among philosophers to take the consequences of ethical subjectivism very lightly. They realise that morality is hypothetical, but imagine that they like most men, have the requisite moral motivation. The consequences of ethical subjectivism become a minor and accademic problem, for those few, mostly psychopaths, who lack such motivation. But several considerations stop this easy dismissal. First, we have many desires and motivations, moral motivations being only one of them; and more than almost any other desire, its fulfillment leads to the frustration of other desires. The nature of our desire for music, for instance, is such that we can have a surfeit of musical enjoyment and still have time and energy left to engage in, let us say, the pursuits of philosophy, and of love. But morality is not like this, it demands all our time and energy. This of course depends on one's view of morality, but if one take morality to be a principled concern for other people, or anything near it, then the moral man could never be satisfied while others suffer (or at least suffer in relatively easily curable ways, like starvation). We can much more easily fulfill a desire which demands only our own satisfaction than one which demands the satisfaction of the whole world. Given that it is in the nature of things that we can only fulfill some of our desires, it would seem rational to fulfill, successfully, many desires rather than unsuccessfully to try to fulfill only one, and frustrate the rest to boot.

It may be urged in reply that morality cannot be so easily disposed of because our moral motivation is such an important part of ourselves. This reply may take two forms: either that our moral motivation is just such a very pressing motivation that we cannot give it up; or that we cannot live any sort of fulfilled life without taking some interest in other people. But is moral motivation really so great? It is noticeable that in almost all cases of moral action there are good non-moral reasons for us to act, and anyone who has read Nietzsche in particular will be disturbed over quite how far these other reasons probably go. But we do not have to go as far as seeking our motivation in a wish for domination in our every act to see that in an example such as murder there are perfectly good moral reasons for restraint: we infrequently hate a man enough for a desire for his death to be very great, and the consequences of social ostracism, to say nothing of long prison sentences, are something of a detraction from any pleasure derivable from tasting blood. It is noticeable that in cases where moral imperatives are largely unsupported by other reasons, such as the feeding of the starving, the majority do nothing, and condemn those who do as moral extremists.

There is a paucity of arguments for being moral for a subjectivist. One of the few is by Philippa Foot, who thinks that an amoral person will have to pretend to be moral in order to succeed in any way at all: almost any project depends on the cooperation of others in society, and they will only help a man who appears to be moral. The price of the pretence and vigilance required to guard against others finding out one's true motivation, and to seize the opportunities for immoral conduct when one can get away with it is enormous. But this picture is highly unrealistic: in one's dealings with the world at large it's almost certainly to one's advantage to make a principle of keeping to the law, such a practice is enough for commercial success. Further benevolence is not generally required except to friends. But even the amoral man can love his friends, and if he knows that at times his ill humour may persuade him to act badly towards his friends, he knows nevertheless that a policy of behaving well to them accords better with his primary motivation.

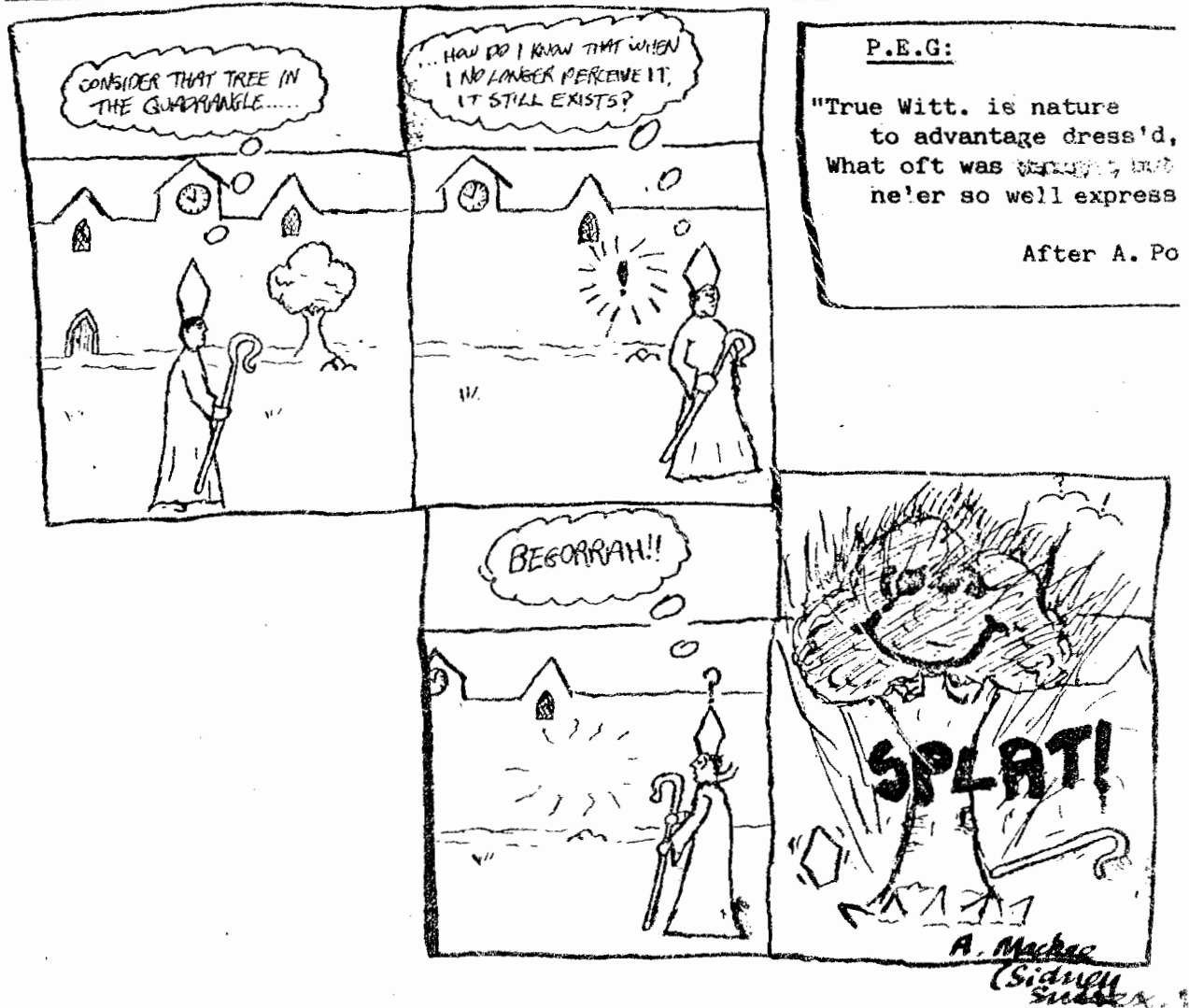
The most frequent attempted justification, generally only mentioned in passing, is the idea that an ability to share the joys of others is a major source of happiness, and it is in our interest to develop such (moral) attitudes. One of the few explicit developments of such a line is in the last chapter of Singer's book 'Practical Ethics'. We must go beyond the prudent egoist to find a meaning to life, he maintains, fulfilling our own interests isn't satisfying. (This is perhaps linked to Schopenhauer's view that the meaning of life is found in striving and not in fulfillment. The selfish man satisfies his desires and is left with nothing; the altruist is continually striving for his aim is never reached). It is quite true that our own selfish satisfactions can never be enough, and an interest in other people is vital, but why does the consideration for others have to stretch to all other men? A concern and love for a few men is enough, a concern for the starving third world will add only guilt to our lives, not meaning.

Hugh Evans (Corpus)

ADDITION TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL JARGON.

A Dummett sentence: A sentence is a Dummett sentence if and only if it contains every grammatical particle of the language in which it is uttered.

P v - P HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY COURSE: UNIT 2. IDEALISM.



FASCISM: A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

Some doctrinaire Marxists explain Fascism as a front for large scale business, designed to defend it against Socialism. Others, have seen Fascism as the revolt of the middle classes. Another theory emphasises the social disruption caused by industrialisation and urbanization on traditional societies. This atomisation, concluded Hannah Arendt, led to a new crystallisation around an attractive new force, i.e. the Nazis. This article will argue that Fascism and in particular the German variety was a revolutionary movement that emphasised the nation as an integrated unit to push forward economic and social development.

In the 1890's there was a crisis amongst European Marxists. In Italy 'revisionism' crept into the party, as Bernstein attempted to do in theory and succeeded to do in practice, in Germany. Arturo Labriola argued the revolutionaries' case that the reformists were stopping quasi-feudal Italy from developing, because Parliamentary democracy by its muddling, consensus nature failed to provide the leadership needed to undertake national economic maturation. The intransigents became influenced by the ideas of Georges Sorel and Maurice Barres. Sorel emphasised the importance of ideological and psychological factors in Marxism as opposed to the deterministic laws and cold economics of traditional Marxism. At the same time ideas of forming a revolutionary vanguard to lead the lethargic proletariat were gestating. The young Mussolini accepted the view that a revolutionary elite was needed to wrest the control of society from the established but moribund elite; a view rather similar to Lenin's.

Mussolini wrote, "Socialism, committed as it was to economic determinism, subjected man to inscrutable and little understood laws, to which he was required to submit. Syndicalism restores to history the effective will of man." Marxism was to Mussolini and the other syndicalists an inspiration for change and movement rather than a series of historical inevitabilities. This assertion of man's free will and the importance of ideals and myths was a symptom of the general change in European attitudes at the turn of the century.

Revolutionary support in Italy for intervention in the First World War was founded on a view of war as a means of national integration and development. Mussolini left the Socialist Party due to his opposition to their pacifism. His experiences during the war led Mussolini to see militarism as a way of national integration. The nebulous idea of comradeship forged in the trenches was to have an important effect on the attitudes of many who fought there. Mussolini concluded that if economic and social development were to be based on the development of the nation, then all classes must be called to national integration. Class struggle was harmful to the future of the state, thus it should be ended.

It is possible at this stage to identify the essential features of Fascism; the conception of progress through an organic state, of an elite anti-parliamentarianism.

The orthodox Marxist view of Fascism as expressed by R. Palme Duff is that, "Fascism, in short, is a movement of mixed elements dominantly petit-bourgeoisie, but also slum-proletarian and demoralised working class, financed and directed by finance capital, by the big industrialists, landlords and financiers, to defeat the working class revolution and smash the working class organisations." Evidence of Hitler's rise to power suggests that big business support of the NSDAP in Germany was negligible. In fact, research has shown that most industrialists supported the right wing liberal government of Brüning or the conservative nationalist DNVP, rather than the Nazis.

Rather than seeing Hitler being given power by the ruling elite one should notice how unwilling the establishment was in 1932 to give power to a party that, after all, was the largest single party in the Reichstag. It is worth pointing out that the 38% of the vote the Nazis received in early 1932 would, under the British system, have given Hitler a sizeable majority in Parliament.

The argument that it was Hitler the demagogue who mesmerized an uprooted population is also found wanting. R. Hamilton has demonstrated that the Nazis' most important electoral bases were the rural areas of Protestant Germany, surely the least 'rootless' of classes. The proletariat, who can be seen as the most atomised part of society gave very little support to the Nazis. Hamilton in his book 'Who voted for Hitler?', emphasises the emergence of local NSDAP groups from the Freikorps units of the immediate post-war period. These men were characteristically those who found themselves unable to return to civilian life after the war. Instead they formed para-military groups which were gradually encompassed within the Nazi party.

The Centrist theory suggests that it was the lower middle class who supported Hitler. The transformation of society in advanced capitalist states is such as to damage the interests of the lower middle classes, that is the artisans, small shopkeepers, farmers and lower civil servants. Caught between capitalism on one hand and organised labour on the other, their social position is threatened by proletarianisation and loss of relative income. These classes, the Mittelstand, wanted a return to the previous situation of small scale business and industry.

This theory makes two sweeping assumptions. First of all it implies that all, or nearly all, members of the lower middle classes suffer losses and that they all have a distinctive psychological syndrome and react within the terms of this framework. Censuses do show dramatic changes in the occupational structures of the period as big business and organised labour developed. However this new structure creates a new order of jobs within large scale business - management, administration, foremen etc. It seems likely that it was the lower middle class groups who took up these new positions - an independent shopkeeper becoming a departmental manager in a supermarket, for example. The lower middle classes might lose their independence, but does this necessarily mean a loss of status? In return they gain better work conditions, hours and security of employment.

Marxist, Centrist and mass disorientation theories clearly do not conform to the realities of the inter-war period. In the case of the Nazis one can promote the importance of issue voting in explaining their success. In the economic catastrophe of the early 1930's opposition parties other than the Socialists offered no solution other than economic retrenchment, a policy that had been pursued and had quite clearly failed. The Nazis offered public works programmes and economic expansion. The parties that maintained their support against the Nazis were the Socialists (though they lost votes to the Communists) and the Catholic centre party. These were parties of integration who unlike the liberal parties sought to involve themselves in as many features of the life of the electorate as possible. Moreover, they had an alternative to the liberal policies of retrenchment.

While in power the Nazis strove to encourage industrial expansion. They allowed private industry to continue but to see this as evidence of pro-capitalist leanings is misguided. The Nazis used private enterprise as a means, not as an end in itself. The Nazi economic policy was one designed to cultivate economic growth. Private enterprise appeared to them the most efficient means of achieving it. Business could make profits but only through subordinating itself to party requirements. The Nazis also did away with the conflict between management and labour; all were subordinate to the party.

Fascism can be seen as a revolutionary movement, in its progress and expansion within an organic state; all were to have a place and find fulfillment in the fulfillment of the nation. It is not a movement that is limited to the interwar period by particular factors. Many third world countries have or used to have regimes which could be described as fascist - Castro's Cuba, Mao's China in the 1940's, Kemal's Turkey etc. It develops when social and economic conditions are such as to demand radical change and when alternatives are unsuccessful or unavailable. Though it is normally associated with the problems of industrialisation and national unification, it would be dangerous to deny the possibility of its developing in different situations.

One is often reminded of the lack of political consciousness among students today as compared to the 1960's. Is this solely due to students being more hard working than previously? Could it also be in part to disillusionment with present approaches to Britain's problems? If this be the case, then one can see the fundamental defences against fascism, alternatives to it, becoming less formidable? If there is not another torch to follow, then the dark side of fascism is less visible.

Doug Wilson (Clare)

Philosophy Faculty Staff-Student Committee 1983-4

	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>COLL</u>
1	IA	Miss C E Covill	NH
2	IA	Mr M J Harris	CHU
3	IA	Miss K C Murphy	F
4	IA	Miss S C Tomlinson	NH
5	IB	Miss A M Feuchtwanger	JE
6	IB	Mr P N B Taylor	K
7	IB	Mr R P L Teichmann	TH
8	IB	Miss M J Whitlock-Blundell	K
9	II	Mr P E Griffiths	TH
10	II	Miss A M M Murphy	EM
11	II	Mr D J O'Dempsey	CL
12	II	Mr D J Owens	JN
13	R	Mr S A R Makin	M
14	R	Mr S J Mulvey	CC
15	R	Mr R A Stockdale	CL
16	S	Dr D H Mellor	DAR
17	S	Dr M K Tanner	CC

Any one of these ought to be willing to represent your views on any topic to the faculty. The more use it gets, the more willing the faculty will be to listen to it, (it is already well listened to). The type of thing they discuss are: Changes to syllabuses, coverage of certain topics; additional papers offered (would people like a General linguistics option for Pt 11?) or new papers created (would people like to have a paper devoted to the study of continental philosophy? would people like to have a philosophy of religion paper?) plus other topics such as tea rooms, and this magazine.

USE IT!

USE IT!

USE IT!

PHILOSOPHY IN KHARTOUM.

This summer I spent a couple of weeks in Khartoum; I was concerned with the work of Dr. Ibrahim. M. Omer, head of the relatively new department of Islamic studies, who studied in Cambridge, submitting his doctoral thesis on Hempel's theory of scientific explanation. Dr. Omer is thus a man who stands between two traditions, and is in a position to make syntheses. This position he has exploited in a very interesting manner. So I went to Khartoum to discover both how philosophy is conceived there and the relationship between modern Islamic and modern Anglo-Saxon philosophy.

The first thing I discovered is that Islamic philosophy is not the study of the philosophers of the moslem world. It is no more necessary for the modern Islamic philosopher to be familiar with the works of Al Ghazali, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) than for his western counterpart to be familiar with Plato, Plotinus, and Aquinas; though in both cases such familiarity may be productive. It is even questionable whether all the great philosophical writers of the Islamic world were really Islamic philosophers, in Dr. Omer's sense.

Islamic philosophy isn't a metaphilosophy. Our Metaphilosophy may tell us that Islamic philosophy is the most productive way of doing philosophy, but this metaview isn't what Islamic philosophy consists in. Islamic philosophy is a philosophy. It's questions are those faced by other philosophers; the questions of epistemology, philosophy of science, etc. It is the attempt to answer these questions from a standpoint which includes the acceptance of the Koran and Sunna (The words and deeds of the prophet) as wholly true. The Koran is God's revelation, and includes the promise that it will be word-perfectly preserved. The Islamic standpoint is one from which any study can be approached, and there will be Islamic sciences of physics, economics, and so forth, as well as Islamic philosophy. All these studies will take what is said about their subject in the Koran and Sunna as the basic premises from which theories should be derived and with which results should accord.

"Philosophy" has often been taken in moslem thought to denote the view that human reason can answer, unaided, all the questions it can pose; this is a heresy, and some Moslem thinkers reject philosophy wholesale. But Omer doesn't believe that philosophy necessarily embodies this commitment, it is that which makes use of the revelation of the Koran. Omer does claim one similarity to the great Moslem philosophers: As they were unafraid to confront Greek philosophy and science, study them and bring them into accord with the Koran, so the modern Islamic philosopher or scientist must confront modern western sciences and bring them into coherence and support with the Koran, unafraid to apply modern methodology to the truths contained in revelation. If he genuinely believes that the Koran is a revelation from God, the threat to it can never be disproof, but only marginalisation. The real danger is that by fearing to confront the Koran with modern knowledge, he will edge it out of his intellectual life, as christians have edged out the bible. Instead the Koran should be the universal theory; the explanation of everything. All other theories must be subsumed under it.

I put it to Dr. Omer that in most modern subjects, the pronouncements of the Koran will be little and piecemeal. Islamic philosophy might be western philosophy plus a few anomalous pronouncements. His reply was that the Koran will change the whole nature of the subject. For a start it will re-introduce systematic metaphysics, we'll philosophise from within a metaphysical view of the whole universe; secondly, we will angle our philosophising far more to the solutions of problems of action, whose application will be immediate. The central concerns of the Koran are the way for a man to walk pleasingly in the sight of God, and the foundation of the virtuous state; the Sharia. Islamic philosophy will be both more metaphysical and more practical than western philosophy.

I also suggested that much of what it said was very general and open to wide interpretation. He pointed out that there are various grades of generality in the Koran. There are specific pronouncements, but there are also programmatic pronouncements.

These tell us how to set about discovering the truth in a certain area. There are also injunctions to judge actions by their utility, and theoretical issues by reason, if nothing is said about them in the Koran. In seeking guidance we look for successively more general pronouncements, and if nothing is forthcoming, we follow these injunctions.

Western philosophies of religion sometimes treat religious language as non-literal; Omer admitted that one might take such an approach to things like descriptions of God, but not of legal prescriptions and clearly empirical propositions. So a muslim scientist must ensure that his conclusions adhere to the Koran, and we must be bound by its prescriptions, or strict analogies of them, where the modern world demands it. One interesting parallel he drew was between a conflict of the Koran with independent judgement, and the conflict of a productive theory with one bad instance. It is only in the most naive philosophy of science, he argued, that this is considered to falsify the theory.

Omer thinks that the Koran is not irrelevant to modern man, because it was given to primitive Arabia, nor that we should give it a wholly new meaning, ignoring what it meant to those ancient Arabs. What matters is what God intended to convey by the signs he gave them; the legitimate range of interpretation of the Koran is limited to what they could have understood by it; a radical interpretation would be bound only by the structure of the Arabic language, which is absurd.

With regard to his western counterpart, the Islamic philosopher doesn't believe only an Islamic approach can be productive, the Islamic premises may be wider and sounder, as bases to work from, but the theory which is built on them is the work of the builder. The western philosopher may reach better conclusions, even if he starts from a weaker set of premises, in this case the Islamic philosopher must not drop his premises, but change his arguments so to arrive at the same conclusions, or better ones. He should be like the Islamic scientists who were forced to demonstrate that Ptolomy's views are not implied by the Koran, by the Copernican revolution, showing this to be compatible with it. The object of the Islamic philosopher must be to surprise the western philosopher by what he achieves from Koranic premises, to use its results to get us to consider previously unacceptable premises, like relativity did. The openness of mind of philosophers to radical alternatives makes it far easier for this to take place in philosophy than in politics or the sciences. A philosophy based on religion would be strikingly different from contemporary western philosophy. Omer thinks we should be glad of the chance to re-evaluate our study. He pointed to the view in the philosophy of science that the information content of a theory is increased by the existence of a viable challenger. Islamic philosophy may force us to look at the foundations of our approach to philosophy and develop our metaphilosophy more adequately.

It was eager to get an indication of the kind of results that might have this effect. He offered three examples. The first was a prospect for a solution to the problem of induction. Once we accept the need for Koranic revelation, we abandon the idea that deductive proof from self-evident premises is the only reliable form of knowledge, and lose interest in the sceptical problems generated by that view. The second example was that the Islamic philosopher might investigate the language of the Koran, looking for the special qualities embodied in this expression of the mind of God. Thirdly, Omer suggested that the truth of the Koran, the idea of truth which occurs in religious belief, gives a relatively transparent access to the notion of truth. In this context it is a notion accessible even to the simple minded, involving an appeal to the intuitive faculties often ignored in philosophy.

In connection with the first of these three prospects, it is worth considering the work of Al Ghazali. In his 'Deliverance from Error...' he gives a compelling account of the process of Cartesian doubt, and concludes that no rational argument can dispel it. He is cured only by the acceptance of the revelation. In other words, he develops a theory of induction so similar to Hume's that some scholars has sought for a connection. But, because of his earlier treatment of scepticism, he doesn't see his theory as an attack on the rationality of inductive

inference.

Omer's View of Islamic philosophy implies a programme for the Islamic sciences as a whole, so, since his department includes Islamic economics and sciences, how far was this programme carried out in these other subjects? In economics only the problem is how to bring mens economic life into line with God's commands; thus only the aim is islamicised; economic variables must be manipulated so that no breach of the divine laws occurs.

The islamic sciences are the results of taking seriously the belief that the Koran is a true revelation in the sciences; so it is important to look at the foundations of this belief. The evidences of the belief are twofold: the miraculous qualities of the Koran (mainly its literary merit, and its place in history) and the truth of those parts of it we can test. Omer doesn't believe that some of the propositions of the Koran are unknowable, unlike Al Ghazali, who thought some only capable of revelation; they are all testable, now. Empirical propositions of the Koran are to be tested by science, this is the importance of the possibility of Islamic science; prescriptions of the Koran are to be tested by seeing if they conduce to the good order of society, an earthly end; the success of the early Islam, so the argument goes, was the result of close conformity to the Koran, and so is evidence for its truth.

Such Pragmatic proof is central to the process of Islamicisation. Philosophy requires the acceptance of the Koran, the aptness of this acceptance is shown by subsequent philosophising; Islamic economics will prove policies which accord with the Sharia are the best by the success of the societies that follow them; this pragmatism doesn't concern itself with what the good society is, or what are good results for a society.

I believe that this is a result of the fact that the recent political and intellectual history of Islam is the history of its domination by the West. The power and intellectual achievement of the west impressed itself on Moslam in an intuitive way that cut across cultural barriers. This domination is now lessening, and Islam feels itself in the ascendant. This was expressed practically while I was in the Sudan by the introduction of Sharia law, and the prohibition of alcohol. The aim of the Islamicisation, in philosophy as elsewhere, is to make Islam in a similar way intuitively impressive to the West.

Paul Griffiths. (Trinity Hall)



ABOUT THIS IDEA OF
ALIEN LANGUAGES
EMBODYING INCOMPREHENSIBLE
CONCEPTS I HAVE ONE
THING TO SAY:
TRAVELLERS' TALES!
AHEM.
PAUSE

IN ANSWER TO GETTIER

In a collection called Knowledge and Belief, by Philip A. Griffiths, lurks an essay by Edmund Gettier, in which he attempts to show that 'knowledge' is not the same as 'true justified belief'. He suggests that it is possible for a person to be justified in holding a belief under the set of criteria:

- S knows that P IFF i) P is true
 ii) S believes that P, and
 iii) S is justified in believing that P

which may in fact not constitute knowledge.

He uses the case of 2 men, Smith and Jones, going for a job interview to illustrate his argument.

Now, Smith believes a proposition a) to be true.

a) = Jones will get the job, and he has ten coins in his pocket.

His evidence for believing a) is strong, suggests Gettier. The president of the company has assured him that Jones will get the job, & Smith counted the number of coins in his pocket two minutes ago.

Now let us suppose proposition b). This states that the man who gets the job will have ten coins in his pocket.

Smith may accept b) on the grounds of a), for which he has strong evidence.

Gettier then continues by saying, Let us suppose Smith, however, gets the job, and had ten coins in his pocket unbeknownst to him. Proposition b) then is true, although proposition a) from which it was inferred is not. Thus in the example, Gettier argues that, although b) fulfils all the necessary criteria; i) it is true, ii) Smith believes that it is true, and iii) Smith is justified in believing it is true; it is clear that Smith does not know that b) is true; because it is true in virtue of the number of coins in Smith's pockets, which Smith does not know. He bases his belief on a count of the coins in Jones's pocket, who he falsely assumes will get the job.

Now, under the conditions of Gettier's example, it is true that he has shown the invalidity of the criteria under which knowledge can be said to be equivalent to true justified belief, but he has only found a loop-hole in the system. I would argue that it is a relatively straightforward matter to reformulate the criteria and plug up Gettier's loop-hole.

My reformulation would be as follows:

S knows that P IFF i) S has access to all the relevant information which would verify/falsify the proposition/that which could be validly inferred using the proposition,

- ii) the proposition and all the immediately relevant concomitant evidence (refer to i)) is true,
 iii) S believes that P, and
 iv) S is justified in believing that P.

This new set of criteria is at least not open to the same problems as the last one as regards Gettier. Measuring Gettier's example against the new criteria would show that the proposition b) could not be termed 'true justified belief' any more than it could be termed 'knowledge'.

In order for b) to be considered a true justified belief now it would be necessary first that all the relevant information which could verify/falsify b) and what could be validly inferred using the proposition b) would need to be known to S.

In Gettier's example this is clearly not the case, because S does not know that he has ten coins in his pocket. This is important.

If S had been in a position to know that he had ten coins in his own pocket, then it would not have been necessary for him to deduce falsely that Jones would get the job. Not being in possession of the information concerning the state of his own pocket, the scales tipped like this as far as he was concerned:

FOR SMITH GETTING THE JOB

Nothing.

FOR JONES GETTING THE JOB

- i) President said that Jones would.
 ii) Man who gets job will have ten coins in his pocket, and Jones has.

Had Smith however been in possession of the information that he too had ten coins in his pocket, the scales would have weighed rather differently:

FOR SMITH GETTING THE JOB

Presence of ten coins in Smith's pocket.

FOR JONES GETTING THE JOB

President's word.
Presence of ten coins in Jones's pocket.

Now, as you can see, working with full acquaintance with the facts, as in the second table, it would be unreasonable to assert categorically that Jones will get the job. 2:1 are not such unreasonable odds.

Thus because all the relevant evidence (viz. that Smith had ten coins in his pocket) was not available to him, b) and any inferences to be drawn from b) would be regarded as invalid according to the new criteria. Gettier's loop-hole is blocked up by them, and knowledge has thus not been proved to be necessarily different from true justified belief.

Katherine Murphy, from Fitzwilliam.

QUIZ!

QUIZ!

QUIZ!

QUIZ!

We have all been trained to take account of the 'context of utterance'. The following nine passages, wrenched out of their environments heedlessly of any such considerations, are presented as the products of eight philosophers and one odd man out. Can you guess the author of each?

1. Rational nature is distinguished from others in that it proposes an end to itself.
2. Wherever a man finds what he calls himself, there, I think, another may say is the same person.
3. Seeing someone, then, as warped or derranged or compulsive in behaviour or peculiarly unfortunate in his formative circumstances - seeing someone so tends, at least to some extent, to set him apart from normal participant reactive attitudes on the part of the one who so sees him, tends to promote, at least in the civilized, objective attitudes.
4. Hence it is plain that, in order to understand the actual Peter, it is not necessary first to understand the idea of Peter, and still less the idea of the idea of Peter.
5. Can I say 'bububu' and mean 'If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk'?
6. The consciousness of a beautiful object is certainly a whole of some sort in which we can distinguish as parts the objects on the one hand and the being conscious on the other.
7. A way of life, pervading each thought and conditioning our every action? Yes, but something much more, even though it only exists, as a pervasion, intermittently. "How to live" - yes, but the phrase is too negative.
8. Though the feeling which breaks out in the repeated attempts to stop railway travelling on Sunday, in the resistance to the opening of museums, and the like, has not the cruelty of the old persecutors, the state of mind indicated by it is fundamentally the same.
9. From these vague introductory remarks - perhaps, as they stand, incomprehensible - we must now turn to something like business.

Roger Teichmann, Trinity Hall.

THE ABSURD AS A SPUR TO RIGHT ACTION .

Throughout this article I use the word 'man' to denote a person of either sex.

I want to argue that there is a basic misunderstanding of the issues in Thos. Nagel's essay 'The absurd' (Mortal questions Ch2). Since this is in many ways a good treatment of the subject I hope I'll be forgiven for summarising its contents at some length.

Nagel analyses the argument that absurdity of our existence is visible from our small size relative to the rest of the universe, and the short duration of our lives and all that we bring about; none of these common expressions of despair have any force. If men were giants, or lived forever, they would still be equally susceptible to absurdity. The traditional expressions of absurdity are best understood as metaphors for our ability to stand outside ourselves and question our most basic purposes; to ask deeper and deeper 'why' questions until we reach the stage where no answer can be given. The absurdity lies in the fact that we are unable to refrain from the desperate pursuit of our desires and yet also unable to say why they are worth pursuing. We are able to see that our deepest values must ultimately be arbitrary, and yet we can't stop taking them seriously!

Nagel accepts the arguments of Sartre and others to the effect that no involvement with any wider scheme or greater being can end our absurdity; it merely sets the stage for another set of questions. If God or history give men's lives a non-arbitrary purpose, they themselves must find a non-arbitrary purpose, and they run into the same difficulty as men. Camus's suggestion that men ought to raise their fist in defiance of the universe is rejected by Nagel, this itself is absurd, the result of taking our despair more seriously than it merits.

Ants have no problem with absurdity, being unable to think reflectively; so Nagel considers this policy as an escape from the problem of absurdity. It won't do. Ants, in fact, live the paradigm of the absurd life; the ends they struggle so desperately for are in the end of no use to anyone but (perhaps) anteaters. The nest has the absurdity of the totalitarian state where even the leaders are oppressed; lack of awareness does not prevent them from being absurd.

Nagel's own attempt at a solution is that if nothing matters, then this fact itself doesn't matter. To worry about our absurdity is itself absurd. As for our inability to stop taking ourselves seriously, we should, he says, 'return to our lives, as we must, but our seriousness is laced with irony.' While I find much of his treatment of the subject admirable, I think that you only have to imagine making love to someone in a manner 'laced with irony' to see that this attitude can only lead to suicide!

I feel that Nagel's failed to appreciate the essentially practical nature of the problem of the absurd, and the moral aim of those that draw our attention to it. Nagel himself admits that absurdity arises when our pretensions clash with reality. The classic absurd situation is that of the emperor with no clothes, or the American statesman cavorting blissfully under the whip of the late Miss Vicki Morgan. Nagel believes that the seriousness with which we live is a pretension which conflicts with our inability to justify our aims.

This assumes that anyone, if questioned for long enough, will realise that his life is guided by principles that do not really inspire him. But if a man can embrace the ultimate ends of his life, and declare them good, the taunt that he cannot justify himself is empty. The absurd man is the one who allows himself to be driven by values which he cannot really embrace. We saw that the problem of absurdity would not be solved by an eternal life; an eternal life guided by false values would merely be an infinite absurdity. The real solution would be a good life. Nagel apparently fails to grasp this. We are not intrinsically absurd, but we become absurd by self-deceit, when we allow ourselves to be guided by society laziness or immediate phenomenal desires. We can escape it by living lives that fulfill our deepest values. Those who stress the absurdity of men's lives in their writings aren't hoping to increase the suicide rate, but to make men be true to themselves.

DO BABIES SUFFER PAIN? -- 2 July 1892

Mothers, maiden aunts and grandmothers are considerably warned not to read this article, for it suggests to men, mainly bachelors, a loophole of escape from the tyranny of babies. At times a crisis is suddenly sprung upon an innocent bachelor when some unforeseen chance places a baby in his hands, and he is brought face to face with the crucial question: What should he do with it? Too heavy a pressure might fracture a rib or two, and with too light a touch the baby might wriggle through his fingers, and involve him in consequences too alarming to contemplate. He dare not hold it by the arm, for he suspects that the limb might leave its socket, and he is very uncertain how far the legs extend beneath the roll of white linen. If he were satisfied that the little wretch did not suffer pain, he might tie it to the leg of the table; place it in the empty fire-grate, hang it on a hat-peg or otherwise dispose of his responsibility. The question clamours for ventilation, and would provide debating societies with pleasing relief to the relative merits of Hannibal and Caesar, Wellington and Napoleon. We are confident that there is a large margin for philosophic doubt whether babies do suffer pain, and, although ladies may sit aghast at the very notion, some speculation on the negative side of the question may tend to ease the minds of baby-ridden gentlemen.

The amount of baby visible to the naked eye consists in a bulb of puffy flesh containing two eyes, a mouth and the rudiments of a nose, and branching out from the white linen two ruddy arms, bursting with fat, creased at the elbow, and ending in pudgy fingers. One baby is the facsimile of another; No man in his inmost judgment ever detected any difference; they are machine-made after one pattern, which amounts, in the mother's eye, for the absence of the imperfections in a hand-made article. In its quiescent state the face of the baby is as free from expression as the Queen's head on a coin. The eyes alone give scope for speculation. At times the vacant stare points to philosophic mastery of thought, a concentration of mind within, the shutting out of external things from a conviction that they are not worth the candle. At times, you attribute to it sheer insensibility, and that the mind has not yet found its way into the eyes. In its active state the grimaces, contortions and spasmodic energy are beyond explanation. Some escapement in the machinery inside is suddenly released and sets arms, legs, eyes, mouth and throat into violent and bizarre action. Then the whole machinery instantaneously stops as if a valve were closed. This similarity to a machine favours the theory of the absence of pain. Whatever may be the motive power within, whether springs, steam or explosive, the equally sudden start and cessation are scarcely consistent with the ordinary idea of pain in a sentient being, with its variations in intensity and gradual subsidence.

If a baby does not suffer pain, why does it cry? That, ladies, is what we call begging the question. It may occur from propriety or etiquette, to assert its authority or to be in the swim with other babies; it may cry for fun or for pure crossedness. Nor would it be a baby if it did not cry without any reason at all, as the fondest mother can testify. You approach a baby with the most amicable intentions, you wreath your face with smiles, lift up your hands encouragingly, and popsy-wopsy it in its own inane language, when the wretched thing goes off into contortions, screws up its face into hideous convulsions, and sends its shrieks down the marrow of your backbone. This is no sign of pain, but merely a gentle hint that you have

committed some breach of baby etiquette. Again, you wish to inculcate some lesson without personal assault, you assume a stern face and shake your forefinger, when the ridiculous baby commences to crow and laugh; you draw nearer and compress your features so as to look positively savage, its delight increases, it daubs your coat with moist hands, and makes an ecstatic grab at your spectacles. On what theory is there pain in the one case and not in the other?

When in an apparent paroxysm of agony the nurse deftly inserts the baby's fist into its mouth, a calm immediately ensues, the lips close on the fist, and suck assiduously at the submerged knuckles without a trace of the previous commotion. The theory of the mother supposes that hunger is gnawing the child's little vitals and that it is pacified by the action of sucking. Is it probable that any real pain at the regions of hunger would be allayed by an application at the gums? Is it not as likely that it cried for amusement and ceased for the less exhaustive amusement of sucking? Again, a baby yells and shrieks in no measured terms for the moon which is thoughtlessly shining through the window. The nurse takes a mean advantage of its astronomical ignorance and gravely places an orange in its hands, and no sooner does it commence its scientific researches on the rind, than all signs of tears and grief disappear. Supposing that it did not detect the deception and was searching for the source of the tides, for the man in the moon, or for green cheese, the original cry intended no pain, it was simply its method of asking for the moon.

Thus the fact of crying furnishes no real evidence of pain if it may be permitted by a variety of motives. When four or five babies congregate together it becomes a mode of intercommunication. We do not understand the language, but we meet with similar phenomena in the zoological gardens without having recourse to the theory of pain. Common experience teaches that it is impossible to ascertain what a fractious infant means by its outcry. It is coaxed and cuddled, danced and dandled, laid on its front and on its back, to no purpose. A baby has only two modes of expression, crowing and screaming. If it does not crow it screams, and failing one method it must adopt the other if it would insist on its wants. Even the advocates of the pain theory search high and low, in and out the screaming baby to discover the locality of the supposed pain, and the result is eminently uncertain; the final method of pacification has no connexion with the conjectured pain, and almost entirely consists in distracting the attention. But this is equally compatible with the theory of crying for fun and ceasing at the prospect of greater fun. Crying and pain are so associated in the popular mind that it requires an effort to disconnect them, but if a mistaken sympathy could be philosophically repressed and the situation regarded with calm reason, it would make a revolution in babydom. Instead of anxiously pacing to and fro with a screaming child, and doing all she knows to stop the clatter, a philosophic nurse would simply place the baby on a sofa to enjoy its screaming until some other whim ceased it.

Granting that crying is not necessarily indicative of pain, the analogy of other sensations tends to the supposition that pain is a growth, and is gradually learned. Sight is very rudimentary in the early stages, and there is a kitten state in which the child is all but blind. The eye cannot distinguish distance, nor perspective, nor solidity, and perhaps not colour. Experience gradually teaches the necessary adjustments of the various membranes. Under this restriction a baby's view of life must be

quaint. We can scarcely tell when hearing comes, certainly the distinction of sounds and their distances are a later acquirement. The notion that its apology for a nose can be any use in smelling may be at once dismissed, and taste is allied to smelling. Through an indefinite period these sensations have to be formed, they grow and develop until the infant may be said to come to its senses. No great stretch of inference leads to the conclusion that sense of touch and the experience of pain pass through a similar growth and development. The bones are soft and have to harden and solidify, the muscles are flabby and irresponsive to contraction, and why should not the nerves be in a similar immature condition? If the eye sees only an indistinct blur, and the ear distinguishes only an indefinite buzz, which in time assume a precise image and a specific sound, why should not feeling consist at first in a slight inconvenience, which ultimately grows into smarts and aches? How long it takes a baby to pick up its pains leads to a further question: we suggest that it passes a certain period in blissful ignorance of pain, as well as other things. A precocious baby may quickly learn to smart, but a wise baby will postpone the lessons, and confine its attention to acquiring sight and hearing.

We do not claim to have established the theory beyond question, but think that we have advanced sufficient to make it a useful working hypothesis. It would be a great relief to be able to listen with equanimity to the woes of the baby, to hear its squalling without responsibility, to be freed from administering most trying sympathy, and to escape the hopeless task of pacification. It would place baby life in a more cheery aspect. We should recognize a screaming baby as a baby of resource, that it varied its pleasures and enjoyments, that it preferred muscular exercise to indolent rest, in fine, that it was a baby of spirit. In time the screams would become as interesting as the crows, manifesting more facial expression, vocal power, and soundness of lung. In the end we might even encourage the baby to cry in order to promote health and sturdiness. Thus half the annoyance, the worry, and the tyranny of babies would disappear. We cannot expect to convince ladies of the truth of our thesis, but we strongly commend it to the attention of bachelors, who at the approach of the roll of linen are prompted to ingenious devices for flight and concealment.

1. Kant - Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, p. 56, trans. Beck.
2. Locke - Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book II, Part 27.
3. Strawson - Freedom and Resentment (the essay).
4. Spinoza - De Intellectus Emendatione.
5. Wittgenstein - Philosophical Investigations, p. 116 note.
6. Moore - Principia Ethica, Chap. I, 18.
7. Stephen Potter (author of One-upmanship) - Lifemanship, Introduction.
8. Mill - On Liberty.
9. Hare - Freedom and Reason, Introduction to Part 1.

ANSWERS!

ANSWERS!

ANSWERS!

ANSWERS!

Do We Have Free Will?

The ubiquity of the causal relation has given rise to the doctrine of determinism: for every event there is an antecedent sufficient cause, that is, a temporally prior set of occurrences and conditions which are sufficient for such an event. The regular effects of certain causes are described by universal laws, the 'natural laws' of science.

Indeterminists find determinism unacceptable under certain circumstances. With regard to some human actions, they protest, universal causation is inapplicable. Such situations are identified as those of moral conflict, where a choice between a man's inclinations and what he perceives to be his duty is demanded. The urge to protest against determinism seems to stem from one or all of three motives:

(1) Our distinct feeling of being free, or of possessing free will. Johnson expostulated: 'Sir, we know our will is free, and there's an end on't!' Determinism threatens our freedom to "originate" our own actions; to be ultimately autonomous in making our choices, by making us intermediaries between cause and effects. We are constrained in our behaviour by influences from our pasts. But the only method of examination of feeling open to us is introspection. If this could reveal to us the causes of our actions, we would know determinism to be a fact. That they remain obscure, however, is not material to the truth of determinism - they may exist, inaccessible to us by this route. Thus the feeling of being free doesn't serve to refute determinism in the sphere of personal actions.

(2) The descriptive statements of natural science have been replaced for some ranges of phenomena by statistical statements, after the discovery of what has been dubbed 'free will among the electrons'. Indeterminists advance the random behaviour of fundamental particles of matter as finally undermining a determinist idea of the universe as a rigid causal procession of events. Perhaps randomness in sub-atomic events which might be discovered to trigger the large-scale neural processes corresponding to human cogitation will introduce same randomness into them. This would reduce the frequency of the agent's relegation to intermediary, but affords no greater power of origination than before. Furthermore, the unpredictability of behaviour of single electrons doesn't imply the unpredictability of motions of large masses of electrons, and it is upon such motions that the psychical processes of human choice ultimately depend. Masses of electrons may be predicted to act with high stability - and such prediction is all that a causal law could hope to do, being an empirical state of affairs.

(3) Acceptance of determinism would appear to invalidate all our notions of moral responsibility. If any human action ultimately owes its occurrence to causal factors beyond the control of the agent it is futile to judge him praise- or blame-worthy, or to punish him for what he has done. (I refer here to the retributive function of punishment only; I shall discuss others later.) But indeterminism cannot save moral responsibility, either. If, in a situation of moral choice, we disallow any causal relation between the agent's decision and his action, we are effectively detached from our acts and cannot justly be called to account for them. They simply happen to us. Punishment is still pointless, here in the sense that we cannot hope that our actions will cause another person to decide differently in the future.

Indeterminism, then, appears, if more attractive, rather less tenable than its adversary. Further, it has been suggested that as determinists we need not sacrifice all pretensions to freedom. Moritz Schlick protests that the 'jeopardization' of free will by determinism is a pseudo-problem - that moral freedom in the only sense that we need it is compatible with determinism. He insists that the difficulty arose by confusing prescriptive (e.g. social) laws with descriptive (e.g. natural, scientific) law, so that the constraining function of the former was associated with the latter's statement of causal relations. This association of compulsion and the universal applicability inherent in the concept of a natural law led to confusion between their contradictory opposites, so that freedom came to be identified with exemption from causality. Now since moral responsibility may be said to presuppose moral freedom, the indeterminists seized freedom's

banner and marched on causality, to vindicate moral thinking. Schlick pronounced them rash; they might have saved much effort if they had reflected on the meaning of freedom as evinced by its usage. Schlick says that human freedom ("My actions are caused by me") is actually inconceivable if determinism is not true. The only freedom we know or could rationally desire, he says, is the absence of an external constraint on our actions, and the ability to translate our natural desires, the motives for our choices, into actions. The concept of responsibility rests on educative grounds for punishment - causes of conduct (in the form of "natural desires") are to be instilled by punishment, to reform the culprit and intimidate others against following his example. The responsible person is therefore the "decisive junction of causes" and the feeling of freedom we experience in the absence of external constraint is the feeling of responsibility - the realization that one's self constitutes the crucial point where motives produce acts.

A valuable criticism of Schlick's compatibilist stance is provided by Campbell, in his attempt to re-instate the problem of free will as a traditional problem of philosophy as yet unsolved. Campbell holds that it is not a confusion between prescriptive and descriptive laws that makes determinism and moral freedom mutually exclusive, but the inevitable implication of universal causal continuity, that no man could have acted otherwise than he did because he could not have willed differently. Schlick is attacked in large measure through his ideas on punishment on a compatibilist basis, with Campbell taking Schlick's own criterion of usage as an index to meaning. Campbell says that on the reformatory notion of punishment, conditioning of lower animals would seem to award them moral responsibility, which is not in accordance with our concepts of responsibility and free will. (Actually Schlick specifies motive and consciousness of freedom as conditions of moral responsibility - hardly attributed to lower animals.)

Campbell asserts that educative punishment invalidates all moral judgments concerning the conduct of historical characters - their future motives are out of reach of our corrective action, since they have no future. It could be answered that here the intimidatory function of punishment comes to the fore - but it is to be remembered that punishment of an innocent man would just as effectively deter others from committing his alleged crime. Thus even if "punishment" of historical characters involves no more than expression of moral disapprobation as a warning to those living, it is difficult to place any stricture for accurate, just judgments on historians.

Campbell says that Schlick's account doesn't include the allowances we make for mitigating circumstances of heredity or environment in judging a person's behaviour. He interprets Schlick as saying that a man's moral responsibility is proportional to how successfully we can affect by our punitive action his future motives. This seems, again, to be a mistaken interpretation: Schlick says rather that responsibility is proportional to how far his motives should, ideally, be improved. Even so, the objection stands: no allowance is made for unfortunate circumstances if all must aspire to the same standards of moral behaviour.

Thus on examination of the common view of moral freedom, Campbell concludes that this must be of a contra-causal nature, principally because if a man had no genuine alternatives in acting, moral judgment of his conduct is futile. The pseudo-problemists answer that sometimes no breach of causal continuity is implied by saying that a man "could have acted differently". The correct analysis of this idea, according to G.E. Moore, is that the man "could have acted differently, if he had willed otherwise". This is espoused as endowing moral freedom within the confines of strict determinism. Presumably, however, we are talking about acting differently under the same set of conditions; to affirm that the man would have acted differently under different conditions is not helpful. But surely the willing of the actions is one of the conditions for it to occur, so to say that under the same conditions the man could have acted differently is to presuppose that he could have chosen to act in two different ways simultaneously, which is self-contradictory.

The crux of the matter, then, is that if a man could not have chosen otherwise (in a given situation reproduced exactly) men's moral responsibility is indefensible, and freedom is ultimately an illusion. To accept freedom as merely the absence of restraint, he says, is mere abdic-

ation of their intellectual responsibility by Positivists such as Schlick. He attributes this to their prejudice against contra-causal freedom, partly due to their fear that the break in causal continuity which free will would involve is inconsistent with predictability of conduct on the basis of the agent's character. If people don't act in character, social intercourse would be destroyed. The fact is, however, that most of the time people's actions are predictable with considerable success on the basis of their character; this would appear to support determinism. Campbell concedes that in many cases the character (expressed as various desires) does determine action, in those situations where duty and inclination co-incide, and there is no moral conflict, as in the case of reflexive or automatic actions. If we concede contra-causal freedom in the small sphere of human actions which can be called moral, however, the inevitable detachment of agent from action does mean that conduct does grow from (and therefore does not belong to) character.

Campbell espouses the theory of agency or self-determinism which says that we are the first-causes of our own actions. This theory rejects determinism, where all physical and mental events are the inevitable consequences of antecedent conditions, and indeterminism, which allows none of my actions to be genuinely caused by me. Self-determinists attribute free will to a metaphysical self which is more than the sum of desires and preferences which we call the character. The domain of the self is transcendence of the character-creative activity, intelligible only by introspection. This shows the self perceiving that it has a choice between duty and characteristic inclination and allows Campbell to see himself as a moral agent, attaching meaning to acts of the self, but not of the self's character and therefore not determined.

It appears however that Campbell is assuming his own conclusion. He posits a metaphysical self to give us moral freedom, but can offer as the only evidence for this self the same moral freedom. It occurs to us to ask how this self can originate desires and actions devoid of the causal relations found in desire-motivated choices. If it acts from reasons, do not the reasons function as causes whose effects are decisions? And how does it accumulate reasons without causal interactions with the world?

I think Campbell's account would also benefit from closer attention to the concept of character, which he takes as merely the composite bundle of a person's desires and preferences. I would suggest rather that character is a social concept - something assignable to a person on the basis of his observed behaviour. Thus it is a corollary of action, not a motivating factor. Its origins are in the choice between desire and duty - which we choose strengthens our characteristic tendency towards indulgence or self-discipline etc. This gives equal status to the rational and intuitive sides of human nature, and recognises that we can make decisions between them from a standpoint transcending both. This standpoint, if it is to avoid infinite regress of perception of ourselves deciding, must owe ultimate allegiance to external causal factors.

This would seem to leave us with determinism, and the unattractive proposition of a mechanised universe. Blanshard resists this by positing different levels of causality according to action on different mental levels. He cites as examples rational thought and art, wherein causality is not a routine of regular sequence, but the constraint of logical necessity or an aesthetic ideal. Similarly moral choice is suborned by an impersonal ideal, the 'vision of the good'; in these cases man is "taken possession of" by the ideal, and his act is determined by his desire for good or beauty etc. He quotes St Paul "I feel most free, precisely when I am most a slave". This rational determinism is superficially attractive, but soon refuted. If abstract ideal are to be causes, they must achieve temporality and can only do so by way of human recognition of them as causes, and human disposition (with desire) to conform to the standards proposed by the ideal. Furthermore, universal causation by ideals would allow us no sort of imperfection - logical errors, immoral acts - these are introduced by the necessarily causal status of the human decision. We are back with Schlick's natural desires and their questionable origins.

Reasoning and introspection seem to avail us little in our quest for free will. Hempel, for one, has advocated patience, while we pursue rigorous and extensive scientific investigation to ascertain to the best of our

possible knowledge, the existence of a set of laws sufficient to determine every event in the world of our experience. Until then, we are perhaps best advised to make do with the most plausible working hypotheses for free will. Partial determinism and partial randomness are part of one such - we can explain and understand random events when they are seen as examples of types arising from a system whose defined limits enclose random processes. If the brain is seen as such a system its components in terms of 'character' properties delimit at a given choice the type of alternative most likely to be chosen, viewing free will as a function of character only.

This explanation requires great attention (and elaboration) if it is to be formulated precisely and intelligibly. This direction of enquiry seems much more promising than the alternative - if we have no free will, then even our own formation of our characters is not truly ours (as is usually allowed as an example of free-will-in-action); and thus our own characters are not our own. Determinism stops short of this, and talks of pre-existing elements of character which mark them off as individuals. This can only mean that our individuality is no more than the uniqueness of our genetic constitution, the whole of our lives being just a series of coincidences. This produces a distinct fear that not only our freedom is at stake here, but also our identity as we have always understood it.

Fiona Sinclair (Jesus)

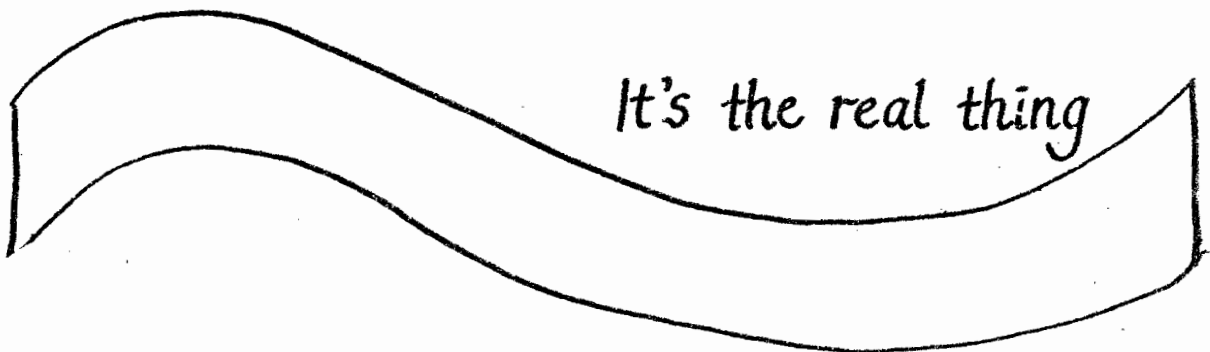
Witty Aphorism 9870.

An aphorism is like a tube of toothpaste; once you get to the end of it you throw it away.

Aristotle O'Rourke.

$P \vee \sim P$ *

*Advertisement



Proof:

- 1) $\sim(P \vee \sim P)$ is a contradiction
- 2) Contradictions cannot exist
- 3) Anything which is $\sim(P \vee \sim P)$ cannot exist
- 4) Only what exists is real
- so 5) $P \vee \sim P$ is the real thing