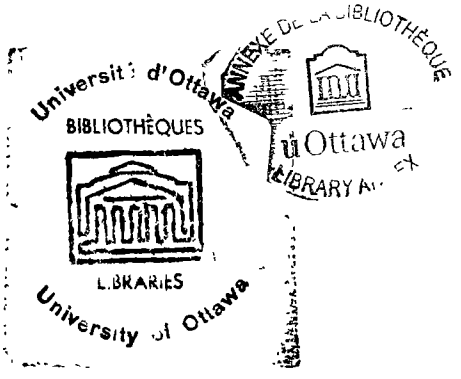
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H.H. PRICE'S THEORY OF SENSE PERCEPTION

by Frederick R. Bauer, C.P.

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ottawa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Ottawa, 1967

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ERRATA CORRIGENDA

p. ii, l.7: read "Eastern" (not: Eastery)
p. 5, n. 8, l.10: read "Visual Sense-Data" (not: Sense-Data)
p. 40, n. 59, l.11: read "or somethings" (not: of somethings)
p. 50, l.10: read "constancies" (not: constances)
p. 54, n. 90, l.2: read "Perspectival Realism" (not: Perspective Realism)
p. 60, n. 11, l.14: read "read Husserl" (not: real Husserl)
p. 60, n. 11, l.15: read "psychologists" (not: psychologist)
p. 73, n. 38, l.17: read "an illusion" (not: all illusion)
p. 76, n. 42 (cont.), l.5: read "Visual Sense-Data" (not: Sense-Data)
p. 119, 18: read "those in which" (not: those which)
p. 126, l.1: read "undermine" (not: undermind)
p. 127, n. 28, #3, l.3: read "so-called" (not: co-called)
p. 152, l.8: read "bluely" (not: bludly)
p. 152, l.16: read "encountered" (not: encounted)
p. 167, n. 95, l.3: read "specific" (not: spicific)
p. 175, l.10: read "concludes" (not: concluded)
p. 231, n. 82, l.7: read "off-duty" (not: off-dury)
p. 252, l.5 of the quote: read "front" (not: frong)
p. 252, last line of quote: read "perceptual act.11" (not: perceptual.11)
p. 264, 2nd last line of text: read "mathematics" (not: matehmatics)
p. 291, 4th last line: read "pain and pleasure are" (not: pain and pleasure)
p. 304, n. 114, l.6: read "as a patchwork quilt" (not: as patchwork quitl)
p. 305, n. 117, l.7: read "than the two" (not: that the two)
p. 335, n. 170: read "170 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 102. (omitted)
p. 361, l.10: read "things, but that we see the material things themselves" (not: things themselves)
p. 370, 4th line from bottom: read "steps" (not: stops)
p. 385, l.6: read "in some sense" (not: in some)
p. 390, n. 8, l.1: read "Thomistic" (not: Thomastic)

PART ONE

BACKGROUND OF PRICE'S SENSE-DATUM THEORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM OF SENSE PERCEPTION

The aim of this thesis is to present and to evaluate the theory proposed by the distinguished contemporary British philosopher, Henry Habberly Price, as a solution to the problem of sense perception.[1]

The problem referred to is that of determining the nature as well as the value of sense perception in its role of enabling man to know the material world that surrounds him. It is possible, of course, to study the nature of sense

---

1 "Sensation" and "perception" are often used interchangeably to refer to man's most basic awareness of the material world that surrounds him, such as seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling, as well as the awareness produced by the integration of these. Some authors, however, distinguish between sensation and perception. (See chap. v below.) Throughout the present work, therefore, the composite term "sense perception" will be used whenever a neutral term is desired (i.e. neutral with respect to the question as to whether such a distinction should be made or not) to designate man's basic awareness of the material world in contradistinction to imagining, remembering and purely speculative or abstract knowledge.

perception, and subjects intimately related to it, from different points of view. As a physicist, one can investigate the physical nature of various sense-stimuli, or, as a physiologist, one can undertake an examination of the neural events which occur in sensation, etc. But these approaches presuppose what might be called an "implicit metaphysics," i.e., they presuppose that there are stimuli and nerves and that we can have true, objective knowledge of them. The philosopher, and especially the epistemologist, approaches sense perception from a more fundamental point of view. He attempts to discern whether or not sense perception, as a form of cognition, is different from other kinds of cognition, and, if so, what are its distinguishing characteristics. He asks what are its specific objects, if any, and what is their nature. And, finally, he examines the judgments and opinions which are based on sense perception in order to discover to what extent those judgments are verified.

It is not difficult to defend the importance of the problem of sense perception, either historically or logically. Historically speaking, it seems that the wide-spread adoption of a particular theory of sense perception, namely, Representationalism, according to which the objects that we directly perceive are not material things, but rather ideas or images that represent them, was one of the major factors in the rise

of idealism and of the great epistemological disputes that followed in its wake.[2]

In order to understand the importance of the problem, logically speaking, one has only to reflect upon the fundamental role which sense perception plays in settling factual questions related to one's knowledge about the material world: questions such as "How do you know that it is raining outside?" always involve at least one premise referring to someone's sense perception and expressed in the general form "Because I (or you, or he, or she) saw (or heard, or smelled, etc.). . ."

II. THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY

It is for his writings on the problem of sense perception that H.H. Price is best known, even though he has also done work on other subjects, mostly epistemological in

---

2 A.C. Ewing mentions this in his work Idealism: a Critical Survey, 3rd ed., London, Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1964, p. 264. Once the opinion was accepted, which was proposed by scientists such as Galileo, Descartes, and Newton, that colors, sounds, odors, tastes, and the like--i.e. those aspects of reality which are immediately grasped by the senses--are found in the mind rather than in the material world, it became necessary either to find some other means of access to the material world besides the senses (the rationalists sought this access via clear ideas and reasonings based on them) or else to renounce all access to it (e.g. Kant's agnosticism concerning noumena) or else to declare the concept of a material-world-wholly-independent-of-mind to be an illusion (the idealists).

nature.[3] And with respect to sense perception, it is chiefly for his skill in presenting a clear and well-rounded exposition of the sense-datum theory that he has won his greatest recognition.[4] A.J. Ayer once characterized Price's relationship to the sense-datum theory as follows:

> Professor Price. . .has made himself the guardian of sense-data--he is not their parent, but it is he who has chiefly interested himself in their welfare; it is to him more than anyone that they owe their present position of honour in the philosophical world.[5]

---

3 In the years since the publication of Hume's Theory of the External World, Price has dealt increasingly with problems involving belief and conceptual thinking, rather than with sense perception. Even so, he has frequently returned to the latter subject in his articles.

4 His exposition of the sense-datum theory in his Perception (London, Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1932; reprinted with a new Preface in 1954) has been described as "most masterful" (D.J.B. Hawkins, "Present Condition of British Philosophy," in Modern Schoolman, 25 [1948], p. 247), "a landmark in its field, a point of departure from which most subsequent discussions of the subject take their initial cues" (T. Hill, Contemporary Theories of Knowledge, New York, Ronald Press, 1961, p. 245), "a classic in its field" (A.J. Ayer, "Philosophy and Language," in Clarity is Not Enough, ed. H.D. Lewis, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1963, p. 401), and "most highly developed" (R.J. Hirst, ed., Perception and the External World, New York, Macmillan and Co., 1965, p. 108).

5 A.J. Ayer, "Phenomenalism", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 47 (1946-1947), p. 166; reprinted in A.J. Ayer, Philosophical Essays, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1954, p. 128.

The title of this thesis, "H.H. Price's Theory of Sense Perception", therefore, refers to his sense-datum theory. Even though he has not always been unwavering in his loyalty to this theory which he so ably expounded,[6] it is the one to which his name is prominently linked. This is also the theory on which he has written the most and to the partial defense of which he rose even in one of his most recent articles.[7]

It is customary to regard G.E. Moore and B. Russell as the originators of the sense-datum theory. G.E. Moore, in the winter of 1910-1911, delivered a set of lectures[8] in which he made extensive use of "sense-datum" as a technical

---

6 See chapter two below.

7 See H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances," in American Philosophical Quarterly, 1 (1964), pp. 3-19.

8 The lectures were published in 1953 under the title of Some Main Problems of Philosophy, (London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.). For Moore's views on sense-data, see--in addition to Some Main Problems of Philosophy--the following works of his: Philosophical Studies, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1922, chapters i-ii, iv-viii; Commonplace Book 1919-1953, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1962, passim; "The Nature of Sensible Appearances," in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 6 (1926), pp. 179-189; "Sense-Data", in British Philosophy in the Mid-Century, ed. C.A. Mace, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1957, pp. 205-211; "Reply to My Critics", in The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, ed. P.A. Schilpp, Chicago, Northwestern University Press, 1942, pp. 627-660. Useful discussions of his views will also be found in P. Marhenke, "Moore's Analysis of Sense-Perception", in The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, ed. P.A. Schilpp, pp. 253-280, and in A.R.White, G.E. Moore: A Critical Exposition, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1958, chap. viii.

term. A year or so later, B. Russell made similar use of the term in a book entitled The Problems of Philosophy,[9] and it may be said that it was this work that introduced the term to the reading public.[10] The theory of sense-data, said to have been "perhaps the most characteristics feature of British Philosophy during the first half of this century;"[11]

---

9 B. Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, London, Williams and Norgate, 1912. Also consult his Our Knowledge of the External World, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1914, chapters iii and iv; Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays, New York, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1917, chapters vi-viii and x; "Reply to Criticisms," in The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, ed. P.A. Schilpp, Evanston, Illinois, Library of Living Philosophers, 1946, esp. pp. 700-716. Reference may also be made to W.T. Stace, "Russell's Neutral Monism", in The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, ed. P.A. Schilpp, pp. 353-384; R.M. Chisholm, "Russell on the Foundations of Empirical Knowledge", in the same volume, pp. 421-444; and C.A. Fritz, Jr., Bertrand Russell's Construction of the External World, New York, Humanities Press, 1952.

10 R. Hall, in a note on the origin of the term "sense-datum", says that the term did not originate with Moore and Russell, but "was current before the end of the nineteenth century" (R. Hall, "The Term 'Sense-Datum'," in Mind, 73 [1964], p. 130). He bases himself on the fact that three or four authors had used the term toward the end of the nineteenth century. None of the authors whom he cites used the term regularly, however: his citations give us four authors who used it once, plus William James who used it three times. Contrary to what he says, therefore, it seems that Moore and Russell were the first to employ the term in a systematic and technical fashion.

11 J.J. Ross, "The Reification of Appearances", in Philosophy, 40 (1965), p. 113.

derives its designation from the view that in every sense-perceptual situation it is possible to distinguish one type of entity or entities whose existence and characteristics can be known with certainty. This type of entity was given the name "sense-datum", which signifies "a datum for sense" or "what is given to sense". Moore's initial description of what he means by "sense-datum" is as follows:

> What happened to each of us, when we saw that envelope? I will begin by describing part of what happened to me. I saw a patch of a particular whitish colour, having a certain size, and a certain shape, a shape with rather sharp angles or corners and bounded by fairly straight lines. These things: this patch of a whitish colour, and its size and shape I did actually see. And I propose to call these things, the colour and size and shape, sense-data, things given or presented by the senses--given, in this case, by my sense of sight.[12]

Actually, Moore himself later corrected this description, so as to speak of the patch itself as the sense-datum, and of its colour, shape and size as qualities or characteristics of the sense-datum.[13] But the quoted passage gives sufficient evidence of the fact that the sense-datum theory is in the true tradition of British Empiricism. Sense-data are direct descendents of Locke's and Berkeley's

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12 G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, chap. ii, p. 44. (In citing pages from this work, the edition published by Collier Books, New York, 1962, will be used.)

13 Ibid., p. 44, n.2 . For more on the problem presented by such alternative descriptions of sense-data, see chap. iii, sec. V, below.

simple ideas (i.e. simple ideas of sensation, also frequently called merely "sensations") and of Hume's impressions.

Proponents of the sense-datum theory regarded the discernment of sense-data and of the knower's relationship to them as a suitable starting-point for epistemological discussions, since judgments, if limited to the sense-data in themselves, were believed to be most certain. Besides, sense-data and judgments about them were regarded as possessing the added advantage of neutrality, i.e. neutrality with respect to such questions as whether they are mental or physical.

This last point is often regarded as one of the chief differences (and also as one of the improvements) of the sense-datum theory with respect to its predecessors.[14] (It was also an improvement from the point of view that it clarified many of the ambiguities and obscurities of the older empiricist theories.) In order to understand this neutrality, it is necessary to recall that the originators of the sense-datum theory were also leaders in the revolt against

---

14 See, e.g., K. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Knowledge, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1964, pp. 87-88; J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, London, Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1957, p. 212; and M. Lean, Sense-Perception and Matter, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1953, p. 5.

nineteenth-century British Idealism.[15] Moore wrote a highly influential article entitled "The Refutation of Idealism"[16] in which his major thesis was the falsity of the proposition "*esse* is *percipi*." He argued that there is a distinction between an experience and its object, and--what is more--an independence of the object in regard to the experience, since otherwise it would be impossible for an experience to exist of which we were not reflexively conscious. (Apparently, Moore believed that no one would deny the existence of the latter.) Whether or not this argument was valid, and Moore later expressed his doubts about it,[17] it foreshadowed the approach taken by the sense-datum philosophers. Whereas it had become automatic to regard colors, sounds, and other objects of immediate apprehension as *ideas*, i.e. as *mental*, the sense-datum theorists insisted on beginning without such a preconception. The objects of immediate apprehension must be examined in detail, just as they present themselves,

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15 Both Moore and Russell went through an early period of allegiance to idealism, then led in the battle against its dominance in British philosophy.

16 G.E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism", in *Mind*, 12 (1903), pp. 433-453; also reprinted in his *Philosophical Studies*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1922, pp. 1-30.

17 "This paper ["The Refutation of Idealism"] now appears to me to be very confused, as well as to embody a good many down-right mistakes" (G.E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, p. viii).

before any questions are asked about their relations to other things such as the mind (except, that is, for the relation of being the object of direct awareness) or material things.

Beyond this point of common agreement, however, the various proponents of sense-data went their own ways. Moore, for example, until the end of his life, made an effort to stay as close to common sense as possible and therefore wavered on the important question, "Are sense-data identical with or distinct from the surfaces of material things?"[18] Russell, however, was more concerned to interpret and to justify the results of science, and he has never ceased to believe that the findings of science make it impossible to hold that sense-data are identical with the surfaces of material things (i.e. of tables and chairs, etc., as they are conceived by the ordinary person) in physical space.[19]

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18 The ordinary person believes that he directly sees the surfaces of material things, therefore we say that the common-sense view (i.e., that of the proverbial "man-in-the-street") is that sense-data are identical with the surfaces of material things. Moore was torn between this view and its opposite, the latter being supported by the arguments which will be presented later on in chapter four. He once wrote that on this question he was completely puzzled, a statement that led J. Passmore to comment: "Nor has he ever subdued that sense of puzzlement" (J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 214.)

19 Compare his The Problems of Philosophy, chap. i, (1912) with his "Reply to Criticisms," in The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, ed. P.A. Schilpp (1946), p. 704, in order to see his consistency on this point.

In fact, this conviction, coupled with his use of Occam's Razor, led him to a drastic reconstruction of the notion of "material thing".[20] C.D. Broad, another author who has made valuable contributions to the theory of sense-data,[21] has put forward a version of it that sometimes resembles Russell's (along the lines of the reconstructed notion of material thing) and sometimes that of John Locke.[22]

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20 For example, see his Our Knowledge of the External World, chapters iii and iv, and Mysticism and Logic, esp. chapters vii and viii.

21 C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1923; IDEM, The Mind and Its Place in Nature, London, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1925; IDEM, "Is There Knowledge by Acquaintance?" in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 2 (1919), pp. 206-220; IDEM, "Some Elementary Reflections on Sense-Perception," in Philosophy, 27 (1952), pp. 3-17; and IDEM, "A Reply to My Critics," in The Philosophy of C.D. Broad, ed. P.A. Schilpp, New York, Tudor Publishing Co., 1959, esp. pp. 796-812. Also consult H.H. Price, "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology," in The Philosophy of C.D. Broad, ed. P.A. Schilpp, pp. 457-485; K. Marc-Wogau, "On C.D. Broad's 'Theory of Sensa'," in the same volume, pp. 487-509. Ordinarily, Broad speaks of "sensa" (sing. "sensum") rather than "sense-data."

22 Broad has written that "the doctrine of 'representative ideas' is the traditional and highly muddled form of it [i.e. of the sense-datum theory]" (C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, p. 238.) It might be added that, as Price points out, Broad never did commit himself without reservation to the sense-datum theory, though he appears to have regarded it as perhaps the most plausible explanation of sense-perceptual experience. See H.H. Price, "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology," p. 457.

Thus, it can be seen that the views of those philosophers whose names are connected with the sense-datum theory[23] are by no means uniform.[24] In their method, however, of first approaching the sense-perceptual situation, i.e. of delineating sense-data as objects of immediate sense awareness, they are alike.

With this background in mind, we can now situate H.H. Price, and then, in a few words, outline the plan of the thesis.

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23 A.J. Ayer's name is also prominently connected with the theory, though his views even about the existence of sense-data differ radically from those of Moore, Russell, Broad, and Price. Ayer professes to be presenting a linguistic, rather than a metaphysical, theory. In other words, he argues that the acceptance of the sense-datum theory concerns, not a question of fact (do they exist or not?), but a question of language (is this the most convenient language for discussing the problems of sense perception?). See A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1940, esp. chapters i-ii. He also deals with sense perception in his Language, Truth and Logic, 2nd ed., V. Gollancz, Ltd., 1946 (in this work he uses the term "sense-contents"); The Problem of Knowledge, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1956, chap. iii; "The Terminology of Sense-Data," in Mind, 54 (1945), pp. 289-312 and reprinted in A.J. Ayer, Philosophical Essays, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1954; "Phenomenalism," in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 47 (1946-1947), pp. 163-196, also reprinted in his Philosophical Essays.

24 It is not the purpose of this thesis to detail the similarities and differences in the doctrines held by the distinct sense-datum philosophers. To do so would require much space, and the task would be complicated by the fact that these philosophers themselves have often changed their views, even on essential points.

III. H.H. PRICE

The biographical facts concerning Henry Habberly Price can be summed up quite briefly. He was born in 1899 at Neath in the south of Wales.[25] His early philosophical training was received at Oxford University, where J. Cook Wilson had been influential in turning opinion away from idealism back to a kind of representative realism.[26] He also studied at Cambridge University for a year (1922-1923), where he attended the lectures of G.E. Moore and C.D. Broad.[27]

After a year of lecturing at the University of Liverpool (1923-1924), he returned to Oxford. There, with the exception of a period spent as Visiting Professor at the

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25 For biographical details, see Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. H.D. Lewis, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1956, p. 496. In the original preface to his Perception, Price mentions some of the men who influenced his thinking.

26 For a convenient summary of the atmosphere in Oxford, and especially of Cook Wilson's ideas and influence, see J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, chap. x.

27 See H.H. Price, Perception, p. vii. Price adds that in addition to attending their lectures, he had "the still greater privilege of private discussion with them" (ibid.). In connection with the fact that Price studied at both universities, it is perhaps worth mentioning the remark of H.J. Paton: "The former isolation of the two universities [Oxford and Cambridge] was a misfortune, and the credit of being the first to break through the iron curtain belongs, unless I am mistaken, to Professor Price" (H.J. Paton, "Fifty Years of Philosophy," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. H.D. Lewis, p. 350).

University of Princeton in the U.S.A. (1948), he was first a lecturer and then Wykeham Professor of Logic until A.J. Ayer succeeded him in 1960.[28]

Characterising Price, like characterizing any philosopher, is possible only within certain limits. He once described himself as being "really just an old-fashioned British empiricist,"[29] and perhaps this is the most apt single-phrase description of him that can be given. In addition to the influence of the older British empiricists (particularly Hume) and of the sense-datum philosophers, Moore, Russell and Broad, however, the traces of Kant and Reid are also noticeable in his works, especially in the earlier ones. And if the theory of knowledge has been his chief concern, the epistemology of sense perception is-- by his own admission--the part of the theory of knowledge that has interested him most.[30]

---

28 See A.J. Ayer's Inaugural Lecture delivered on Nov. 3, 1960 before the University of Oxford, entitled "Philosophy and Language," and reprinted in Clarity is Not Enough, ed. H.D. Lewis, pp. 401-428, for his tribute to Price, his predecessor and former professor.

29 See H.H. Price, "Comment on: 'Price's Theory of the Concept'," in Review of Metaphysics, 12 (1958-1959), p. 481.

30 He remarked that "the particular department of the theory of knowledge which happens to interest me most [is] the epistemology of perception" (H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. H.D. Lewis, p. 391).

Price's writing career began with the publication, at the age of twenty-five, of an article on sense perception, entitled "Reality and Sensible Appearance"[31] and has continued to the present. His most recent article, so far as the present author knows, was published in 1965 and entitled "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'."[32]

It is not necessary to discuss his writings here, however, since this will be done in the second chapter of the thesis, where the development of his thinking with respect to the sense-datum theory will be sketched out. The only thing that remains to be done in introducing both that chapter and the rest of the thesis is to indicate in brief the plan according to which the thesis is laid out.

IV. THE PLAN OF THE THESIS

The plan of the thesis is a fairly straightforward one. Following this Introductory chapter, there will be five others setting forth the main lines of Price's theory. These will form the body of the thesis. The seventh and final chapter will constitute a summary and an overall evaluation of Price's proposed solution to the problem of sense perception.

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31 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance," in Mind, 33 (1924), pp. 20-43.

32 H.H. Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," in Religious Studies, 1 (1965-1966), pp. 5-27.

In more detail:

Chapter two will outline the development of Price's attitude toward the sense-datum theory. If allegiance to sense-data is taken as our yardstick, then it is possible to distinguish three phases in Price's attitude toward sense-data. At first, he opposed them. Then he became their most prominent advocate. But subsequently, his allegiance was shaken, and there has followed a period of vacillation.

Chapter three will be an exposition of a central doctrine in Price's sense-datum theory. It will be shown, by a combined method of phenomenological inspection and systematic doubt, that in every sense-perceptual situation there is a peculiar type of object(s) which is apprehended by immediate sense awareness. Such objects--color patches, sounds, odors, and the like--will be given the name "sense-data".

Chapter four will develop the argument that Direct Realism (as defined on p. 32, n.36) is entangled in internal contradictions and must be relinquished. In other words, the argument will try to show that sense-data (defined for the moment as "whatever it is that we directly sense") cannot be identical with or inherent in the surfaces of material things, if "material thing" be taken to mean what the ordinary realist takes it to mean.

Chapter five will then take up the question: if we do not directly sense material things or their surface-inherent characteristics, then how do we come to know of them at all? This chapter will first of all give Price's reasons for rejecting certain proposed answers to this question, and then his own preferred explanation will be presented.

Chapter six will delve more deeply into Price's explanation (the one presented in chapter five), particularly by inquiring whether our knowledge of material things, if it is what Price's explanation says it is, is valid or not. That is, does our knowledge, as Price explains it, reach material things with certainty and as they really are? This inquiry will uncover a new question: how does Price understand "material thing"? His answer will be the final part of chapter six.

In the seventh chapter an evaluation of Price's sense-datum theory will be offered. It must not be thought that all criticisms will be held back until this last chapter, however. On the contrary, the criticisms which have been directed against the different opinions and explanations proposed by Price will be mentioned in their appropriate contexts throughout the expository chapters. In this way, the final evaluation in chapter seven will be able to concentrate on just the major points of Price's theory and on some possible alternatives to it.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF PRICE'S THOUGHT

I. PRE-SENSE-DATUM PERIOD

As was mentioned in the Introduction, the name of H.H. Price is commonly associated with the sense-datum theory of sense perception. His adherence to it has not, however, been lifelong. In his first two published papers,[1] he examined and rejected sense-data, and offered, instead, a theory of "appearance and reality". Only gradually, in the six years that intervened between the second of these papers and the publication of Perception, did his opinion swing around to the sense-datum position. Then, after a period during which he championed the cause of sense-data, his confidence in the theory waned. Since that time, it is not always certain just how far Price goes in still advocating the sense-datum theory.

Before embarking on the exposition of his sense-datum theory, therefore, it may be instructive if we examine the evolution of his thought. By trying to understand what led

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1 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", in Mind, 33 (1924), pp. 20-43 and "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 6 (1926), pp. 162-178.

him to embrace the sense-datum theory as well as what later undermined his confidence in it, we may better appreciate what are the strongest arguments in its favor and what are the major difficulties that threaten it.

A. "Reality and Sensible Appearance" (1924)

In the opening words of his first paper, Price set forth the problem which was to occupy so much of his life's attention:

> In our ordinary every-day frame of mind we all believe very firmly that there is a world of bodies or physical objects, revealed to us in perception, but existing whether perceived or not, and independent of our comings and goings. And the familiar question, how far or in what sense this belief can be logically justified, is one of the most important and interesting in that collection of problems sometimes called the theory of knowledge.[2]

In setting out to answer this question, many people--Price says--tell us that we must rid ourselves of all preconceptions and begin solely from given facts or data. According to such persons, this method will lead us to the notion of sense-data. For:

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2 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 20. For the present, let us give to this "ordinary, every-day" view the name "Naive Realism". (However, consult chap. iv, sec. I below.)

> . . .in our actual experience of sensa, when and as they are sensed, there is (we are often told) no risk of error. No doubt in describing them we are apt to make mistakes, especially mistakes of detail. But still--so it would be urged--there is no doubt at all that we really do experience colours, sounds, smells, pressures, and so on. In describing any particular sound (say) we may make mistakes: but still we know very well what sort of a thing sound is, and we should never mistake it for a colour or a smell... 'Sensa' or 'sense-data' are the data, par excellence; and our business, it is urged, is to find an interpretation of them, and in doing this, we shall also be able to see whether or how far the common-sense interpretation of them is justifiable.[3]

Price agrees to the project of beginning the epistemological inquiry by asking just what is given. But the answer to such a question will not be: "Sense-data". Sense-data, he declares, "are at best nothing but abstractions, which could not possibly exist or be given by themselves."[4] Rather, the answer will be: "[What is given is] a unitary something having diverse sensuous qualities, . . .a substance."[5] In fact, what is given in the first instance is something given, not solely to sense, but to perception, which Price understands here to mean "both sentient awareness of sensuous qualities, and intelligent awareness of one

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3 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

4 Ibid., p. 21.

5 Ibid., p. 24.

substance whose qualities they are."[6] If argument is needed for this, it is found in the fact that, simultaneously with the sensuous qualities of the substance (i.e. color, taste, smell, etc.), there are also given such non-sensuous data as endurance (e.g. of a prolonged sound), spatial relations (e.g. of the different parts of a round, red patch), identity-amid-differences (e.g. when the same sound grows louder), etc.[7]

There is, however, another reason for rejecting the sense-datum analysis of what is given in the initial sense-perceptual situation. Any such analysis, which declares that the only things given are bare qualities,[8] is likely--as the history of philosophy has amply demonstrated--to lead to very undesirable conclusions:

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6 Ibid., p. 26. Note that this is not the same way he later defines perception: then, instead of making perception an act embracing sensation within it, he makes it a distinct type of awareness over and above sensation.

7 Ibid., pp. 21-24.

8 It seems that in this article he takes "sense-data" to refer to bare qualities. He writes: "It is difficult to know whether the term sense-datum or sensum has any proper meaning at all. For a quality by itself--such as red or blue or loud--could never be a datum, apart from that of which it is a quality" (ibid., p. 24). Later, when he proposed his own version of the theory, he took sense-data to be "particulars or somethings, having such qualities as colour, shape, hardness, loudness, etc." (H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World," in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 27 [1926-1927], p. 111). For more on this subject, see chapter three, pp. 79-81 below.

> Theories which profess to start from mere sense-data are apt to end in one of two ways. Either they make each separate datum a substance (in fact if not in name) and resolve 'things' into collections of these; or they postulate a world of material substances behind or beyond the sense-data, and regard the data as effects of those substances upon us, adding that the cause and effect somehow 'correspond'--and then the manner of correspondence or connexion becomes an unfathomable mystery.[9]

The interesting thing about these last arguments is that, as we shall see, it was arguments similar to them that later returned to undermine Price's adherence to the sense-datum theory.

But this paper of Price's is more than a mere rejection of what he considers an erroneous theory. In its place, he offers a theory of Appearance-and-Reality.[10] Different authors had proposed versions of such a theory, no two of which were exactly alike.[11] Price sums up his version as follows:

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9 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 24.

10 Ibid., pp. 31-43.

11 There is an interesting discussion of the subject in G. Dawes Hicks' article, "Appearances and Real Existence", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 14 (1913-1914), pp. 1-48, where he first examines the theories of Plato, Kant and Hegel, and then proposes his own, quite different, version. Price refers to this article as one of the sources of his own views; see H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 31, n. 1. He also refers to another article by Hicks, "Are the Materials of Sense Affections of the Mind?" which is found in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 17 (1916-1917), pp. 434-445, and to H.A. Prichard's Kant's Theory of Knowledge, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909, chap. iv.

> What appears is independent of us, and exists unchanged whether we are there or not; but the way it appears, the sensuous qualities it appears to have, depend partially on us, on the states of our bodies and minds--are as it were plastic, and vary with alterations of those states.[12]

The crucial question, of course, is what sort of being is to be attributed to appearances, or what exactly is their nature. As will be explained later,[13] there are many contemporary philosophers who would object even to putting the question in that way, on the grounds that there are no such entities as "appearances", but only ways of appearing, and these latter are not to be regarded as ontological entities over and above the observer and the thing which appears. In this article, however, Price states that

> . . .we must admit of course that appearing is a kind of being, that it is a kind of reality, if you will.[14]

If we scrutinise what he has to say about this kind of reality, it seems that what he calls "ways of appearing" are identical with "apparent qualities", and these are the qualities which we grasp. They partially depend upon the sense-perceptual situation, i.e. on the conditions of

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12 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance," p. 31.

13 See chap. iv, sec. II, G.

14 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 34.

observation.[15] But there is no problem in this fact that they are thus dependent:

> A thing may have in different relations qualities which would be incompatible if it had them in the same relation. A man cannot be both polite and rude in the same relation. But he can be polite to his superiors and rude to his inferiors, without the slightest contradiction. In the same way a penny may be round 'for me' and elliptical 'for you'.[16]

The fact that only the apparent shapes and colors and other sensuous qualities of a thing present themselves to us should not lead us, however, into the error of holding

> . . .the view which regards them as sensa or sensations 'in us', produced by the action of an imperceptible physical world, or again as a sort of veil or screen of tertia quaedam set up between that world and us. For the very essence of the common-sense position is that it is always the real world itself which appears to us, however much various apparent qualities of it are dependent on us.[17]

Price then goes on to explain the various methods and criteria whereby common sense learns to distinguish the real, as opposed to the merely apparent, properties which things possess,[18] adding--as his reason for believing that

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15 See the quote on p. 23 (from "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 31.) Also see that article itself, pp. 26ff.

16 Ibid., p. 34.

17 Ibid., pp. 38-39.

18 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", pp. 32-42.

such a thing is possible--that "in some respects, according to common sense, what appears and what physically is, are one and the same."[19]

Such, in brief to be sure, is the theory which Price held at the outset of his publishing career. While recognizing the inadequacy of common sense in one of its views, the view, namely, that we immediately grasp the real-in contradistinction to the apparent--qualities of things,[20] he defends common sense in its view that we do immediately grasp material things (in the same composite act wherein we grasp their apparent qualities). This early paper includes, therefore, three of the essential factors which will play a role in most of his subsequent speculation on the problem of sense perception: viz., the inadequacy of naive realism in supposing that the qualities immediately grasped are wholly independent of us; the fact that "appearing" involves some kind of reality besides simply the observer and material things as they are independently of the observer; and the difficulties

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19 Ibid., p. 39.

20 For more on this important matter, see ibid., pp. 26-30. His argument is that the facts of illusion show that the qualities which we immediately grasp are partially dependent upon us (in contrast to what common sense or naive realism supposes--see note four on p. 111 below). For the argument from illusion, see chap. iv, sec. II below.

that beset any sense-datum theory (tendency to phenomenalism or to pure representationalism).

B. "The Nature of Sensible Appearances" (1926)

Price's next article, "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", represents his contribution to a symposium whose other members were G. Dawes Hicks, G.E. Moore and L.S. Stebbing. In it, he continues to oppose sense-data and to advocate a theory of appearance-and-reality. But some modifications in his views seem to have occurred.

Consider his reasons for rejecting the sense-datum theory, for example. Neither of the reasons presented in his first article re-appear here. Instead, one of the main objections now raised against sense-data is their "peculiarity": they are created ex nihilo, vanish again (according to one version of the theory, at least) in nihilum or else require continual re-creation, can neither cause changes nor suffer them, are private (observable by only a single person), and possess no intrinsic properties of their own.[21]

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21 H.H. Price, "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", pp. 168-171.

The other reason which he gives is that neither version of the sense-datum theory which he examines[22] sufficiently accounts for the views of common sense: one version has nothing to account for the unity which common sense finds in the sense-data belonging to the same thing;[23] the other version does not adequately respect the distinction existing between sense-data that belong to different things.[24]

Whatever may be the validity or invalidity of these objections of Price, it is possible that their substitution for his original objections indicates that Price was no longer so completely convinced by the original ones. (Some other explanation may be possible, of course: perhaps he felt that the objections presented in "Reality and Sensible Appearance" were too well known to bear further repetition.) In his views on the nature of sensing, however, a shift of

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22 Price distinguishes two slightly different versions of the theory, one of which is much like Locke's Representationalism (substituting "sense-data" for "ideas of sense") and the other being that presented by C.D. Broad in his works Scientific Thought and The Mind and Its Place in Nature.

23 The "Lockean" version gives us simply a flux of discrete sense-data, connected together solely in the sense that they are presented to the same mind.

24 Broad's version is held deficient on the grounds that "all the sense-qualities ever sensed by me belong. . . to a single substance, called by Dr. Broad my 'sense history'" (H.H. Price, "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", p. 170).

opinion is more readily detectable. Whereas he previously stressed the integration of sentience and intelligence ("We never have sentience without intelligence, nor qualities without substance")[25] and regarded both as awareness,[26] he now is undecided about its nature. Probably, he writes, we should not say that sensing is a form of knowing: even if it is a direct relation between the mind and its object, it must be remembered that other direct relations such as fearing or being pleased at are not forms of knowing.[27] He continues:

> We can still maintain that sensing is other than immediate knowing, but that it is always accompanied by such knowledge--viz. the knowledge that some real thing or other is presenting itself to me. Or again we may hold that sensing is a complex process (or attitude) which consists of immediate knowing and of something else. Nature is no prodigal; she is not likely to have allowed us any more immediate knowledge than is absolutely necessary for the purposes of life. And by comparison of several perceptual situations, we can arrive at highly probable opinions about the detailed structure of objects, even though it is not immediately known to us. Can we expect more than this?[28]

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25 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 26, n. 1.

26 "We. . .use the term perceive to mean both sentient awareness of sensuous qualities and intelligent awareness of one substance whose qualities they are" (H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 26, n. 1).

27 H.H. Price, "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", pp. 177-178. On the notion that knowing is a form of direct confrontation between the mind and an object, see p. 194, n. 20 below.

28 Ibid., p. 178.

That is how he ends the paper. What the "something else" of which sensing consists may be, is not even hinted at.

C. "Mill's View of the External World" (1927)

If our analysis of "The Nature of Sensible Appearances" is correct--i.e., if Price's views had been undergoing modification when he wrote it--then this diminishes the surprise that might otherwise be felt on reading the opening words of a paper presented just six months afterwards.[29] "Mill's View of the External World" begins thus:

> It is generally agreed by philosophers that the particulars or somethings, of which we are aware in sight and touch, cannot be parts of the surfaces of physical objects.[30]

And, if these particulars or somethings are not parts of the surfaces of physical objects, what are they?

> Sense-experience reveals to us a great multitude of particulars, or somethings, having such qualities as colour, shape, hardness, loudness, etc., and related by relations of similarity, difference, concomitance, and sequence. . . These sense-given somethings we shall in future speak of as sense-data, following Dr. Moore.[31]

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29 "The Nature of Sensible Appearances" was delivered in July, 1926, and "Mill's View of the External World" on January 24, 1927 (see Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 27 [1926-1927], p. 109).

30 H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 109.

31 Ibid., pp. 111 and 112.

Thus, in his third article, Price announces his conversion to the sense-datum theory, or at least to that part of it which maintains that we sense entities that are distinct from material things (if "material things" is taken in its usual meaning).[32] No explanations are given. He simply takes over the theory that what is given to sense are those entities called by Moore (and Russell and Broad) "sense-data". Of course, his aim in this paper is not to defend the sense-datum theory; his aim is rather to discover how far Mill's particular version of it can go toward explaining our sense-perceptual knowledge, once it is brought up to date and more fully worked out.[33] But the fact that Price now takes

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32 Only in Perception (1932) do we find Price's first exposition of a complete sense-datum theory.

33 The way Price proceeds is as follows. The important thing is to see how far we can proceed--after accepting the sense-datum starting-point--in accounting for our knowledge of material things. Such knowledge, Price points out, can come only in the following ways: to begin with, it will either be immediate or mediate (the second alternative is mentioned on p. 110, n. 2 of the article). If we wish to hold that it is the first (immediate), then "we must take one of two courses: either we must hold that we are aware of them by some other, non-sensuous kind of awareness [this remark shows that he now considers sensing to be an act distinct from that whereby we are aware of physical objects]; or else we must alter our conception of what a physical object is" (H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 109). In this paper, Price rules out the theory that we have immediate, non-sensuous awareness of physical objects, and he declines to discuss the theory that we have mediate awareness of them. Instead, he investigates the intermediate option, i.e. the possibility of altering our conception of what a physical object is. This is what John Stuart Mill had attempted, and his theory is elaborately worked out by Price.

seriously the possibility that Mill's phenomenalism[34] may after all be tenable--recall his earlier rejection of sense-data on the precise grounds that their adoption might lead to such phenomenalism[35]--shows that whatever the reason for his "conversion" may have been, it must have been a weighty one.

Yet, while in "Mill's View of the External World" Price gives no indication why he has adopted the sense-datum theory, there is a clue in Perception, published five years later (1932). There, after rejecting what we will call

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33 (cont'd) As will be seen in chapters five and six of this thesis, the views which Price presents in this paper will, after slight modification, be made an integral part of his own sense-datum theory. At the end of "Mill's View of the External World", he hints at the fact that Mill's theory is, in the final analysis, inadequate because it does not explain causal laws. Price's later theory differs from Mill's (as elaborated upon by himself in the present article) chiefly in its attempt to remedy this inadequacy. (Later on, Price distinguished between material things and physical objects--see chap. vi, sec. IV below--but in these early writings he does not.)

34 It is true that in this paper he denies that Mill's theory should be called "phenomenalism" (op. cit., pp. 113-114), but he later acceded to the traditional designation (see H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 187, 262, etc.).

35 If we start from sense-data as being the given, par excellence, he wrote, then "we shall either conclude that physical objects are composed of sensa, are collections or systems of sensa; or we shall conclude that sensa. . . are mere transient effects of a non-sensible physical world, with which they somehow or other 'correspond'. . . . The history of philosophy might almost incline us to say that both of them [these opinions] lead in the end to absurdity and self-contradiction" (H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 21).

Direct Realism,[36] Price examines various modifications of it. One such modification which he scrutinizes and rejects is the "Theory of Appearing", whose authors, he tells us, are H.A. Prichard and G.E. Moore.[37] Now it was precisely this theory which he had himself previously espoused.[38] A quick survey of why he now rejects it will provide an insight into his simultaneous adoption of sense-data.

According to the Appearing Theory, no problem should be made concerning the facts of perspective and illusion which are ordinarily exploited by the sense-datum philosophers to establish their preferred theory. The trick, according to the advocates of the Appearing Theory, is to understand the distinction between <u>appearing</u> and <u>being</u>.

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36 In this thesis, unless it is otherwise stated in a particular context, the term "direct realism" will be used to refer to the theory which holds that what we directly sense are material things such as tables, chairs, trees, and the like, or at least that what we directly sense are colors, sounds, odors, and similar qualities inherent in the surfaces of such things. Furthermore, "material thing", as it is used in this definition is to be understood as the ordinary person understands it--i.e. as something which, together with its inherent qualities, exists whether perceived or unperceived, and independent of our comings and goings (see H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 20).

37 See H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 61 and n. 1. He specifically mentions chap. iv of Prichard's <u>Kant's Theory of Knowledge</u> and pp. 243-247 of Moore's <u>Philosophical Studies</u>.

38 Recall the fact that on p. 31, n. 1, of "Reality and Sensible Appearance", he designates the same fourth chapter of Prichard's <u>Kant's Theory of Knowledge</u> as one of the sources for his own Appearing Theory.

> The same top surface of a certain penny stamp may appear to me pink and to a colour-blind man grey, to me lozenge-shaped and to him trapeziform, while in itself it is square and (perhaps) colourless. Of course the same entity cannot _be_ at once red and grey and colourless, trapeziform, lozenge-shaped and square. But then it does not have to be. For though _being_ trapeziform is incompatible with being lozenge-shaped, yet appearing trapeziform to A is perfectly compatible with appearing lozenge-shaped to B--and with being intrinsically square.[39]

Though he had once accepted this argument, Price now finds it untenable.

> Let us . . . turn back to its [the Appearing Theory's] fundamental expression 'A appears _b_ to So-and-So' which we allowed to pass without criticism, and ask what meaning can be given to it. Clearly if A is the name of a material object such as a table, it does mean something. But equally clearly, that meaning is further analysable. When I say 'This table appears brown to me' it is quite plain that I am acquainted with _an actual instance of brownness_ (or equally plainly with a pair of instances if I see double). This cannot indeed be proved, but _it is absolutely evident and indubitable_.[40]

There is no need to expand upon this matter here, inasmuch as it will be taken up again in chapter four below. What Price is indicating here is simply that "appears" does not do justice to the facts of immediate awareness. To use another example, when--as we ordinarily say--"we see a piece of white paper under a strong red lamp", it is not enough to assert that something _appears_ red to us. We must go further

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39 H.H. Price, _Perception_, p. 62.

40 _Ibid._, p. 63. Italics added.

and say that what we see is red. It is not even enough to say, as Price earlier had done, that "appearing is a kind of being."[41] The redness or brownness in the appearing situations are as real as any qualities which we ever experience or as any we can conceive. There is no reason for assigning them an inferior type of reality such as is implied by the phrase "merely apparent".

This, we submit, is the major change in Price's estimation of the facts and was chiefly responsible for his acceptance of the existence of sense-data.[42]

D. Other Articles Published Before Perception

The bare acceptance of sense-data does not by itself, however, constitute a complete theory of sense-perception. Only in 1932, on the occasion of the publication of Perception, are we given such a complete theory. In the interim, Price published four other papers, one of which does not pertain to the subject of sense perception.[43] In "On the

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41 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 34. Italics added.

42 For further confirmation, compare his analysis of "seeing double" ("Do I see one thing appearing doubled or do I see two things?") in "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", pp. 172-176, with the analysis of the same case presented in Perception, pp. 62-63.

43 H.H. Price, "Negation", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 9 (1929), pp. 97-111.

So-Called Space of Sight",[44] there is offered to us a phenomenological description of the visual field and its components. It shows, if not the influences of, at least much similarity to, the Gestaltist analysis of the visual field.[45] In "The Appeal to Common Sense"[46] Price tries to explicitate just what philosophers mean when they speak of "common sense" and carries out a critique of the different methods used to discover precisely what are the ordinary man's common-sense principles. Lastly, he gives his own views as to the authority possessed by these principles, once they are discerned.[47]

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44 Found in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 28 (1927-1928), pp. 97-116.

45 One important similarity is found in Price's view that "in every pattern [visual field] there is one form which is dominant, and another, or others, constituting a background" (op. cit., p. 110). On the other hand, Price carries out his description with as little reference to material things as possible, in order to avoid the stimulus-error. On the latter, see chap. iii, sec. II below.

46 H.H. Price, "The Appeal to Common Sense", in Philosophy, 5 (1930), pp. 24-35, 191-202.

47 On pp. 193-195 of the article, he makes what seem to be disparaging remarks about the sense-datum theory. A close reading of the text will show, however, that what he is chiefly concerned with is not the theory itself, but its use by some as an argument against attributing any authority whatever to common sense. Those who argue this way say that the principles of common sense--particularly the conviction that physical objects exist--are merely postulates. Even in Perception, where he proposes the sense-datum theory, Price rejects the hypothesis that our belief in physical objects is simply a postulate. He is not arguing, therefore, that the sense-datum theory is false because common sense judges it so: in "Mill's View of the External World" he had written: "Common sense will never be satisfied, so why try to satisfy it?" (op. cit., p. 126). (It must be added that he did try to satisfy it, nevertheless!)

The last article, "Our Knowledge of Other Minds",[48] does not add much with respect to sense-data themselves, but does introduce us to Price's notion of perceptual consciousness as involving a "taking for granted" that is non-inferential and pre-judgmental.[49]

II. SENSE-DATUM PERIOD

In 1932, Price published his major work on sense perception, a book which he called, very simply, Perception.[50] Eight years later, Hume's Theory of the External World appeared.[51] We can look on these two events as being convenient boundaries for the period in his life when he wholeheartedly supported the sense-datum theory.

A very brief resumé of the theory presented in Perception will suffice here, since the corpus of the thesis is devoted to it. Price believes that an analysis of sense perception reveals the existence of entities which he calls "sense-data". These are color-patches, sounds, odors, and the like. They are grasped by an act of direct awareness,

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48 Published in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 32 (1931-1932), pp. 53-78.

49 See H.H. Price, "Our Knowledge of Other Minds", pp. 57-58. For more on this, consult chapter five, sec. IV below.

50 Published in London, by Methuen and Co., Ltd.

51 Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1940.

variously described as sensing, acquaintance, or intuitive apprehension. Over and beyond the act of sensing, there is perceptual consciousness. This is analyzed into perceptual acceptance, an act whereby we are made quasi-intuitively aware of the material object to which the sense-datum "belongs", and perceptual assurance, perhaps best described as a state of mind resulting from many confirmatory acts of sensing and perceptual acceptance. In the process of obtaining perceptual assurance, e.g., as we walk about an object and look at it from different angles, we discover a succession of sense-data which shade into one another in such a way that we can mentally "construct" them into an ordered series. Price names this ordered series of sense-data "a family". The family, taken together with the physical object which is at least a partial cause of them, constitutes what most people mean by a material thing.

Such is the theory which Price presents in Perception and which he maintained throughout the decade. Various elements of the theory were either re-expressed or had additional light thrown on them by later articles, like "Mr. Stace on the Construction of the External World,"[52] "Some Considerations About Belief",[53] and a review-article of

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52 Published in Mind, 42 (1933), pp. 273-298.

53 Found in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 35 (1934-1935), pp. 229-252.

J. Wisdom's Problems of Mind and Matter.[54] His Inaugural Address, delivered upon the occasion of his becoming Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford,[55] examined the claim that some judgments are incorrigible (i.e., cannot turn out to be false). In Hume's Theory of the External World, Price attempted to do for Hume what he had done for John Stuart Mill in "Mill's View of the External World", namely, to show how Hume would have elaborated and modified his theory, had he been writing in mid-twentieth century. Hume's theory, as thus expanded by Price, much resembles the latter's own theory of sense-datum families, and thus indirectly clarifies it by analyzing various difficult situations not touched upon in Perception.

III. PERIOD OF "SECOND THOUGHTS"

Despite the fact that the sense-datum theory was prominent in British philosophy for most of the first half of the twentieth century, it was subjected to continual criticism. Gradually these criticisms generated a widespread reaction against the theory. Some of the impetus for the reaction came from outside strictly philosophical circles,

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54 In Mind, 44 (1935), pp. 351-367.

55 Truth and Corrigibility, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936.

namely, from the vigorous opposition which Gestalt psychologists exerted against the distinction between sensation and perception and, consequently, against any analysis that starts out with patches of color, sounds, odors, etc., rather than with things, as its "given data".[56] Much of the impetus came also from the advocates of Ordinary Language Philosophy. Of late, the reaction has become so widespread that one of the most striking features of the recent discussions concerning sense perception is, according to one observer, "the degree to which this [sense-datum] theory has fallen from favor."[57]

In such an atmosphere of opposition, it would be only natural if Price felt the need for reviewing his opinions on the sense-datum theory and, if necessary, even revising them. Still, it is somewhat surprising to find him, in his review of Ayer's Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, writing the following:

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56 See C.M. Myers, "The Determinate and Determinable Modes of Appearing", in Mind, 67 (1958), esp. pp. 32-33.

57 K. Gallagher, "Some Recent Anglo-American Views on Perception", in International Philosophical Quarterly, 4 (1964), p. 124. This article is an excellent survey of the subject announced in its title.

> But, it will be said, the Sense-Datum Philosophers claim to have discovered a new set of entities, and this at least they have not done. I agree that some of them may have made this claim in moments of exaltation. But in a cool hour, I believe they would claim something much less specific.[58]

Such a statement marks, if not a radical break with the theory presented in Perception, at least a very different manner of interpreting it, for the ordinary reader will have no doubt that, if what Price writes in his review of Ayer's book is true, then Perception was written entirely during moments of exaltation.[59] However that may be, this and other

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58 H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, in Mind, 50 (1941), p. 284.

59 For instance, chapter five of Perception is entitled "The Nature of Sense-Data". Besides, the work abounds with statements such as "the existence and expandedness of visual and tactual sense-data is absolutely certain", (p. 110), "a sense-datum is in any case different from a material thing" (p. 117), "sense-data are causally dependent on the states and the changes of physical occupants together with those of such minds as stand in causal relations with physical occupants" (p. 319), etc. Recall also what he had written in "Mill's View of the External World", where he called them "particulars of somethings" (H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 111, quoted above on p. 29). It might be argued that in Perception, Price looks on sense-data as events rather than as entities. Nowhere in Perception, however, does he distinguish event from entity; and even to investigate such questions as "How are sense-data related to the percipient?" or "How are they related to the material thing which they make known?" is to go far beyond the position which he enunciates in the rest of the passage which we have quoted from his review of Ayer's book.

passages in his review-article, written in 1941, alert us to the fact that Price may be experiencing second thoughts with respect to the sense-datum theory. Subsequent articles of his confirm this view.

A. The "Iron Curtain" Objection

A survey of Price's post-1940 writings show that the objection which he himself had raised against the sense-datum theory in his earliest paper, later returned to bother him. In "Reality and Sensible Appearance" he had written that one possible result of adopting sense-data as a starting-point would be for their advocate to

> . . .postulate a world of material substances behind or beyond the sense-data and regard the data as effects of those substances upon us, adding that the cause and the effect somehow 'correspond'--and then the manner of correspondence or connexion becomes an unfathomable mystery.[60]

This is what is often referred to as the "Iron Curtain Objection". It states, in effect, that any theory which holds that what is directly sensed are effects existing only in the percipient's mind, is cutting off the limb on which it rests. The opinion that secondary qualities (colors, sounds, odors, etc.) are thus "subjective" relies for much of its force on the alleged discrepancy between what we believe to be true of

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60 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 24.

material things and what we see or hear or feel.[61] But if all that we see or hear or feel is in our own mind and not in material things themselves, how do we know that any discrepancy exists? How do we have knowledge of anything at all besides the ideas or sense-data which cut us off from a view of anything beyond? How do we even know that there is anything beyond? If nothing else--so the objection runs--such a theory will lead inevitably to doubt and skepticism.

Now, although Price believed that he had circumvented this objection by the explanations which he offered in Perception (see chapter five below), there is one remark in the 1941 review-article which may or may not be an indication that perhaps he was already then beginning to feel that these explanations were inadequate.

> If we remember that the Appearing language can always be used, we shall be able to get rid of a puzzle which has sometimes worried the Sense-Datum Philosophers. The puzzle is this: if sense-data are all what we are directly aware of in perception, how have we ever acquired the concept of "material

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61 E.g., the sense-datum philosopher speaks of the difference between the stick which remains unbent when immersed in the water and the bent appearances which are all that we see, in order to prove that we see, not the stick itself, but a subjective sense-datum distinct from the stick. See chapter four below for more concerning this argument.

> thinghood" at all? Must it not be an innate idea? But if we change over to the Appearing language, the puzzle vanishes.[62]

In "Seeming", a paper delivered in 1952, he defends the sense-datum philosophers against the iron-curtain objection,[63] but in the 1954 Preface to Perception, he conceded to his critics that sense-data may not be the best starting-point, since "we may come to feel that we are irremediably cut off from the material world by an iron-curtain of sense-data."[64]

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62 H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 282. Our reason for hesitating to make a definite judgment here is that it is not certain in the context whether he intends this passage to represent his own views or merely those of anyone who would adopt the Appearing Theory. A further remark on p. 285 of the article seems to imply that he does accept the above view himself.

63 "This 'iron curtain' objection would only be valid against the Sensation [i.e. sense-datum] philosophers if they had said that perceiving consists of nothing but having sensations" (H.H. Price, "Seeming", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 26 [1952], p. 231). But, "the Sensation philosophers were careful to insist that perception is something more than sensation. When we perceive, they say, we are not only being acquainted with sense-data (or experiencing sense-contents); we also . . . believe or take for granted that there is a material object of which this sense-datum is in one way or another a constituent" (Ibid., p. 230).

64 H.H. Price, Perception, 1954 reprint, p. viii of new Preface. (Hereafter, this new Preface will be referred to as "the 1954 Preface.") See also his "Appearing and Appearances," p. 3.

And yet, in this last-mentioned locus and in his 1962 address entitled "Appearing and Appearances",[65] Price gives a new twist to the iron-curtain objection. This new twist puts the emphasis on the problem of language and meaning, even though the notion of the iron curtain is still involved.

> To make someone understand the sense-datum terminology, we have to give him suitable instructions. 'Look at a pencil. Push one of your eyes aside with your finger. There will now be two elongated colour-expanses in your visual field, whereas there was only one before. These two colour-expanses are visual sense-data.' . . . If these instructions, and others like them, are to be understood, the material-object language of common sense must be understood already . . .To say the same thing otherwise, it would seem that at least some material-object concepts must be empirically cashable by a direct awareness of the objects which are instances of them.[66]

Thus, it is apparent that one reason for Price's later vacillation concerning the validity of the sense-datum theory is that he was no longer confident that his arguments against the iron-curtain objection had been valid.

A further insight into his frame of mind can be gained if we pay attention to a small remark which he makes

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65 An address delivered in 1962 and published in American Philosophical Quarterly, 1 (1964), pp. 3-19.

66 H.H. Price, 1954 Preface, Perception, p. viii. In "Appearing and Appearances" he refers to this argument as "The Principle of the Primacy of the Normal" (op. cit., pp. 7-9 and passim). For further discussion of this more linguistic form of the argument, as well as bibliographical references, see R.J. Hirst, The Problems of Perception, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., pp. 121-126.

in "Appearing and Appearances". The sense-datum philosophers need material-object concepts, he says, but

> . . .unless those concepts are innate ideas, surely one must have acquired them by experience of actual instances, by being confronted with entities which did actually satisfy the concepts in question.[67]

The significance of the remark is this. Price indicated by it that one conceivable escape from the iron-curtain objection is the theory of innate ideas. It was just such a theory which he had employed in Perception.[68] As time went on, however, he gradually ceased speaking of innate and a priori ideas and sought to ground all knowledge and ideas in sense perception. Such a shift in his thinking could not help but make him feel more keenly the force of the above-mentioned objection to the sense-datum theory.

B. Has Price Repudiated the Sense-Datum Theory?

Let it be granted, therefore, that Price's allegiance to the sense-datum theory is not as solid as it once was. But the question remains: has he definitely repudiated the theory? One must scrutinize his later writings carefully to

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67 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 8. Of course, this repeats what he had said already in 1941: see the passage from p. 282 of Price's review of Ayer's Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, quoted on pp. 42-43 above.

68 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 101-102. In "Mill's View of the External World", pp. 139-140, already, he had mentioned the possibility of innate, a priori knowledge.

discover the answer to this question, but when that is done, the answer seems to be a strongly-qualified "Yes".

To begin with, Price has continued to regard the sense-datum theory as something important, if not from an ontological[69] point of view, at least from a terminological one. In the 1954 Preface to Perception he wrote:

> I still think that the sense-datum terminology is useful for purposes of phenomenological description, where our aim is to describe how things look (sound, feel, etc.) and not how they physically are. For example, the world as a painter sees it--and that is one important way of seeing it--does have to be described in a terminology of visual sense-data or something like it.[70]

He repeats this conviction elsewhere, going so far as to say in one place that "for the purposes of detailed phenomenological description a Sensation [i.e. sense-datum]

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69 "Ontology" is used here in contradistinction to "linguistic" and "conceptual". If a theory or question is an ontological one, in the sense intended here, it is a question that concerns facts and entities, and not merely the manner in which we speak or think about facts and entities. The word is definitely not used here to refer to a theory of being-in-general, as opposed to a theory of some particular region of being. In view of the prevailing philosophical climate in Anglo-American circles, the former use of the term is more important.

70 H.H. Price, Perception, p. vii.

terminology, or something akin to it, is almost indispensable."[71]

Precisely what such a description would look like in practice is never made perfectly clear, but probably it would be somewhat as follows. In order to describe, e.g., how things look to visual sense perception, it is convenient for us to compare everything which we see in a single glance to a large tapestry of colored patterns (each of which, in turn,

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71 H.H. Price, "Seeming", p. 233. See also his Review of H.A. Prichard's Knowledge and Perception, in Mind, 60 (1951), p. 114, and "Appearing and Appearances", p. 19. This idea, that the sense-datum terminology can really be regarded as a terminology (rather than as an ontology or metaphysics), is reminiscent of A.J. Ayer's theory to this effect, which he presented in The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. Ayer's view is that theories of sense perception deal with questions of language rather than with questions of fact. He specifically criticises Price for misjudging the true nature of the sense-datum theory: "If the 'theories' against which they [Price's arguments against the Naive Realist theories] are directed really were theories, in the sense in which this word is commonly understood, Professor Price's objections would be without force. But the truth is not that his objections are without force, but that he has mistaken the character of that which he is attempting to refute. For what he regards as alternative theories are, in fact, what I should call alternative languages. As languages, they afford us the means of describing what we already know, but it is not to be expected that we should be able to deduce anything from them concerning the nature of our future experience; for if that were possible, they would not be languages, but theories in the ordinary sense. . .What we here have to consider is not a number of alternative hypotheses concerning the nature of empirical facts, but a number of alternative recommendations concerning the way in which we are to describe them" (A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 55). The verification principle can be presumed to lie behind some of this, particularly behind the crucial phrase "it is not to be expected that we should be able to deduce anything from them concerning the nature of our future experiences."

can be regarded as a single patch), and then to describe the features of this "visual field" as if they were all real features instead of merely apparent ones (for instance, "there is a round, red patch in the center of the field" rather than "there is something in the center of the field that appears red", etc.).[72]

There is no need here to criticize the idea that such a description possesses advantages over other methods of description. What is more important is to try and discover what Price believes the real facts of the situation are. Is it true, as some of his statements would lead us to believe, that the sense-datum analysis is only a question of language?[73] Is it only a technique for describing what-we-sense by means of a convenient fiction, i.e. as if it consisted of entities called sense-data? And if the sense-datum analysis is only a descriptive terminology, what analysis will give us the actual facts?

In answering these questions, let us begin by pointing out that Price has never fully subscribed to Ayer's

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72 See H.H. Price, "Seeming", esp. pp. 232-233.

73 E.g., see his statement, "I want to suggest, in fact, that the Appearing philosophy and the Sensation [sense-datum] philosophy . . . are just two different ways of saying the same thing. . . Either the Appearing language or the Sensation language will cover all the facts" (H.H. Price, "Seeming", pp. 227-232).

thesis that the problem of sense perception involves only questions of language. Even in his review of Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, he wrote that the sense-datum philosophers "would claim to have discovered . . . a 'feature of our experience', or of the experiencable universe."[74] Or, to put it another way, it was the discovery of a fact that dictated the adoption of the sense-datum terminology.[75]

This emphasis on certain facts of experience or of the experiencable world as opposed to mere linguistic convenience is as characteristic of Price's later writings as it was of his earlier ones. We will now try to indicate some of these facts and then the theory he would like to construct on them.

In "Seeming" he mentions that even if the Appearing language is used to describe after-images, hallucinations and dreams, one must not deny that "something really does occur" or that there are actual experiences.[76] He adds that "some

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74 Op. cit., p. 284.

75 "They would claim to have discovered . . . a 'feature of our experience', or of the experiencable universe, which can only be accomodated by making some departure from our customary modes of speech" (ibid.). See R.J. Hirst, The Problems of Perception, pp. 115-117, for a criticism of Ayer's thesis.

76 H.H. Price, "Seeming", p. 229. This remark of his is directed against the theory mentioned below, see chap. iv, sec. II, G.

form or other of the Sensation terminology is also very difficult to avoid when one is discussing the causation of sense-perception."[77] Although this statement by itself is too brief to indicate precisely what he has in mind, presumably he is referring to the fact that scientific theories regarding physical stimuli and neurological events, for instance, are based on certain very noticeable features of sensory experience, such as the actual distortion of what we see, etc. In "The Argument from Illusion" he argues--against those who make much of the "perceptual constances"[78]--that when, for example, "we see a motor car which is approaching us along the road, . . . there is certainly something which grows larger, not merely appears to grow larger, but actually does."[79] This "something" he calls "perspectival (or field-of-view) size", and it is "something quite different from the physical size" of an object.[80] And finally, in "Appearing and Appearances", he spends much time showing that in various situations--such as when the sun looks oval at a certain

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77 Ibid., p. 233.

78 See p. 125, n. 28 below.

79 H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. H.D. Lewis, p. 393.

80 Ibid., p. 394. He extends the same considerations to perspectival or field-of-view shape as well.

period of the day during the winter, or when a distant hillside looks almost vertical, or the railway engine's whistle seems to change its pitch from high to low and vice-versa, etc. --there are certain qualities which are so truly present that they make it possible to give an ostensive definition to the concepts which correspond to them, even though the anti-sense-datum philosopher would deny that such concepts are physically exemplified in those situations. Referring to the sun's oval appearance, for example, he writes:

> When the sun looks oval, for instance, there is ground for saying that an oval-shaped particular <u>does</u> "visibly turn up" since it does occupy a place in our visual field.[81]

Facts such as these are precisely those which Price had earlier used in arguing for the sense-datum theory. Yet, despite the importance which he continues to place on them--frequently protesting that opponents of the sense-datum theory ignore them completely[82]--he does not suggest that they require a full-scale reinstatement of the sense-datum theory.[83]

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81 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 19. So, too, "if a photograph were taken of the scene . . . something oval would come out in the top half of the photographic print" (<u>ibid</u>., p. 15).

82 His entire article on "Appearing and Appearances" can be regarded as an attempt to restate forcefully such facts which, he observes, tend to be overlooked in recent times.

83 If his article, "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology" were taken as an expression of views which he himself held even in 1956 rather than those

Instead, to the extent that he expresses positively what theory he would prefer, it would be a theory as close to the assumptions of direct realism as possible. According to this, it would be said that in "normal" sense-perceptual situations, we are directly aware of material things: so much, at least, is implied by what Price writes in the 1954 Preface to Perception:

> It would seem that at least some material-object concepts must be empirically cashable by a direct awareness of the objects which are instances of them.[84]

Of course, the existence of perspective even in non-illusory situations means that Price is forced to hold the rather unusual view (sometimes referred to as "Perspectival Realism") that each material object possesses different kinds of size and shape: a great variety of perspectival sizes and shapes, as well as one physical size and one physical shape.[85]

If the foregoing views are tenable, then it is only in hallucination as well as in a number of cases "intermediate

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83 (cont'd) held by Broad (and by himself in the 1930's), then it would be an exception to the above statement. So also are the opening pages of "Appearing and Appearances."

84 H.H. Price, Perception, 1954 reprint, p. viii. Also, "All the parts of the wall which are visible from here present themselves to the percipient as they really are, so long as his vision is perspectival" (H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion," p. 399, italics added).

85 H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", p. 394.

between ordinary appearing situations and hallucinations" that

> . . .something very like the sense-datum terminology is needed. . . . For here, one certainly does experience particulars which are not material objects nor parts of material objects.[86]

Even so, hallucinations and genuine illusions could be regarded, on the basis of this perspectival realism, as "just occasional abnormalities."[87]

To the present writer, it seems that such is the theory which Price would like to espouse. But only with some strong reservations. He has admitted that, if Locke's theory of color or if certain modern scientific theories are correct, then "all vision, all touch, too, is partially illusory."[88] And, if that is the case, Price says that he doubts "whether one could answer [the objections based on] them without departing in some degree from the assumptions of common sense."[89] This doubt would be even stronger if his theory that a thing can simultaneously possess many

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86 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 19. To our mind, it is simply an overdose of reserve that dictates Price's use of "terminology" here instead of "theory". His meaning is quite obviously that the terminology is needed here <u>because the theory is verified</u>.

87 H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", p. 399.

88 <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 399-400.

89 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 400.

perspectival sizes and shapes in addition to its physical one turned out to be untenable.

In dealing with the writings which Price has published in his post-sense-datum period, it is important to note that he is not denying the reality of the characteristics which are often called "merely apparent". Both in "The Argument from Illusion" and in "Appearing and Appearances", he has emphasized that these characteristics or qualities actually occur. Should someone wish to criticize his later opinions, therefore, the point to attack would not be his reversion to the Appearing Theory--for he is not really reverting to it[90]--but rather his opinion that material things

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90 It is true that in "Appearing and Appearances" he suggests substituting the term "appearance" for "sense-datum" (op. cit., p. 19), but his reason is that the term "sense-datum" may imply a mistaken notion of infallibility. The term "appearance" is not perfectly satisfactory either, since it might suggest to the uncritical reader that Price is reverting to the Appearing Theory.

It is hoped that the above discussion of Price's shift in viewpoints will have helped the reader to become aware of the affinities which exist between these three theories: the Appearing Theory, the Sense-Datum Theory, and the Theory of Perspective Realism. Particularly do these affinities exist on the question, "Do we really sense some shape and size (and even secondary qualities) which are different from the non-perspectival shapes and sizes and other absolute qualities which common sense attributes to things?" All of the theories answer "Yes", though they go on to explain the agreed-on facts in different ways. (The Appearing Theory mentioned here must be carefully distinguished from the more "linguistic" version of it: see chap. iv, sec. II, G below, where the latter version is discussed.)

can simultaneously possess many perspectival sizes and shapes in addition to its physical ones.[91]

Enough has been said, however, to provide the reader with a background of Price's views on the problem of sense perception. It is now time to plunge into an exposition of his sense-datum theory, for which he is justly renowned.

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91 On this, see p. 125, n. 28 below.

PART TWO

SENSING AND ITS OBJECTS

CHAPTER III

DELINEATION OF SENSE-DATA

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Price's sense-datum theory is an attempt to analyse man's sense perception of the physical world. As such, it aims at discovering the various elements or ingredients that make up the phenomenon under discussion. According to Price, such an analysis reveals at the core of every perceptual situation the existence of an entity (or entities)[1] called sense-data. These sense-data are the objects of a special type of awareness: direct, intuitive awareness. Besides sense-data and our awareness of them, the analysis of sense perception reveals another type of consciousness which is called "perceptual acceptance", whose object is the existence of material things.[2] A sufficient number of perceptual acceptances can combine to produce "perceptual assurance",

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1 This word does not explicitly stand for "substance", though neither does it exclude such a meaning. It is intended to be non-committal, in the sense of "something".

2 See chapter five below.

a new state of mind characterized by a confidence in the previous acts of the mind with respect to a particular object or situation.[3] Thus, a careful inspection of the complex phenomenon of sense perception brings to light a diversity of cognitive activities and their respective objects. Further discussion of these objects reveals, so Price argues, that sense-data are not, as direct realism maintains, identical with the surfaces of material things (nor are sense-data, for instance, qualities inhering immediately in those surfaces). Sense-data are entities distinct from material things.[4]

This last point, however, is intended to be the conclusion of a careful examination of the relevant facts. It is not intended as an initial assumption. Therefore, in Perception, Price first tries to give a description of "sense-datum" that will not pre-judge the issue, "Are sense-data identical with (the surfaces of) material things or are they distinct?" His procedure can be compared with a criminal trial. 'X' is on trial for a crime. Those who are trying him have two different concepts: one simply of 'X' (e.g. 'John

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3 See chapter six below.

4 When he comes to explain the nature of material things, Price distinguishes between "material thing" and "physical object". At the outset, however, he makes no such distinction, but takes "material thing" in the sense described on pp. 110-111 below. (On his later distinction, see chapter six below, passim.)

So-and-So sitting before us"), another of 'a' ("The perpetrator of such-and-such a crime"). The question is whether or not both concepts are realized by the same individual. Analogously, Price tries to help the reader notice a particular ingredient in the perceptual situation which will be designated by the name "sense-datum". Next, he takes up the concept of material thinghood,[5] and asks, "Is it possible to identify these two?" "Are they both realized by the same entity?"

The first objects whose existence is revealed by Price's analysis are, as we have said, given the name "sense-data". The etymology of the word is sufficient indication of its meaning. "Data" signifies "what is given", and "sense-" specifies this as "what is given to sense". In very simple terms, "sense-data" refers to the things which we directly apprehend with our sense of sight, our sense of hearing, our sense of touch, etc. Ordinarily we take it for granted that we see, hear and feel such things as chairs, tables, houses,

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5 At the outset, Price neither questions nor affirms the existence of material or physical objects. He begins with merely the concept of material thinghood, and asks whether there is conflict or harmony between what we know about sense-data and what we take to be true about material things. This initial neutrality regarding material things is a result of adopting the phenomenological method of investigation (at least as he understands its exigencies). For a criticism of this procedure, see chapter four, sec. II, E below.

trees, other people, and so on. It is Price's conviction, however, that such things are not the objects of immediate sense apprehension.[6]

II. PHENOMENOLOGICAL INSPECTION VS. THE "SCIENTIFIC" APPROACH

In Price's writings, there are many references to a special psychological attitude, or approach, to the problems of sense perception. This approach is variously called "inspective attitude",[7] "phenomenological mode of investigation",[8] "phenomenological inspection",[9] and so on. The aim of this special attitude, approach or method, is "the phenomenological

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6 The reader of Price's writings must be warned that he does not always--perhaps one should say "not ordinarily"--use the verb "to sense" as a generic synonym for "to see", "to hear", "to touch", etc., as it is customary to do. Price distinguishes sensing from the act which he calls perceiving or perceptual acceptance (see chapter five, sec. I, below). On the proportionately few occasions when he uses the terms "see", "hear", "touch", and the like, he uses them as synonyms for "perceive" rather than for "sense", mainly--it would seem--because it is the objects of perception, i.e. material things such as chairs, tables, etc., and not of sensing, that are the objects which the ordinary person takes himself to be seeing, hearing, and touching.

7 H.H. Price, "On the So-Called Space of Sight", p. 98.

8 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 10.

9 Ibid., (1954 Preface), p. ix; IDEM, Review of H.A. Prichard's Knowledge and Perception, p. 114.

description"[10] of what is apprehended by sense perception.

In order to carry out this description, it is necessary, at least temporarily, to set aside certain common assumptions:

> In such a discussion as this a certain mental attitude is necessary, which is very different from the attitude of everyday life. . . . We must do our best to forget everything that we know or believe about physical objects: and we must resist the temptation to "refer" our data and their relations to such objects. . . . We are to think about and try to describe our data and their relations among themselves, . . . and not their relations to physical objects, whether in the way of cause and effect or in the way of "being appearances of them".[11]

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10 H.H. Price, "Seeming", p. 233.

11 H.H. Price, "On the So-Called Space of Sight", pp. 97-98. In Perception, Price speaks of "suspending as far as possible the practical or outwardly directed attitude of ordinary life" (op. cit., p. 123). Despite the overtones of the Husserlian phenomenological reduction (see, for example, E. Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Phenomenology, tr. W.R. Boyce Gibson, New York, Collier Books, 1962, sections 24-32), it does not appear that there is much direct influence of Husserl on Price's thinking. I have found only a single direct reference to Husserl in his writings, and that is with respect to the phrase "leibhaft gegeben", found on p. 152 of Perception. The article from which the above passage was quoted could have been written even if Price had never read Husserl, but only such writers as the Gestalt psychologist. Three further facts are worth noting. First, some of the theories of Brentano, who so strongly influenced Husserl, and of von Ehrenfels had penetrated into British thought through the work of G.F. Stout, who taught both Russell and Moore. And, secondly, even from the time of Thomas Reid, the idea was current that, for a faithful description of sense experience, a special type of attention is necessary: Reid, in speaking of the fact that "the mind has acquired a confirmed and inveterate habit of inattention to them [our sensations], for they no sooner appear than quick as lightning the thing signified succeeds and engrosses all our regard", asserts that "however difficult it may be to attend to this fugitive sensation . . . this is what the philosopher by

In addition to suspending the attitude of everyday life, it is also necessary to set aside certain scientific theories. At the beginning of Perception, Price states that there is often

> . . . a confusion between two standpoints or modes of investigation. (a) the physiological and (b) the immanent or phenomenological. . . . We are asking what is given to consciousness, or presented to the mind. We are not inquiring into the causes which may have led to its being given.[12]

The motive behind this is the desire to avoid the error of distorting what is given in knowledge, an error which stems from giving priority to assumptions derived from science. That is, when sensation is viewed strictly as the product of external stimulation of the sense organs,[13] then the question "What is given?" is often decided, not by an impartial examination of experience, but by an analysis of the physical stimulus.

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11 (cont'd) pains and practice must attain" (Thomas Reid, Inquiry into the Human Mind, ed. W. Hamilton, 5th ed., Edinburgh, 1801, pp. 135, 120). See also C.D. Broad, Mind and Its Place in Nature, pp. 297-298. For the third remark, see p. 73 n. 38 below.

12 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 10-11.

13 B. Russell provides an instance of this conception of sensation when he writes that "it [sensation] is supposed to be the core, in the perception, which is solely due to the stimulus and the sense-organ, not to past experience" (B. Russell, Outline of Philosophy, Cleveland, World Publishing Co., Meridian Books, 1960 [original, 1927], p. 212).

It is understandable, of course, how the "scientific" approach originated. The rise of modern science saw a succession of remarkable discoveries concerning the nature of such things as light, heat, sound, the human nervous system, and so forth. When these discoveries were coupled with the apparently obvious fact that sense perception is in many respects an effect caused in us by our environment, it was not surprising that some thinkers would try to find a point-to-point cause-effect relationship between physical stimuli and what is given in sensation. Correlatively, it was sometimes asserted that anything for which a specific stimulus could not be found, could not be given. A striking example of this approach is found in Berkeley's rejection of the theory that distance can be sensed:

> It is, I think, agreed by all that distance, of itself and immediately, cannot be seen. For, distance being a line directed endwise to the eye, it projects only one point in the fund of the eye, which point remains invariably the same, whether the distance be longer or shorter.[14]

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14 G. Berkeley, Essay towards a New Theory of Vision, par. ii. For other examples of this approach, see J. Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk. II, chap. 1, sec. xxiii, and D. Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. 1, Pt. i, sec. ii. It is frequently assailed as "the stimulus error" (see, e.g., W. Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, New York, Mentor Books, 1959 [original, 1927], p. 95) or, in an expanded form, as "the constancy-hypothesis", which states that "whenever the same physical events stimulate the same elements of the nervous system, the same sensations cannot fail to appear" (A. Gurwitsch, Field of Consciousness, Duquesne University Press, 1964, p. 90).

There may be no theoretical objections against making the cause-effect premise a methodological assumption for certain investigations carried out in experimental psychology, but Price considers that it has no place in epistemology.[15] First of all, he believes that to make use of knowledge about the physical or physiological processes involved in sense perception in order to verify our knowledge of the external world[16] would be a case of circular reasoning, since our

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15 The scientific approach may have no positive use in showing what is given, but it may have a negative use in demonstrating internal contradictions in the position of direct realism. Price gives offhand confirmation of this when he writes that "all vision, and all touch, too, is partially illusory, if the precisely located surfaces and clear-cut boundaries which solids and liquids appear to us to have do not really belong to them . . . as the study of physics has led some philosophers to suppose" (H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", p. 400). For a criticism of Price's neglect of scientific theories, which makes him similar to G.E. Moore and quite different from B. Russell and C.D. Broad, see M. Mandelbaum, Philosophy, Science and Sense Perception, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1964, pp. 208-210.

16 The phrase "external world" is admittedly ambiguous, in the sense that different philosophers have meant quite different things by it. A phenomenalist, for example, interprets it differently than does a realist. G.E. Moore devotes a very careful discussion to the term in his paper, "Proof of an External World" (in G.E. Moore, Philosophical Papers, New York, Collier Books, 1962 [original, 1959], pp. 126-148). As used here, the term is synonymous with what Price calls "a world of bodies or physical objects" when he writes that "in our ordinary everyday frame of mind we all believe very firmly that there is a world of bodies or physical objects, revealed to us in perception, but existing whether perceived or not, and independent of our comings and goings" (H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 20).

knowledge of those processes is part of our knowledge of the external world, and therefore part of the knowledge to be verified.[17] Then, too, as was discussed above, such an assumption leads to an ignoring of some things which are given, on the basis that they cannot be explained in terms of physiological stimuli.[18]

III. PHENOMENOLOGICAL INSPECTION AND THE GIVEN

After declaring his intention of investigating "those experiences, . . . [especially] of seeing and touching, upon which our beliefs concerning material things are based",[19] Price sets out to ascertain, by the method of phenomenological inspection, precisely what is given. He does so by taking the concrete example of a man looking at a particular material thing, in this case, a tomato. Now there are a great number of things that can be said about this person's total

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17 "Since the premises of Physiology are among the propositions into whose validity we are inquiring, it is hardly likely that its conclusions will assist us" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 2).

18 "It is simply a fact that colour-expanses in the same visual field do often face in sensibly different directions. The denial of this arises from certain physiological hypotheses; and . . . they are powerless against the patent empirical facts. Only inspection of sense-data themselves can tell us what qualities and relations they actually have; and if it follows from some theory that they ought to have other ones, so much the worse for the theory" (ibid., p. 242).

19 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 2.

consciousness in such a situation. However, one notable feature of it is that there is something directly present to his consciousness. By "directly present to consciousness", Price means that the consciousness of it is not reached by an inference or any other intellectual process, such as abstraction or intuitive induction.[20] In the example of the man looking at the tomato, what is directly present to his consciousness is "a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches."[21] This special presence of the red patch and its background to consciousness, Price says, "is called _being given_."[22] There is, in fact, a close connection between

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20 _Ibid._, p. 3.

21 _Ibid._, p. 3. In describing here what is immediately present to a particular sense, such as sight, Price does not advert to the problem of isolation or segregation. On one hand, we might ask why he does not speak simply of the entire field of patterned colors or colored patterns being directly present as a single sense-datum. On the other hand, if he is going to distinguish one pattern or "patch" from another, why--as a photograph or painting will show--does he not speak of each shade of each pattern as a single datum? The fact is that Price apparently assumes that something like figure-background discrimination is _given_: "In every pattern [i.e. sense-field] there is one form which is dominant, and another, or others, constituting a _background_. The dominant form 'strikes' us more than the rest; it has more vividness or liveliness, and the others have less" (H.H. Price, "On the So-Called Space of Sight," p. 110). For more on this problem, see A. Gurwitsch, _Field of Consciousness_, Pt. I, chapters ii and iii, _passim_.

22 H.H. Price, _Perception_, p. 3.

phenomenological inspection and the notion of a given element in knowledge, as well as between both of these and the sense-datum theory.[23]

It is probably impossible to give a definition of "the given" which would satisfy all philosophers. C.I. Lewis remarks, apropos of "the given elements of knowledge", that "the manner in which these elements and their relation to one another are conceived, varies in the widest possible manner, and divergence on this point marks a principal distinction amongst theories of knowledge."[24] Yet, it is equally true, as this same author writes, that "one of the oldest and most universal of philosophic insights" is the recognition that

> . . .there are, in our cognitive experience, two elements: the immediate data, such as those of sense, which are presented or given to the mind, and a form, construction, or interpretation, which represents the activity of thought.[25]

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23 With respect to the first combination, it is perhaps sufficient that Husserl, who can be credited for explicitating the relevance of the phenomenological method to philosophy, is also the author of the cry "Back to things themselves", meaning by "things" whatever is given. As to the second, G.E. Moore, the man who first made systematic use of the term "sense-datum", introduced it to signify "things given or presented by the senses" (see G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, Collier ed., p. 44).

24 C.I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 38.

25 Ibid. There are disagreements, as might be expected, about the meaning of the distinction between the given and the not-given. John Laird, in an article entitled "The Given", in Mind, 43 (1934), pp. 298-314, offers five meanings for the term "given". R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. II, in Mind, 59 (1950), pp. 35-39, presents three different interpretations of the distinction.

As far back in the history of thought as the fourth century of the pre-Christian era, Aristotle had distinguished the elements of human knowledge into those which are known by direct intuition and those which are known only by discursive reasoning,[26] and an awareness of this distinction was kept alive down through ancient and medieval times, both in mathematics and in philosophy.[27] Rene Descartes, however, gave the distinction renewed prominence (and perhaps a new twist) by his introduction of the mathematical method into philosophy. As Descartes saw it, it was the task of the philosopher, or of anyone desirous of acquiring certain knowledge, to sift his opinions in order to isolate the objects of infallible, direct intuition, and then--with these as his foundation--

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25 (cont'd) A broader survey of the problem can be found in John Wild's "The Concept of the Given in Contemporary Philosophy", in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1 (1940), pp. 70-82.

26 See Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, Bk. 1, chap.iii (esp. 72b 5ff) and Bk. II, chap. xix.

27 With respect to mathematics, one naturally thinks of geometry--developed by the early Greeks and synthesized by Euclid--with its orderly progression from indemonstrable assumptions to the most complex inferences and conclusions. In philosophy, the scholastic doctrine concerning the reduction of knowledge to first principles grasped by intellectual intuition and to the evidence of the senses contained the same fundamental insight that Aristotle had recorded earlier.

to build the rest of his knowledge upon them.[28] By thus showing that one's knowledge consisted of primary truths certified by direct intuition and other truths legitimately deduced from them, it would be possible, Descartes felt, to validate that knowledge and to secure it from the skeptic's arguments.

Because succeeding philosophers found this project of Descartes an attractive one, the problem of setting out to discover first of all what is given attained great importance in modern philosophy. And it is due to this fact that so much attention has been paid to the phenomenological method. For, if the given is what is presented to the mind's intuition, i.e. to its mere gaze or look (as opposed to what is acquired by the mind's own operations, performed on what is given), then the way to find what is given is to merely

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28 At the beginning of his Meditations on First Philosophy, Descartes writes: "It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had from my earliest youth admitted as true, and how doubtful was everything I had since constructed on this basis; and from that time I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted and commence to build anew from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure of the sciences" (R. Descartes, op. cit., 1st Med., from The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. E. Haldane & G. Ross, New York, Dover Publications, 1955, Vol. I, p. 144).

gaze or look, and in this way to see what shows itself.[29]

IV. PHENOMENOLOGICAL INSPECTION AND SENSE-DATA

It is precisely at this juncture that sense-data enter the stage. According to Price and many other philosophers, the search for the indubitably-given, conducted by means of phenomenological inspection, turns up nothing less than sense-data.[30] What immediately presents itself, what we are intuitively aware of in perceptual situations, is-- in the words of G.E. Moore--"the colour-patches we actually see, the sounds we actually hear, the smells we actually smell," etc.[31] This claim is warmly contested by many philosophers,

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29 The word "phenomenology" has within it the notion of something "showing itself". See M. Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1962, esp. pp. 51-55 (Introduction, pt. ii, no. 7, A), where he traces the etymology of the term and emphasizes the direct nature of the phenomenon's showing itself.

30 J. Yolton traces the connection between the sense-datum theory and the previous views as follows: "The methodology which operates in most contemporary and traditional forms of epistemological dualism is well known, not being limited to procedures in epistemology. It consists of passing from basic axioms which do not require proof to propositions, assertions or beliefs which are the products of inference. The rationalists have sought to use this method in all spheres of thought and it is the nerve of the geometric method. The sense-datum philosophers have adopted this methodology for the purposes of epistemology, some less critical than others of its nature" (J. Yolton, "Linguistic and Epistemological Dualism", in Mind, 62 [1953], p. 25).

31 G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, Collier ed., p. 145.

particularly by adherents of what R. Firth calls "the Percept Theory",[32] but before considering the objections of these critics, it is first necessary to say something more specific about Price's use of phenomenological inspection as a method for delineating sense-data.

The first illustration of his method, and the one most frequently discussed, is found at the beginning of Perception, where Price brings up the case of the man looking at a tomato and concludes that what is directly present to such a person's consciousness is a "field of colour", or, more precisely, "a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches."[33]

The interesting thing about Price's treatment of this case, however, lies in the fact that he here makes more explicit use of methodical doubt than of positive inspection. After mentioning the tomato, he immediately asks what the person observing it is able to doubt or not able to doubt, rather than what it is that he sees.[34]

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32 R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. I, in Mind, 58 (1949), pp. 434-465, and Pt. II, in Mind, 59 (1950), pp. 25-56.

33 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 3.

34 J.L. Austin remarks that this passage "suggests that he [Price] is really interested, not so much in what seeing is, as in what one can't doubt" (J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1962, p. 105).

It is important, of course, to realize that methodical doubt and phenomenological inspection go together. They can even be said to constitute two sides--negative and positive--of a single method.[35] Since, however, we propose to devote some attention to the subject of methodical doubt by itself, it will be preferable here to take another example mentioned by Price which makes greater use of positive inspection. Imagine that you are looking at a cat from a particular vantage-point. What, Price asks, do you claim to see of the cat?

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35 Notice how both positive and negative considerations are conjoined in the following passage from Descartes' Rules for the Direction of the Mind: "Here it must be noted that no direct experience can ever deceive the understanding if it restrict its attention accurately to the object presented to it, just as it is given to it either at first-hand or by means of an image; and if it moreover refrain from judging that the imagination faithfully reports the objects of the senses, or that the senses take on the true form of things, or in fine that external things always are as they appear to be; for in all these judgments we are exposed to error" (op. cit., rule xii, Haldane-Ross translation, Vol. I, p. 44). The method of doubt is directly based on the possibility of error, mentioned at the end of this passage.

> In answering this question, take care to limit yourself to what you actually see here and now. Obviously you do not see the far side of the creature, but only its near side and perhaps a little of its top side. From this distance you do not see its whiskers, and still less the individual hairs of its coat. You do however claim to discern certain visible properties of it: a variegated tabbyish colouring and a certain humpish shape, more easily drawn on paper than described, the whole located at a certain visible distance from you. Now these are just the visible properties which the sensum theory attributes to a certain visual sensum in your present visual field.[36]

In this task of describing what one sees (or hears or feels, etc.) and only what one sees at a particular moment, it is necessary to concentrate upon just what appears without letting oneself be influenced by any extraneous information about what "really is".[37] In other words, the observer might on a particular occasion know that he is looking in the direction of a straight stick which is partly immersed in water, but the non-appearing straightness of the stick must not be taken into account in describing what does appear. Price believes that the distinction is worth insisting on:

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36 H.H. Price, "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology," p. 474. In this passage, Price does speak of seeing various parts "of the creature", i.e. of the cat itself. But he adds that the sense-datum theorist would change this, and speak of "a certain visual sensum in your present visual field" (ibid.).

37 This is the point that was made in sec. II above.

> The way things look, as distinct from the way they physically are--including the way they look in highly abnormal conditions--is an important characteristics of the universe as we experience it. It is a fact as solid as any that distant waterfalls look stationary, that the moon looks about as large as the sun and very much larger than any star, that two events which appear simultaneously need not physically be so, that the mountain on the horizon looks flat and purplishly gray, and that its outline and its internal detail look much less complicated than they physically are.[38]

(It is because he thus shares with the painter this concern for the way things look as opposed to the way they physically are, that the sense-datum philosopher's analysis

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38 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 4. See also H.H. Price, Perception, 1954 Preface, p. viii. Some have interpreted this phrase, "as distinct from the way they physically are", to mean that the initial (phenomenological) investigation of what is immediately sensed abstracts or should abstract from all questions of actual existence. For this reason, both R.J. Hirst (The Problems of Perception, pp. 33-34) and L.E. Hahn ("Neutral, Indubitable Sense-Data as the Starting Point for Theories of Perception", in Journal of Philosophy, 36 [1939], pp. 590-591) have criticised Price for maintaining from the start that what is immediately sensed exists. A distinction must be made, however. Insofar as the word "they" is taken to denote material things such as waterfalls, the sun, the moon, stars, mountains, etc., the initial phenomenological report must abstract from the predication of actual existence, the reason being that we might be experiencing all illusion or hallucination. If it is taken to denote what is sensed, apart from any further qualifications regarding its exact ontological nature, then we must note that throughout his writings Price has maintained that this object does exist. In its insistence on this "matter of fact", Price's phenomenological approach differs from that of E. Husserl.

of visual perception is sometimes called "the philosophy of 'the painter's eye'.")[39]

What is noteworthy about this method of narrowing one's attitude to only what is immediately given to consciousness is that it entails the making of qualifications not ordinarily made in the course of practical daily life. The most important of these qualifications is that, instead of saying that we see simply a (whole) cat or any other (whole) material thing, we limit ourselves to saying that we see only the near side of it, or only the color and shape of the near side, etc. For this reason, this method of description is sometimes called "perceptual reduction".[40] This particular feature of the sense-datum philosopher's procedure has been the target of much criticism, some of which will now be examined.

V. AN OBJECTION: PHENOMENOLOGICAL INSPECTION REVEALS THINGS, NOT SENSE-DATA

Perhaps the strongest challenge to the analysis exemplified by Price's description of what is immediately

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39 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 4. See also his "On the So-Called Space of Sight, p. 98, where Price refers to phenomenological inspection as "the aesthetic attitude". The same thing is found in B. Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, p. 9, and R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception, pp. 250ff.

40 R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. I, pp. 458-461.

present to consciousness when one looks at a tomato or at a cat comes from philosophers who are advocates of what R. Firth calls the Percept Theory. These philosophers contest the reduction of the contents of immediate awareness to nothing more than "patches of color" or "snatches of sound" and the like. They insist that, in spite of all suggestions to the contrary,

> . . .physical objects themselves are observed as directly as patches of colour, odours, tastes, and other so-called "sense-data".[41]

The ways in which this objection or something similar to it is expressed vary from one critic to another. Some see no need for always distinguishing between the way we see, for instance, one part of an object, and the way we see the entire object. Warnock writes:

> It is clearly not in general necessary that one should see the whole of what one sees, even in cases where to speak thus is appropriate, for it to be simply true that one sees it. I have never seen the whole of Blenheim Palace, but there is no question that I have seen it.[42]

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41 R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. I, p. 440. See also C.M. Myers, "The Determinate and Determinable Modes of Appearing", pp. 32-49.

42 G.J. Warnock, "Seeing", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 55 (1954-1955), p. 208. Some, wishing to respect our ordinary ways of speaking, but still convinced that some distinctions must be made, have offered the theory that "see" has different meanings. G.E. Moore, perhaps the best-known proponent of this theory, writes: "I once met a philosopher who told me I was making a great mistake in thinking that such objects [pennies, chairs, trees] are ever seen. But I think that this philosopher was

Others seem to minimize the differences in the ways whereby we apprehend various elements of the total scene which confronts the observer.

> We shall, therefore, have to rediscover the natural world, too, and its mode of existence, which is not to be confused with that of the scientific object. The phenomenon of the background's continuing under the figure, and being seen [vu] under the figure--when in fact it is covered by the figure--a phenomenon which embraces the whole problem of the presence of the object, is equally obscured by empiricist philosophy, which treats this covered part of the background as invisible (in virtue of a physiological definition of vision).[43]

Now it is true that our everyday manner of speaking might at first appear to support these objections. Seldom does anyone make the distinctions called for by the sense-datum analysis. Thus, we constantly speak of seeing trees

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42 (cont'd) certainly wrong, and was thinking that the various correct uses of 'see' are limited in a way in which they are not in fact limited. . . I personally have in fact often seen pennies and often seen the moon" (G.E. Moore, "Sense-Data", p. 205). This does not contradict Price's analysis, though: for, one of Moore's "see's" has sense-data for its object, while this second "see" is equivalent to "perceive", the same as it is for Price. For further discussion of whether we see the whole or only part, consult C.D. Broad, "Some Elementary Reflections on Sense Perception", pp. 3-5, R.M. Chisholm, Perceiving: A Philosophical Study, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1957, pp. 155ff; and P. Marhenke, "Phenomenalism", in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Max Black, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, [original 1950], p. 285.

43 M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1962 [original French, 1945], chap. ii, pp. 24-25. Also see J.J. Gibson, The Perception of the Visual World, Boston, Houghton Miflin Co., 1950, p. 28.

and houses, of hearing birds singing out on the lawn and cars driving down the street, of smelling the food which is cooking or the wood that is burning. When we look at the book which we hold in our hands, it seems evident that we see, not just a patch of color, but the book itself. The percept theorists conclude, therefore, that if phenomenological inspection is to be our criterion, we should not say that we see only a patch of color, thereby implying that we apprehend the book itself in some other way.

And yet, despite the initial plausibility of these objections, it seems to us that their force is notably diminished by three considerations.

To begin with, the fact that we do not ordinarily distinguish between seeing a house and seeing only the near side of it (i.e. only part of it) is outweighed by the further fact that the non-professional "man in the street" knows quite well how to make this distinction and that he often does make it quite readily, e.g., on the witness stand. And is it not contrary to plain phenomenological fact that, apart from any and every physiological definition of vision, the part of the table that is covered by the book is present to sight in a radically different way from that in which the uncovered book is? The fact that it is possible for all kinds of changes to occur in the interior or rear portions of the house or in the covered part of the table without our

being aware of them, but impossible for the same thing to occur in what we take to be the near side of the house or the top surface of the book, would appear to be inexplicable unless such a distinction is admitted. While it is no doubt important to respect the close harmony and integration of the different aspects of human consciousness, it seems to us that this is no warrent for playing down or ignoring the salient differences between those aspects.[44]

Secondly, is it possible, as is sometimes implied, that we know by simple intuition that it is a material thing which we are directly apprehending? In answer, it must be pointed out, first, that we cannot tell by simple intuition what kind of material thing we are directly apprehending.

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44 Thus, it seems that there is a basic ambiguity in the following passage from William James: "We certainly ought not to say what usually is said by psychologists, and treat the perception as a sum of distinct psychic entities, the present sensation namely, plus a lot of images from the past, all 'integrated' together in a way impossible to describe" (W. James, Principles of Psychology, New York, Holt, 1896, Vol. II, p. 80). For further discussion of the distinction--or lack of it--between conscious awareness as a whole and a special "direct awareness" at its core (sensing), see the following: R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. I; A.M. Quinton, "The Problem of Perception", in Mind, 64 (1955), pp. 28-51; G. Ryle, "Sensation", Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. H.D. Lewis, pp. 427-443; R. Wollheim, "The Difference Between Sensing and Observing", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 28 (1954), pp. 219-240.

This is shown by the most ordinary perceptual errors.[45] But, furthermore, there are very great difficulties in the way of maintaining even that it is always at least some kind of material thing which we directly apprehend by sense. Such things as hallucination or the experience of seeming to see a star which turns out to be non-existent appear to show that there are occasions when we do not directly apprehend material things.[46]

Finally, it must be pointed out that even if there are some occasions when we directly sense material things, Price's initial description would not thereby be falsified. His aim is to describe the object of immediate sense apprehension without prejudice to the question, "Is that object a material thing or not?" Though he speaks of the object of

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45 The most convincing disproof of a person's claim to have intuitive cognition of something is to show that he is in error, i.e. to show that the object which he professes to intuitively grasp either does not exist or else possesses characteristics incompatible with his claims. It is for this reason that the method of critical doubt (which capitalizes on the possibility of such error) goes hand in hand with the method of phenomenological inspection, as a test to determine whether what apparently is "phenomenologically inspected" truly is so or not.

46 On the question of direct apprehension of material things, see chapters four and five. Chapter four examines Price's arguments purporting to show that we do not sense material things such as chairs, tables, houses, etc., but only sense-data which are distinct from them. Chapter five examines the theory that we directly perceive (as opposed to sensing) material things.

visual awareness as a "colour-patch", the term "patch" should be taken simply as a synonym for an "extended entity", without any more specific connotations:

> The admission that there are sense-data is not a very large one; it commits us to very little. . . [In using the term] we are not committed to any view about what is called 'the status' of sense-data in the Universe, either as regards the category they fall under, or as regards their relations with other types of existent entities. They may be events, or substances, or states of substances.[47]

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47 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 18-19. There is one further point regarding Price's initial description of the object of immediate sense-awareness which is important, and it is this: Price does not first distinguish all reality, in terms of the traditional Aristotelian categories, into substances and their accidents (or characteristics) and then say that the senses apprehend only the characteristics. He would agree, verbally at least, with J. Owens when the latter writes that "what is perceived immediately in sensation is not color, nor sound, nor odor, nor taste, but something colored, something audible, something odorous, something tasty" (J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1963, p. 220). Throughout his sense-datum period, Price continued to maintain what he had proposed in "Mill's View of the External World", viz., that "sense-experience reveals to us a great multitude of particulars, or somethings, having such qualities as colour, shape, hardness, loudness, etc., and related by relations of similarity, difference, concomitance, and sequence. . . Each of these particulars reveals itself as a this such, or qualified somewhat" (H.H. Price, op. cit., p. 111). See also H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 105-111, and "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World," p. 285.

This position raises the question, however: "Do we sense qualities, the substratum, or both?" In the opinion of some critics, the sense-datum theory would tend to re-introduce Locke's problem regarding the unknowability of substrata, so that it would have to be said that the universe contains, "in addition to [unknowable] things-in-themselves, unknowable sense-data-in-themselves" (R. Chisholm, "Russell on the Foundations of Empirical Knowledge," p. 436). Price has never given this difficulty a great deal of thought, but in one place he minimizes the distinction between the

This third answer in defense of Price's analysis is important enough to deserve a brief amplification. Although Price claims that his initial description of the object of immediate sense-awareness as a patch of color or sense-datum is a neutral one, this is not entirely true, if "neutral" is taken to mean "uncritical". It is already a partially critical description, inasmuch as it does not begin by simply accepting the plain man's earliest conviction that what he senses are material things. Price is assuming that his readers are aware of the widespread differences of philosophical opinion about whether we can know material things at all, and his initial description of what is given in immediate awareness takes account of these disputes. In effect, he distinguishes two concepts, "being given to sense" and "material thing", and only subsequently does he ask whether these two concepts are realized by the same entity or not.[48] This procedure seems to be justified, since no one, presumably, would contend that the two phrases are synonymous.[49] Consequently,

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47 (cont'd) sense-datum and its qualities, saying that the distinction is only "what Hume describes as a distinction of reason" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 110).

48 See H.H. Price, "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", pp. 166-167.

49 That is, no one would consider that the statement "what is given directly to sense-awareness are material things" is analytically true.

although he does not immediately describe the sensibly-given as a material thing, Price is by no means denying that it may in fact be such.[50]

VI. METHODICAL DOUBT

It has already been suggested that phenomenological inspection and methodical doubt are but the positive and negative sides, respectively, of a single, unnamed method of analysis. If "just looking" is the way to discover what it is that we _are_ directly aware of, it is by applying methodical doubt that we pare away what we are _not_ directly aware of. When he introduces sense-data to the reader in _Perception_, Price resorts particularly to the aspect of doubt, even though he never mentions it specifically as a methodical tool distinct from phenomenological inspection. Here is what he writes:

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50 This is the answer to one of the objections urged by L.E. Hahn in his article, "Neutral, Indubitable Sense-Data as the Starting Point for Theories of Perception", esp. pp. 595-600. We have already referred to another of his objections--based on the opinion of those who, like Santayana, describe sense-data as essences--which challenges Price's assertion that sense-data indubitably exist. (See p. 73 , n. 38 above). Santayana's denial that the data given in experience exist is based on an unusual definition of "exist", according to which existence is not something that a datum can enjoy by itself but only to the extent that it is inserted into a context of varied relations with other entities. For a criticism of this opinion, see A. Lovejoy, _Revolt Against Dualism_, 2nd ed., La Salle, Illinois, Open Court Publishing Co., 1960 [original, 1930], pp. 134-142.

> When I see a tomato there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is a tomato that I am seeing, and not a cleverly painted piece of wax. I can doubt whether there is any material thing there at all. Perhaps what I took for a tomato was really a reflection; perhaps I am even the victim of some hallucination. One thing however, I cannot doubt: that there exists a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches, and having a certain visual depth, and that this whole field of colour is directly present to my consciousness. What the red patch is, whether a substance, or a state of a substance, or an event, whether it is physical or psychical or neither, are questions that we may doubt about. But that something is red and round then and there I cannot doubt. Whether the something persists even for a moment before and after it is present to my consciousness, whether other minds can be conscious of it as well as I, may be doubted. But that it now exists, and that I am conscious of it, this cannot possibly be doubted.[51]

Underlying the frequent mention of doubt in this passage is, of course, an assumption that the reader is familiar with the experience of perceptual error. Except in the context of possible error, such doubts would never arise. More specifically, anyone who has never been deceived by the appearances of artificial fruit or vegetables (such as a wax imitation of a tomato would be), or anyone who has never seen a reflection or heard of hallucination, etc., would be

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51 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 3. What he states with respect to visual sensing, he extends to other kinds of sensing as well: "Analogously, when I am in the situation called 'touching something', 'hearing it', 'smelling it', etc., in each case there is something which at that moment indubitably exists--a pressure (or prement patch), a noise, a smell; and that something is directly present to my consciousness" (ibid.).

completely puzzled by the references to possible doubt. In effect, Price is asking the reader to recognize all of the errors which are possible in connection with the bare experience of seeing what he sees from just one angle, only for a moment, and without the benefit of additional contacts with the object (such as handling it, listening to what type of noise it makes, smelling it, etc.),[52] and then to eliminate every judgment rendered dubious by the possibility of such errors. After all such judgments are trimmed away, however, there remain certain things which, Price contends, cannot be mistaken or doubted. These are, in the present case, that there exists something red, round, bulgy and immediately present to consciousness.

As has been mentioned, Price nowhere states any explicit views on his use of critical doubt as a method, for which reason it is difficult to properly compare his use of the method with that of other philosophers. In view of his expressed admiration for the works of Bertrand Russell, it is possible that he was influenced by the use which Russell

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52 These qualifications are essential to the sense-datum analysis. Sensing something from new angles, watching it for a period of time (during which it may change), experiencing it with different senses--all of these constitute additional factors (i.e. sense-data). "It is necessary to distinguish very sharply between what is revealed in one 'perceptual situation' and what is revealed in several (H.H. Price, "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", p. 173). For more on the subject, see chapter six, p. 257, n.16 below.

makes of critical doubt in his Problems of Philosophy (which might be called "the first popularization of the sense-datum theory"). Russell's opening words in this work are:

> Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?[53]

In chapters two and fourteen of this work, Russell examines and approves of Descartes' systematic doubt as a profitable method for use in philosophy.

But whatever may or may not have been the inspiration for Price's own use of methodical doubt, it is important to note that he does not apply it so rigorously as, perhaps, Rene Descartes would have done. Descartes writes:

> It will . . . be useful to reject as false all these things as to which we can imagine the least doubt to exist, so that we may discover with greater clearness which are absolutely true, and most easy to know.[54]

Though Price employs the same criterion ("Can we imagine the least doubt about it?") in order to isolate one particular type of object from all the rest, he by no means considers that we must regard the remainder of our opinions false or unacceptable before they can be justified critically.

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53 B. Russell, Problems of Philosophy, opening page (page references to this work will be from the Galaxy Books edition, New York, 1959), p. 7.

54 R. Descartes, The Principles of Philosophy, Pt. I, princ. ii (Haldane-Ross edition, Vol. I, p. 218).

This is especially true, as we shall see, with respect to our conviction that material things exist.[55] Perhaps the difference can be expressed by saying that Price's aim is to analyse consciousness and its objects, and to label its various components as "certain", "most probable", "less probable", and so on, rather than to erect a system of knowledge composed entirely of concatenated certainties.

Some clarifications must now be made with respect to the passage from Perception which was quoted above (p. 83). First of all, the situation which Price describes involves three distinct types of cognitive activity.

To begin with, there is the observer's direct cognitive awareness of a sense-datum. This relationship between consciousness and its object has several names:

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55 See chap. vi, sec. III below. On the different uses of doubt as a method of investigation, see J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, esp. pp. 265-267. These pages will also serve as a guide to further literature on the subject.

> This peculiar and ultimate manner of being present to consciousness is called being given, and that which is thus present is called a datum. The corresponding mental attitude is called acquaintance, intuitive apprehension, or sometimes having. Data of this special sort are called sense-data. And the acquaintance with them is conveniently called sensing.[56]

Quite distinct from this acquaintance with sense-data are the judgments which the observer makes about them, such judgments as "Something is red and round", or "It now exists", or "It is directly present to my consciousness." In Perception, Price gives nodding assent to this distinction, but he does so almost grudgingly.[57]

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56 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 3. Elsewhere, Price writes that "sensing is a form of apprehension or knowing" (ibid., p. 49). Some have taken the statement that sensing is knowing (or knowledge) to mean that it is equivalent to knowing the nature of what is sensed. Price later concedes that some sense-datum philosophers "may have been mistaken in assuming that sensing is a form of knowledge. They may have confused sensing with something else, namely phenomenological inspection of what is sensed" (H.H. Price, Review of H.A. Prichard's Knowledge and Perception, p. 114). As for Price's own opinion here, it seems that when he says that sensing is a form of knowing, this should be taken to signify only that it is a form of direct confrontation between the observer and the object: on his notion of "knowing", see p. 194, n.20 below. See also his "Thinking and Meaning", in Philosophy, 23 (1948), pp. 247-248, quoted on p. 346, n. 9 below. For other views on the matter, see N. Goodman, "Sense and Certainty", in Philosophical Review, 61 (1952), p. 162; G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, Collier ed., p. 93, n. 1; B. Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chap. xiv.

57 There is a reason for this rather grudging assent. The Idealist influence was still strong at the time Price was writing. His primary concern, then, was to prove that something was given, not that in addition there were judgments about the given. (According to the Idealists, all perceiving

Finally, there is the critical reflection which we exercise upon our judgments about sense-data. This critical reflection is directly aimed at discovering a particular quality of those judgments: "Is this judgment certain or can

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57 (cont'd) is judging.) Thus the first objection which he mentions against his thesis is the following: "For instance, you cannot apprehend a round red patch without apprehending that it is red and round and has certain spatial relations. But if we apprehend that it has these qualities and relations, we are not passively 'receiving' or (as it were) swallowing; we are actively thinking--judging and classifying--and it is impossible to do less than this" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 7).

There are, in fact, still those who tend to deny that in sensing we are directly confronted by certain data such as Price describes, and who lean toward the theory that sensing is judging. D.M. Armstrong writes, for example: "We have tried to meet the Argument from Illusion by offering an analysis of sensory illusion which would escape the need to postulate an immediate object of perception in the case of sensory illusion. We said that in sensory illusion we merely believe or are inclined to believe that we are perceiving, veridically perceiving, some physical object or state of affairs. We also gave an analysis of what it is to have a sense-impression. It is to believe, or be inclined to believe, that we are immediately perceiving some physical object or state of affairs. Where 'the sense-impression corresponds to reality' the belief is true, where it does not, the belief is false. Correspondence or lack of correspondence of sense-impressions to reality is nothing but the truth or falsity of certain beliefs" (D. Armstrong, Perception and the Physical World, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1961, p. 98). For similar opinions, see C.A. Campbell, "Sense-Data and Judgments in Sensory Cognition", in Mind, 56 (1947), pp. 289-316; R.G. Collingwood, "Sensation and Thought", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 24 (1923-1924), pp. 54-76; and J.J. Ross, "The Reification of Appearance", in Philosophy, 40 (1965), pp. 113-128.

Price's answer to the first objection, quoted above, is that "the argument only proves that nothing stands merely in the relation of givenness to the mind, without also standing in other relations: i.e. that what is given is always also 'thought about' in some sense or other of that ambiguous

it be doubted?"[58] When an indubitable empirical judgment has been located, it is then presumed to be pointed at or based on a present sense-datum.

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57 (cont'd) phrase" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 7). With respect to Armstrong's theory, Price would probably answer the same way that he answers those who say that when something "really" round "appears" oval this only means that I am inclined to believe or think that it is oval. He answers: "It is not a matter of what you think, but of what you see, or the way you see, in a sense of the word 'see' for which the common sense philosophers have not provided" (H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 13). In this answer, he is using the example of the sun looking oval on a misty winter day a few minutes before sunset, and his point is that the ordinary person has no inclination to believe that the sun's shape is oval and is even firmly convinced to the contrary, without any effect at all on the fact that the sun continues to look oval. (Descartes makes a similar remark when he points out that even after we have discovered that the sun is immensely larger than the earth, yet it continues to look very small: see his Meditations on First Philosophy, 3rd Med., [Haldane-Ross ed., Vol. I, p. 161].) See also H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, pp. 288-289.

58 Perhaps it is worth emphasizing that it is not the sense-data which are dubitable or indubitable, but the judgments made with respect to them. Nor, in the ordinary usage of the terms, would sense-data be "true" or "false", but only judgments about them. N. Goodman writes that "to such content [of experience] or materials or particles or elements the terms 'true', 'false', and 'certain' are quite inapplicable. These elements are simply there or not there. . . Such elements may be indubitable in the vacuous sense that doubt is irrelevant to them, as it is to a desk; but they, like the desk, are equally devoid of certainty. They may be before us, but they are neither true nor false. For truth and falsity and certainty pertain to statements or judgments and not to mere particles or materials or elements" (N. Goodman, "Sense and Certainty," pp. 161-162).

VII. FURTHER OBJECTIONS TO PRICE'S DUAL METHOD

There are two further lines of criticism which have been made against Price's method of delineating sense-data. According to the first, a critical inspective attitude such as Price adopts in describing a tomato either alters the object first presented or else substitutes one object for another. According to the second line of criticism, it is maintained that sense-data are not always indubitable, and therefore methodical doubt is useless. These criticisms may overlap to some extent, but it will be more convenient to treat them as if they were independent.

A. "Inspective Analysis Involves Object-Transformation"

R. Firth sums up the first objection as follows:

> The operation of perceptual reduction has two rather distinct effects when it is performed on a state of perceptual consciousness. The first of these two effects is to make the ostensible physical object progressively less and less determinate. . . [But there is also] a second effect: a radical change takes place and a <u>new</u> object of consciousness appears and grows more and more determinate.[59]

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59 R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory" Pt. I, p. 460. ("Perceptual reduction" is another name for Price's phenomenological inspection.) Mention has already been made of the fact that Price uses different names for the method of investigation. There are some who refer to the method of uncovering and accurately describing the sensory aspects of an experience as "Introspection". E.g., Kohler writes that "in psychology, we must try to ignore it [acquired meaning] and to focus only on actual sensations. The procedure by which this is achieved is called

This objection amounts to saying that when, instead of merely looking at an object in our ordinary, everyday fashion, i.e., instead of looking at it as a tomato or a familiar house or a favorite rocking-chair, we very analytically ask ourselves what we are absolutely certain we can see ("a tomato?" "perhaps only a red physical object?" "perhaps only a red patch?"), we end up cognizing a different object than we began with. G.F. Stout writes:

> The analysis, which is commonly described as "analysis of presentations", must either be a logical absurdity, or it must in reality be concerned with objects which are not immediately present in consciousness.[60]

It is also possible to view our analysis as involving, not the outright substitution of one object for another, but a change undergone by the same object. Firth's words can be interpreted as implying both types of change: before being replaced, the first object becomes less and less

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59 (cont'd) introspection" (W. Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, New York, Mentor Books, 1959, p. 44 [original, 1927]). (In this passage, Kohler is describing the opinion of others, an opinion which he subsequently attacks.) Boring has noted the incongruousness of the term, since it is actually used "without implying anything about a mental eye that turns about and looks into the mind" (E.G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, 2nd ed., New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950, p. 332.)

60 G.F. Stout, Analytic Psychology, 3rd ed., London, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Ltd., 1909, Vol. I, p. 55.

determinate, while afterwards the new object develops in the opposite direction. More specific is what Merleau-Ponty writes:

> The experience of the separate 'senses' is gained only when one assumes a highly particularized attitude, and this cannot be of any assistance to the analysis of direct consciousness. I am sitting in my room, and I look at the sheets of white paper lying about on the table, some in the light shed through the window, others in the shadow. . . I decide to look more closely. I fix my gaze upon them, which means that I restrict my visual field. I may even look at them through a match-box lid, which will separate them from the rest of the field, or through a 'reduction screen' with a window in it. Whether I use one of these devices or merely observe with the naked eye, provided that in the latter case I assume the 'analytic attitude', the sheets change their appearance.[61]

Price's answer to positions such as these is contained, half-explicitly and half-implicitly, in the first chapter of Perception. Explicitly, he charges that some critics take too univocal a view of "activity". They seem to think that just as physical activity transforms its object, so thinking or analysis, being an activity, must change

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61 M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith, pp. 225-226. The experiment mentioned by Merleau-Ponty concerns the so-called "perceptual constancies". For a brief description of these constancies, see J.E. Hochberg, Perception, pp. 50-57 or Foundations of Psychology, ed. E.G. Boring, H.S. Langeld and H.P. Weld, New York, J. Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1948, pp. 231-237. Merleau-Ponty apparently agrees with Kohler in the opinion that, when perceptual constancies are disrupted by introspective analysis, we change the data: see W. Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, chap. iii.

its object as well. On the contrary, Price says, the only thing which intellectual activity alters is "one's own mind, causing it to pass from (say) a state of uncertainty to a state of certainty, or from confusion to clarity."[62]

However that may be, the major though sometimes implicit disagreement between Price and his critics at this stage concerns the point mentioned previously, namely, the distinction between acquaintance with sense-data and the thought or analysis directed toward them. Price would undoubtedly admit that, so far as our thinking is concerned, a very great change occurs when we turn from an everyday, almost-purely-pragmatic attitude toward objects and adopt the stance of critical phenomenological inspection. But he would also be of the opinion that the basic, underlying cognitive acquaintance with sense-data is not necessarily changed. He writes: "Knowledge-about [the given] is the usual, perhaps the inevitable, companion of acquaintance, but it is not its executioner."[63]

It appears to us that Price is correct in distinguishing the special presence of sense-data, as distinct from our thinking about them or even about things distinct from them (e.g., about the covered portions of a table or the far

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62 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 14.

63 Ibid., p. 18.

side of a door). What he is saying, therefore, is this: even when we are not paying attention to them, we are continually enjoying an acquaintance with various sense-data. When we apply the method of phenomenological inspection, we are merely taking note of what was previously occurring unnoticed.[64] Otherwise, how does one explain the fact that a person engaged in conversation about a very abstract and

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64 The question "Can there be unnoticed sensations?" is one which has innumerable facets, simply because there are so many different situations which need to be discussed, and on which there is an extensive literature. Some authors regard the existence of unnoticed sensations as a gratuitous hypothesis; "It is assumed that, given unchanged objects, medium, and sense-organs, a change of attention brings about no change in the associated experiences" (A.M. Quinton, "The Problem of Perception", p. 38). Others regard the entire question as one of linguistic conventions: "I exclude the possibility of there being sense-data whose existence is not noticed at the time that they are sensed. . . My grounds for this denial is admittedly conventional" (A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, pp. 125 ... and 127). Others seemingly admit their existence, but maintain that the focussing of attention on them alters them (see the quotation from Merleau-Ponty on p. 92 above).

Price's attitude, as we have said, is that they do exist, and that, in general, they are unchanged by our inspection of them.

Further discussion of the subject can be found in the following places: C.D. Broad, The Mind and Its Place in Nature, chapters viii-x; D.M. Armstrong, Perception and the Physical World, pp. 37-46, 123-124 (with reference to Price's views as the latter had expressed them in his review of A.J. Ayer's Philosophical Essays, in Philosophical Quarterly, 5 [1955], pp. 273-274); and K. Walton, "The Dispensability of Perceptual Inference", in Mind, 72 (1963), pp. 357-368. In this whole question, it is necessary, of course, to distinguish between so-called subliminal perceptions (which are held to be unnoticeable even if one tries to discriminate them) and the merely unnoticed, but noticeable sensations mentioned here.

remote topic is able to pick his way carefully along a crowded sidewalk without paying any special attention to what he is sensing? (That he is sensing seems obvious: were he blindfolded, he would still be capable of carrying on the same conversation, but would be unable to negotiate the practical task of walking down the sidewalk.) Again, without such a distinction, how can one explain why it is that although for a long time we can be apparently oblivious of certain steady noises, such as the ticking of a clock, we suddenly become aware of them when they stop?[65] Finally, imagine the situation in which we just happen to be looking in the direction of a tomato, but are thinking about something else. If someone unexpectedly asks us to describe carefully what we see, is it in fact true that a change occurs so far as our seeing is concerned? Proof in such a matter is probably impossible to attain, though to us it seems quite apparent that this is a case of attending to what was already appearing, rather than a case of colors and

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65 The ticking of a clock is one of the cases discussed by C.D. Broad in The Mind and Its Place in Nature (pp. 405-406). Though he does not find it necessary to admit that we were actually hearing the same sounds before and after we notice the ticking, he does admit the existence, within the original auditory sensum prior to our attention, a general modification of it which corresponds to the ticking. This is something which we do not notice until it stops, however, so that even it would in some sense be an unnoticed datum of consciousness.

other details suddenly appearing for the first time or of altering beneath our gaze.[66]

Even if this distinction between sensing and its objects (often unattended-to) on the one hand, and our power to attend to them or to something else on the other hand, be admitted, there are still some cases where it is plausible to maintain that changes occur in the objects of sense awareness as a result of attention. An example would be the case of the alternating figures mentioned in many psychology textbooks. For example, Broad writes, in connection with figure A below:

> When I look at the "staircase figure", which is given in most psychology text-books as an instance of ambiguous figures, it seems to me that it actually looks sensibly different from time to time. Its sensible appearance changes "with a click", as I look at it, from that of a staircase to that of an overhanging cornice.[67]

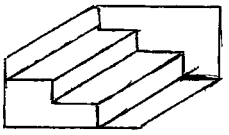


Fig A

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66 A very practical example: while we are sitting at a desk reading a book, we are not noticing the tactile sensations caused by the contact between ourselves and the chair on which we are sitting or by the contact between ourselves and the clothing on our shoulders, arms, legs, etc. Do these sensations come into existence only at the moment when our attention is called to them? On the contrary, it seems that these are precisely the type of unnoticed sensations of whose absence we would become instantly aware, were they suddenly to be discontinued.

67 C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, p. 108. See also M.D. Vernon, The Psychology of Perception, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1962, pp. 173-175; and M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith, pp. 262ff.

Other examples are the reversal of figure and background in the drawings specifically designed for such an experiment,[68] as well as the changes that allegedly occur when reduction screens are used in the study of sensory details.[69] Not everyone agrees on whether or not such changes in the sensed objects do occur. Some apparently regard the change as occurring, not in the data themselves but in the meaning or significance which informs them or which noetic factors impose on them.[70] C.D. Broad would object to this if it implied that the only change was in the area of judgment:

> So far is it from being a mere change in the judgments which I happen to base on one and the same sensum, that the direction of my thoughts changes first and is the condition for the change in the sensible appearance.[71]

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68 E.g., see M.D. Vernon, The Psychology of Perception, pp. 40-46.

69 See W. Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, chap. iii, Mentor ed., esp. pp. 44-46, 54-55. This is what Merleau-Ponty was alluding to in the passage quoted on p. 92 above.

70 Such is Husserl's view, as interpreted by A. Gurwitsch (Field of Consciousness, pp. 265-272).

71 C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, p. 108.

But whatever decision is rendered with respect to these ambiguous cases,[72] it seems to us that, in line with the distinction between sensing and other types of cognition which was maintained above, the change of attention (i.e. the adoption of the phenomenological attitude) does not ordinarily alter what is sensed.[73]

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72 These changes must be kept distinct from other changes about which there is little question. The changes discussed here occur--if they do--when one's focus remains fixed. Ordinarily, even when we attend only to a small portion of the visual field, our glance is continually shifting, so that what at first occupied the center of the visual field (the region of maximal visual acuity) moves somewhat towards an edge of the field and is replaced by a new portion of the total visual datum which moves into the region of maximal acuity. If this shift involves a change in that part of the total datum which moves out of the center, then this is a change different from that which is discussed in the text. On the problem of the different degrees of visual acuity, see, e.g. J. Hochberg, Perception, pp. 22-24 or R.S. Woodworth and H. Schlosberg, Experimental Psychology, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1954, pp. 386-387.

73 It might be well to add the vital fact that if alteration in what is sensed does occur in the situations discussed here, then this alteration would serve as additional grounds for the argument against direct realism. (See chapter four.) The reason is that it is contrary to the assumptions of direct realism to suppose that there is a change, say, in the tree when we look at it, or in the pieces of paper when we inspect them more closely, etc.; therefore, if what we sense does change, then what we sense cannot be identical with the unchanging material things which direct realism takes to be sensed.

For this reason, those who make the most of the changes, particularly the gestalt psychologists, distinguish the world of immediate experience from the world of physical objects which, presumably, are never directly experienced. Kohler speaks of these as "the world of objective experience" and "the physical world", respectively (see his Gestalt Psychology, chap. i), and Koffka speaks of the "behavioral environment" and the "geographical environment" (see his

B. "Knowledge About Sense-Data is not Indubitable"

This second objection challenges the efficaciousness of methodical doubt as an instrument for uncovering the given elements in knowledge. Recall that the method relies on the assumption that doubt is not possible in the presence of sense-data. The objection answers that this is precisely the difficulty: doubt and error about sense-data are possible. Price himself, in his most recent article on sense perception, writes that "it is often very difficult to describe appearances, and one may easily make mistakes in trying to describe them."[74]

Admittedly, there is a serious problem here. Although our judgments about sense-data are certain enough for our ordinary pragmatic purposes, and although we feel that

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73 (cont'd) Principles of Gestalt Psychology, London, Routledge, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., Ltd., 1935, chap. ii, pp. 27ff). They are thereby faced with the perrenial difficulty of bridging the gap from one world or environment to the other, as Price points out in his review of J.J. Gibson's The Perception of the Visual World, in Mind, 62 (1953), p. 410. R. Firth, in his article "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", also points out that the percept theory is by no means identical with what is often referred to as "naive realism" and chides those who would overlook this crucial fact (op. cit., Pt. II, pp. 43-48).

74 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 19. It is for precisely this reason ("because of the misleading suggestions about infallibility which the word 'datum' may arouse"--ibid.) that at the end of this article, Price suggests that we revert to the use of the term "appearance" in place of "sense-datum".

most of the errors we make about what we see or hear or touch are caused because we do not always pay sufficiently close attention to what we sense, a more rigorous examination of the facts shows the situation is not so simple.

We can set aside the problem of merely verbal errors, such as occur, for example, when a person says "this is green" but means "this is red".[75] Such instances are not so much errors about sense-data as they are errors about the proper use of language.

Other errors are not merely verbal, however. Everyone is familiar with situations in which the appearances of things are altered by such circumstances as unusual lighting or acoustical conditions, organic disturbances on the part of the percipient, and the like. In such situations it is easy to make erroneous judgments about things, and therefore some critics of the sense-datum theory argue that the phenomenological descriptions of that theory are too dogmatically expressed. Concerning the example of Price's red tomato, R.J. Hirst insists that instead of saying simply that what we sense <u>is</u> red, we should qualify this by adding the words "or at least red-looking", since it is always possible that

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75 See H.H. Price, <u>Thinking and Experience</u>, London, Hutchinson's University Library, 1953, p. 77, and A.J. Ayer, <u>The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge</u>, p. 81.

"the object may be some other color and only be looking red in this light."[76]

This particular form of the second objection against the sense-datum analysis brings up the problem of appearance vs. reality, which will be dealt with later. It is mentioned here for the sake of completeness, since it is related to the question of indubitability. For the moment, all that can be said in answer to such an objection as Hirst's is that, whatever may be the causal explanation for it,[77] what we sense in the situation described by Price is not something that merely appears red, but something that is red. For a full discussion of this question, see chap. vi, sec. II, C 2 below.

There remain the situations in which Price himself admits that we may easily make mistakes. Examples are not difficult to find. If we focus our look on one spot, we find it progressively more difficult to accurately describe the parts of the visual field lying further and further from the center of focus. Then, too, there are many occasions when it is nearly impossible to decide whether we do or do not sense

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76 R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception, p. 33. Also see G.J. Warnock, Berkeley, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1953, pp. 138, 186. Price refers to this as the "safety-first" approach: see his "Appearing and Appearances", pp. 12, 14-15.

77 Such as, for example, unusual lighting conditions, etc.

sounds, lights, etc., when these--if they exist at all--are extremely faint. (Note the difficulties involved in determining the thresholds of sensation.) There are the difficulties which we experience in reading the oculist's eye-chart and determining what are the exact shapes of the letters we are looking toward. This is not the same problem as the previous one concerning "appears" vs. "is"; for here, we find it as difficult to describe the characteristics which the sensed entities appear to have as it would be to describe what characteristics they do have.

Facts like the above have prompted such questions as "Are there vague sense-data?"[78] "Can sense-data have unnoticed characteristics?"[79] "Can sense-data possess merely

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78 This is the title of an article by V.C. Aldrich, in Mind, 43 (1934), pp. 477-482.

79 This is different from asking whether sense-data exist when they are not attended to. Here the question is whether, even when we bend our powers of attention to the task of scrutinizing the sense-data, some of their features can remain undetected. The questions are not always treated separately. On these problems as well as that of determining whether data are changed by the process of phenomenological inspection, see A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, chap. ii, sec. xi; H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, pp. 285-289; R.B. Braithwaite, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, in Philosophy, 17 (1942), pp. 86-88; R. Chisholm, "The Problem of the Speckled Hen", in Mind, 51 (1942), pp. 368-373 (this title is borrowed from an example used by Price in the above-mentioned review, and the article is a survey of the previously-listed discussions); A.J. Ayer, "The Terminology of Sense-Data", in Mind, 54 (1945), pp. 289-312 (this is Ayer's reply); H.H. Price, "Review of Ayer's Philosophical Essays," pp. 273-275 (a new criticism of Ayer's position).

determinable, as opposed to determinate, characteristics?"[80] It would not be possible here to deal thoroughly with every facet of these questions which have been the occasion for an extensive literature. Instead, a few comments must suffice.

First, it does not seem necessary to do more than agree with Price when he labels as "absurd" the theory that an entity might exist which possesses merely generic or determinable (i.e. indeterminate) qualities. Such a supposition is equivalent to maintaining, for instance, that "a colour-patch can exist which is just coloured and is neither red nor green, blue nor yellow."[81]

The question is complicated, however, because there are two factors involved: the object which is sensed and our act of sensing. Someone might claim that, although the object which is sensed possesses only determinate characteristics (this is readily granted by those who believe that we

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80 The distinction between determinable and determinate in recent British philosophy is much the same as that between generic and specific in traditional Aristotelian categories, and, therefore, different from that between universal and particular. (For the distinction, see L.S. Stebbing, Modern Introduction to Logic, London, Methuen and Co., 1931, chap. xxiii, sec. i.) On the question as applied to sense-data, see C.M. Myers, "The Determinate and Determinable Modes of Appearing", where he tries to reconcile the percept theory and the sense-datum theory by means of a theory of determinate-and-determinable characteristics.

81 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 17.

sense material things), we sometimes can manage only an indeterminate or obscure grasp of the object. Think, for example, of an object seen through a semi-transparent sheet of glass: it will commonly be conceded that the object on the other side of the glass possesses a specific shape, but all that can be discerned is a vague, indistinct outline. The question then is this, "Shall we say that, because we sense material things, therefore what we sense possesses a determinate shape grasped in an indeterminate fashion,[82] or shall we say that what we sense possesses determinate characteristics in the same way that a painting of the figure behind the glass--i.e. a painting which exactly reproduces the scene--possesses determinate characteristics if considered in itself?" The latter is the alternative chosen by Price:

> A sense-datum may be of faint intensity, very uniform in all its parts, and only slightly different from neighboring sense-data. . . But the intensity of the sense-datum is always a perfectly determinate degree, be it great or small, and the same is true of the other characteristics.[83]

In this he seems to be justified. The fact that a painter can reproduce the vague or indistinct shape, despite

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82 Or else it might be suggested that what we sense possesses a determinate shape, but one that appears indeterminate to us because of the perceptual conditions.

83 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 150.

the fact that he has nothing but specific and quite determinate colors on his palette and the fact that he applies them to the canvas in a very determinate way, illustrates what is meant by speaking of the sensed object as something that is very determinate in itself. It is even possible to make very determinate judgments about the object which we sense in such cases, just as we would about the painter's canvas, although we might be able to say only that "the shape is definitely a vague one with shadowy outlines."[84]

The most telling argument against the alleged indubitability concerning the data of sense bases itself upon the existence of unnoticed features of attended-to sense-data.

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84 The real problem here is that we have few specific descriptive words for such sensed objects--"vague", "shadowy", and "filmy" being some of them. This is due to our ancestors' pragmatic interests which were concerned with the properties of material things rather than with the phenomenological description of the details of sensory experience. Consequently, it is essential to understand that the sense-datum can possess very definite characteristics without our being able to describe them in perfectly determinate terms. The latter problem stems from imperfections of language and does not necessarily have anything to do with erroneous judgments. For example, our visual field contains an immense number of details which the ordinary person would be incapable of describing: compare the almost infinite variety of different shades of color with the mere dozen or so color-names which the ordinary person's vocabulary contains. In this latter case, words which are usually regarded as specific (e.g. "red," "green", "blue", etc.) are in reality more or less generic, inasmuch as they are used to describe a number of very distinct colors. For such obvious reasons, then, the linguistic expression of our judgments vis-a-vis the sense-data which we sense will always be inadequate to some degree or other.

B. Russell mentions the following instances. If a person is holding a small weight in his hand, it is possible to add a small extra weight without the person's being able to detect the addition. This operation can be repeated. But if all of the extra weights are added at once, the person is able to detect the addition. Similarly, it is possible to present someone with strands of yarn whose colors vary only slightly; though he is unable to notice any difference between the first and second, the second and third or the third and fourth strands, he will have no difficulty in noticing the difference between the first and fourth if they are presented without any intermediaries. The conclusion is that differences can exist but go undetected unless they are sufficiently large.[85] If a person is required to make judgments in such situations, it is not at all difficult to visualize him making errors. The same is true with respect to reports about the outer edges of the visual field, about extremely faint lights or sounds or odors, and the like.[86]

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85 B. Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, 2nd ed., New York, Mentor Books, 1960 (original 2nd ed., 1929), pp. 112-113.

86 It may be impossible to verify whether or not a particular judgment is true or false in these situations, even though we can easily conceive of a false one. It is important to avoid falling into the stimulus-error on this point, i.e. necessary to avoid the mistake of concluding that a person, say, has or has not heard a particular noise on the grounds that there either was or was not a physical stimulus at the time. The same holds with respect to reports about the outer edges of the visual field.

Does this objection overturn the claims which Price makes concerning our inability to doubt with respect to what is sensed? If anyone is inclined to think that indubitability as understood here means that whenever a sense-datum is present we can exhaustively describe it without making a single error, then the last-mentioned situations do seem to pose insurmountable problems. It is possible that, in Perception, Price may sometimes have suggested this, and if so, then the objection would certainly apply in some measure to his procedure. But it is not necessary to adopt such a rigid position. Nor does the possibility of making errors in regard to the finer details of sense-data or of making errors when trying to be too specific in our judgments about vague and filmy sense-data detract from the fact that in many situations there are matters--such as the existence and redness and roundness of what is sensed--about which we can make absolutely certain judgments. Price is therefore justified when he writes:

> It seems to me clear that as a matter of fact there are some . . . judgments which are incorrigible; I mean, some empirical ones. . . I refer to such trivial judgments as 'this is now red', 'this is to the left of that', 'I am wondering whether it will rain tomorrow', 'I remember hearing a loud noise last night.[87]

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87 H.H. Price, Truth and Corrigibility, pp. 28-29.

Of course, judgments about sense-data, not those referring to self-knowledge or to memory, concern us here. But if there is such a thing as certainty at all in human knowledge, it can at least be found in many of our judgments about sense-data.

VIII. CONCLUSION

We have seen that, starting from the example of an ordinary perceptual encounter between an observer and an object, Price analyses it and discovers that it involves a special relation of direct awareness between the observer and what is henceforth to be called a sense-datum. The sense-datum, which, in Price's example, consists of "a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches", is given to consciousness in such a way that its characteristics of color and shape are at the same time accessible to "mere looking" and immune to doubt. All other questions concerning the nature and status of the sense-datum have been held in abeyance until clear directions were given that will enable anyone wishing to analyze his own knowledge to pick out those particular somethings which are to be discussed.

This does not mean that the perceptual encounter does not involve a great deal more than the mere sensing of sense-data. Price insists that, simultaneously, the mind

becomes conscious of a "whole" object, which has front, back, sides, and so forth. (Usually we take the sense-datum to be the near side of this object, i.e. to be part of the whole.) This whole, Price will say, is the object of a different type of cognitional activity which Reid called "perception" and which Price prefers to call "perceptual consciousness."

In the following chapter, we shall consider Price's view regarding direct realism, which maintains that what is sensed is the near surface or surface-inherent qualities of material things which exist independently of our knowledge of them.

CHAPTER IV

DIRECT REALISM: EXAMINED AND REJECTED

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It is only natural that, having made an initial analysis of the perceptual situation, Price should immediately turn his attention to the implications of this analysis for our common-sense view of sense perception, since this is the view which all of us bring into the lecture-hall where we are first introduced to those puzzles frequently referred to as "philosophical". This common-sense view involves two different aspects, an ontological and an epistemological one. That is to say, it involves an idea of what a material thing is as well as an idea of what it is that we immediately sense.

What is the common-sense understanding of "material thing"? Answers to this question will vary, perhaps because, deep down, most philosophers agree with Whitehead when he says that our major task is to satisfy common sense.[1] Every such philosopher, therefore, will wish to propose his own

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1 "You may polish up common sense, you may contradict it in detail, you may surprise it. Yet ultimately your whole task is to satisfy it" (A.N. Whitehead, "Organization of Thought", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 17 [1916-1917], p. 63).

theory as being in agreement with common sense. Even Berkeley maintained that his highly novel explanation of "material thing" coincided with the ordinary man's view of it. Fortunately, most people would agree with Price that by "material thing" is understood something which possesses the following marks: it is accessible to more than one sense, it is three-dimensional, all of its characteristics are individual and determinate, and it possesses causal characteristics and perdures in time, unaffected by our knowledge of it or the lack thereof.[2]

Epistemologically, the "plain man" holds the theory which will be called here "direct realism".[3] This is the same as what Price, in Perception, calls "Naive Realism".[4]

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2 See H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 35 and 178.

3 See p. 32, n. 36 above.

4 See H.H. Price, Perception, chap. ii. It will be helpful if two points are kept in mind. First, so far as epistemology is concerned, this thesis will use the terms "common-sense theory of sense perception", "direct realism", and "naive realism" interchangeably to signify the theory explained above in the text. Secondly, although the same remark is very often true of Price's own writings, it is not always so. For instance, even in Perception, he announces that naive realism "is hardly a faithful analysis of the unreflective assumptions of the plain or naive man" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 26). This merely repeats what he had written in his earliest article: "Suppose I am now perceiving a hard square table covered with a rough blue table-cloth; then, according to Naive Realism, the table would still exist and would retain its hardness and squareness even if I ceased to perceive it; equally, the tablecloth would continue to be rough and blue. This doctrine . . . is far more common among philosophers than among 'naive' or 'plain' men" (H.H. Price,

Common sense believes that what we immediately sense are material things or at least parts of them. In the case of the man looking at the tomato, common sense believes that the bulgy red expanse of which the percipient is immediately aware is the front surface of the tomato resting on top of the table, just so many feet or inches away. Thus, if we ask common sense what is the relation between the sense-datum and the material thing, the answer will be that the relation is "the same as being a part of the surface of: in that literal sense in which the surface of one side of this page is part of the whole surface of this page."[5] In other words common sense maintains that there is no numerical distinction between what we sense (i.e. "sense-datum") and the surface or surface-inherent qualities of the material thing. It also maintains that the colors, sounds, odors, and tastes belonging to the material thing are independent of observers, that

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4 (cont'd) "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 26). Later on, referring to Mill's phenomenalism, he writes that it "may even claim to be 'realistic', if this word comforts anybody" (H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the Eternal World", p. 138). These quotes refer more to the ontological than to the epistemological aspects of common sense, but they serve to illustrate what R.I. Aaron says when he writes that "the mood [in contemporary British philosophy] . . . is a 'falling back on common sense' without being quite sure what this means" (R.I. Aaron, "The Common Sense View of Sense-Perception", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 58 [1957-1958], p. 1). See also R.J. Hirst, Perception and the Eternal World, p. 2.

5 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 26. See also ibid., pp. 99, 143.

they are the same regardless of whether anyone is sensing them or not.

How do these convictions of the plain man fare when examined in the light of fact? Can they be reconciled with the claims of immediate sense experience when this latter is critically examined and analyzed?

Throughout his career, Price has maintained that there is a conflict between the claims of common sense and certain facts of immediate experience. Though it is sometimes difficult to chart the variations in his views, he has consistently rejected the common-sense opinion that what we immediately sense are the surfaces or surface-inherent qualities of material things, if these qualities are taken to be wholly independent of our observation of them. In his earliest article, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", after reviewing several facts of immediate experience he concludes:

> In view of all the facts that we have cited--and there are of course infinite multitudes of the same kind--we seem bound to abandon Naive Realism.[6]

Although he here rejects only the common-sense notion that the qualities of the material thing which we grasp are in no way dependent upon us, he tries to retain the view that in some sense we do immediately apprehend the material thing itself. In his sense-datum period, he went further against

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6 H.H. Price, op. cit., p. 30.

common sense by rejecting even this latter view. And despite the fact that he later tried once again to uphold the view that we enjoy the immediate apprehension of material things, he felt compelled to admit that some arguments were so troublesome for direct realism that he doubted "whether one could answer them without departing in some degree from the assumptions of common sense."[7]

In this chapter, we are going to examine the arguments which he proposed during his sense-datum period against the epistemological aspect of common sense, i.e. against direct realism.

II. THE ARGUMENT FROM ILLUSION

A. In General

There are two chief sets of facts or arguments which lead Price to disagree with direct realism. The first argument is usually referred to as "the argument from illusion", and is traditionally the main one used to discredit common sense.[8] The other argument used by Price is called "the causal argument" or "the argument from causal dependency".

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7 H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", p. 400.

8 R.J. Hirst, Perception and the Eternal World, p. 4.

The argument from illusion takes its name from those perceptual situations in which the observer is deceived by the data of his senses or would be deceived if he could not correct his judgments in the light of his past experience.[9] The aberrations of the sick man's sense of taste, the relativity of thermal sensations, and similar facts, as well as the problems which these facts present for direct realism, had already impressed the early Greek thinkers to the extent that both Plato and Aristotle felt obliged to devote attention to the problems.[10]

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9 It is important to note that many of the situations referred to as "illusions" by the sense-datum theorists do not involve any actual error. In some cases, particularly those which involve the phenomenon of constancy (see p. 125, n. 28 below), the element of illusion is hard to notice. In fact, there are those who object that many of these situations are not illusory at all. See J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, pp. 22, 27, 31, etc., for an example of this denial. These objectors are perfectly correct in pointing out that people are so familiar with size- and shape-perspective that they are only rarely deceived by it, and this contention of theirs would readily be accepted by any proponent of the sense-datum theory. Sharp disagreement begins, however, when these objectors go on to deny that such situations involve characteristics (e.g., ellipticity in the case of a penny seen at a tilt) which conflict with the characteristics believed to be possessed by the material objects which--according to the sense-datum philosophers--are not sensed but perceived.

10 Plato discusses the Protagorean explanation of the relativity of the senses in the Theatetus (151E, ff). Aristotle has an even more developed treatment of the problems in his Metaphysics, Bk. IV, chap. v.

The basic form of the argument against direct realism, as based on such facts, can be summed up as follows: illusory perceptual situations contain, as the object of immediate sensing, some entity whose characteristics are such that it is impossible to identify it with the material thing which is at first believed to be the object immediately sensed. This distinct entity is a sense-datum.

The argument requires either of two further premises in order to produce the usual conclusion that <u>every</u> perceptual situation contains the said distinct entity. Either it is argued that every perceptual situation is in some sense illusory, or else it is argued that the intrinsic similarity between illusory and veridical (non-illusory) situations is such that for reasons of symmetry[11] the same distinction between material things and sense-data which is found in the one is also to be found in the other.

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11 Apart from extrinsic considerations, a theory is felt to be more satisfying and likely to be true, the more facts it can explain by the same general laws. Conversely, it is less attractive, the more it must resort to "ad hoc" theories to explain exceptions to the general laws. Although this motive is hardly ever explicitated by proponents of perceptual theories, the desire for symmetry becomes manifest in such remarks as the following: "Can we suppose that [perceptual] processes so similar can have such utterly different results? To do so is surely contrary to all the principles of causal reasoning" (H.H. Price, <u>Hume's Theory of the External World</u>, p. 126).

B. Some Distinctions

Before proceeding to consider the arguments in particular, it will be well to note the ambiguities latent in the word "illusion". Not only are there several distinct situations covered by the same word, but the meaning of "illusion" is complicated by the similarities that exist between illusion, delusion and hallucination.

There is, though not universal, at least sufficiently general agreement that "delusion" is a term that should be limited to beliefs rather than to sensations or perceptions. We can accept the definition of C.T. Morgan according to whom a delusion is "a groundless, irrational belief or thought, usually of grandeur or of persecution."[12]

By contrast, both illusions and hallucinations have to do with perception. The distinction between these two is usually given on the basis of factors extrinsic to the perceptual experience itself, namely, on the presence or absence

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12 C.T. Morgan, Introduction to Psychology, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1956, p. 629. He adds that "it is characteristic of paranoia." N.L. Munn implies the same thing (Psychology, 4th ed., Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961, p. 242) when he speaks of a patient having "delusions that he is God, that he is the head of the institution in which he is a patient," etc. See also J.M. Baldwin, Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, where it is stated that delusion is confined to "the higher mental processes" (Vol. I, p. 511).

of certain "objective" factors. Munn, for instance, puts the difference this way:

> Certain perceptions, referred to as hallucinations, have no evident dependence upon external stimuli, while others, referred to as illusions, can be viewed as misinterpretations of known stimulating circumstances.[13]

Paul Siwek gives a similar explanation:

> An illusion . . . always has some objective basis. It is nothing more than a distorted perception of some actually existing object. An hallucination may lack any objective ground; it may be a pure fiction of the imagination, that is, it may represent some objective reality as its point of departure, but it represents it in a purely subjective way, out of all proportion to reality.[14]

It is more difficult to distinguish hallucination from illusion from within experience itself. In fact, it is the contention of the sense-datum philosophers that it is only on the basis of subsequent experiences that we can learn from within whether a particular situation is veridical, illusory or hallucinatory. (On this alleged fact is based the argument from continuity, which forms the second important step of the argument against direct realism. See chap. iv, sec. IV below.) For the moment, however, we will be satisfied with the above description of the difference between illusion and hallucination.

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13 N.L. Munn, Psychology, 4th ed., p. 564.

14 P. Siwek, Experimental Psychology, New York, Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1959, pp. 170-171.

Among situations which qualify as illusions there is a great deal of variety. If we tentatively define an illusion as a perceptual experience in which what is sensed possesses or seems to possess characteristics which could serve as the ground for a false judgment about the material thing which is involved,[15] then we can distinguish those illusions in which the judgment concerns the thing's basic identity from those which the judgment concerns the thing's qualities (color, shape, size, and so forth). We can speak of the former as "mistaken-identity" illusions. Examples of it would be such situations as that in which an artificial wax tomato appears to be a real one, or in which the word "casual" seems to the proof-reader to be "causal".

The other illusions are difficult to sort out. We can perhaps divide most of them into cases of perspectival variation, media-interference, and percipient-interference. Perspectival variation is exemplified by such familiar things as the penny which, seen edgewise, looks elliptical, or the square garden which, viewed from the proper angle, appears diamond-shaped, or the airplane which appears to shrink to the size of a dot and then disappear as it flies off.

Media-interference illusions occur when light and sound waves are distorted or re-directed during their passage

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15 See p. 115, n. 9 above.

from the distant object to the eye or ear. Refraction caused by water makes the partially immersed stick appear bent. Mirrors cause us at times to think that objects are in a different place from where they are. Magnifying glasses can lead us to think that things are closer or larger than they really are.

Percipient-interference illusions include the aberrations of the sick patient's sense of taste, color-blindness, myopia, etc.

Although these illusions are distinguishable, their use in the argument against direct realism is always the same: to show that what is directly sensed possesses characteristics incompatible with those possessed by the material things thought to be directly apprehended.

C. Argument Based on Mistaken-Identity Illusions.

As an example of a mistaken-identity illusion, Price offers the case of a man who looks up into a tree and at first believes that what he sees is an owl perched on one of its branches. On looking more closely, however, he discovers that "it is really nothing but a stump, resembling an owl in shape."[16] In this same category of illusions, Price would put the experience of seeming to see a pedestrian at twilight

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16 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 29.

leading a white-faced goat, though it turns out that it is only a man on a bicycle carrying a milk-pail,[17] or the experience of waiting for the No. 3 bus and of seeming to see a 3 where there is really an 8.[18]

What do such illusions prove? The answer to that question will depend very much on how such experiences are interpreted. On the one hand, some may contend that there is nothing more involved here than mistaken judgments about what is seen. In this case, what is seen remains the same, both when the erroneous judgment occurs and after it is corrected. For instance, someone might encounter what is actually Lloyd George (alive) standing in Madame Tussaud's wax museum and lost in contemplation, and might take him to be a wax imitation of Winston Churchill: this would not, by itself, be sufficient grounds for saying that it was not in fact Lloyd George that the observer saw.[19] Just so, it can be maintained that the observer really saw a stump or a man on a bicycle or an 8 but only misjudged that what he saw was an owl or pedestrian with a goat or a 3.

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17 Ibid.

18 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 29.

19 The example is borrowed from G.J. Warnock's article "Seeing", p. 203, where he draws this same conclusion. See also J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 30.

Apparently Price himself believed otherwise. In "Reality and Sensible Appearance", he writes, apropos of the owl-in-the-tree case: "We did not merely think it was an owl, but saw it so."[20] And his reason is that "what we see and hear is sometimes determined (in part at least) by our past experience, and present interest."[21] This would mean that the percipient originally sees the appearance of an owl rather than a stump and a 3 instead of an 8. It would also entail the consequence that in the process of discovering the true situation, what is sensed changes: the owl appearance into a stump appearance, the 3 into an 8.

If this second interpretation of the facts is the true one, then it shows that, for these cases at least, direct realism is refuted. To see something owl-shaped is incompatible with seeing a stump, just as seeing a 3 is incompatible with seeing an 8.

Which interpretation is correct? Although there are occasions when it is difficult to decide whether there is a change in what is sensed,[22] it seems more likely to the present writer that, in the instances mentioned by Price,

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20 H.H. Price, op. cit., p. 29.

21 Ibid. The same reasoning is repeated in Perception, p. 51.

22 See chap. iii, sec. VII above.

what is involved are mistaken judgments rather than changing appearances (i.e. changing sense-data). The only other possibility would be that a change in the sense-data does occur as a result of a change in the observer's position vis-a-vis the material thing, e.g. if the observer moves closer to the tree in order to inspect it more closely. But this would be an instance of perspectival variation.

Whatever may be the truth about such cases as those mentioned here, i.e. even if they do not support his conclusion, they are not essential to Price's thesis. The other types of illusion which he examines sufficiently demonstrate its validity.

D. Argument Based on Perspectival-Variation Illusions.

A more frequently mentioned type of illusion involves perspectival variation. Price refers very cursorily to the experience of what happens when we walk around a table: "If we walk around the table, to take the usual instance, the shape of what we see alters as our position alters."[23] What he is referring to can be expanded by turning to what

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23 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 27. This is the same type of illusion as that referred to by Descartes when he argues against the trustworthiness of the senses: see R. Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, 6th Med.

Bertrand Russell had written about the same example in his Problems of Philosophy:

> In fact, as we all have to learn if we try to draw, a given thing looks different in shape from every different point of view. If our table is 'really' rectangular, it will look, from almost all points of view, as if it had two acute angles and two obtuse angles. If opposite sides are parallel, they will look as if they converged to a point away from the spectator; if they are of equal length, they will look as if the nearer side were longer.[24]

But it is not merely a case that the given thing will look different. Russell goes on to explain that if the table looks different, this is because "what we see is constantly changing in shape as we move about the room."[25] In other words, a careful inspection of our visual experience as we move about the table will reveal a succession of differently-shaped somethings. When we stand at the corner of the table and stoop a little, what we see is, not just "appears", diamond-shaped. If we look down at it from the ceiling, what we see is square. When we stand in another position relative to the table, what we see is trapeziform.

In addition to this feature of shape-perspective, there are also variations as regards size-perspective. "Mont Blanc, provided it is distant enough, is visibly smaller than

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24 B. Russell, Problems of Philosophy, pp. 10-11.

25 Ibid., p. 11. Italics added.

my little finger."[26] When two men are distant from us, one five feet away, the other a hundred yards away, "there can be no doubt that the sense-datum belonging to him [the more distant one] is sensibly smaller than that belonging to the other man."[27]

Examples of this are unlimited, but the basic phenomenon involved is sufficiently familiar to everyone as not to require the mention of additional cases.[28]

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26 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 27.

27 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 143.

28 It must not be thought that everyone agrees to this interpretation of the phenomenon, of course. There are three major objections to it.

I. There is the opinion of those who make much of what psychologists call "the perceptual constancies". (Any standard work on experimental psychology can be consulted for this; a good example is J. Hochberg, Perception, pp. 50-55.) According to this opinion, for instance, "most generally a friend does not appear to double in size with each couple of steps; the headlights on a car do not seem to turn from circles through ellipses to lines as they pass us on the road," etc. (J. Hochberg, op. cit., p. 50.) Gestalt psychologists in particular have insisted on this interpretation. In reply, Price points out that even if it be admitted that the size or shape or color of a perceived object remains constant within a limited range of varying perceptual conditions, the constancies fail when these conditions are varied further. (This fact then provides the sense-datum theory with a foothold-argument that can be completed by the argument from continuity: see sec. IV below.) Price also argues (we believe rightly) that even within the more limited range phenomenological inspection reveals that something does change, and this is seen most clearly when "the object is cut off from its background, for instance, by viewing it through a tube" (H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", p. 392; see also p. 393). Many opponents of the sense-datum theory will admit this latter fact, i.e. that such a change does

Facts such as these, if they are accepted, undermind the position of direct realism. As already mentioned, Price's argument rests on the discrepancy that exists between the characteristics of what is sensed and those which the

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28 (cont'd) occur when the object's background is cut off, but in doing so they acknowledge that it is not common sense's "thing in itself" which is directly perceived, but rather some kind of phenomenal object--and, therefore an entity which is in addition to the physical thing itself. Now this is what the sense-datum theorist himself maintains, so that the only question then will be, "Whose analysis of this additional entity is correct?" Our conviction is that the opponents of the sense-datum theory, on this point, are mistaken in underestimating the distinction between sensing and the cognitive acts which accompany it. See chap. iii, sec. V above.

II. There is another objection, proposed by those who advocate what might be called "perspectival realism" (see R.J. Hirst, Perception and the External World, pp. 199, 307-308). This is the theory which Price proposes, in opposition to his earlier sense-datum analysis, in "The Argument from Illusion", (1956). There are also affinities between this theory and the theories of Whitehead and those who advocate what K.T. Gallagher calls "virtual realism" (K. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Knowledge, p. 108ff). Although there are numerous important disagreements among these authors, they would probably concur in saying that when we deal with such immediately-sensed characteristics as color, sound, odor, shape, and size, we are not dealing with qualities that are simple or absolute, but with properties which are essentially relational, i.e. whose nature inherently bespeaks a reference to a perceiver and to the conditions of his perceiving (see K. Gallagher, op. cit., p. 108). It is not easy to reply briefly to such an objection to the sense-datum theory. Nevertheless, it seems a mistake to say that these relational properties exist even when no observer is present. Although Price maintains that they can do so in "The Argument from Illusion", (p. 398), he had earlier denied it in "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", (p. 172, n.*) and in Perception, (p. 292). But if they do not exist when no observer is present, i.e. if they come into being only on the occasion of being observed, then this fact would require proof in view of its incompatibility with ordinary common-sense opinion to the contrary. (If this were proven, it

material thing is assumed to possess. If what is sensed is diamond-shaped, and the table-top is square, then there must be two distinct entities present, since the same thing cannot be diamond-shaped and square at the same time.

E. The Argument from Illusion as an Internal Critique.

1. The Problem.

There is a problem with respect to Price's exposition of this argument, however (at least as he presents it in Perception). Recall that he has declared his intention of

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28 (cont'd) would be found that the theory comes close to the sense-datum analysis: see A. Lovejoy, Revolt Against Dualism, 2nd ed., chap. v, esp. pp. 221-234.) In addition, the perspectival realist is faced with the question: are the relational properties the only properties an object possesses or are they in-addition-to the object's "absolute" properties? The former alternative seems false, for it would mean that the thing has no color or shape or size in itself (Gallagher shows that there is no basis for distinguishing between primary and secondary qualities in this argument: see K.T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Knowledge, pp. 108-119), and the second alternative merely brings back the problem of the sense-datum theory, viz. how do we learn about the thing's intrinsic properties if we only apprehend the perspectival ones? (On this problem, see R.M. Chisholm, "The Theory of Appearing").

III. The third objection comes from those who insist that, with respect to the characteristics which are immediately sensed in the co-called illusory situations, we should not say that they exist, but that they appear to exist. For instance, we ought not to say, when we look toward the partially-immersed stick, that what we see is bent, but only that it appears to be bent. This objection will be considered later in this chapter (sec. G, 2).

"suspending as far as possible the practical and outwardly directed attitude of ordinary life",[29] and of limiting himself to the phenomenological method. This leaves us with the question: granted that we can know the characteristics of what we sense by direct inspection, yet how do we know the characteristics of the material object? Unless we do know them, it is futile to argue that any discrepancy exists between them and the characteristics of that which we immediately sense. The American philosopher, Arthur O. Lovejoy, puts the matter quite nicely:

> Now you obviously cannot discuss whether two particulars--two in the sense that they have been provisionally distinguished in discourse--are identical [or distinct] unless you already know or assume something about both. If you are in a state of blank ignorance about either one, no question concerning the nature of their relations can be raised.[30]

Now the direct-realist answer to this problem would be to say that we know the characteristics of material things on the basis of direct inspection, on the only basis--he will say--by which we can obtain such knowledge. In fact, this is frequently given as a reason for rejecting any theory but direct realism: every representationalist theory cuts off the possibility of knowing the characteristics of material things,

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29 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 123.

30 A.O. Lovejoy, Revolt Against Dualism, 2nd ed., p. 20.

thereby undermining its argument that those characteristics are incompatible with the characteristics which we directly sense.[31]

Leaving aside this direct-realist argument for the moment (it will be taken up later on p. 133, n. 38), it is necessary to concede that if a philosopher is going to seriously examine the direct-realist hypothesis, he cannot begin with the assumption that he obtains his knowledge of material things by means of a direct inspection, since this would be equivalent to "refuting Naive Realism at one point only by assuming its truth at another."[32]

Another way of obtaining the required knowledge might be the indirect method of comparing a large number of sense-data. Price does not adopt this method himself, although he suggests that it would be possible.[33] The difficulty, however, is that just as the previous method would have attempted to refute direct realism by assuming its validity, this seems to be a method of refuting it that begins by already assuming its falsity. That is, it assumes that sense-data are not the

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31 For a vigorous statement of this view, see W.S. Haymond, "Afterthoughts on the Logic of Empiricism", in Modern Schoolman, 40 (1962-1963), pp. 245-262.

32 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 34.

33 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

surfaces of material things, and that we obtain our knowledge of the latter, not by inspecting them directly, but only by correlating many sense-data.

Because he realized the difficulty of obtaining the required material-object premises for his refutation of direct realism by either of the two previous methods, Price proposes a third starting-point. We can begin with the general concept of material thinghood, he says, and with this concept in mind, we can examine a series of sensings in order to see whether the variations which we discover in what we sense do not make it impossible for us to say that what we sense is a material thing.[34] This is the procedure which he adopts in Perception.

It seems to us, though, that Price overlooks some of the difficulties of such an approach. Let the concept of "material thing" be innate as Price will later suppose.[35] Let us describe a material thing as a three-dimensional whole, having one closed surface, one shape, one size, one position relative to other bodies, able to be present to my senses from different places and in different ways. Without additional assumptions respecting the unchangingness of the material thing concerned, it will be difficult to refute

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34 Ibid., p. 35.

35 Ibid., pp. 101-102.

direct realism. Suppose that, as we walk about the table, not only the shape of what we see changes from diamond-shaped to square and from square to trapeziform, but also that the shape of the table changes as well. In that event, there is no ground for asserting that there is a discrepancy between the characteristics of what is sensed and the characteristics of the material thing.[36] The same would be true in other cases: if Mont Blanc did become smaller than one's little finger, we might no longer want to call it Mont Blanc, but whatever it was might still fit the definition of a material

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36 For this objection against such a procedure as Price's, see A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, esp. pp. 14-19. Such an objection may appear bizarre, yet the fact that Ayer makes it shows that Price is assuming more than the simple concept of material thinghood. He is assuming something about the existential conditions of the particular material things under discussion. Ayer is wrong, however, in maintaining that such considerations as these show the dispute between sense-datum philosophers and common-sense philosophers to be merely one of language. Only if his phenomenalist metaphysics is presupposed does the adoption of the sense-datum terminology rather than the appearing terminology become a question of language and not one of fact. (In such a case, it would be a question of erecting two different "logical constructions" on the same empirical facts.) On this point, Price's criticism of Ayer is not strong enough. He wrote that Ayer "professes to be suggesting a modification of Naive Realist terminology, but he is really saying that it must be abandoned" (H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 283). The truth is that Ayer is recommending an abandonment of the Naive Realist ontology, not merely its terminology. As Price himself had written earlier: "No plain man, however plain, at any period later than the stone age, can really have held that trees and mountains swell and shrink as he walks about" (H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 31).

thing. Apparently, when Price asserts that it will be impossible for us to fit the various what-we-see's (i.e. sense-data) into a single three-dimensional whole,[37] he is forgetting that they are experienced, not simultaneously, but successively. Thus, while there would be a discrepancy if the multitude of sensed somethings, possessing varying characteristics, existed simultaneously--common sense assumes that a material thing possesses only one shape and size at a particular moment--this is not necessarily true if they succeed one another in existence (or if it is really the case of seeing only one thing whose shape or size is changing).

Thus, none of the three alternatives mentioned by Price in Perception is successful for showing how we obtain the required material-object premisses for our examination of direct realism. We cannot maintain that we get the required knowledge of material things and their characteristics by direct inspection without assuming the validity of direct realism, nor maintain that we obtain it by a comparison of many sense-data without assuming the falsity of direct realism. And, finally, the mere concept of material thinghood is insufficient: some of the premisses must concern concrete, existential facts about the material things involved in the discussion.

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37 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 35-36.

2. The Solution.

The solution to the above difficulty is a simple one. At this initial stage in the examination of direct realism, it is not necessary to explain how one has obtained his knowledge of material things. It is the firm conviction of the direct realist that we do have this knowledge. In other words, the direct realist does not profess agnosticism with respect to the existential facts about material things: he believes that mountains do not shrink when we approach, that sticks do not bend when they are immersed in water, that objects do not change their colors when viewed under different kinds of light, and so forth. For the purpose of critically examining the logical coherence of these views with the facts of immediate experience, it is not necessary to first justify their validity. It is sufficient if they are assumed and then used in making an internal critique of direct realism.[38]

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38 This is the answer to the argument mentioned above on p. 129. That argument is valid only if one assumes at the outset a radically-empiricist position with respect to our knowledge of material things, to the effect that it is impossible to obtain such knowledge on any basis but direct sense inspection of material things. This empiricist assumption would be exemplified by such statements as that of J. Owens, who writes that "if substance is not attained somehow in sensation, the intellect has no means of knowing it" (J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, p. 221). (In the context in which this statement occurs, "substance" is equivalent to "material things".) For further discussion of this matter, see chap. vii, sec. III, B, below.

Although Price did not adopt this position in Perception, he acknowledges its validity in other of his writings, particularly in Hume's Theory of the External World. There, he discusses Hume's skeptical arguments against ordinary realism, which is the view of the "vulgar", as Hume calls the plain man.[39] At first, Price is inclined to reject Hume's argument as circular, on the basis that it assumes a knowledge of physical and physiological facts--which knowledge, according to Hume, the paragon of empiricism, could only be valid if obtained by sensation. Price admits, however, that if we view Hume's argument only as a reductio ad absurdum of common-sense realism, i.e. as showing internal contradictions within the common-sense combination of epistemological and ontological realism (as those positions were described above on pp. 110-113), it is not important for Hume to concern himself with giving any positive theory about how we learn the physical and physiological facts which he invokes against common sense. His argument, as it stands, "does appear to show that there is a complete muddle in our ordinary view of the external world."[40]

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39 See D. Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. I, pt. iv, sec. ii.

40 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 123.

Furthermore, no other starting-point is as natural as that which begins with those assumptions made by the direct realist concerning the actual state of material things surrounding him. Writing with reference to Sir Russell Brain's The Nature of Experience, Price remarked:

> He [Brain] says we must be careful to choose the right starting-point for our theory of perception: 'The fact with which we must begin is the fact of knowledge, experience or information. . . If we start with knowledge of experience, we start with the subject-object relationship already given. We do not need to ask how we became aware of things outside ourselves because it is with that awareness that we begin.' So far, so good. Most contemporary philosophers would agree that this is the right starting-point for an epistemological enquiry.[41]

The fact is that we do not walk into the philosophy classroom (or any classroom, for that matter) with completely empty minds. When we walk in, at the beginning at least, we are usually direct realists.[42] Daniel Cory has remarked:

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41 H.H. Price, Review of Sir Russell Brain's The Nature of Experience, in British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, 11 (1960-1961), p. 73. The quote upon which Price is commenting occurs on pp. 31-32 of Brain's work (R. Brain, The Nature of Experience, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1959). See also H.H. Price, "The Causal Argument for Physical Objects", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 19 (1945), p. 96, for the same view.

42 The reason for the saying "usually" is that an early acquaintance with modern science could conceivably convince someone even at a youthful age that colors, sounds, and other secondary qualities do not "really" exist in material things themselves.

> The adult mind is not a blank tablet upon which the philosopher is supposed to sketch the origin of the 'complex notion of thinghood'. Students of philosophy are not innocent children to observe with curiosity a collection of sense-data being strung together by a professional conjurer and then labelled 'a material thing'.[43]

We need only extend what Cory writes about the concept of material thinghood to include our concrete beliefs about particular material things, and we can understand why Price speaks of naive realism as being the "psychologically inevitable" starting-point for any initial investigation into physiology, physics or any other branch of natural science, and--with the qualification made earlier--even for epistemology.[44]

Having lifted the ban which Price--in the interests of a strictly phenomenological procedure--had placed (while writing Perception) on everyday assumptions regarding existing material things, there is no difficulty in showing how

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43 D. Cory, "Transition from Naive to Critical Realism, with Comments on a Paragraph by H.H. Price," in Journal of Philosophy, 39 (1942), p. 267.

44 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 123-124. Price, following Hume here, does not interpret naive realism in terms wholly acceptable to someone who maintains the reality of substance. (See p. 160, n. 81, below.) But this does not affect the point he is making: we all begin our examination of the external world from a common-sense vantage-point, i.e. we begin by assuming that the material things surrounding us are what they are independently of our knowledge of them, and by assuming that our senses give us direct access to them.

the argument from illusion is used to undermine direct realism. For instance, direct inspection reveals that the shape and size of what we sense change as either we move about material things or as they move with respect to us, much in the same way that the photographic images of material things change shapes and sizes as the camera is shifted from place to place. Inasmuch as there is no corresponding shape- or size-alterations in the material things themselves (this is the premise assumed from the direct-realist position), it is necessary to conclude that common sense is mistaken in identifying what we sense with the material things involved. The same reasoning is then extended to the other types of illusion.

This conclusion is dictated by common sense itself. The only way we can retain the common-sense conviction that, even when the alleged discrepancy exists, what we immediately sense are material things is, as C.A. Strong remarks, "by contradicting common sense on a much weightier point, namely, by asserting that objects are capable of possessing at the same moment and in the same spot contradictory qualities."[45]

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45 C.A. Strong, "On the Nature of the Datum", in Essays in Critical Realism, New York, Macmillan Co., 1920, p. 224. There are, of course, those who do contradict common sense on this point, which is in its way fundamental to Price's whole argument against direct realism. For example, see T.P. Nunn, "Are Secondary Qualities Independent of Perception?" in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 10 (1909-1910), pp. 191-218, and B. Russell, Mysticism and Logic,

F. Media-Interference and Other Illusions.

Having shown the method of argumentation employed in the argument from perspectival variation, it is enough merely to give one or two examples from the remaining types of illusion. We look through a pane of uneven glass at a telephone pole across the street: when we do so, what we see (and originally take to be the telephone pole) is kinked.[46] Since it is impossible for the same thing to be straight (common sense believes there is a straight pole outside the window) and kinked, what we sense (kinked) cannot be identified with the telephone pole (straight). The person suffering from color-blindness looks at the tomato which is presumed to be red. What he sees is not red but gray. Again, the conclusion follows that the gray something which he senses cannot be identified with the tomato which the realist believes is red.

The case of hallucinations is a difficult one, inasmuch as most of us have not experienced them, and it is not

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45 (cont'd) pp. 147-148. We must content ourselves with the reply that in addition to thus contradicting common sense on one of its fundamental convictions, the theory proposed by Nunn and Russell contradicts common sense on an even more fundamental point, by reconstructing the notion of "material thing". On this, see sec. III, B, below.

46 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 223.

always clear what people who have experienced them mean by their reports. Does the victim of hallucination really see something or not? In Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty discusses the reports of several pathological hallucinations and comes to the conclusion that if the victims do see anything, it is not certain from their reports that the object and the seeing are qualitatively indistinguishable from ordinary, non-hallucinatory sensing.[47] Macbeth's vision of the dagger, frequently referred to in the literature as an example of hallucination, is a dubious one. There are other instances, however, such as the mirage which the desert-traveller sees[48] and the unusual things which the mescaline-taker sees, in which there is no question but that something is sensed. Price himself once took mescaline for experimental purposes, and he describes one of the hallucinations which he experienced:

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47 M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith, pp. 334-345. It is on the grounds that hallucinations involve experiences in which there is sensing as well as genuine objects of the sensing that Price and other sense-datum philosophers introduce them into the discussion.

48 If it is maintained that the traveller really sees a distant oasis which, by reason of unusual refraction of the light, only appears to be closer than it truly is, this might be classified as an illusion rather than as a true hallucination.

> At one stage of my mescaline experience I sat looking at a bedspread with a rather well-marked pattern on it, and suddenly I had a vivid hallucination of a pile of large and very solid-looking dead leaves, something like holly-leaves in shape, but five or six times as big. . . . How am I to describe this experience? 'You thought you saw a pile of large dead leaves.' To this I am inclined to reply (too brusquely perhaps) that it was not just a case of thinking, but of seeing. I saw those large leaf-like shapes as clearly as I see you now.[49]

As a matter of fact, a study of actual cases of hallucination leads very naturally to a distinction between pseudo- and genuine hallucinations. One distinguishing feature is that in the genuine case "the hallucination does appear within the normal visual field bounded in space and time, and takes on the character of objectivity as would any normal perception."[50]

In genuine cases of hallucination, therefore, there is not only something which is sensed, but what is sensed is sometimes indistinguishable from other parts of the visual field. This, taken together with the fact that the hallucinatory object is distinct from any material thing, supplies a

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49 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 18. (This paper was delivered at a meeting before being published.)

50 D. Howard, "Hallucination: a Phenomenological Analysis", in Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, 6 (1966), p. 212. Price's experiences were obviously genuine in this sense. For a further discussion of different types of hallucination, see J. R. Smythies, Analysis of Perception, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1956, chap. iv, esp. pp. 81-98.

basis for the argument that all of the parts of the visual field are distinct from material things.

G. A Note on "Errors of Sense".

The use which Price makes of various types of illusion in order to refute the tenets of direct realism is nothing new in the history of philosophical discussion. His careful analysis does, however, make use of a clarification which is somewhat recent and which is common to the sense-datum philosophers, namely, an insistence on the reality of the entities (and their characteristics) which are immediate sensed in so-called illusory situations.

To begin with, Price distinguishes between the entities which are sensed and the beliefs (or judgments) which we make on the basis of them.[51] This distinction makes it possible to say that in illusions, the errors--if they occur--are not to be attributed to the senses, but to the judgments which are based upon them.[52]

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51 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 63-65.

52 The same distinction is found, more or less explicitly, in the writings of some of the older philosophers. See, for instance, R. Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, 3rd Med., or IDEM, Principles of Philosophy, Pt. I, prin. lxvi (which is entitled: "That we also have a clear knowledge of our sensations, affections, and appetites, although we frequently err in the judgments we form of them"--see the Haldane-Ross ed., Vol. I, p. 247). Something of the same idea is intimated in the traditional theories regarding the proper vs. the common and the accidental objects of the

Simply making this distinction is not sufficient by itself, however, unless its implications are attentively scrutinized. Instead of being content to say that the senses do not err, it is essential to note that in the illusory situation they grasp an object distinct from themselves and that this object and its characteristics are as genuinely real as the material things to which the subsequent judgment, often mistakenly, attributes them.

This important fact, together with its consequences for direct realism, is sometimes concealed by what must be regarded as erroneous or at least slipshod ways of speaking. We shall consider two of them, under the headings of "The Appearing Theory" and "The Mode-of-Being-Affected Theory".

1. The Appearing Theory.

By the Appearing Theory is meant here the opinion of those who substitute the term "appears" for the term "is" when there is a question of describing the characteristics

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52 (cont'd) senses. Thomas Aquinas writes that "the sense is not deceived with respect to the proper object, as for instance sight is not deceived about color; except 'by accident', on account of some impediment to the organ, as when the sick person's sense of taste judges sweet things to be bitter on account of the bad humors with which the mouth is filled" ("Sensus enim circa proprium objectum non decipitur, sicut visus circa colorem; nisi forte per accidens, ex impedimento circa organum contingente, sicut cum gustus febrientium dulcia judicat amara, propter hoc quod lingua malis humoribus est repleta"--Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, P. I, q. 85, a. 6, c).

of the immediate object which is sensed in the illusory situation. This is best explained by an example. Price declares that when he looks toward the tomato, he is certain that, no matter whether there is a real tomato present or not, the object which is directly present to his consciousness is red, round and bulgy. The advocate of the Appearing Theory will agree with this, but only if there is a material thing present which really possesses these characteristics.[53] If, on the contrary, it is a question of a material thing which is really white, being illumined by a strong red lamp, then he will concede only that what is seen appears red. R.J. Hirst therefore "corrects" Price's initial description of what is directly sensed when one looks at the tomato:

> Strictly, all we can say from a single perceptual act is that there is something red or at least red-looking, for the object may be some other colour and only be looking red in this light.[54]

Applied to the other cases discussed earlier in this chapter, this would mean that when we or the color-blind person look at a distant Mont-Blanc or at a partially-immersed stick or at a piece of red paper, we should only say that

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53 Price calls this "the Principle of the Veridicality of Perceptual Verbs". See H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 9.

54 R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception, p. 33. Italics added.

what we see appears smaller than our thumb, or that what we see appears bent, or that some things appear gray.

The sense-datum philosophers will agree that this is not necessarily an incorrect way of speaking, for it is one which we all do in fact often use.[55] But they contend that such statements are further analyzable. Price, for instance, maintains that

> . . . when I say 'This table appears brown to me' it is quite plain that I am acquainted with an actual instance of brownness (or equally plainly with a pair of instances when I see double). This cannot indeed be proved, but it is absolutely evident and indubitable.[56]

This instance of brownness can be called "an appearance" or "sense-datum"--the precise term is unimportant in the present context. What is important is that, for Price, when something appears brown in a perceptual situation of the kind described, something is brown (just as in the above-mentioned cases something is red or smaller than one's thumb

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55 Advocates of Ordinary Language Philosophy often make this fact of language-usage, by itself, an argument against the sense-datum theory. J.L. Austin, for instance, writes: "What is wrong, what is even faintly surprising, in the idea of a stick's being straight but looking bent sometimes? Does anyone suppose that if something is straight, then it jolly well has to look straight at all times and in all circumstances? Obviously no one seriously supposes this. So what mess are we supposed to get into here, what is the difficulty?" (J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 29). See also G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1963, pp. 205-207, 209.

56 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 63.

or bent or gray). That these somethings are entities distinct from the material things involved in the illusory situations is plain inasmuch as their characteristics are incompatible with those of the relevant material things.

The advocates of the Appearing Theory deny all of this. They contend that in such situations the term "appears" is unanalyzable.[57] They maintain that it is an error to transform the verb "appears" into a noun, as happens when we say that for something to appear means that it presents an appearance.[58] To do so is to reify appearances or to hypostatize looks.

The disagreement is a basic one, therefore. When a white sheet of paper is looked at under a strong "red" light, shall we say that what we see appears red or that it is red? When we look toward the partially-immersed stick, shall we

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57 G.E. Moore points this out in his Philosophical Studies, pp. 244-245.

58 "Strictly speaking, . . . there are no such things as appearances. To suppose that there are would be like supposing that because Mr. X put in an appearance, there must have been something over and above Mr. X which he was kind enough to put in. 'Mr. X appeared': that is the proper mode of expression if we are to avoid difficulties" (W.H.F. Barnes, "The Myth of Sense-Data", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 45 [1944-1945], pp. 113-114). For the same thing see also P. Coffey, Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1917, Vol. II, pp. 168 and 181; M. Lean, Sense Perception and Matter, pp. 180-181, 193, 204-205; and K. Gallagher, "Some Recent Anglo-American Views on Perception", p. 125.

say that something appears bent or that something is bent? The sense-datum theorists' option for the second alternative is so crucial that one author calls it "the foundation stone" of their theory.[59]

The literature on this debate is a large one,[60] and it is obviously not possible to discuss here all of the linguistic, ontological and phenomenological aspects of the problem. Perhaps this is not required, however, since the question is one that can be settled, not by argumentation, but only by turning to the immediate evidence. Of course, argumentation is often of service in the task of making facts stand forth in all of their clarity and distinctness. But it cannot be too strongly emphasized that, ultimately, the issue of "appears" vs. "is" can only be decided by actually experiencing--by looking in the direction of the partially-immersed stick, by gazing at a piece of paper illuminated by

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59 ". . . the foundation stone on which the great edifice of the sensum theory has been raised" (W.H.F. Barnes, "The Myth of Sense-Data", p. 104).

60 See H.A. Prichard, Kant's Theory of Knowledge, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909, chap. iv; P. Coffey, Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge, Vol. II, chap. xx; there is a good introduction to the whole problem, together with bibliographical leads, in R.M. Chisholm's article, "The Theory of Appearing", in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Max Black, pp. 97-112; G.A. Paul, "Is There a Problem about Sense-Data?" in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 15 (1936), pp. 61-77; and the symposium on "Seeming", by K. Britton, H.H. Price, A.M. Quinton, in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 26 (1952), pp. 215-252.

a strong red lamp, by pushing one's eye to the side and "seeing double", etc. To the present author, Price's opinion on this issue seems incontrovertible.

Before proceeding to the Mode-of-Being-Affected Theory, it may be well to point out that in his very earliest article, when Price put forward the theory of "appearance and reality", this was much closer to the sense-datum theory than it was to the purely linguistic version of the Appearing Theory, since he there contended that "appearing is a kind of being".[61] In fact, there are many not-purely-linguistic Appearing Theories[62] which have similar affinities to the sense-datum theory. Both varieties of Appearing Theory are given the same name, but it would probably be better to speak of the "Linguistic Version of the Appearing Theory" and the "Ontological Version of the Appearing Theory". Many of the contemporary British philosophers advocate purely linguistic versions. They are, in effect, direct realists, and they explain illusions simply by referring to causal (physical or

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61 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 34. See pp. 22-25 above.

62 E.g., see that discussed by C.D. Broad in his Mind and Its Place in Nature, pp. 157-158.

physiological) theories.[63] Price's article, "Appearing and Appearances", is a lucid criticism of the shortcomings of their position.

2. The Mode-of-Being-Affected Theory.

There is another theory which attempts to evade the consequences of admitting the reality of the characteristics which things are said to "apparently possess in illusory situations." Often, it is not so much a theory as an ambiguous way of expressing certain facts. For instance, Thomas Aquinas writes:

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63 In this, they commit the error of "changing the subject." That is, in trying to answer the difficulties raised against direct realism by the problems of illusion, they begin to speak of different causal conditions, physical and physiological. For instance, when faced with the problem of the partially-immersed stick, many will say: "That presents no problem. The stick looks bent because the water refracts the light rays." Thus, M. Lean, criticising C.D. Broad's assertion that physical and physiological explanations are irrelevant to establishing the fact of what we sense, writes: "I must reply [that] . . . these facts about the different refractive indices of different media do explain the phenomenon of the bent appearance of the stick" (M. Lean, Sense-Perception and Matter, p. 180). On the basis of this, Lean goes on to deny that we sense entities distinct from material things. Of course, it is true to say that many of the features of our sense-data are probably due to such factors as light refraction and other causal conditions, but the first question to be settled is not "Why does what we sense have the qualities it has?" but "What is it that we sense?" Too often it is overlooked that the second question is not answered by the reply to the first.

> The being-affected of the sense is its very act of sensing. Whence, from the fact that the senses report in the same way as they are affected, it follows that we are not deceived in the judgment whereby we judge that we sense something. But from the fact that the sense is sometimes affected otherwise than as the thing is, it follows that it reports the thing to us differently than the thing is. From this, we are deceived through sense about the thing, but not about the sensing itself.[64]

This passage appears to us to be ambiguous. It speaks explicitly only of two things that might serve as objects of immediate awareness: the fact that we are sensing ("that we sense something") and the thing itself (for Aquinas, this is the extra-organic object).[65] But what about the objects or characteristics which we immediately sense in the illusory situations?[66] These do not fit into either of the categories which are mentioned. They are something over and above the mere fact that we are sensing, and they are

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64 "Dicendum quod sensum affici, est ipsum ejus sentire. Unde per hoc quod sensus ita nuntiant sicut afficiuntur, sequitur quod non decipiamur in judicio quo judicamus nos sentire aliquid. Sed ex eo quod sensus aliter afficitur interdum quam res sit, sequitur quod nuntiet nobis aliquando rem aliter quam sit. Et ex hoc fallimur per sensum circa rem, non circa ipsum sentire" (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, P. I, q. 17, a. 2 ad 1am).

65 On the notion of "extra-organic" and "intra-organic" objects, see the Appendix.

66 Such as the grayness or gray something which the color-blind person sees, the greenness or green something which we see when we look at a piece of blue paper covered over with yellow cellophane, the bentness or bent something which appears when we look toward the partially-immersed stick, the inverted image which we see when a magnifying-glass is interposed between us and a distant object, etc.

incompatible with the extra-organic objects. (That is why we make mistakes in attributing sensed characteristics to the extra-organic objects.)

Some commentators believe that this doctrine of Aquinas can be interpreted in such a way as to allow for the senses to grasp real qualities even though they do not necessarily exist formally in extra-organic objects. What the exact nature of these qualities is is something left rather obscure, but at least it would help to clarify the fact that more is involved in illusory situations than the act of sensing itself and the extra-organic material thing.[67] Such

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67 C. de Koninck, it seems, presents such an interpretation, though the article in which he does so leaves something to be desired in the way of perfect clarity on this point. He writes: "I cannot doubt, when I see a surface as green, that I truly see green, nor doubt that I see it as being in that surface. But whether it is there in the way in which my sight reports it is another matter. In fact, the more we learn about sensation the better we realize that qualities are not simply there as we sense them. But this does not change the really relevant fact that we do perceive qualities, that the perception of them is real, and that the term 'reality' refers first of all to the kind of being attained in actual and external sensation" (C. de Koninck, "Abstraction from Matter", Pt. I, in Laval Théologique et Philosophique, 13 [1957], p. 178). This may also be the interpretation of R. Verneaux, who writes: "Comme ce qui impressione les sens n'est pas toujours identique à ce qui est dans la chose, il s'en suit que les sens nous montrent parfois la chose autrement qu'elle est. Dans ce cas, nous nous trompons sur la chose, mais non pas sur ce que nous percevons. 'Circa ipsum sentire' ne doit pas s'entendre de la sensation comme phénomène subjectif dont nous avons conscience, mais de la sensation en tant que révélation d'un objet, ou plus précisément, en tant que révélation de ce qui impressione les sens" (R. Verneaux, Épistemologie Générale, Paris, Beauchesne et Ses Fils, 1959, p. 124.

an interpretation would be compatible with the sense-datum analysis, at least to the extent that both would admit that what is immediately sensed are entities distinct from the extra-organic objects and their characteristics.

It is conceivable, nevertheless, that Aquinas' doctrine might be interpreted to mean that in addition to the bare fact that we are sensing and in addition to the extra-organic object, we can also speak of "the way in which the sense is affected." And there are many philosophers who have spoken in just this way. It seems to be the view of those who advocate what is sometimes referred to as "the adverbial analysis of sensing."[68] According to such a view, to say that the "something appears red" when faced with an illusory situation is really to report something about the way the senses are affected under such-and-such circumstances. A better way to paraphrase the report would be to say "I sense redly."[69] Similarly Aquinas' statement might be taken to

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68 See R.J. Hirst, Perception and the External World, p. 306. Among its adherents can be listed C.J. Ducasse (for a convenient exposition of his views, see his article, "Introspection, Mental Acts and Sensa", in Mind, 45 [1936], pp. 180-192). R. Chisholm (Perceiving: A Philosophical Study, chap. viii) and J.R. Jones ("Sense-Data: A Suggested Source of the Fallacy", in Mind, 63 [1954], pp. 180-202). See also p. 291, n. 86, below.

69 R.J. Hirst, The Problems of Perception, p. 33.

mean that we cannot err if we limit ourselves to stating only "the way in which the sense is affected."

Now certainly such an interpretation would avoid the admission that there are any bothersome entities, such as sense-data or intra-organic objects, involved in illusory situations. But it is hard to see what precisely is meant here by "the way the sense is affected". Does it make any sense to say that we "sense redly" or "bludly" or any other such way? Is the redness which we do sense (or the bentness or the color-blind person's grayness) <u>really</u> the mode of an act?

Or, better, is a mode something that is visible or audible? If it is not, then this view cannot be accepted, since it blurs the distinction between act and object. In other words, the qualities which we immediately sense, and about which we cannot be mistaken, are encounted as being distinct from or transcendent to the act of sense-awareness.[70]

In conclusion, we can sum up this clarification by insisting that it is important to keep in mind, always, the reality of the entities which are immediately sensed. Their reality is not "merely apparent", nor are they unextended modes or ways of being affected by things.

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70 This is the point of G.E. Moore's highly influential article entitled "The Refutation of Idealism", in <u>Mind</u>, 12 (1903), pp. 433-453.

III. THE CAUSAL-DEPENDENCY ARGUMENT

A. First Version.

As was mentioned earlier, there are two chief arguments which Price employs to refute direct realism. Having discussed the first of these, the argument from illusion, we now turn to the second, which is based upon the implications of the fact that sensing involves causal dependencies. In Perception, Price refers to this second argument simply as "the causal argument", or else as "the causal form of the argument from illusion."[71] For reasons of clarity, however, i.e. in order to distinguish this argument from a quite distinct theory which is also called the "causal argument", we prefer to speak of the "causal-dependency argument".[72]

There are two forms of this causal-dependency argument which seeks ultimately to prove that the objects of immediate sense apprehension are dependent upon the percipient

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71 H.H. Price, Perception, chap. ii.

72 The second "causal argument" is the theory according to which we obtain our knowledge of material things by means of inferences based on our sense-data. Thus, Locke's theory is often given this name, as are the theories of other representationalist philosophers. It is this, rather than the causal-dependency theory, of which Price speaks in his article "The Causal Argument for Physical Objects". See chapter five below.

in some way and which goes on to conclude that, since material things are not thus dependent, there is a distinction between the objects of immediate sense apprehension and material things.

The first version dwells on the chain of causal processes preceding actual sensation. There are processes which take place outside the observer's body, between it and the material thing: with respect to sight, for instance, there is the initial radiation of light from some source of illumination, the reaction that takes place between the material thing and the radiated light (absorption, reflection, and/or refraction of some or all of the radiated light-frequencies), and the subsequent passage of the modified light to the observer. There are also the events that occur within the confines of the observer's body: the focussing of light by the eye's lens, the chemical reactions at the surface of the retina, the generation of nerve impulses in the optic nerves and the transmission of these to the brain. The event which we call "seeing" occurs only at the very terminus of this chain of events.

Some philosophers have given the impression that such facts by themselves refute direct realism. Bertrand Russell writes, for example:

> The physiologist sees what he is observing only after the light-waves have reached his eye; therefore the event which constitutes his seeing comes at the end of the series of events which travel from the observed brain [Russell is speaking here of a physiologist who is observing another man's brain] into the brain of the physiologist. We cannot, without a preposterous kind of discontinuity, suppose that the physiologist's percept [sense-datum] which comes at the end of this series, is anywhere else but in the physiologist's head.[73]

By themselves, the facts actually only seem to prove that the act of sensing is brain-dependent, not necessarily that the objects of the sensing are, as well. Those who argue in this way envision the act of sensing as being an act of the same genus as a physical or physiological act and as having the same sort of relation to its object: as if, since you cannot strike a match at one end of the room and, after the manner of actio in distans, make a candle at the other end of the room begin to burn (the candle must be brought into contact with the match), you also cannot have an act of sensing that is "in" the brain or mind and an object which is not in contact with the same place. Such an assumption overlooks the fact that sensing is a form of "being aware", and that, although it may have all kinds of connections with events in the brain, it is "totally different from

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73 B. Russell, Outline of Philosophy, Cleveland, Meridian Books, 1963, p. 146 (original, 1927).

any kind of bodily happening".[74] Although thinking, remembering, and imagining are activities which have connections with bodily happenings, only the most doctrinaire materialist would conclude that we cannot think of things distinct and even distant from those happenings. So, too, the mere fact that sensing occurs only at the very end of a chain of causal events does not by itself prove that we cannot sense material things which are at a distance from us.[75]

When such a fact is supplemented, however, by certain other considerations, it does show that not only the act of sensing, but also its object is causally dependent upon these physical and physiological events, or at least that the object's qualities are thus dependent. For instance, by altering the source of illumination, we can alter the colors that we see (this is the principle that makes technicolor movies possible: if we saw only the "white" color of the screen, there would be no movie). By interposing lenses of various kinds, we alter the shapes and sizes of what we immediately sense. If we press our eyeball, what we see doubles. If we

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74 "Being aware of something is totally different from any kind of bodily happening, though it may, of course, have all sorts of causal connections with bodily happenings" (H.H. Price, "Some Objections to Behaviorism", in Dimensions of Mind, ed. S. Hook, New York, Collier Books, 1961, p. 80).

75 See G.E. Moore, Philosophical Studies, pp. 183-184, for a similar observation.

dose ourselves with alcohol or drugs, there are changes in what we sense. Such facts as these, Price remarks, show that not only are the physical and physiological events "conditions" for sensing what we sense, but they "make a difference" to it.[76] And since the changes occur in what we sense at a time when there are no such changes in the material objects, then the discrepancy prevents us from identifying the two.

Perhaps one of the most significant facts of all whereby this discrepancy can be shown and one of the strongest reasons for asserting the causal dependency of what is sensed upon the causal events involved in sense perception is the time-lag that occurs between the time that light or sound waves leave the distant material thing and the time they reach the percipient.[77] Consider what happens when someone on the earth is said to be observing events taking

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76 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance," p. 27.

77 A. Lovejoy writes: "Roemer's observation in 1675, through which it became established as one of the fundamental theorems of empirical science, is not usually mentioned in the histories of philosophy; but the omission merely shows how badly the history of philosophy is commonly written, for the discovery was as significant for epistemology as it was for physics and astronomy" (A. Lovejoy, Revolt Against Dualism, p. 23). A.N. Whitehead has also signalized the importance of the theories of light and sound transmission for philosophy: see chap. ii of his work, The Concept of Nature, Cambridge University Press, 1920.

place on the sun--a prominence, for instance.[78] For eight minutes after the prominence on the sun begins, the earth-bound observer sees nothing but the plain orange disk which he takes for the sun. Only after eight minutes have elapsed, i.e. when the light which left the vicinity of the sun when the prominence began reaches the earth, does the observer begin to see a flame-colored jet rise from the edge of the orange disk. And by the time that the observer notices the last remnant of the flame-colored jet subside, the surface of the sun has already been "back to normal" for eight minutes.

Even more than this, the sun could cease to exist, and--apart from extraneous considerations--the observer on the earth would continue, for eight minutes afterwards, to observe, unchanged, that same round orange disk which he takes to be the sun. This is what happens in the case of burnt-out stars, i.e. stars which have long since ceased to radiate light, but from which light long ago radiated is still reaching earth and causing observers to sense white pinpoints within their visual fields.

The conclusion to be drawn from such facts is that, not only are the physical and physiological processes at least partial causes (or conditions) for the seeing, but they

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78 Solar prominences are clouds of gaseous material which shoot out from the surface of the sun, sometimes to heights as great as a million miles.

are also at least partial causes of the objects of the seeing--whereas these processes are not the causes of the material sun or the stars. Therefore the objects ensed are distinct from the material sun and stars, since the same thing cannot at the same time be both causally dependent on, and causally independent of these processes. By means of the "continuity" argument, this conclusion is extended to embrace all objects of sensation.[79]

Price's attitude toward this form of the argument has not been uniform, however. It has already been mentioned that he approved of such an argument in "Reality and Sensible Appearance". In Perception, though, he insists on adhering to the phenomenological or "immanent" method. Thus he writes:

> It is necessary to give up the 'external' standpoint of Physiology, and to take up instead what is called the 'immanent' standpoint, that of the individual experient himself.[80]

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79 On the continuity argument, see sec. IV below. It will be noticed that this first version of the causal-dependency argument utilizes many of the same facts already referred to in the argument from illusion. The basic principle is the same for both arguments: by showing that the perceptual situation involves contradictory characteristics, it argues that the bearers of these mutually exclusive characteristics must be numerically distinct. The similarities between the arguments are the reason why, as was mentioned earlier, Price sometimes refers to the causal-dependency argument as "the causal form of the argument from illusion."

80 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 37.

The reason for this move is, as it was with the argument from illusion, a fear of circularity: how do we know that there are light and sound waves, lenses, and so forth, unless by inspection? And if we know about them by inspection, how can we use such knowledge to refute the claim that we know them by inspection? But the difficulty is obviated in the same way that it was obviated above, namely by taking the argument simply as an internal critique of the ordinary version of direct realism, whose proponents concede the validity of scientific theories about light and sound transmission. The causal-dependency argument does show--and this Price later admitted[81]--that it is not possible to uphold

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81 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, chap. iv, esp. pp. 122-123, 135-136 (see p. 134 above). The reader of that work may be puzzled by some of the things which he finds there, particularly when Price refers to material things as being constituted by unsensed sensibilia, and when he treats this as the common-sense notion of material things. This would mean that material things are composed solely of color-patches, sounds, odors, and the like. ("Sensibile"--the plural of which is "sensibilia"--is a term used to designate an entity whose nature is the same as that of a sense-datum, except that it is not sensed: "sense-datum" should properly be used of things actually given to sense. Thus the addition of "unsensed" to "sensibilia" is redundant. See B. Russell, Mysticism and Logic, New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957 [original, 1917], pp. 143-144.) We must remember, however, that Price is speaking here from Hume's point of view, and Hume would have nothing to do with Locke's unsensed substrata: see H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 115. Thus, if there are unsensed substances, as common sense believes, then according to Hume these are nothing more than collections of sensibilia.

simultaneously the theories of modern science and the epistemological theory of direct realism.

B. Second Version.

In consequence of his intention of proceedings phenomenologically in Perception, Price found himself obliged to reformulate the argument from causal dependency.[82] The reformulation attempts to discuss the argument in terms of nothing but the data of actual sense experience, without any mention of such things as light and sound waves, lenses, pressing one's eyeball, etc. When we do this, we discover the following facts. First of all,

> . . . what we are acquainted with at any one time is not one single sense-datum but a number of generically different sense-data. Indeed at most moments of our waking life we are acquainted with tactual, auditory, and organic sense-data, and usually with visual ones also, if we are not blind.[83]

The total aggregate of sense-data being sensed at any given moment Price calls the Totum Datum. With respect to this aggregate, there are two facts which stand out. First, the Totum Datum can be distinguished into two parts, one of which consists of somatic sense-data, the other of non-somatic

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82 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 38-53. See also his Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 115-120.

83 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 38.

or environmental sense-data. Somatic sense-data are those which we take to belong to our body (those which the physiologist would treat as arising from stimulation of nerve endings present in the internal bodily structures, in the muscles, visceral organs, semi-circular canals, etc.), and environmental data are those which we take to belong to material things external to our bodies. Secondly, "somatic and environmental data vary concomitantly in certain respects, and this concomitant variation never ceases so long as there is a Totum Datum at all."[84] Thus, we find that between the somatic and environmental data there are relations of co-presence and concomitant variation.

If we accept these as facts that can be established phenomenologically, we can ask what follows from them. In Perception, Price devotes several pages of closely-reasoned discussion to this question. He says that the answer depends on how you interpret the relation between the two sets of data within the Totum Datum. We can interpret the relation

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84 Ibid. Price's use of the term "sense-data", throughout the pages of Perception where he is attempting to distinguish them from material things is apt to be confusing. In order not to beg the question involved here, it is necessary to take the term simply as a substitute for the phrase "the something(s) immediately sensed." At the initial stage of the argument against direct realism, the possibility is left open that the somethings immediately sensed are parts of one's body (somatic data) and parts of the material things forming our physical environment (environmental data).

either connectively or selectively.[85] This amounts to saying that we can interpret the relation of the two sets of data according to either of two theories of causality. The connective interpretation is based on Hume's theory of causality (see Hume's Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. I, pt. iii, sec. xiv), and states in effect that "as somatic and environmental data are never in fact found apart, therefore they cannot exist apart."[86] The selective interpretation is a bit contrived when stated in terms of sense-data rather than in terms of sense-organs, but according to it, our somatic data are instruments which enable us to become aware of the environmental data.[87]

Beginning with the selective interpretation, we can note that it would not refute direct realism, at least not if

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85 Price speaks of the "connective interpretation" and the "selective interpretation" (Perception, pp. 39-40). These are in most respects the same interpretations which he elsewhere calls the Generative Theory and the Selective Theory, respectively (see H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 121). The names come from C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, pp. 523ff.

86 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 39. For a succinct statement of the argument, see H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", p. 290.

87 Ibid. The term "selective theory" was originally used by C.D. Broad to refer to the theory that the senses are our instruments for selecting only certain already-existing sensibilia out of a mass of them. See C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, pp. 523ff. When Price states the theory in terms of sense-data alone, it becomes rather awkward.

we take direct realism according to one unusual version of it. If one supposed, for instance, that each visual datum was an individual existent in its own right, we can imagine space filled with them. There would then be no substance distinct from and underlying these data (sensibilia), but instead, a substance would be a particular group of these entities. The sun, for example, would be

> . . .a whole assemblage of particulars, existing at different times, spreading out from a centre with the velocity of light, and containing among their number all those visual data which are seen by people who are now looking at the sun. Thus the sun of eight minutes ago is a class of particulars, and what I see when I now look at the sun is one member of this class.[88]

A selective interpretation of the relation between somatic and environmental data would, in this scheme of things, mean simply that the somatic data are instrumental in selecting for our conscious awareness certain of an enormous multitude of sense-data which pre-exist our consciousness of them and can also continue to exist afterwards. The

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88 B. Russell, Mysticism and Logic, Doubleday ed., p. 132. To many people, the very oddness of such a "realist" theory would convince them that it would be better to relinquish the direct-realist epistemology than to be forced to adopt such a non-common-sensical "realist" ontology in order to preserve it. Writing as he did within the setting of British empiricism, where such theories are by no means uncommon, Price was obliged to consider them seriously. In fact, as we shall see, he himself has often leaned toward such ontological theories.

interpretation does not refute direct realism, if this latter is understood in such an unusual fashion.

Nevertheless, Price goes on to reject the selective interpretation. It was designed specifically as an alternative to the connective interpretation which argues that constant conjunction shows causal dependency and thus refutes direct realism. (The connective interpretation does this by showing that, unlike material things, the environmental data are causally dependent upon the somatic data.) But by arguing that constant conjunction does not prove causality here, the selective interpretation effectively denies causality everywhere:

> The theory holds that constant compresence and concomitant variation is not here a sign of causal connexion direct or indirect. But if so, we must ask, why should it be a sign of causation in other cases either?[89]

Such a consideration leads Price to conclude as follows:

> The conclusion, then, is that if there is ever any empirical reason for believing that two entities are connected, then somato-centricity must be interpreted connectively and not selectively.[90]

The connective interpretation of the phenomenologically-discovered facts, however, fares better in Perception.

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89 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 48.

90 Ibid., p. 50.

The texts already quoted are sufficiently indicative of Price's view on causation to make us expect that he takes the constant compresence and concomitant variation of somatic and environmental data as signs of causal dependency.[91] He does qualify this by saying that "there is no reason to give priority to the somatic rather than to the environmental."[92] In other words, we cannot argue that the environmental data are caused by the somatic rather than vice-versa.[93] The sole conclusion one can draw from the connective interpretation of the facts is that "sense-data are somato-centric, and . . . they exist only within the somato-centric complex."[94] This being so, the further conclusion can be drawn that, since material things are not, according to common-sense realism,

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91 For more on Price's conception of causality, see chap. vi, sec. IV, B, 2 below.

92 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 39.

93 See D. Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. I, pt. iii, sec. ii, for the doctrine that, of the two representations, that of the cause is distinguishable by being the earliest, and that of the effect by being the second, to appear in time. Price observes that there is no uniformity in this respect in the Totum Datum: "The staggering of the whole field of view when one is about to faint is preceded by a marked change in the whole quality of the datum. But equally it is sometimes the other way about. Thus I am aware of the succession of visual data purporting to belong to an approaching cricket-ball before I feel the blow on my hand or head" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 39).

94 Ibid., p. 54. See also ibid., pp. 77, 101 and 204.

somato-centric, then sense-data which are somato-centric are distinct from material things, and direct realism is refuted.

But is the argument valid? Price himself believed so. And although he later rejected a very similar argument in Hume's Theory of the External World, that rejection did not directly apply to the argument presented in Perception.[95] It seems, however, that the argument rests upon a very dubious premise. Stated baldly, that premise maintains that because it is not possible for, say, a round, red patch (the tomato-datum) to be experienced unless there is simultaneously experienced some kind of somatic data, therefore it is not

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95 See H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 115-120. In this later work, he examines an argument which would translate very spicific statements about sense-organs and nerve impulses into statements about color-patches, sounds, etc. For example, it would restate the fact that "the injection of certain drugs causes our sense-data to alter" into statements about seeing a syringe-shaped sense-datum approach the flesh-colored datum which we take to be our arm, feeling a prick, and later noticing that our visual field altered. After examining this reformulation (which is identical with a phenomenalist description of the facts), Price concludes that it "breaks down when we try to make it specific" (ibid., p. 116). It breaks down for the same reason that Hume's causal theory breaks down: our sense-impressions are too few and fragmentary to support by themselves Hume's claim of "constant conjunction" (ibid., pp. 116, 119). The difference between the argument criticized here and the argument presented in Perception is that the latter is a very general argument, stating merely that whenever there are any environmental data, there are always co-present some somatic data (and vice-versa). Only to the extent that his explicitation of what he means in Perception by "concomitant variation" would approximate the theory examined and rejected in Hume's Theory of the External World would the Perception argument be judged invalid by Price.

possible for the round, red patch to exist without the simultaneous existence of the latter.

How can such a premise be justified? It certainly does not appear to be self-evident. Suppose that the round, red patch spoken of is the surface of a material tomato, and that the somatic datum is my body (the distinction of the data from the relevant material things is what the argument is supposed to demonstrate, therefore it cannot be assumed at the outset). In such a case, Price's premise amounts to saying that, because I never see the near surface of a tomato without at the same time actually sensing my body, therefore the tomato's surface and my body cannot exist apart. Now, not only does this not appear to be self-evident, but most people would consider it quite obviously false. At the very least, one could request that it be supported by some arguments rather than offered simply as a self-evident premise for the refutation of direct realism.

We can conclude, then, that of the two versions of the causal-dependency argument as they are found in the writings of Price, the second, "phenomenological" version is invalid, resting as it does either on an implicit begging of the question or else on a mistaken premise. The first

version, like the argument from illusion, is probative if taken as a reductio ad absurdum of common-sense realism.[96]

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96 For the sake of completeness, we might refer here to the fact that the empiricist rejection of direct realism is sometimes attributed to a certain bias in favor of science. It is said that this bias manifests itself in a decision to exclude secondary qualities from the material world simply because the scientist is able to state his laws solely in terms of quantity and other primary qualities. (An exposition of such an argument for the exclusion of secondary qualities can be found in The Ways of Knowing, by W.P. Montague, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1925, pp. 253-257.) E.A. Burtt writes, for example: "We have discovered in the course of our historical analysis sufficient reason that in its first inception by Galileo and Descartes this position [the immanence-to-the-percipient of secondary qualities] was buttressed by nothing more than a mathematical apriorism" (E.A. Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday Anchor Bks., 1954 [original, 1925], p. 211; see also chap. iii, sec. C.) Maurice Mandelbaum objects that this charge of bias usually goes unsupported, adding that it was not as dominant a motive for declaring the subjectivity of colors, sounds, tastes, and the like, as is often supposed. Descartes, for instance, uses chiefly the argument from illusion to support the theory. (See M. Mandelbaum, Philosophy, Science and Sense Perception, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1964, pp. 219-220.)

It must be agreed, of course, that it is insufficient to argue against the objectivity of secondary qualities (i.e. to argue against the view that material things themselves are colored, make sounds, are hot or cold, etc.) on the mere grounds that the physicist has no need to include them in his formulae. But the difficulty must be faced by the common-sense realist that scientific theories about light and sound transmission, for example, are based on sense observations which, even though they may be carried out with greater care and attention to detail than is found in most of our everyday sense observations, are basically no different from these latter. That is to say, these observations which point to contradictions in his views, must be given equal attention by the direct-realist epistemologist, along with the attention which he devotes to observations which might seem to support his views. He has no legitimate grounds for ruling out of the discussion any reference to the possibly-embarrassing observations on which certain scientific theories are based. We can note with approval Price's rather

IV. CONSIDERATIONS OF CONTINUITY

Throughout the previous discussions, the purpose of which were to demonstrate the untenability of direct realism, a certain very important assumption has been implicitly at work. At the outset of the present chapter it was stated that in order to refute direct realism, the argument from illusion had necessarily to be supplemented by either of two further premisses. Either it had to be argued that every perceptual experience is in some way "illusory" (as that term was defined earlier), or else it had to be argued that, by reason of their intrinsic similarities, every perceptual situation involves the same type of entities and activities. Until one of these premisses is shown to be true, it would be a fundamental error of logic to suppose that because in some perceptual situations what is sensed are sense-data distinct from material things, therefore this is true in every perceptual situation. From a purely a priori viewpoint, it is quite easy to imagine that, although in many instances such as hallucination, illusions due to unusual lighting or the

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96 (cont'd) belated recognition of this fact, expressed in 1956 when he wrote: "It would be true that all vision, and all touch, too, is partially illusory, if the precisely located surfaces and clear-cut boundaries which solids and liquids appear to us to have do not really belong to them, but merely appear to do so because of the limited acuity of our senses, as the study of physics has led some philosophers to suppose" (H.H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion", p. 400).

refraction of light (the bent-stick illusion), and the like, we do not directly sense a material thing, we may still do so under "normal" circumstances.[97]

As far as the first supplementary premise is concerned, we have already quoted Price's remark in which he says that if the modern atomic and sub-atomic theories of matter are true, i.e. if material bodies are discontinuous, then all perception of material bodies is partially illusory.[98] (It is true that the atomic theory would not by itself refute a direct-realist interpretation of hearing and tasting and smelling, but no philosopher--to our knowledge--has ever suggested that if sight and touch do not directly apprehend material bodies or their inherent proper qualities, then perhaps hearing and taste and smell do.) If all vision is perspectival, i.e. involves the element of perspectival variation already spoken of, or if colors are not found formally in the material world, then again it could be argued that all vision is illusory.

Nevertheless, although it might be possible to supplement the arguments from illusion and causal dependency in

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97 Price mentions that, not only is this view conceivable, but it is probably quite close to what the ordinary person actually believes (see H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 125). For the reasons to be considered in the text, however, he rejects the view.

98 See p. 169, n. 96 above.

this manner, Price himself does not attempt to do so. Therefore we will pass on to the second possibility, which Price does consider.

> The whole point of the sense-datum terminology is that it is supposed to be neutral as between normal perception, illusion, and hallucination; whatever other differences there may be between them, it was claimed that at any rate the sensing of sense-data was present in all three.[99]

There are different arguments given for treating hallucinatory, illusory, and veridical sense perception as intrinsically similar and therefore involving the same fundamental structure. First of all, Price says, "there is no qualitative difference between normal sense-data as such and abnormal sense-data as such."[100] It would have been preferable for him to have said that there is no qualitative difference between what we immediately sense in those situations which we take to be normal (for the moment, let us take a

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99 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 12. Recall that this article is his most recent one on sense perception. That is the reason for his use of the past tense ("was claimed"), as well as his reason for speaking of the sense-datum terminology rather than of the sense-datum theory. (For a criticism of this latter point, see p. 53, n. 86 above.) He added that the sense-datum philosophers were "led to devise a terminology which is neutral as between illusion, hallucination, and normal perception and is designed to bring out the features which are common to all three. I think there are such common features, and we are in danger of forgetting it" (ibid., p. 4).

100 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 31.

"normal" situation to be one in which the ordinary person believes that he is sensing a material thing as it actually is) and what we immediate sense in those situations where we believe that our senses are misleading us. Price gives an example of what he means:

> The abnormal crooked sense-datum of a straight stick standing in water is qualitatively indistinguishable from a normal sense-datum of a crooked stick. Again, a mirror-image of a right-hand glove 'looks exactly like' a real left-hand glove.[101]

To be complete, he might have included here an example of an hallucination. For example, a person under the influence of the drug, mescaline, has an experience which is "very like a case of seeing in the veridical sense of 'see'".[102]

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101 Ibid. Again, Price's use of "sense-datum" here is liable to be misleading (i.e. to beg the question) unless our previous cautions are kept in mind.

102 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 18. The description which Price gives of his experience , in this article, is especially valuable because he was able to describe it with a full awareness of the philosophical implications of his experience. Part of his description was quoted above (p. 140). Further parts of it are pertinent here: "The most obvious fact about hallucinations is the resemblance they have to normal or veridical perceptions. But how do they resemble normal perceptions? How or in what respect was my situation like what it would have been if I had been seeing real dead leaves of an unusual size? Because there was something I actually experienced, something actually present in my visual field along with the walls, floor, etc., which were physically before my eyes; and this something was very like what would have been present if I had been seeing a real pile of large dead leaves, in the veridical sense of the word 'see'. Given the necessary skill, I could draw a sketch of what there was in my visual field on that occasion, or paint a picture of it. . . One has to use the word 'see' in describing this experience because it was in fact a visual

The conclusion is suggested that if these three kinds of experience are so alike as to be qualitatively indistinguishable apart from further experience,[103] and if the objects which are immediately sensed in one so resemble the objects immediately sensed in the other, then the objects <u>are</u> of the same nature.

> Is it not incredible that two entities so similar in all these qualities should really be so utterly different: that the one should be a real constituent of a material object, wholly independent of the observer's mind and organism, while the other is merely the fleeting product of his cerebral processes?[104]

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102 (cont'd) experience; and though what was experienced was not physically there, it had color, shape, and location, just as the other parts of the visual field had (the walls, the floor, the legs of the bed which I saw at the time)" (<u>ibid</u>., pp. 18-19).

103 "The fact is that from the character of a perception considered by itself, that is, apart from its relation to further sense-experience, it is not possible to tell whether it is veridical or delusive" (A.J. Ayer, <u>The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge</u>, p. 7). Some opponents of sense-data accept this "similarity from within", but, then, like M. Lean, go on to declare that it has no significance since the situations are "objectively very much unlike", i.e. "the veridical situation involves an object, but the delusive situation involves only an experience very much like . . . that which one has of an object" (M. Lean, <u>Sense-Perception and Matter</u>, p. 40). Such an evasion amounts to radically separating the experience and its object: the experiences are the same, but in one, the veridical, case there is an object, while in the hallucinatory case there is none. A distinction like this is unavailing, however, since it ignores the fact that what makes the experiences similar is precisely the similarity of their objects: see Price's report of his own mescaline experience, quoted in the foregoing footnote.

104 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 32.

And since it is known that in hallucinations and in illusions (like that of the bent stick), what is sensed is a sense-datum which cannot be the surface of a material thing (since there is no such material thing involved), then it follows that in other perceptual experiences what is immediately sensed must be sense-data which are not the surfaces of material things.

J.L. Austin has attacked this argument which makes hallucinatory, illusory, and veridical experiences indistinguishable from within, and which concluded that the only differences are extrinsic, such that in veridical experiences, but not in the others, there exists a material thing that somehow "corresponds" to the sense-datum.[105] Although he does not deny that there may be instances in which such experiences are indistinguishable, he insists that such cases are not nearly so common as Price and other sense-datum philosophers seem to believe.[106] He says, for instance, that nobody would seriously suggest that the experience of dreaming that one is being presented to the Pope is qualitatively indistinguishable from actually being presented to the Pope. Nor is seeing stars when we are hit on the head exactly the same as seeing stars when we look into the sky. Furthermore,

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105 J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, chap. v.

106 Ibid., p. 52.

the reason why we are seldom deceived when we find ourselves in the situations which Price calls illusory is that, as psychological investigations have shown, our judgments about what we see are based on certain "concomitants of the main thing,"[107] of which we may or may not be consciously aware. By "concomitants" Austin is referring to what others call "cues". He mentions the fact that when we see the stick immersed in water, we are usually able to tell from reflections, etc., that it is in water, and so we do not mistake it for a bent stick out of water. When we include such cues or concomitants in our account of illusory and veridical perceptions, he says, then "surely this is a perfectly obvious respect in which 'the perception' [of the stick in water] differs from, is distinguishable from, the 'perception' we have when we look at a bent stick not in water."[108]

Austin is, of course, perfectly correct. To state, as Ayer does, for example, that "from the character of a perception considered by itself, that is, apart from its relation to further sense-experience, it is not possible to tell whether it is veridical or delusive,"[109] is to neglect some

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107 Ibid., p. 53.

108 Ibid.

109 A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 7, (quoted above in n. 103 on p. 174).

important distinctions or qualifications. It is very true that in psychological experiments it is possible to cut off many of the pertinent cues, so that the observer does not even suspect that he may be mistaken in a particular perceptual judgment,[110] and in such cases we may say that there is no intrinsic indistinguishability. But these are uncommon experiences for most people.

But does this vitiate Price's contention? We must again be very careful not to overlook the absolutely essential point which was mentioned earlier in sec. II, G of the present chapter. When one looks at the partially-immersed stick, one sees something which is bent: even if the bottom half of what is sensed looks, not like the bottom half of a stick out of water, but rather like the bottom half of a stick in water, it still looks as much like the near surface of a material thing as anything that we ever sense does. It also looks as much like something distant from us and hard as anything ever looks. When we look toward a blue sheet of

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110 The famous experiments by A. Ames, Jr., might be mentioned as examples. (See W. H. Ittelson, The Ames Demonstrations in Perception, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1952.) Other examples: it is impossible in some situations to distinguish between an oval piece of cardboard held upright and a round piece of cardboard held at a tilt when both are viewed against a brightly-lit white screen (both appear oval); a blue sheet of paper, over which a piece of yellow cellophane is placed is invariably declared by observers to be green; etc.

paper covered with yellow cellophane, what we sense looks as green--and as unlike any blue or yellow--as any green that we ever see, and it also looks like it belongs as much to the world of material things as any "non-illusory" color. When we look toward the sun and see what we take to be a huge solar prominence shooting outwards, it would be impossible to tell, just by looking, that what one is sensing is not "out in the vicinity of the sun". In other words, in illusory and genuinely hallucinatory experiences, one is sensing objects which are certainly in no obvious way different from the kind of objects one senses in so-called veridical experiences.[111]

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111 This would be, basically, the reply of the sense-datum theorist to the suggestion that in certain privileged circumstances, i.e. in "normal" or "optimal" ones, we sense the real qualities of material things. In other words, such a suggestion must be met by emphasizing that these so-called genuine qualities are no more genuine or real than the other colors, sounds, odors, shapes, and sizes that we sense. When that fact is realized, then the further considerations mentioned in the text become applicable. There are, however, other arguments against the notion of "normal" when it is used to describe a certain class of perceptual conditions. First of all, it is difficult to see how "normal" can mean anything more in the ultimate analysis that "most frequently realized", and if that is the case, then it must be objected that "this does not touch at all the question of the status of what is seen" (K. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Knowledge, p. 106; pp. 106-108 of this book discuss the concept of "normal conditions"). Furthermore, the attempt to determine what are normal conditions is a circular process: it is only possible to learn what normal conditions are if we are able to learn accurately the genuine characteristics of the things that constitute "normal" conditions--and only those characteristics are genuine which appear under normal conditions. See A.J. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, pp. 128-129.

Our judgments (or, in Price's terminology, our acts of perceptual acceptance) may be correct, in virtue of the concomitantly-sensed cues that make up part of the illusory experiences. But, the sense-datum philosophers would argue, the ability to make use of such cues and to form correct judgments is conditioned by previous experience. What is at stake here is not the judgments which we make in these situations, but the nature of what we sense. When we limit ourselves to this basic question, then we find that apart from extraneous cues or concomitants, there is no very obvious difference between what is sensed in hallucinatory, illusory, and veridical sense experiences.[112] If in the one case it

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111 (cont'd) When Price discusses the meaning of "normal" he emphasizes the fact that all sense-data are equally real, but adds that some are picked out as "standard" or "optimal". Those are standard or optimal which serve as a common term of reference for the various sense-data which are said to pertain to a particular object. The picking-out is conventional, for the purposes of linguistic intercommunication. See H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 210-215. At other times, he speaks of the "normal" or "optimal" sense-data as those which are spatially-synthesizable: see his Review of J. Wisdom's Problems of Mind and Matter, p. 360. On this notion of spatial synthesizability, see chap. vi, sec. IV, A, 3 below.

112 Perhaps one further reflection may be helpful in alerting us to the need for limiting ourselves to basic considerations. Austin writes that "it is simply not true to say that seeing a bright green after-image against a white wall is exactly like seeing a bright green patch actually on the wall" (Sense and Sensibilia, p. 49). This assertion gains its plausibility from the fact that any movement on the part of our eyes makes it appear that the after-image has moved (though, in reality, the after-image retains its position in respect to our visual field: it is the background which moves), whereas with the "real" patch on the wall the

is impossible for what is sensed to be the surface of a material body, then there is good reason to believe that the same holds good of the other cases as well.

The same point can be pursued from another angle. Let us suppose, as some direct realists admit is possible, that in some instances what we see are entities distinct from the material things themselves.[113] For example, presuming that the time-lag argument has convinced an observer that what he senses at the moment that he is "watching" the solar prominence cannot be the sun itself, he will admit that what he senses is something else. But then, if the distance between the observer and the sun could be gradually diminished

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112 (cont'd) patch does not appear to move. But the movement or non-movement is not perceived with a single, momentary glance (nor does the after-image's brightness wane in a single instant): if we limit ourselves to that, i.e. to a single glance, then there is not the difference between the two experiences which Austin claims.

113 Austin admits it, at least for the sake of argument: "Even if we were to make the prior admission . . . that in the 'abnormal' cases we perceive sense-data, we should not be obliged to extend this admission to the 'normal' cases, too" (J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 52). By insisting that at least at short ranges we must be able to perceive objects directly and without any time-lag if we are to learn that in other cases there is a serious time-lag (for the transmission of light and sound waves), W.S. Haymond seems to concede that in these latter instances we do not perceive distant material things directly: see W.S. Haymond, "Afterthoughts on the Logic of Empiricism," pp. 258-259). Consult also K. Marc-Wogau, "On C.D. Broad's Theory of Sensa", pp. 502ff, for an explicit theory along this line.

(with the impossible proviso that this could be done without injury to the observer), there would have to come a moment when the "something else" drops out of sight, and the sun itself begins to be sensed directly. If such a thing happened, we should expect to notice a sudden change--if the objects of immediate sensing are different in illusory situations from what they are in veridical situations. But it is difficult to imagine any such change occurring. (Price illustrates the same fact with the example of a cricket ball.)[114] Consider the immersed stick again: is it true that we notice a change in the nature of what we sense as we draw the stick out of the water? Or finally, does such a change in the nature of what we sense occur when we lift the yellow cellophane from the blue paper and, instead of something green, now see something yellow and something blue?

The same argument can be reinforced from a different, though closely allied, viewpoint. Do not compare a single object of sensing with a later single object, such as was done above. Take an entire scene at once, but a scene in which there is at least one "something sensed" which is not a material thing, e.g. the green patch which we see when the blue paper is covered with yellow cellophane, or the image of the sun touching the tree-tops in its descent to the

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114 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 32.

horizon. Is it believable that the green patch is somewhere else and of quite a different nature than the seen objects which apparently surround it (e.g. the table on which the paper rests)? And what about the orange disk which we take to be the sun? Where and what is it, in relation to the surrounding material things that the direct realist believes he sees directly (e.g. the tree-tops, etc.)?

Lastly, if the realist does believe in the scientific account of light and sound waves, sense-organ stimulation, nerve impulses, and other such things, then let him explain the origin of sense-data in those instances when it is admitted that what is immediately sensed is not the distant material thing. For instance, the light which is reflected from the lower half of the partially-submerged stick is refracted as it leaves the water on its way to the observer's eye. When the light from both upper and lower halves of the stick reaches the eye, it is focussed into a quasi-image on the retina, and the image is of a bent stick. Either this is what is directly sensed or else what is sensed is a sense-datum generated when the nerve impulses finally reach the brain. By passing the first alternative (what we will refer to as the theory of "intra-organic" objects, or "indirect realism")[115] since we are here concerned with the refutation

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115 See the Appendix.

of direct realism, let us turn to the second and ask whether it is plausible to say that sense-data are generated in this and other cases of illusory sense experience, and not in other sense experiences? Price puts the question this way:

> Whatever stage we examine, from the retina to the optic centres in the back of the head, the two processes [i.e. in veridical and in illusory experiences] are similar in kind. Both alike consist of complicated physico-chemical changes occurring in nerve-cells. Can we suppose that processes so similar can have such utterly different results? It is very difficult to suppose this. To do so is surely contrary to all the principles of causal reasoning.[116]

Obviously, this is an internal criticism of direct realism, valid only if one accepts the premise regarding the processes involved in sensing an illusory sense-datum. That is, the argumentation in favor of the distinction of illusory sense-data from material things is here presumed to have been effective. If that is accepted, it is likely that the direct realist will explain the illusory object in one of the two ways mentioned. Once that is done, Price's argument "from

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116 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 126. C.D. Broad made the same point with his customary bluntness: "In view of the continuity in the external conditions of our visual sensations, I find it very hard to believe that some of the visual sensibilia which we sense are parts of the surfaces of the bodies which we see, and that others are not parts of the surfaces of any body. . . . what I may call Prof. Marc-Wogau's 'half-and-half' theory is logically possible, but it is the kind of theory of which I can only say: 'If it should be true, I'll eat my hat!'" (C.D. Broad, "Reply to my Critics", in The Philosophy of C.D. Broad, ed. P.A. Schilpp, pp. 807-808).

continuity" becomes relevant to the objects of non-illusory sensing.

PART THREE

PERCEPTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

CHAPTER V

PERCEPTUAL ACCEPTANCE

I. PERCEPTUAL ACCEPTANCE: IN GENERAL

While referring to several of the objections which one hears brought against the sense-datum theory, Price speaks of those who complain that the theory is trying to deprive us of something. "We thought", they say, "that we saw trees, books, mountains, lightning flashes. The sensum theory is supposed to say that we did not really see these things at all. . . . Instead, we are only allowed to see a kind of coloured facades, and private and evanescent ones at that."[1]

To this complaint, Price replies:

> But this is a misunderstanding of what the sensum theory is maintaining. Almost all the philosophers who have used any variety of the sense-datum terminology . . . distinguish in one way or another between sensing and perceiving. There is a familiar and easily recognizable experience which we call seeing a tomato. The sensum theory does not say that this <u>just</u> consists in being aware of the bright

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1 H.H. Price, "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology," p. 473. The complaint applies equally to hearing, feeling, etc.

> red colour-expanse with a roundish shape. It says there is another element in the experience as well, and an equally essential one, namely the believing or the taking for granted that this colour-expanse is related in a specially intimate way to a physical tomato.[2]

In plain words, Price is saying that, while it is true that the sense-datum analysis does exclude our instinctive belief that we sense material things, there is another avenue open whereby we can gain an awareness of them.

In this connection, it is important to keep in mind Price's original aim. It is not his intention to isolate "atoms of sensation" and then to show how all subsequent knowledge is a construction based solely on them. Rather, Price insists that we take perceptual experience as it is, respecting all of its data, and then analyse it into its components and attempt to validate them. We must not take the position of refusing to admit anything which cannot first be validated.

Now it is just the fact that the awareness of material things is part of our experience. On this point, Price is quite clear:

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2 Ibid.

> It is surely rather odd to argue for the existence of a material world at all, though of course many very illustrious persons have done so. For it seems to me that we know to begin with that there are many material objects.[3]

Thus, Price is maintaining that, in the perceptual situation, besides our sensing of sense-data, we also enjoy a non-sensuous awareness of material things. Some philosophers use the term "perception" to refer to this latter awareness,[4] but Price prefers the phrase "perceptual

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3 H.H. Price, "The Causal Argument for Physical Objects", p. 96. See also his Review of R. Brain's The Nature of Experience, p. 73, and Perception, p. 188.

4 It is not easy to trace back through the history of thought the distinction between sensing and perceiving with perfect assurance. D.W. Hamlyn has made the attempt to do so, but with only qualified success, in his Sensation and Perception: A History of the Philosophy of Perception (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1961). He remarks that Reid was perhaps the first philosopher to insist rigorously on the distinction (op. cit., p. 126). In this, he is supported by E.G. Boring who writes that "at least he [Reid] clarified and formalized the problem of objective reference by establishing the distinction between the words sensation and perception" (E.G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 206). One thing worth noting about the distinction, however, is this: Reid and others treated sensation as being similar to feeling (like pain and pleasure) and therefore as having no object. For instance, in his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Reid wrote: "Sensation is a name given by philosophers to an act of mind which may be distinguished from all others by this, that it hath no object distinct from the act itself" (op. cit., ed. A.D. Woozley, London, Macmillan Co., Ltd., 1941, p. 18). Price, and the sense-datum philosophers generally, treat sensation (or sensing, as they prefer to call it) as an act of cognition which does have an object.

consciousness".[5] Nor does he take this additional element of the perceptual situation for a simple, uncomplicated thing as is often done. He carefully distinguishes two aspects within it. The first of these is an initial "taking for granted" with respect to a material thing, and this he calls perceptual acceptance. It varies in the definiteness of what is taken for granted, depending upon the extent of the percipient's previous experience. On the occasion of multiplied sensings and perceptual acceptances pertaining to the same material thing, the perceptual acceptance is transformed into a new state of mind which Price terms perceptual assurance.

Price did not always profess this distinction between sensing and perceiving (or perceptual consciousness). In his earliest article on sense perception, he was particularly concerned to show that the idea of an act of sensing whose object would be discrete sense-data was not verified in our actual experience, and that sense-data were "at best nothing

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5 It is not unusual to find philosophers giving a special meaning to certain terms or phrases that would suggest to the unfamiliar reader something slightly different. Thus, it would be natural to take the phrase "perceptual consciousness" to refer globally to our conscious awareness of the material environment. But Price uses it to refer only to a part of that total experience, namely, to its non-sensuous element (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 25). Contrary to our natural expectations, therefore, perceptual consciousness does not, for Price, include sensing.

but abstractions."[6] His position in this article is not entirely clear, however, and at one point he states:

> Perhaps we may be allowed to use the term perceive to mean both sentient awareness of sensuous qualities, and intelligent awareness of one substance whose qualities they are. For as we have tried to show, we cannot possibly have the first without the second. We never have sentience without intelligence, nor qualities without substance.[7]

If we substitute "perceptual consciousness" for "intelligent awareness" in this passage, we can see that his position here is not too far removed from his later views.[8]

In "Mill's View of the External World", Price has come to accept the act of sensing with sense-data as its particular objects. With respect to the proposal that sensation is accompanied by another form of experience which would be a direct awareness of physical objects (this is what Price, in this article, conceives Reid to have meant by "perception"), he only remarks: "I do not seem to have any immediate awareness of these objects."[9] But, although he

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6 H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 21.

7 Ibid., p. 26, n. 1.

8 Also: when he later accepted the distinction, he insisted that perceiving is not subsequent to sensing but takes place simultaneously with it--which is somewhat like his early view.

9 H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 110.

declines to discuss it in this article, he makes a passing reference to the possibility of what is in reality the same type of consciousness he later called perceptual acceptance:

> When I have the tactual sensations just described [a set of pressures, having a certain pattern and a certain intensity], I certainly am strongly "under the impression that" a table exists, that my own body exists, and that they are in contact.[10]

By the time he wrote "On the So-Called Space of Sight", Price was openly espousing the theory that sensation is accompanied by perception, which is "the conception and belief of the present existence of a material object."[11] This is the theory, in a nutshell, which he so elaborately develops in Perception.

Let us note from the outset that it is difficult to describe perceptual consciousness, if only for the reason that we pay so little attention to it. The difficulty is compounded when the attempt is made, not only to describe perceptual consciousness, but to determine the ontological processes and objects involved.

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10 Ibid.

11 H.H. Price, Op. cit., p. 116. In a footnote to this sentence he adds that "it would be very convenient if the term perception could always be used in this, the sense given to it by Reid."

II. PERCEPTUAL ACCEPTANCE: DIRECT INTUITION OF MATERIAL THINGS?

In general, we can say that for the philosophers who distinguish sensing and perceiving, sensing concerns qualities such as color, sound, odor, etc., whereas perceiving concerns material things like trees, houses, tomatoes, and so forth. Reid, whose name is so closely associated with the distinction, wrote:

> When I smell a rose there is in this operation both sensation and perception. The agreeable odour I feel, considered by itself without any relation to any external object, is merely a sensation.[12]

With respect to perception, he says:

> If . . . we attend to that act of our mind which we call the perception of an external object of sense, we shall find in it these three things: first, some strong conception or notion of the object perceived; secondly, a strong and irresistible conviction and belief of its present existence; and, thirdly, that this conviction and belief are immediate, and not the effect of reasoning.[13]

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12 Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, ed. A.D. Woozley, p. 150. Reid writes here as if the sensation were an object and not an act, but recall his identification of the two (see p. 187, n. 4 above). A few lines after the sentences quoted above, he writes: "There is no difference between the sensation and the feeling of it--they are one and the same thing."

13 Ibid., p. 79. Reid's theory is not as clear as it might at first appear from these selected quotations. Price speaks of Reid's theory of perception as being one which Reid maintained "with some hesitation and much obscurity of language" (H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 109). For an extensive treatment of the problems presented by Reid's works, see A.D. Woozley's long introduction to his edition of Reid's Essays, from which the above quotations have been taken.

These quotations represent, in brief, the theory which Price maintains, especially in Perception. He himself observes at the end of one of his chapters that "the position maintained in this chapter with regard to the nature and validity of perceptual consciousness is in essence identical with that maintained by Reid against Hume."[14] His chief qualification is that "Reid did not carry his analysis of perceptual consciousness far enough, and failed to distinguish clearly between acceptance and assurance."[15]

The first question which we can ask concerning the theory is this: how does the perception of a material thing resemble or differ from the sensing of sense-data? As Price explains it, in the act of sensing we are directly aware of sense-data. Is our perceptual awareness of material things direct in the same sense?[16]

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14 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 203.

15 Ibid.

16 The ideas of "direct" and "indirect" knowledge are not completely unambiguous. When there is a question of discursive argumentation from premisses to conclusions, some would say that the conclusion is known indirectly and mediately from the premisses. Others would say that when we have arrived at the conclusion, it is then known directly and in itself. (See H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 150-151.)

The same difference of opinion--one that is terminological to some extent--is found in the case of knowledge that involves ideas or representations. Some believe that if there is any intermediary at all, then knowledge is indirect. Thus, some scholastics feel that if eternal sensation involves expressed species, it will not be direct: e.g., R.P. Phillips writes that "it [the presence of an

When he wrote "Mill's View of the External World", Price was under the impression that Reid had maintained that perception was a "direct awareness" of the physical object and that it accompanied sensation.[17] But he rejected the theory on the grounds that (a) he was not conscious of possessing any such immediate awareness, and (b) the impression--which he received in such situations--that a certain material thing existed was open to the possibility of being completely erroneous.[18]

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16 (cont'd) expressed species in external sensation] would be positively harmful, since it would prevent the sense from grasping its object immediately, so that we should have experience, not of objects, but of the species" (R.P. Phillips, Modern Thomistic Philosophy, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1950, Vol. I, pp. 227-228). Others deny that the presence of an expressed species in cognition necessarily involves indirect knowledge: "The direct object of intellectual apprehension is *not* the concept [the expressed species] or the intentio intellecta (otherwise logic would be the whole of science), but, rather, the res" (J. Maritain, Degrees of Knowledge, trans. G.B. Phelan, p. 391).

17 "Reid blames his predecessors for failing to distinguish between sensation and perception. When (as I say) I touch a table, I do not merely feel a set of pressures, having a certain pattern and a certain intensity, as philosophers like Berkeley and Hume suppose. The sensation is attended by another quite different form of experience, viz., by a direct awareness of a certain physical object, in this case of a smooth, flat, rigid object with a right-angled corner. This other kind of experience or mental act by which every sensation is attended, Reid calls 'perceiving'" (H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", pp. 109-110).

18 H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 110.

When he wrote Perception, he still opposed the theory that in addition to the sensing of sense-data we also enjoy a direct awareness of material things, but he no longer appeals to the first of the reasons he had given for this opposition to the theory in "Mill's View of the External World", namely, that he was not conscious of possessing any such direct awareness. (Perhaps he was not longer confident that the question could thus be decided phenomenologically.)[19] Instead, he now restricts himself to the second reason, i.e. that perceptual acceptance may be mistaken:

> Now in the first place it is clear that this perceptual consciousness is not a form of knowing. It is neither 'knowledge by acquaintance' (as sensing is) nor is it 'knowledge of facts about.' For it may be mistaken. It may be that the thing is not a tree but something else. It may be not over there but somewhere else (I may have been deceived by a mirror image); it may not have the size or the shape I take it to have. Or perhaps I am even having a complete hallucination and there is no material object present to my senses at all.[20]

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19 R. Firth makes the observation also: "Price's only reason for refusing to say that our consciousness of physical objects is intuitive appears to be epistemological rather than phenomenological" (R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. I, p. 456).

20 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 139. Although he does not mention "direct awareness" in this passage, this is implied, since "knowledge by acquaintance" is a synonym for "having directly present to consciousness." See Perception, p. 3. The same thing, practically speaking, can be said of his use of the word "knowledge". Throughout his writings, Price interprets "knowledge" to mean something like "direct inspection of", so that for him the word carried the same implication of certainty and inerrancy that the Greek word "epistémé" carries: "In knowledge, the mind is directly

The point Price is making is this: if a particular act is direct or intuitive, we ordinarily think of it as being infallible. "Immediate apprehension cannot possibly be mistaken."[21] One way to find out whether or not a particular act is direct or intuitive is to see if it is ever mistaken. If it is, then by definition it is fallible, and cannot be direct or intuitive. How can the same kind of act be sometimes infallible and sometimes not?

How valid is this argument for proving that our awareness of material things is not as direct as our

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20 (cont'd) confronted with a certain fact or with a certain particular. Knowledge is by definition infallible, though of course, it need not be exhaustive. But it cannot be called true, because the alternatives true or false have no application to it. . . Knowledge is something ultimate and not further analysable. It is simply the situation in which some entity or some fact is directly present to consciousness" (H.H. Price, "Some Considerations about Belief", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 35 [1934-1935], p. 229). In saying that knowledge cannot be called true or false, Price is obviously comparing it to the case of vision: we do not ordinarily speak of seeing (or of simple apprehension) as being true or false. Either we see a thing or we don't. Likewise, either we know a thing or we don't. For example, if we think we know the definition of "funicular" and it later turns out that the definition we have in mind is incorrect, then we simply do not know the definition. See also H.H. Price, Review of H.A Prichard's Knowledge and Perception, pp. 116-117. This identification of knowledge with certain knowledge can be traced back at least to John Locke who wrote: "The highest probability amounts not to certainty, without which there can be no true knowledge" (J. Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk. IV, ch. iii, sec. xiv).

21 H.H. Price, "Our Knowledge of Other Minds", p. 65.

awareness of sense-data? Certainly there are many who will not be convinced by it. Some will counter, for example, that although the act of perceptual awareness does not necessarily give us specific knowledge of the material thing, yet by it we are made directly conscious at least of a "material thing in general". In other words, it might conceivably be argued that if we narrow our claims and admit that a single act of perception does not tell us with certainty what kind of object we perceive (whether it is a live person or only a mannequin, a tomato or a wax imitation, etc.), we can still maintain that even a single act of perception does give us an intuitive grasp of the person or tomato under the formality of "some kind of material thing".[22]

As unobjectionable as this proposal might seem at first glance, it is nevertheless necessary to modify it in the light of certain common experiences--and especially in the light of hallucinations. True, there are many occasions when it might seem plausible to argue that in addition to sensing "illusory" sense-data, we simultaneously perceive actually existing-material things: e.g., it might be said

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22 Something like this seems to be implied by the following statement from J. Owens: "When . . . you see or feel anything, you spontaneously make the judgment that what you see or feel exists. The judgment may take the vague form 'Something exists'. Upon examination, the 'something' appears as something corporeal and extended, which is the type of thing that is felt or seen" (J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, p. 267).

that, besides sensing the bent-stick sense-datum, we perceive a material stick which is really straight. But the same thing cannot be maintained in the case of genuine hallucinations, disintegrated stars, double images,[23] echoes, and the like.[24] In these latter situations, there are no material

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23 When we press one eyeball to the side, everything in the visual field is doubled, i.e. there are now two of everything. Hume made use of this illusion in his Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. I, pt. iv, sec. ii (Everyman's edition, p. 203). Price treats it in Perception, pp. 57 and 62-63, and in Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 108-113. A case similar to this occurs in those situations which we usually describe as looking both at an object and at its reflection in a mirror. It frequently happens that only afterwards do we discover that there are not two distinct material things; therefore the perception of one of them as "an actually-existing material thing" was a mistaken (therefore fallible) perception.

24 As an interesting sidelight, one might note the implications which Thomas Aquinas' theory of transsubstantiation would have for the theory that in addition to sensing certain qualities, we directly perceive actually-existing material substances. His theory asserts that, in the Eucharist, the quantity, color, taste, etc., exist by themselves--there is no substance present in which they inhere, and the only substance which is present (Christ's body) is not perceivable. Yet the percipient seems to perceive an actually-existing substance, namely, that of bread (or wine in the correlative case), in this situation as truly as he does in any other. The admission that, since no perceivable substance exists here, there is none being directly or intuitively perceived would seem to support the claim that in no situation is the substance directly or intuitively perceived: if it is possible to be mistaken in this case where no illusory or abnormal viewing conditions are implicated, there is nothing to prevent the same from being true in any other situation. Thomas Aquinas examined this difficulty. He raises the objection that, inasmuch as the senses "perceive" bread in the Eucharist where there is no bread, our faith in transsubstantiation is not only praeter rationem, but contra rationem. His answer is that "there is no deception [of the senses]; the accidents, about which the senses judge, are

things present at the moment we seem to perceive them. It is therefore impossible to say even that at least we are always perceiving, in a very generic sense, a material thing.[25]

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24 (cont'd) truly there. The intellect, whose proper object substance is, is preserved from deception by faith" ("in hoc sacramento, nulla est deceptio; sunt enim ibi secundum rei veritatem accidentia, quae sensibus diiundicantur. Intellectus autem, cujus est proprium objectum substantia.... per fidem a deceptione praeservatur"--Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, P. III, q. 75, a. 5 ad 2 am). Here then, Thomas Aquinas is tacitly admitting that the intellect is unable to determine, solely from the data which one sense-experience provides, whether or not a substance is being presented to it. (Otherwise, faith would not be required to prevent the intellect from being deceived.)

25 This is true only if "material thing" is taken to refer to such items as chairs, trees, houses, etc. There are other theories which propose different types of material things as the objects of immediate sense-awareness.

First, there are some who believe that the immediate object of sense perception is the network of excitations in the cortex of the brain. See, e.g., J.J. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes", in Philosophical Review, 68 (1959), pp. 141-156, H. Feigl, "Mind-Body, Not a Pseudo-Problem", in Dimensions of Mind, ed. S. Hook, Collier ed., pp. 33-44, etc. If such a theory were true, it would make it possible to maintain that even in complete hallucination what is perceived is a material thing, i.e. a network of "abnormal" excitations. The theory is open to serious objections, however. For one thing, as Russell Brain points out, there is no similarity between the pattern of our visual field and the spatial deployment of the nerve excitations which are said to be identical with it. (See W.R. Brain, "The Neurological Approach to the Problem of Perception", in Philosophy, 21 [1946], esp. pp. 134-137.) For another, the radical qualitative differences between colors, sounds, odors, and other objects of immediate sense-awareness (the proponents of this theory, even when they do distinguish between sensing and perceiving, often maintain that the objects of the two operations are basically the same, differing only as part from whole) are incompatible with the qualitative homogeneity of optic, auditory, olfactory, and other nerve excitations. (See I. Asimov, The Human Brain, New York, Signet Books, 1963, p. 223.)

Another alternative to Price's rejection of direct perception of material things is the following. Although there are some situations in which we do not directly perceive material things, yet is it not plain that these are unusual, even abnormal, situations? Thus, "even if were to make the prior admission . . . that in the 'abnormal' cases we perceive sense-data, we should not be obliged to extend this admission to the 'normal' cases, too."[26] In other words, is it not possible that under the proper conditions perceiving does directly and intuitively grasp material things?

Whatever else might be said about such an alternative, one thing must first be made clear. Even if it were to be admitted that we enjoy direct perception of material things, this would be in addition to the sensing of sense-data. This contention rests on the arguments presented in the previous chapter, particularly the arguments which show

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25 (cont'd) There is another theory, held chiefly by neo-scholastic philosophers, according to which "what is immediately seen is just the object which touches the retina, what is immediately felt is the inner surface of the skin in contact with the nerve ends, what is heard immediately is only the sound within the ear, and so on" (J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, pp. 219-220). This theory is an important and interesting one and cannot be adequately treated in the space of a footnote. It will be dealt with, therefore, in a separate appendix. See the Appendix.

26 J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 52. In this remark, he is not distinguishing sensing and perceiving.

that the elements of perspective and causal dependency are to be found in every perceptual situation.

But even though there is always the sensing of sense-data, is it not plausible to believe that we directly perceive material things in most situations? We may possibly be mistaken about the correct identification of particular things, yet on those occasions when we do become aware of a material thing, is it not possible that our awareness is really direct?[27]

Several replies to this question are possible. First of all, one must ask himself whether his conviction that in certain situations he has absolute certitude that he

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27 It is not easy to find representative philosophers who would maintain such a view. As has already been remarked, Price seems at one time to have understood Reid as holding it. But he later came to interpret Reid differently, i.e. as holding that perception is a form of belief rather than of direct awareness.

In contemporary British philosophy, though, there is a trend of thought that closely resembles the view being discussed. While many reject entirely any distinction between sensing and perceiving (particularly if there is any question of the two having distinct objects), there are others who propose theories of direct perception of material things while admitting that something else underlies it: this something else is variously named--"sense impressions" (D.M. Armstrong, Perception and the Physical World), "sensation" (S.M. Hamlyn, Psychology of Perception, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1956), "sentience" (R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception), etc. Still, it must be pointed out that the explanations which these authors give concerning perception and its "direct" nature are usually obscure and--in our opinion--open to the criticism to be found in the text.

perceives a material thing (e.g. a large chestnut-colored horse standing three feet away in broad daylight)[28] is any greater than his conviction that the colors he sees and the sounds he hears are inherent in the surfaces of material things. Are they not rather, if anything, of equal strength? But if it is possible to conclude that the second conviction is mistaken, does not this fact weaken one's absolute confidence in the first?[29]

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28 This is an example mentioned by A.M. Quinton of a situation in which doubt about what is perceived would be unreasonable: see A.M. Quinton, "The Problem of Perception", p. 47. He and Austin both find fault with Price's use of indubitability as a criterion for isolating sense-data and ultimately distinguishing them from material things. But, whereas Hirst had argued that we are often as uncertain about sense-data as Price claims we are about material things, the present authors argue that we are often as certain about material things as we are about sense-data. See A.M. Quinton, op. cit., pp. 28-51, and J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, chap. v. Quinton argues that "single observations can give us certain knowledge about objects" (op. cit., p. 42), and he refers to the experience of standing in broad daylight three feet away from a large horse and says that the question "How do you know it is a horse?" is an absurd one. Especially, he says, it would make no sense to give an answer like "Because there is now a horse-shaped brown sense-datum at the center of my visual field." For a criticism of this opinion, see p. 257 , n. 16 below.

29 In fact, we ordinarily do not consider ourselves to be engaged in two distinct acts, sensing and perceiving, when we look at something. Prior to analysis, we believe that we are simply seeing--and seeing a colored material object. The act of perceiving is put forward, less on the basis of a distinct consciousness of an act in-addition-to and over-and-above seeing or hearing or touching, than on the basis of the need to explain how we attain our knowledge of anything besides colors, sounds, and so forth.

Furthermore, even if it is granted that we ordinarily enjoy direct perception of material things, the facts of illusion referred to on p. 197 make it necessary to add that whether or not in a particular situation we are directly perceiving a material thing is something that can be known with certainty only subsequently or in the light of other facts.

The same thing is true with regard to the opinion that under "normal" conditions our perception is direct. Even were this so, it would be impossible to know <u>that</u> a particular situation is normal except by means of correlation with other experiences.[30] We are not born with the knowledge that we are or are not color-blind. It also takes time for us to discover that when we look toward a mirror there are no material things where the images appear to be and to discover that there are such things as hallucinations or illusions. Even after we have learned by experience to instantly identify an experience as illusory and to "correct" the data on the basis of certain cues, it still remains a fact that oftentimes there are no such cues, and so

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30 It is necessary to distinguish the present discussion, relating to the direct <u>perception</u> of material things, from the discussion concerning whether or not in some situations (i.e. the "normal" ones) we directly <u>sense</u> the <u>genuine</u> qualities of material things. For the latter discussion, see p. 178, n. 111 above.

it is only by subsequent checking that we can decide whether or not there actually was present a material thing able to be directly perceived. (The case of the burnt-out star provides an outstanding example of this.)

In other words, the power to discriminate between those perceptual situations which are normal and those which are not is an acquired ability. The so-called normal situation does not--to use the words of C.D. Broad--"come visibly trailing clouds of glory behind it. It would have to be discovered to have this property by comparing it and its objective constituents with other perceptual situations and theirs."[31] If even a single time it can be shown that a person claiming to be absolutely certain that he directly perceives a material thing is mistaken, no future single act can be regarded as an adequate basis for absolute certainty regarding direct perception, just as, if a person tells a lie just one time, this prevents us from being absolutely certain on any future individual occasion that it

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31 C.D. Broad, Mind and Its Place in Nature, p. 193.

is impossible for him to be lying.[32]

The aim of this discussion has been to show that even if Price's argument against the claim that on many or even

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32 It is the same with percentages: we may be certain that two-fifths of the marriages involving a girl less than twenty-years of age will finish in divorce, but it is impossible to point to any individual marriage and say with certainty that this marriage will end in divorce. Unless we are dealing with intrinsic necessities and, consequently, with intrinsic impossibilities (e.g. if it is necessary that all men be mortal, it is impossible that anything not mortal will be a man), then the only statement we can make with certitude about any individual marriage is the uninformative "This marriage will end in divorce, unless it doesn't." The comparison is relying, of course, on the notion of "criterion". We are saying that a single error by a person claiming to be able to discern without the aid of additional, extrinsic acts of sense perception, whether he is directly perceiving a material thing or not, and to be able to discern it with infallible certainty, is sufficient to destroy the claim that the non-illusory experience contains an intrinsic criterion of certitude (i.e. to destroy the claim that it comes "trailing clouds of glory behind it"). Our position can perhaps be represented by the following quotation taken from an author who is discussing the criteria proposed by phenomenologists and neo-Thomists: "It could not be denied that their criterion would be excellent--if it were practicable. But if it were, there would be no more error and consequently no more need of a criterion. If one had only to look at the thing in itself to have the truth, what would be simpler? But error consists precisely in this, that one thinks he sees the object in itself and that he is determined by it, whereas he is including the subjective. . . [To distinguish object and subjective evidence as has been done] only brings into greater relief the true difficulty. For either one can easily, by the examination alone of the evidence, decide whether he is dealing with an evidence that is either objective or only subjective, or he cannot. . . But once again, error consists precisely in this, that one takes what is in fact of subjective origin for the object in itself or for an objective quality or determination" (August Brunner, La connaissance humaine, Paris, Aubier, 1943, p. 88; quoted on p. 264 of G. Van Riet, Thomistic Epistemology, trans. D. McCarthy and G. Hertrich, St. Louis, Herder Book Co., 1965, Vol. II).

most occasions we enjoy--in addition to the sensing of sense-data--a direct perception of material things is not absolutely conclusive, the fact of error upon which he bases that argument does prove that there is nothing intrinsic to any individual act which serves as a sign or guarantee that that act is one of those wherein we directly perceive a material thing.[33]

But is this all that the fact of perceptual error proves with respect to the hypothesis of direct perception? Perhaps not. If the connection which we habitually make between direct perception and absolute certitude is valid, i.e. if, whenever we directly perceive a material thing, it is possible for us to be absolutely certain of the fact, then the breakdown of this certitude effectively undermines

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33 There is only one alternative possibility which has not been mentioned directly, though the difficulty with it is the same as that already mentioned in connection with the argument based on "normalcy". Someone might argue that perception is, by definition, infallible. That is, where we have genuine perception, it infallibly reaches an existing material thing. In those instances where we fail to reach an existing material thing, there is only pseudo-perception. Such a solution would merely push the problem back one step further, however. Whereas according to the present explanation we have no internal criterion for determining whether we are perceiving an existing material thing or not, in the proposed alternative we would have to say that we have no internal criterion to decide whether we have genuine perception or not. For a further discussion of this theory and its false interpretation of, e.g., hallucinatory experiences, see H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", pp. 9-11, 18-19.

the claim that we do actually perceive material things directly. Price felt confident that the connection was valid, and in this, he probably has the weight of tradition in his favor.

III. PERCEPTUAL ACCEPTANCE: NOT CAUSAL INFERENCE

Following the rise of modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its impact on theories of sensation and sensible qualities, those philosophers who accepted the conclusion that colors, sounds, odors, and the like exist only in the observer were forced to revise the traditional way of explaining our knowledge of the material world. Once it was admitted that colors, sounds, and odors, the objects which we directly sense, are only ideas--inevitably, the doctrine that sensible qualities are immanent to the observer was interpreted to mean that they were ideas--these philosophers felt constrained to show how it is that we pass from the knowledge of these ideas to the knowledge of things.

Many philosophers, therefore, proposed that in addition to the sensing of immanent sensible qualities, we have knowledge of material things by means of causal inference. By a process of reasoning from effects (the immanent sensible

qualities) to appropriate causes, they said, we can discover the properties of the unsensed material world.[34]

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34 John Locke gave what is considered to be the classic exposition of this causal-inference theory, in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk. IV, chap. xi. He writes, for example: "It is therefore the actual receiving of ideas from without, that gives us notice of the existence of other things, and makes us know that something doth exist at that time without us, which causes that idea in us" (op. cit., sec. iii). He proceeds to offer several further reasons for believing that the ideas of both primary and secondary qualities are produced in us by material things. It will be recalled that Locke assumed that, while there is nothing in external objects (i.e. external to our minds) which resembles our ideas of the secondary qualities, yet there are properties in the objects which correspond to our ideas of solidity, extension, figure, etc. (See ibid., Bk. II, chap. viii.) Berkeley successfully challenged this assumption of Locke's, pointing out that we have no more reason to believe that our ideas resemble objects in their primary qualities than that they do in their secondary qualities. He also showed that if what we know directly are only ideas, there is no way to prove that they have any other cause than God. See G. Berkeley, Principles of Human Knowledge, sections 18-21. Hume's critique of causation was meant to be the final attack on every attempt to prove anything regarding either the existence or the nature of whatever material things might be said to "stand behind" our ideas.

Anyone attempting to argue today in favor of a causal-inference theory of perception (whether it is proper or not to refer to such inference as "perception" or not is a minor issue) must face the objections posed by Berkeley and Hume. That is, one must first explain the origin of our knowledge of the principle of causality. If the sense-datum theory is correct in denying both that we directly sense qualities inherent in material things themselves, then it becomes difficult to maintain that our knowledge of causality is obtained empirically by our sensory-perceptual experience of material things. If our knowledge of causality is a priori (as Kant proposed), then the problem is to show that this knowledge is valid for understanding those unexperienced material things which are said to be causes of the phenomena. In either case, there remains the difficulty of proving that the cause or causes of the phenomena is solid, extended, etc., rather than immaterial and unextended (as Berkeley's argument tried to show).

There are two ways in which Price deals with the theory of causal inference. In various writings, he criticizes it on what we might call logical grounds, by examining its internal consistency.[35] But he also criticized it on phenomenological grounds, contending that the theory is not verified by our actual experience.

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34 (cont'd) In recent times, proponents of the causal argument for material things have been content to claim less than apodictic certainty for their conclusions. They argue rather that the theory that material things exist and that we can know many of their characteristics is the most reasonable theory, i.e. the one that explains the phenomena in the most natural way.

For various expositions of the causal-inference theory, see the following authors: R.W. Brain, Mind, Perception and Science, Oxford, Blackwell, Ltd., 1951; J.C. Eccles, Neurophysiological Basis of Mind, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953; J.R. Smythies, Analysis of Perception, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956; R.M. Chisholm, Perceiving: A Philosophical Study, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1957. For its variant, the "best-hypothesis" argument, see B. Russell, Problems of Philosophy, Galaxy Books, 1959 (original, 1912); A.C. Ewing, Fundamental Questions of Philosophy, New York, Collier Books, 1962 (original, 1951); and R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception.

35 From the very outset, Price regarded the causal-inference theory--which is the usual form of Representationalism--with suspicion. In his first article, he referred to the postulated correspondence between effects and cause as "an unfathomable mystery" (H.H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance", p. 24). Chapter four of Perception represents his most thorough critique of the theory. But see also his following writings: Hume's Theory of the External World (esp. chap. iv), "The Causal Argument for Physical Objects", Review of Prichard's Knowledge and Perception, esp. pp. 112-113, and Review of R.M. Chisholm's Perception: A Philosophical Study, in British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, 10 (1959-1960), esp. pp. 151-152.

A. Logical Arguments against the Causal-Inference Theory.

Let us first examine his logical arguments against the theory. According to Price, there are three chief defects in the causal-inference argument for material things: (1) it goes beyond its premisses when it attempts to determine the specific characteristics of the cause; (2) it fails to recognize the fact that the notion of material thing is a pre-condition for the inference whereby we are supposed to arrive at it; and (3) it attempts to prove the more certain by means of the less certain.

1.--To begin with, there are various ways in which one can attempt to show what are the characteristics of the thing or entity which is the cause of the different sense-data which we experience. It would be impossible to outline these various ways here,[36] but all of them begin by making a synthesis of many sense-data, and then go on to postulate a correspondence between the characteristics of the synthesized group of sense-data and a cause that is common to

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36 The interested reader may consult the very detailed exposition which Price offers in chap. iv of Perception.

the group.[37] For every difference in the sense-data there must be a corresponding difference in the unsensed cause. Most of the philosophers who hold the theory would deny that the characteristics in the cause which correspond to the colors, sounds, odors, and other secondary qualities which we sense, must themselves be colors, sounds, odors, and the like. On the contrary, they may simply be a particular chemical or physical structure, light-absorbing or light-reflecting powers, etc.[38] (These latter things are properties with which modern science is concerned.) We can also discover the shape and location of the cause by the same method.

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37 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 95. For instance, we synthesize the different visual sense-data which we experience as we walk about the object, as well as the auditory, tactual and other sense-data which we experience in connection with it. (The preceding remark obviously takes for granted the existence of a material thing and is merely a short-cut description. It would have to be restated in a strict exposition of the causal-inference argument. There are endless disputes, however, about the very possibility of such a restatement--i.e. of one that would not make use of the ideas of the material things whose existence is to be proven. The above statement conveys the idea well enough to obviate the necessity of attempting a reformulation here.)

38 There are exceptions, of course. For instance, A.C. Ewing, who propounds a combination of the causal-inference and the best-hypothesis theories, maintains that material things are literally colored, make sounds, possess odors, etc. See A.C. Ewing, "The Causal Argument for Physical Objects", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 19 (1945), pp. 32-56.

What are we to make of these proposals? Price is convinced that they do not suffice to prove anything more than that some cause exists. The causal theory cannot refute Berkeley:

> Our sense-data, including the extended ones, might all be directly produced by a spirit, provided that spirit conceives of a system of spatially ordered three-dimensional figures.[39]

The reasons why the causal-inference theory does not refute Berkeley are the following. First, there is no need to conclude that the cause of something spatial and extended (the synthesized groups of sense-data, if the sense-data all co-existed, would be spatial and extended) must be something spatial and extended itself: Price gives the example of a man tracing a circle on a piece of paper and notes that it is not necessary that his will, which causes his hand to trace the circle, be circular.[40] Secondly, the same immaterial cause could be the cause of any number of groups of sense-data. That is, even if we accept the premise that for every difference in the sense-data there is a difference in the cause(s), it may be that the differences are all characteristics of the same cause, just as one author can "create" many different individuals for the plot of a novel.[41]

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39 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 93.

40 Ibid., p. 92.

41 Ibid., p. 94.

Thus, not only is it impossible to prove that the cause of an individual group of sense-data is spatial and extended, but there is also no way of proving that each group of sense-data has its own cause. They may all be caused by just one agent.

2.--The second difficulty with the causal argument is this: it maintains that we first become aware of material things by a process of causal inference. But from the point of view of the individual's personal history, Price objects, "none of us reaches the belief in matter by inference, but . . . we all had it from the beginning."[42] Imagine an infant or a cat employing the abstract and intricate reasoning that is part of the causal-inference theory![43]

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42 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 99. Many authors, recognizing this have said that whereas no such argument is employed in acquiring our knowledge of the existence and nature of material things, yet the argument is useful in justifying that knowledge. The difference can be seen most clearly in the philosophy of Descartes who certainly did not believe that the infant obtains his knowledge of material things by reasoning from the Cogito and from God's veracity. B. Russell, in The Problems of Philosophy, writes: "Of course it is not by argument that we originally come by our belief in an independent external world" (op. cit., p. 24). But while such authors escape this second criticism made by Price, their arguments are still subject to his first charge, that they cannot prove anything about the cause of sense-data with absolute certitude.

43 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 45.

But it is not just the implausibility of an infant carrying on such complicated thought-processes that leads Price to reject the theory. He also argues that the causal argument is logically dependent on the concept of material thinghood. As was mentioned above, one of the premisses for the theory rests upon our awareness of synthesized groups of sense-data. And, according to Price, the concept of "material thing" is a pre-requisite for the synthesis of sense-data into such groups.

It is obvious that in the case of sounds, odors, and tastes, that from a single one of them no one could obtain the slightest idea of their cause. (It must be kept in mind, of course, that we are here excluding the memory of previously-experienced sense-data.) This fact might not be quite so apparent in the case of tactual and visual sense-data, but that is mainly due to the influence of previous experience.[44] Nevertheless, when the fact is reflected upon,

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44 Price emphasizes two distinct elements in these cases. To use a convenient illustration, imagine yourself standing before a large house, visually sensing the color pattern which is characteristic of such an experience. With respect to perceptual acceptance in this situation, Price would distinguish our indistinct awareness of a three-dimensional object (house in general) and whatever specific knowledge we might have of the parts of the house that are "away from us". He makes use of the phenomenon of our indistinct awareness of the whole to support his theory that perceptual acceptance is not what Hume and the Associationist philosophers would have said: an act whose object is simply a mosaic built up from sense-data. (See Perception, pp. 151-156). But if our experience of houses is limited to

it can be seen that any causal argument concerning the characteristics of a material thing must take as its starting-point, not isolated sense-data, but at least a composite image, synthesized in imagination, whose elements are mostly remembered and projected[45] sense-data.

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44 (cont'd) just the single sense-datum which we sense as we stand in front of this house, we cannot argue from this sense-datum to a specific knowledge of any part of the house besides the front of it. Whatever specific knowledge we have of the rest comes about on the basis of further experience. (See J. Donceel, Philosophical Psychology, 2nd ed., New York, Sheed and Ward, 1961, pp. 137-138.) In effect, Price believes that in the very first act of sensing, there is an act of perceptual acceptance whose term is a vague, unspecified material thing, and that only by putting together information gathered from further acts are we able to obtain a determinate, specific knowledge of a particular material thing. J. Bronowski tells how natives living in the valleys among the Himalaya mountains often will have seen and climbed a particular mountain from various sides without recognizing that the sides belong to the same mountain. Only when inquisitive strangers, mapping the area, have pointed out the connection to them do the natives put the two sides together in their minds and form a comprehensive picture of the mountain. Originally, however, when they gazed toward the mountain from one of its sides, they would have conceived that it had a full three dimensions and, therefore, other sides--but only of a vague, unspecified kind: see J. Bronowski, Science and Human Values, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1959, pp. 39-41.

45 As Price explains, we often have experience of certain objects only from one or two angles, and we fill in the unsensed gaps of the composite image by a process which he calls sometimes "supplementation" (Perception, p. 22), sometimes "postulation" (Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 43-44). Usually, however, the supplementation is a kind of thinking that such-and-such data could be sensed rather than an actual process of imaging hypothetical data to ourselves. (Price distinguishes imagining and imaging: see quote on p. 308 below.) Of course, in line with p. 213, n. 44, it must be added that such postulation or supplementation is formed on the basis of previously-experienced sense-data.

But, asks Price, how can we explain this initial synthesis? "What kind of relation unites the set into one whole? Upon what principle, or with what question in mind, does the synthesis proceed?"[46] In other words, how does it come about that we synthesize, say, the visual sense-datum we experience from the front of the house with a visual sense-datum we experience when we stand in back of it? Or that we synthesize a visual sense-datum we experience as we look towards the clock with the "ticking" auditory datum we experience at the same time? Why is it that we synthesize data at all? Why does not our consciousness remain simply the experience of a succession of detached, disorganized sense-data?

The problem is an old one. Aristotle had postulated a sensus communis to explain the synthesis of concurrent sensings, and even mentioned the importance of likeness and continuity for explaining the order found among the images preserved in the memory.[47] Hume developed the theme further, under the general designation "association of ideas."[48] According to him, the synthesis was explained by the two

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46 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 95.

47 Aristotle, On Memory and Reminiscence, chapters i and ii.

48 See, for example, Hume's Treatise of the Human Understanding, Bk. I, pt. i, sec. iv.

factors mentioned by Aristotle, namely, resemblance and contiguity in time, plus a third relation, that of cause-and-effect. In general, such is the theory maintained by the school of British empiricism.[49]

Price is unable, however, to accept this explanation. We do not, he says, first synthesize our various sense-data into group-images and then argue from the characteristics of these to the existence and characteristics of material things. On the contrary, the concept of material thing is required if the process of synthesis is to take place at all.

> The guiding principle [of this synthesis] is just the thought that there is some one solid to which all the members of the set are related, some as constituents of it and some as distortions; the question in our mind is, what particular kind of

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49 It was, in fact, one of the achievements of British empiricism to have forced on modern philosophy a recognition of the importance of the phenomenon of association. (It is one thing to mention a phenomenon in passing, but quite another thing to have paid sufficient attention to it.) Kant noted this when he wrote: "Psychologists have hitherto failed to realise that imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception itself. This is due to the fact that that faculty has been limited to reproduction, partly to the belief that the senses not only supply impressions but also combine them so as to generate images of objects. For that purpose something more than the mere receptivity of impressions is undoubtedly required, namely, a function for the synthesis of them" (I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A 121, n. a; translation by N. Kemp Smith, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1965, p. 144).

> solid is it in this particular case? Indeed, without this guiding principle not only the synthesis but the preceding picking out of syntheta from the irrelevant contexts in which they were presented would never have occurred.[50]

This guiding principle is innate:

> What we want to get to is a complete three-dimensional whole of sensa. . . And I think we shall have to say that he have an innate idea of tri-dimensional wholeness, and an innate tendency to look for instances of it and a consequent tendency to ignore those characteristics of the given which prevent us from finding them.[51]

This idea of a tri-dimensional solid is, Price says, equivalent to a concept of a material thing.[52] And thus he concludes that insofar as the various causal-inference arguments "profess to be the source of our consciousness of a

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50 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 95-96.

51 H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", p. 287. (This article was written at the same time as Perception.) Price adds that the concept of space is also required: "We need the idea not merely of a solid entity, but of Space: the thought that every solid entity is enclosed within a wider region or 'field', in which a number of solid entities can stand related by the same sort of relations as subsist between the parts of any one of them; and that given any two solid entities, there is always a region enclosing both. If we were without this thought, how should we avoid collecting into the same set sense-data which belong to one solid and sense-data which belong to another, in cases where these solids were exactly alike in shape and size? How, for instance, can we distinguish the sense-data belonging to a lump of sugar in this room, from those belonging to a lump of sugar in that one?" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 96; see also ibid., pp. 306-308).

52 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 99.

determinately shaped and situated system of spatially related solid objects, they are obviously guilty of a vicious circle and must be abandoned."[53]

Before proceeding to the third part of Price's logical criticism of the causal-inference theory, a remark or two concerning this second part of it are in order. First of all, this notion of a priori concepts of material thinghood and of space (see n. 51 above) which guide[54] the synthesis reminds us very much of Kant. That this is no mistake is confirmed by Price himself when he states that the process of synthesis which he describes in Perception is the same as that described by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason (particularly Kant's section on "Deduction of the Categories").[55] Secondly, by no means everyone would agree with Price that an

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53 Ibid., p. 98.

54 The notion that an a priori concept guides the synthesis must not be taken to imply that we are self-consciously aware of the process of selecting the syntheta or that we are consciously comparing them with our concept of "some one solid". It is as inconceivable that the infant does this as it would be for the infant to engage in reasoning from effects to cause.

55 Price, on p. 286 of Perception, mentions particularly the first version of the Critique, sections 100-103, i.e. "The Synthesis of Reproduction in Imagination". For further evidence of Kant's influence, see esp. pp. 306-308 of Perception. H.J. Paton once referred to Price as an "anima naturaliter Kantiana" (H.J. Paton, "Fifty Years of Philosophy", in Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series, ed. H.D. Lewis, p. 340).

a priori concept of material-thing-in-general is required as a pre-condition for the process of synthesis. Many who disagree with the causal-inference theory believe that the sense-data bear within themselves the explanation for their specific groupings.[56]

The question is a very difficult one.[57] Even without entering fully into the debate, it seems fair to mention that Price is certainly correct in saying that our idea of a material thing is something quite other than a mere composite image, however that image may be formed, as well as in saying that no (causal-inference) argument which begins solely with the existence of a composite image and the principle of causality will beget our knowledge of material things. This last observation is, however, somewhat similar to the third part of Price's logical criticism of the causal-inference theory.

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56 Writing with specific reference to Kant's theory of the synthesis that takes place, J. Collins says: "For St. Thomas, the inner senses receive sense-data possessing an inherent structure of their own, a structure not entirely imposed by sensibility. This determinate sensible form guides the operation of the internal senses, as they bring the image to the condition where it can provide an adequate basis for the act of intellectual abstraction of the intelligible structure" (J. Collins, A History of Modern European Philosophy, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1954, pp. 485-486). For another view, see W. Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, esp. chap. viii.

57 For a survey of several theories regarding the synthesis of sense-data, see A. Gurwitsch, Field of Consciousness, esp. Parts I and II.

3.--The third comment which Price has to make on the internal consistency of the causal-inference theory concerns the causal premise of the argument. Price says that our knowledge of this premise, viz. that "every event has a cause",[58] is gotten solely "by reflecting upon the nature of certain causative substances or things"[59] and is, in fact less certain even than the fact that material things exist.[60] It is not very likely, therefore, that we derive our consciousness of material things by way of causal inference.

B. Phenomenological Argument against the Causal-Inference Theory.

At the beginning of this section, it was mentioned that Price criticized the causal-inference theory both on logical and phenomenological grounds. Having now surveyed the first, let us turn to the second criticism. (The third of the logical objections already had a quasi-phenomenological nature to it.) Besides pointing out the fact that we are

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58 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 102.

59 Ibid., p. 101.

60 Ibid., p. 102. For the same, see his "The Causal Argument for Physical Objects", p. 97. Elsewhere, referring to J. Wisdom's causal-inference theory, he writes: "The argument does assume the validity of Mr. Wisdom's views about Causality, and in particular his three Causal Principles. And for my own part, I am much more certain of the existence of material objects than of the truth of these principles" (Review of J. Wisdom's Problems of Mind and Matter, p. 364).

wholly unaware of any kind of inference at all taking place as we perceive a house, for example, Price remarks that our original experience seems to be exactly the opposite of what the causal-inference theorists describe. "Historically speaking, the Causal Theory has got things just the wrong way round."[61] At first we assume that what we sense are material things (or their inherent qualities), that these things and their qualities continue to exist unchanged even when unperceived; and the argument which proves to us that what we sense are not material things but rather entities which we call sense-data is based on the assumption that material things exist.

> Argument is required to convince us that sense-data do not exist in the absence of sentients: we require none to convince us that material objects do. The fragmentary and interrupted existence of sense-data is, historically speaking, no original premise, but the conclusion of a long and elaborate argument. And it is a conclusion one of whose premises, namely, that sense-data are not parts of the surfaces of the material things which they belong to, is only reached as a sort of by-product of the synthetic process whereby we assure ourselves that there are certain material things which do have surfaces of such and such sorts.[62]

The "synthetic process" to which Price refers is the process of perceptual assurance. He is saying, in other words, that it is only in the process of discovering, say,

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61 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 100.

62 Ibid., p. 101.

that there is a straight stick in the water that we discover the existence of some sensed entities (the "bent" sense-data) that must be distinct from the surface of the stick.

One must agree with Price on this point, at least so far as it is possible to recall one's own mental development.[63] The incredulity of most ordinary people and of a large number of philosophers when it is proposed to them that what they see and feel are not chairs, tables, houses, and other material things, is an overwhelming confirmation of Price's phenomenological comment on the causal-inference theory. Surely, if that theory were correct, it would not be difficult to convince people of the validity of the sense-datum analysis of sensing.

IV. PERCEPTUAL ACCEPTANCE: TAKING-FOR-GRANTED

Having ruled out two possible explanations of perception, it is now time to turn to the positive side of Price's own theory. (Even this will involve some further negative judgments.) In chapters six and seven of Perception, which is our chief source for Price's theory of perceptual consciousness, we find a mixture of phenomenological

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63 Broad has wisely observed, however, that "of all the sciences, that which is concerned with what goes on in the minds of babies is and must remain the most precarious" (C.D. Broad, Review of J.S. Huxley's Evolutionary Ethics, in Mind, 53 [1944], p. 354).

description and epistemological analysis. Even if the phenomenological aspect seems to predominate as Price tries to help the reader catch himself in the act of perceptual acceptance and of perceptual assurance and to get the feel of them, it is well to understand the dual approach, since many of the things which are true of perceptual consciousness epistemologically are not true of it phenomenologically. For example, Price will suggest that every act of perceptual acceptance is in fact provisional (i.e. we need further experiences to assure us of the truth of what we have accepted), though we do not consciously advert to this provisionality during the act itself.

What then is perceptual acceptance for Price? It is "a radically different form of consciousness from the sensing which it accompanies, being a form of taking-for-granted."[64] The act is one of which we are so little aware that Price is tempted to describe it in purely negative terms. After describing how it differs from belief, he says:

> Accordingly, it would be nearer the mark to describe perceptual consciousness (in this its simplest and primary form) not as belief, but as absence of disbelief: or again as 'the not doubting that.'[65]

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64 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 146.

65 Ibid., p. 142. Later on, he adds: "The single perceptual act, we have found, has to be described largely in negative terms: it is not an intuitive apprehension, it is not inference, it is not opinion nor belief, its object does not necessarily exist; it is undoubting and unquestioning, and inattentive to the difference between sense-datum and material thing" (ibid., p. 170).

It is difficult to describe the act, however, without simultaneously describing its object:

> What the perceptually conscious subject takes for granted when he senses a particular visual or tactual sense-datum is that there now exists a material thing to which this sense-datum belongs; and that this thing has a front surface of a certain general character, to be more exactly determined by subsequent perceptual acts. What general character the surface is taken to have, and how determinate that character is, does depend upon the nature of the present sense-datum.[66]

It will be recalled that Reid often used the word "belief" in speaking about perception:

> If, therefore, we attend to that act of our mind which we call the perception of an external object of sense, we shall find in it these three things: first, some conception or notion of the object perceived; secondly, a strong and irresistible conviction and belief of its present existence; and thirdly, that this conviction and belief are immediate, and not the effect of reasoning.[67]

Price declines to use this term, though, on the grounds that "belief" is ambiguous, having one sense which is quite different from "taking-for-granted" as well as the sense which is somewhat synonymous with it. In this different sense, to say that someone has a belief is to say that he assents to a proposition about a particular fact on the basis of his knowledge of other facts (e.g. he knows that

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66 Ibid., p. 145.

67 T. Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, ed. A.D. Woozley, p. 79.

someone whom he trusts has testified to the accepted proposition).[68] Perceptual acceptance is not at all like this, according to Price. He writes that, while it is true that someone might regard the sense-data as evidential grounds for the perceptual taking-for-granted, "I, the subject of the perceptual act, do not use them so. I am in a state of mind which is, so to speak, below the level of evidence-using."[69]

In order to further delineate the act of perceptual acceptance, Price says it is like "being under an impression that." It is also pseudo-intuitive and pre-judicial.

First, it can be described as being-under-an-impression-that:

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68 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 139-140. Price is referring to J. Cook Wilson's definition of belief. (See J. Cook Wilson, Statement and Inference, ed. A.S.L. Farquharson, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1926, Pt. II, chapters iii and v.) Price, who obtained his degree from Oxford, adopted many of his definitions of cognitional acts from Cook Wilson, probably the most influential philosopher at Oxford at the turn of the last century.

69 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 140. In his article "Some Considerations about Belief", Price explains as follows: "If we have got evidence for the proposition which we accept, is there really any difference between acceptance and belief after all? To clear up this point we must distinguish between the consciousness which is in fact of something which is in fact evidence, and the using of it as evidence" (H.H. Price, op. cit., pp. 239-240).

> This state of mind much more resembles what Cook Wilson calls being under an impression that than what he calls belief. In 'being under an impression' we simply jump straight from the awareness of A to the thought of B, without any preliminary wondering or considering of evidence, indeed without any rational process whatever; for instance, we jump from hearing a knock on the door to the thought that our friend Jones has arrived.[70]

Elsewhere, he uses a specific example:

> The traditional example of taking for granted is as follows: We see a man walking in front of us in the street having red hair and a dark blue overcoat. Without any weighing of evidence or any consideration of alternatives we straightway jump to the conclusion that it is our friend Smith. We walk up to him and slap him on the back. And then we discover that it is not Smith at all, but a perfect stranger. Obviously this is quite different from the case discussed before [evidence-using belief]. No doubt we should apologize and say 'I am sorry, I thought you were Smith.' But 'thought' does not mean here 'assented upon evidence with a mild degree of confidence.' We may indeed be tempted to say, as Mr. Russell does about a similar case, that our apologetic statement is simply false; that we were not thinking at all, but merely behaving. And sometimes this is so. But not always. It seems necessary to distinguish between this purely behavioristic quasi-acceptance (if we may call it so) and acceptance proper.[71]

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70 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 140-141.

71 H.H. Price, "Some Considerations about Belief", pp. 237-238. For Price's application of the same doctrine to our knowledge of other minds, see his "Our Knowledge of Other Minds", pp. 56-57. The "traditional example" which he gives above is taken from J. Cook Wilson, Statement and Inference, Pt. II, chap. iii, p. 110. Both of Price's examples refer to perceptual acceptances which could take place only after the percipient had been conditioned by a great deal of previous experience. Initial takings-for-granted must be much more generic.

In the first quotation, Price mentions jumping from the awareness of one thing to the thought of another. What he is emphasizing is the lack of any intervening reasoning process. In fact, he goes on to point out, it is not correct to speak of jumping at all, if this is taken to imply temporal sequence. Perceptual acceptance is pseudo-intuitive.[72] (In saying that it is pseudo-intuitive, he is contrasting perceptual consciousness to discursive thought, not to indirect cognition.)[73] Illustrating his point with reference to one's perception of a tree, he writes:

> The two states of mind, the acquaintance with the sense-datum and the perceptual consciousness of the tree, just arise together. The sense-datum is presented to us, and the tree dawns on us, all in one moment. The two modes of "presence to the mind", utterly different though they are, can only be distinguished by subsequent analysis.[74]

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72 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 150-152, 162-169.

73 "'Intuition' is opposed to 'discursive'. The difference between them is not that intuition is direct or immediate and discursus mediate or indirect; or at least this is a confusing way of stating it. If I am in any way conscious of something A, it is A itself that I am conscious of, and not a medium between myself and A. The difference seems rather to be as follows: in discursive consciousness (as the name suggests) there is a passage of the mind from one item to another related item, for instance, from a subject to a concept under which we classify it, or from premises to conclusion" (H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 150-151). This non-discursiveness is only one mark of intuition, however; in fact, from what Price later writes, we can see that intuition does involve a special directness. Also consult p. 192, n. 16 above.

74 Ibid., p. 141.

In this quote he treats the matter of simultaneity from the viewpoint of the acts; elsewhere, he refers a little more to the objects:

> There is no passage of the mind from the sense-datum to the taken-for-granted, both coming before the mind at once as one single complex.[75]

Perceptual acceptance is only pseudo-intuitive, however. When the drunkard takes-for-granted the existence of a pink rat, he is deceived. He does not intuit a pink rat, for there is no pink rat to intuit. If perceptual acceptance were genuine intuition, such deception and error would be impossible.[76]

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75 Ibid., p. 151. In explaining his application of the description "pseudo-intuitive" to perceptual acceptance, Price offers two further reasons, one dealing with the fact that intuition is an act complete in the first moment (the scholastics would say it is actus perfectus rather than actio), and the other dealing with the fact that it grasps the object as a whole before there is specific awareness of its parts. See Perception, pp. 151-152. Inasmuch as the word "inference" ordinarily connotes a transition from one fact to another, Price considers himself justified in concluding that there is no inference involved in perceptual acceptance: see ibid., p. 140.

76 Ibid., p. 156. When he explains that we do not have here genuine intuition, Price is not entirely consistent with his original definition of intuition. Originally, he said that intuition was opposed to discursive thought by not being the passage of the mind from one thing to another. See p. 227, n. 73. If this were the chief characteristic of intuition, then perceptual acceptance would be intuition. Traditionally, however, the non-discursive aspect of intuition has been seen as merely a side-effect of its main feature: i.e. of the fact that intuition is a direct confrontation between the knower and the known. And this is how Price himself describes it on p. 156 of Perception: "Intuiting is a form of awareness or apprehension, and what we

Finally, perceptual acceptance is pre-judicial or pre-judgmental. It is not a judgment at all. "When we take for granted that A is B, we cannot be said to be judging that A is B."[77] The reason which Price gives for this observation is not immune to criticism, though. He denies that perceptual acceptance is judgment in much the same way that he denies that it is belief: by taking a rather restricted definition of judgment. "Judging", he writes, "is always answering a question."[78] And in perceptual acceptance, there is no questioning whether A is or is not B: "We did not ask whether A is B; we simply took it to be so."[79] Perhaps if Price had taken a broader view of judgment, he would have

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76 (cont'd) apprehend or are aware of must be real: apprehension is just the presence of the real to the mind." It is with this latter aspect of intuition in mind that he calls perceptual acceptance merely pseudo-intuitive.

77 Ibid., p. 163.

78 Ibid., p. 163. Once again, it is Cook Wilson from whom he is drawing his inspiration. According to the latter, "a judgment is a decision. To judge is to decide. It implies previous indecision; a previous thinking process, in which we are doubting. Those verbal statements, therefore, which result from a state of mind not preceded by such doubts, statements which are not decisions, are not judgments, though they may have the same verbal form as judgment" (J. Cook Wilson, Statement and Inference, Pt. II, chap. ii, pp. 92-93). As is evident, the idea of assent based on previous considerations is central to this view of judgment.

79 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 163.

been readier to treat perceptual acceptance as one species of it.[80] (See chap. vii, Sec. II, B below.)

(When Price writes that perception is pre-judicial, he does not, he says, mean that it "ever occurs apart from judgment. It is a plausible opinion that so long as we are conscious we are always judging.")[81]

V. THE OBJECT OF PERCEPTUAL ACCEPTANCE

Up until now, Price's description of perceptual acceptance may have presented little difficulty. But when we

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80 Discussion of the differences and similarities between Price's theory of perceptual acceptance and the idealist theory that all perception is judging can be found in R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception, chap. viii. Different authors have noted that Price's explanation of the object of perceptual acceptance in terms of "sets of propositions" (see Perception, pp. 166-167 as well as the following section of this thesis) makes it difficult to justify his denial that perceptual acceptance is judgment: see B. Blanshard, The Nature of Thought, New York, Macmillan, 1939, Vol. I, pp. 94-95, and A.R.M. Murray, Review of H.H. Price's Perception, in Mind, 42 (1933), pp. 511-512. Hirst (op. cit., p. 233) sees an answer to this difficulty in Price's assertion that there is judgment only when the propositions are explicitated and not until then: Price writes that perceptual acceptance is the "act whose expression in words, if we actually express it, would be the statement A is B. . . . (Only, if it were actually expressed, it would not be a taking-for-granted. When I say that A is B, I am judging that it is so, and am no longer just taking it for granted.)" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 167; italics added). Still, it is not easy to see how propositions can exist unless there is a kind of mental activity which many would call "judgment", even if they use the term more loosely than Cook Wilson does.

81 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 164.

inquire further into its object, we discover more than just a little difficulty. This is partially due to the fact that Price is trying to describe, not the consciousness of a philosopher who has distinguished sense-data from the qualities inherent in the surfaces of material things, but that of the ordinary person who makes no such distinction.[82] It is partially due to the fact that Price maintains that his description of the object of perceptual acceptance is compatible with quite diverse analyses of that object's ontological status.[83] And it is partially due to the fact that the

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82 It is because he is conscious of the danger of "over-intellectualizing" the act of perceptual acceptance that Price is frequently driven to describe it in negative terms. It is not belief because there is no consideration of evidence, not judgment for much the same reason, etc. This fact, viz., that the ordinary person, and even the philosopher during his "off-dury" hours, makes no distinction between sense-data and material things, is one that creates considerable difficulties in the task of giving an "unbiassed-by-philosophical-presuppositions" description of perceptual acceptance. R.J. Hirst criticizes Price on this score, saying that he does fall into the trap of describing perceptual acceptance in terms that presuppose the distinction of sense-data from material things: see R.J. Hirst, Problems of Perception, pp. 240ff. It must be conceded that Price frequently does express himself in ways that lay him open to this criticism.

83 On p. 146 of Perception he explains how both the Naive Realist and the Selective Theory as well as certain forms of Idealism are compatible with his description of perceptual acceptance. And on p. 154, he extends this to phenomenalism as well.

expressions which Price uses in referring to the object do not always seem compatible.

At first, Price describes the object of acceptance simply as a material thing:

> Somehow it is the whole thing, and not just a jejune extract from it, which is before the mind from the first. From the first, it is the complete material thing, with back, sides, and insides as well as front, that we 'accept', that 'ostends itself' to us, and nothing less: a thing, too, persisting through time both before and after (whereas the most that could be present to our senses here and now is the one brief phase of its history) and possessed of various causal characteristics. It is true that these further elements in the being of the ostensible thing are not so determinately specified as the front surface--that is left to further sense-data and further perceptual acts. Still, already in this single act, even in a momentary glance, we do take them to be there, all of them.[84]

Note that although in many instances (for example, when we first encounter a strange, new object) our perceptual

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84 Ibid., pp. 151-152. Reflect upon the amount of explicitation Price is performing here. How little of all this is the percipient explicitly aware of "in a momentary glance". Price appears to be guided in his explicitation by the very concept of material thinghood: "What is before the mind in perceptual consciousness is a material thing. Now by 'a material thing' is meant an individual something. Therefore any characteristic which belongs to it at all must have an absolutely determinate form. . . . Moreover, since it is a material thing--not a spiritual or other sort of thing--it must be spatially complete. . . . Further, it must have causal characteristics, and it must endure through a considerable period of time. All this follows simply from the definition of material thinghood, whether in fact there are any material things or not. All this, then, and nothing less, is being taken for granted whenever a perceptual act occurs" (ibid., pp. 177-178; italics added).

acceptance is quite vague--so that we take-for-granted only that the thing has some kind of back and sides and inside, yet after we have had many experiences in connection with an object (or another like it), our acceptance will be much more determinate. If at first we perceptually accept merely "a house", frequent perceptions of it will bring us to a point where we perceptually accept "Mr. Jones' house."[85]

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85 With respect to the variable degrees of determinateness that perceptual acceptance may possess, see Perception, pp. 149-150: "Perceptual consciousness may have all degrees of definiteness, ranging in the case of a single perceptual act from the mere consciousness of some material thing or other I can't say what, which is the lower limit, to the consciousness (for instance) of a rectangular thing seven feet by three with dark spots on it (Perception, p. 149). It may appear that there is a conflict between this statement and that which Price makes afterwards: "What is before the mind in perceptual consciousness is a material thing. . . . Any characteristics which belong to it at all must have an absolutely determinate form" (ibid., pp. 177-178). This discrepancy resembles another that crops up when, after writing "What I take to exist is often not just a house but a particular house" (ibid., p. 152), Price states that "we must realize that the ostensible object, the what-is-accepted, is not a particular as a sense-datum is; (there could not be a non-existent or doubtfully-existent particular)" (ibid., p. 166). The solution which he proposes to this apparent inconsistency is the following: "What we take to exist is a spatially complete material thing, fully determinate in all its characteristics, and continuing through time. That it is all this, is actually part of the taken-for-granted: what form its spatial completeness takes, just what its determinate characteristics may be, just what the length of its temporal continuance may be before and after the present moment, the present act does not tell us" (ibid., p. 179). In other words, Price seems to distinguish the object (as a material thing, it is--by definition--something completely determinate) and our knowledge of it ("the single perceptual act is bound to be very largely indefinite"--ibid., p. 178).

Even so, whether our perceptual acceptance is definite or indefinite, its object is presented quite straightforwardly--in these passages at least--as a material thing. At this stage, however, a problem arises: how does this explanation of perceptual acceptance differ from the theory which maintains that it consists in direct apprehension of material things? When Price writes that "it is the whole thing. . . which is before the mind from the first,"[86] this can easily be construed in a "direct apprehension" sense. One critic, in the course of contrasting the sense-datum theory and the theory which says that the direct object of sense perception (viewed as one and not two distinct acts) is a material thing, writes that the above passage from Price, quoted on p. 232 above,

> . . . aptly describes the unmediated character of perceptual consciousness to which supporters of the Percept Theory have tried to draw attention. That Price could write a passage like this and still accept the Sense-Datum Theory, is a mystery.[87]

As has already been pointed out, Price rejects the proposal that perceptual consciousness is direct apprehension of the material thing, and his reason for doing so is the

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86 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 151; see p. 232 for full quotation.

87 R. Firth, "Sense-Data and the Percept Theory", Pt. I, p. 451. He adds immediately, ". . . [is a mystery] of the kind which the next section [of his article] is intended to solve".

fallibility of the act. It may, and often does, happen that we perceptually accept what does not, in fact, exist, as happens when the delirious person believes he sees a pink rat. For this reason, Price gives the designation "ostensible" to the objects of this act: "the object of any one act of perceptual consciousness is as such ostensible only."[88]

The difficulty inherent in this position is readily apparent: how is it possible that an act of perception can have an object which is only ostensible, i.e. one that, while it apparently exists, may really not exist? What does not really exist is nothing and therefore cannot be an object at all. This seems to be the thought that underlies the following remark of Price's:

> Now of course we must realize that the ostensible object, the what-is-accepted, is not a particular as a sense-datum is; (there could not be a non-existent or doubtfully-existent particular.[89]

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88 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 148. Further on he writes: "Perhaps I should remind the reader that what I am perceptually conscious of--the 'object' or 'content' of my perceptual act--need not necessarily be real. I may be having an hallucination. Even then what I falsely take for granted is that a material thing exists" (ibid., p. 177, n. 3).

89 Ibid., p. 166. A "particular" is usually defined only in contrast to a universal, of which the particular is an existing instance. It is not synonymous with individual substance, however, but is also applicable to individual qualities and relations as well. See W.E. Johnson, Logic, New York, Dover Publications, 1964 (original, 1921), Vol. I, p. 11; or L.S. Stebbing, A Modern Introduction to Logic, New York, Harper and Row, 1961 (original 1930), pp. 52-53. Price gives a brief description of the concept of a "particular" in Perception, pp. 103-104.

The solution which Price offers for this difficulty is somewhat involved. Fundamentally, it seems to appeal to the distinction between acquaintance and what is sometimes called propositional-knowledge. Immediately adjoined to the above remark of Price's, we find the following:

> What is taken for granted is, after all, that so and so is the case--that a material thing exists here and now, that it has a surface of such and such a sort, that it is grass, etc.--in short, what is taken-for-granted is a set of propositions. . . . If we like to say so, taking-for-granted whether perceptual or otherwise, is something which is included in an act of judging, but is not itself an act of judging: as the act whose expression in words, if we did express it, would be the statement A is B, may be said to be 'included in' the act whose expression is the statement AB is C. (Only, if it were actually expressed, it would not be a taking-for-granted, When I say that A is B, I am judging that it is so, and am no longer just taking it for granted.)[90]

Though he does not expound upon the distinction ex professo in his works, Price frequently refers to it, presuming no doubt that it will be familiar to his readers.[91]

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90 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 166-167.

91 Some examples of his use of the distinction are the following: "We may immediately apprehend not merely sense-data, but physical objects; not merely images, but past events; the function of the sense-data may be merely to direct our attention to those physical objects. Or we may be immediately aware not of this physical object itself, but of the fact that these sense-data are appearances of some one physical object; and of the fact that these images are present appearances of a past event" (H.H. Price, "The Appeal to Common Sense", p. 196); "We may say that I am remembering a class if we like. But the truth is rather that I am remembering that there is a class of a certain sort. My memory-knowledge of a fact, not of a particular" (IDEM,

At the beginning of Perception, he writes:

> Perhaps we may say that there are two sorts of intuitive apprehension, one directed upon facts, e.g. the fact that I am puzzled or was puzzled, or again the fact that 2 + 2 = 4, or that courage is good: another directed upon particular existents, e.g. this colour-patch or this noise or that visual image, or again upon this feeling of disgust and that act of wondering. The first is apprehension that, the second is apprehension of. The term acquaintance is properly reserved for the second.[92]

This recalls Bertrand Russell's knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description.[93] The first, according to Russell, is a direct confrontation between the mind and

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91 (cont'd) "Memory-Knowledge", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 35 [1934-1935], p. 28); "The verb 'to imagine' is radically ambiguous. It does sometimes mean imaging. But also, and far more commonly, it means imagining that so and so is the case. If I ask you now to imagine that there is a crocodile in the bathroom, you can carry out my instructions without having any images at all. You can entertain this proposition in a purely verbal way" (IDEM, "Image-Thinking", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 52 [1951-1952], p. 45); "This memory [Furlong] says, is propositional. It is true, then, that the defects and omissions of our memory-images can be 'checked' by something else. But this something else is not a direct acquaintance with the past. It is a propositional attitude of believing or taking for granted, formulated (I suppose) in words; and it is not infallible, as a direct awareness of the past would have to be" (IDEM, "Memory", in Philosophical Quarterly, 2 [1952], p. 351.

92 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 5. Note, though, that we are not dealing, in perceptual acceptance, with knowledge-that (which is infallible), but with taking-for-granted-that.

93 See B. Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, Galaxy ed., pp. 44-45, 46-59, and "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 11 (1910-1911), pp. 108-128.

its object; in the second, the mind is directly related to propositions or truths which--by being descriptions of some object other than themselves--give the mind indirect knowledge about that other object if it exists. G.E. Moore has expressed the same theory very succinctly (though in slightly different terms):

> Every proposition is, as we constantly say, a proposition about something or other. . . . But the point I wish to call your attention to is this. Namely, that in the case of an immense number of the propositions which we apprehend, even at the moment when we do directly apprehend the whole proposition, we do not directly apprehend by any means all of the things which the proposition is about. Propositions, in fact, have this strange property: that even at the moment when we do directly apprehend the whole proposition, we need not directly apprehend that which the proposition is about. . . . And it is, I think, obvious that we are constantly thus directly apprehending propositions about things, when we are not directly apprehending those things themselves.[94]

There are no explicit acknowledgements in Perception where Price says that what he calls propositional knowledge

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94 G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, chap. iii, Collier ed., pp. 84-85. The history of the distinction, as well as the debates about its validity and the validity of allied distinctions ("knowledge about", "knowledge of truths", "knowledge of facts") are too complicated to be treated here. A helpful introduction to the problem is the symposium "Is There Knowledge by Acquaintance?" whose participants were G.D. Hicks, B. Edgell, and C.D. Broad; see Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement, 2 (1919), pp. 159-220. On the whole, it seems to us that the last contribution, that by C.D. Broad, is the most acceptable in its conclusions.

is the same as Russell's knowledge by description or Moore's knowledge-about.[95] There are indications, though, that if what he has in mind is not exactly the same, it is similar on most important points. Thus, Russell proposes that knowledge by description involves abstract ideas or universals. Knowledge by description (opposed to knowledge by acquaintance) "always involves . . . some knowledge of truths as its source and ground,"[96] and

> . . . all knowledge of truths . . . demands acquaintance with things which are of an essentially different character from sense-data, the things which are sometimes called 'abstract ideas', but which we shall call 'universals'.[97]

Price is aware of and accepts the theory that some knowledge (or belief) involves universals. Even before Perception was published, we find him declaring:

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95 Only once does he mention knowledge by description, and that is just in passing. He says that although every sense-datum is private to the mind of its percipient, so that only he can know it by means of acquaintance, yet other people can know of it "by description, i.e. can know what characteristics it has" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 274). Even this, however, is really the same as what Moore proposed.

96 B. Russell, Problems of Philosophy, Galaxy ed., p. 46.

97 Ibid., p. 48.

> In mere belief it [the mind] does stand in a relation to the object, but the relation is indirect. What the mind directly apprehends is a certain universal or set of universals; and by an act which cannot be further analyzed, but which certainly is not an act of knowing at all, it 'attributes' these universals as characteristics to some real thing or things already known to exist. If these universals really do characterize the thing, the belief is true; if not, false.[98]

Although perceptual acceptance is not belief but rather taking-for-granted, it seems apparent from the following passage that it involves the same thing that belief, in the preceding passage, involved: not only is perceptual acceptance

> . . . a going beyond the evidence, a taking of propositions for true for which the intuitive characteristics of the sense-datum now sensed provide no sufficient justification: these propositions even include concepts which are not exemplified in the intuited data at all and cannot be abstracted from them--namely, those concepts which make up the notion 'material thinghood'.[99]

Another indication is the following. Perceptual acceptance--after a sufficient amount of experience has been accumulated--can be much more specific than at first. In addition to taking-for-granted that a material thing exists,

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98 H.H. Price, "The Appeal to Common Sense", p. 199.

99 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 168-169. See ibid., p. 64: "When I say 'This object appears brown to me', I am in two distinct mental attitudes: . . . the first, a relation of acquaintance to the actual instance of brownness; the second a relation of belief--which is, I suppose, a relation not to the material object (for there may be none), but to objectness."

the percipient can also take-for-granted that such and such specific sense-data are obtainable from particular points of view. But

> . . . the fact that the sense-data would exist if there were observers at such and such points of view--this is not a fact about particulars at all; for the very existence of these sense-data is admittedly at best problematical, and indeed we may happen to know that they do not actually exist. Like other 'existential' facts, it is really about certain universals (e.g. redness, hardness) and it is to the effect that they would then have instances.[100]

Perceptual acceptance, then, is an intellectual cognition, involving propositions (or facts) about universals. To the extent that there exist instances of these universals, it can be said that our cognition is indirectly about the instances. Price later gave fuller description of this indirect cognition, or, as he came to call it, "thinking in absence".

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100 Ibid., p. 292. Correlating this with the passage quoted above on p. 194, it would seem that Price distinguishes three sorts of possible ingredients in the perceptual situation: acts of cognition (sensing, knowing, believing, taking-for-granted), facts, and the objects which the facts are about (universals or particulars). Whether this is the result of a fully systematic view or not is hard to determine. On existential propositions, he elsewhere has this to say: "Every existential proposition contains a universal; we may even say, if we please, that it is about a universal. It is of the form $\exists x.\ \phi x$, where x is a variable and ϕ a universal or description" (H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 94).

> When we think of a particular in absence, we always think of it by description (in Lord Russell's phraseology). Symbolic cognition of an absent particular is not a kind of intellectual intuition or non-sensuous acquaintance; it is not as it were a sort of clairvoyance, as we might be tempted to suppose. We can think of a particular in absence only in so far as it is a member of this or that class, or of several classes at once; as the Realist would say, only in so far as it is an instance of this or that universal.[101]

Of course, what is said in this last passage is said as if it were about thinking and not about acceptance or taking-for-granted, therefore the proper qualifications have to be made. But whether the cognition be explicit (thinking) or only implicit (taking-for-granted), the same relations between the same types of entities apparently hold. In his writings, Price is non-committal about the ontological status of universals and propositions, probably because he wished to avoid becoming entangled in problems outside his chosen

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101 H.H. Price, Thinking and Representation, pp. 25-26. Further references to the points discussed here are H.H. Price, "Logical Positivism and Theology", p. 316; IDEM, "Our Evidence for the Existence of Other Minds", in Philosophy, 13 (1938), p. 451; and IDEM, "Image-Thinking", p. 154.

scope.[102] That he did for a long time accept the theory of universals is evident from his earlier writings, even though in Thinking and Experience he finally abandoned it.[103] It is also evident from Perception that he held our knowledge of "material thinghood" to be ours in virtue of innate concepts:

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102 Passmore calls the question of the existence or non-existence of propositions "one of the most controverted points in recent philosophy" (J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 207, n. 3). In his article "Some Considerations about Belief", Price remarked: "I am of course aware that the phrase 'to entertain a proposition' is a stumbling-block to many philosophers. I shall be asked whether I hold with Bolzano and Meinong that propositions are real entities independent of the mind, existing or subsisting in a world of their own, distinct from the world of facts. I reply that I use the phrase 'entertaining a proposition' in an entirely non-committal way, to stand for an experience which we are all perfectly familiar with. Everyone knows what it is to understand a statement, without either believing or disbelieving what is stated" (op. cit., p. 232).

103 He speaks of "the classical theory of thinking" as the one in which he was brought up: "The ideas of sub-activation and latency of concepts [proposed in Thinking and Experience] appealed to me because they seemed the only promising way of escaping from the Classical . . . Theory of Thinking in which I was brought up and in which I used to believe" (H.H. Price, Letter to Prof. Richard Brandt, Aug. 27, 1954, quoted by R.R. Ammerman, The Nature of Concepts and Images, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation for Brown University, 1956, p. 56, n. 23). "Classical Theory of Thinking" refers, as he explains in Thinking and Experience, to the theory whose "essential tenet is that thinking is differentiated from other forms of cognition not only by being a special sort of activity, but also by having a special sort of objects, which are variously called universals, concepts or abstract ideas" (H.H. Price, Thinking and Experience, p. 301; chap. x of this work is entitled "The Classical Theory of Thinking").

> The power of conceiving these concepts [which make up the notion 'material thinghood'], as soon as visual and tactual sense-data are presented which do not exemplify them, is an innate power; in a defensible sense of the phrase, they are innate ideas. And the power of taking for granted propositions into which they enter is likewise an innate power.[104]

We can now ask whether these explanation of perceptual acceptance in terms of indirect knowledge, propositions about universals, and particulars related to universals as instances of them, are sufficient to solve the difficulty of accounting for cognition whose object is ostensible only, i.e. whose object, while it apparently exists, may really not exist. This is one of the most difficult questions that can be asked, and it may be wondered whether any theory can completely solve the difficulty. Price's own proposal does not seem to be developed fully enough to be really satisfactory. For, one must eventually tackle the question: if our theory introduces an intermediary to serve as the object of thought in those situations when there are no existent instances of the thing we imagine ourselves to be thinking about (e.g. when we are thinking about dinosaurs or merely-ostensible objects in situations where no instances do exist), how can we be certain that even when instances of it do exist, we are thinking of or knowing them and not, still, only the intermediary?

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104 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 169.

Price recognized this difficulty: he observed that it is not the same thing for the mind to know one set of entities which has a mere de facto relation to a further set of entities, and for the mind to have a cognitive relation to that further set:

> The mind-dependent concept or thought-content of the Conceptualist does in fact stand in a relation of abstract-ability to any and every member of the relevant objective class. . . . But still they are merely de facto relations. There is still no cognitive relationship between the mind and the class.[105]

(This is the problem which some thinkers have tried to meet with a distinction between intentional and real (physical) existence, combined with a theory of intentional identity.)[106]

Nevertheless, even though Price was aware of this problem, no adequate solution is to be found for it in his works. In his early writings he limited himself to the broad outlines of what might be regarded as a tentative theory. When he came to write his major work on intellectual cognition (1953), he had abandoned the theory of universals and

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105 H.H. Price, Thinking and Representation, p. 29. (See also Perception, pp. 23-25).

106 For example, J. Owens writes: "The strictly metaphysical viewpoint of the one thing and its diverse existential acts, one real and the other intentional, is required to explain how the real object, existing apart from any perception, may be numerically one with the perceived object at the moment of perception" (J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, p. 231, n. 18). "Perception" here stands for any kind of knowledge. Owens offers this scholastic theory as an alternative to the epistemological monism (i.e. the denial of any intermediaries whatever) proposed by the American Neo-Realists.

concepts as understood in their traditional sense (see p. 243, n. 103 above), and the substitute theory which he offers seems to us to be too vague and non-committal in some parts and too close to a quasi-behaviorist reductionism in others to be acceptable.[107] Perhaps his best treatment of the problem is found in the work we have quoted above, viz., Thinking and Representation, but even this is devoted more to a dissection of the errors of nominalism, conceptualism, and what he calls the imagist theory of knowledge, than to his own positive views, thus leaving us--once again--rather with the broad outline of a theory than with an adequate treatment of all the knotty problems which that theory raises.

What has been presented above, however, is sufficient for our present purposes of showing the general view which Price had in mind when he put forth his complete sense-datum theory, particularly in Perception. It is now time to turn to the remainder of his analysis of perceptual consciousness.

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107 It is not possible to go into detail here on this later work, Thinking and Experience. For further discussion of the theory he proposes in it and of its limitations, see R.J.C. Burgener, "Price's Theory of the Concept", in Review of Metaphysics, 11 (1957-1958), pp. 143-159, and C.W.K. Mundle, Review of H.H. Price's Thinking and Experience, in Philosophical Quarterly, 4 (1954), pp. 156-165.

CHAPTER VI

OUR CERTITUDE CONCERNING THE WORLD

I. PERCEPTUAL ASSURANCE

In consequence of his view that our initial attitude toward material things is not one of direct, infallible intuition, Price is left with the conclusion that "any single perceptual act is as such provisional and requires confirmation by subsequent acts."[1] How do we obtain this confirmation? By the process which Price calls "perceptual assurance." He describes it in the following passage:

> Let us consider what we actually do in the case of the table. We look from various sides, from above and from underneath; we thump and grasp and stroke. That is, we replace our original sense-datum by various sorts of others. . . . And if in all the new perceptual acts thus elicited a table is still presented to the mind, we become convinced that there really <u>is</u> a table.[2]

In itself, this is not a complete description of the process as Price envisions it. Besides "still presenting" a table to the mind, the sense-data must "fit together" in ways that are not easy to describe. For instance, we could stand in front of an assembly-belt as one book after another passed in front of us: each of the visual data which we successively

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1 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, pp. 148-149.

2 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 172.

experienced might well present a book to our mind, but we would simply have a series of perceptual acceptances that in no way tended to give us greater assurance regarding one, single book. It is required that the successive sense-data pertain to the same object.

In chapters seven and eight of Perception, Price goes into great detail in describing the criteria according to which we take different sense-data to pertain to the same object. He also examines the criteria which we use in selecting certain of the sense-data to make up our "standard" idea of a particular thing. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to simply mention these criteria, without going into any of them extensively. Price's own method is to discuss the criteria under the form of different theories regarding the relation of various sense-data to one another.

First, he discusses the class theory, according to which sense-data are said to fit together on the basis of resemblance.[3] The criterion of resemblance is, of course, too vague to serve by itself. On the one hand, many sense-data resemble each other but belong to different things

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3 Price discusses this theory in Perception, pp. 206-208. He seems to be referring to B. Russell's theory about "the 'thing' being defined as the class of its appearances" (B. Russell, Mysticism and Logic, chap. viii, Doubleday Anchor ed., p. 155). Russell himself, however, had elaborated his theory somewhat along the lines of the gradual transition theory which is the one Price discusses next.

(e.g. the case of the books on the assembly-line). On the other hand, not all of the sense-data belonging to the same thing resemble each other: the sense-data belonging to a magazine, for instance, do not all resemble each other in color, nor in shape, nor in size.

Price then outlines what he calls the gradual transition theory,[4] which differs from the class theory insofar as it includes the notion of indirect as well as direct resemblance. When we walk about a table, we experience a succession of sense-data which can be mentally arranged in such a way that each is only slightly different from data adjacent to it. Consequently we can say that each of them resembles all of the others, if not directly, at least indirectly via those that intervene between them. But even this emendation does not make the theory entirely satisfactory. It still says nothing about the kind of spatial relationship that is required among the sense-data. Besides, it does not explain how, say, auditory and olfactory data are related to visual and tactual data.

In order to supplement the inadequacies of the gradual transition theory, Price next sets forth the theory of

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4 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 208-217.

spatial synthesis[5] and the principle of maximum specific detail.[6] Ignoring the fact that they do not temporarily coexist, the mind discovers within a particular group of sense-data a "remarkable property":

> This property is that all the members of it fit together to form a single solid, i.e. that taken together they form a closed three-dimensional surface, totally enclosing a certain region.[7]

Those that fit together to form this solid, Price calls "nuclear" sense-data.[8] Usually we find that these are also the most specific sense-data which we can obtain, i.e. those which we experience when we say that we are "close to the thing", or those which are the most distinct and differentiated. Of course, even those sense-data which are not nuclear nor most specifically detailed will be taken to give us assurance of the same object if they can be linked to the former data on the basis of gradual transition. These other data are simply called non-nuclear; or else they are said to belong to "distortion-series."

In general, the descriptions which Price offers in these chapters show a degree of patient and detailed

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5 Ibid., pp. 217-223.

6 Ibid., pp. 223-226.

7 Ibid., p. 218. For more on "spatial synthesizability", see sec. IV, A, 3, below.

8 Ibid., p. 222.

elaboration which is quite unusual. In Hume's Theory of the External World, there is a further abundance of detailed description of the way we correlate our experiences in order to obtain knowledge and assurance concerning the existence and characteristics of individual material things as well as concerning the relations of these things to one another.[9] There are a number of difficulties involved in the descriptions, but before turning to them, there is one additional aspect of perceptual assurance that should be brought out. This is the fact that perceptual assurance, besides giving us a "settled conviction"[10] of the existence of a material thing, is also the process of learning more about it.

II. PROCESS OF SPECIFICATION

As was mentioned earlier, our initial perceptual acceptance of a material thing, apart from other related

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9 There is at least one major difference between the two works, however. Whereas in Perception, Price accepts the innate concept of material-thinghood in his explanation of perceptual consciousness, he does not do so in Hume's Theory of the External World. The chief explanation for this is to be found in the fact that he is primarily concerned in the latter work with elaborating a theory that would be acceptable to Hume, and--needless to say--Hume would not accept a theory of innate ideas. Another explanation is that already in 1940, perhaps, Price was moving away from his earlier theory toward an empiricist position much closer to Hume's.

10 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 171.

experiences, is quite generic. Whatever specification is found in this initial act is due to the particular characteristics of the sense-datum which is simultaneously sensed. (Therefore, even our first perceptual acceptance will be partially specified by the nature of the sense-datum that is presented.) As we gain additional experiences, however, we do more than merely verify our original taking-for-granted that there is a material thing before us. We also acquire a more determinate knowledge of it. While experiencing diverse sense-data in conjunction with our examination of the table, for instance, we learn what its various parts are like, how hard it is, how heavy, and so forth. This further information is stored up in the memory and thus conditions subsequent perceptual acceptances. In other words, we do not, in our second and third encounters with a particular thing, begin all over again from a state of very generic acceptance and repeat the entire process of examination.

> If we bring in acquired perceptual dispositions, still greater definiteness [in perceptual acceptance] is possible. For these enable us in suitable cases to take for granted not merely the existence of a thing having such and such a specific sort of frong surface, but such and such a specific sort of thing behaving in such and such a specific sort of way; for instance, of a short-eared owl flying at just above stalling-point: all this and more may be taken for granted in one single perceptual.[11]

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11 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 149.

Concerning the effect of previous experience upon perceptual acceptance, Price is most anxious to avoid any suggestion that it involves inference or conscious recall. The rationalists explained perception (as distinct from sensing) in terms of inference. According to the associationist philosophers and psychologists, perception is just the sensing of present sense-data together with the recalling of past sense-data.[12] Price's opposition to such theories is vigorous:

> When we have perceptual consciousness of a house we simply do not infer from the sense-datum to the front surface of the material thing, nor from the front surface to the other surfaces, nor from these to the insides. We must not allow philosophers to bully us into saying that we are 'thinking' when we are not. Again, we simply do not recall a vast and

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12 "The Associationists say that . . . when we sense a sense-datum A here and now, we recall (are reminded of) a multitude of other sense-data which we have been accustomed to sense in the past along with it or immediately after sense-data of the A kind. According to these philosophers, the perceptual act just is the sensing together with this customary recalling of past sense-data" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 153). Berkeley and Hume and James Mill often speak this way, but it seems fair to point out that since the time of John Stuart Mill, the matter has not been put quite so crudely: see E.G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, 2nd ed., pp. 228-233.

various multitude of past sense-data which have accompanied this sense-datum in the past--say all the back views and side views of the house that we have ever seen.13

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13 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 154. Price is particularly concerned in the context to insist that the object of perceptual acceptance is a material thing and not simply a complex image made up of presently- and previously-experienced sense-data.

It is worth noting here that even with respect to some important features of the "given sense-data", Price's views are closer to the position of, say, the Gestalt psychologists than to that of the "atomistic" psychologists. It is not easy to sum up briefly his attitude toward traditional associationism, and the task is complicated by the fact that he has not always been clearly consistent with himself. In general, he seems to distinguish between characteristics of sense-data which are due to present "external" stimuli and those which are due to conditioning [of the nervous system?] by the traces of previous experiences. The distinction cannot be discovered by phenomenological analysis, since both types of characteristics are equally given; it can only be determined by subsequent investigation.

An example of this "non-atomistic" side of Price's theory is his view of visual depth and three-dimensionality. He writes: "It is a strange misunderstanding to assume, as some eminent thinkers have, that visual sense-data must be 'flat', i.e. two-dimensional. It is a plain phenomenological fact that visual fields have the property of depth. And why should sense-datum philosophers, of all people, be supposed to deny this obvious fact? On the contrary, they have usually been careful to emphasize it; and in this book [Perception] it is emphasized ad nauseam" (H.H. Price, Perception, 1954. Preface, pp. vii-viii). Illustrations of his emphasis on the point are found in Perception, pp. 8, 218-219, 242, 245; also see "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology", p. 474; Thinking and Experience, p. 50, n. 1; "Appearing and Appearances", p. 4. In "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", he admits the possibility that the sense-data of new-born infants may lack depth and three-dimensionality, but insists that this does not prevent those characteristics from being given to the adult: "We must not confuse questions about the causes of the given with questions about its nature. Moreover, the antithesis between given and not-given is one thing, while that between original and acquired is another" (op. cit., p. 280).

Price admits that without the benefit of previous experience, our perceptual acceptance when we are in the presence of a "front view" of a house might be the acceptance, not of a house, but "merely of a large cliff-like

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13 (cont'd) Other examples which he offers of features of the given which are due to previous conditioning are the coldness of the ice and the wetness of the water that are seen (see H.H. Price, Thinking and Experience, p. 47) and he attributes them to what some psychologists had spoken of as "complication". (For the notion of "complication", see J. Laird, A Study in Realism, Oxford, University Press, 1920, pp. 24-25; G.F. Stout, A Manual of Psychology, 3rd ed., London, University Tutorial Press, Ltd., 1913, Bk. I, chap. iii, sec. vii, and Bk. III, chap. ii, sec. iv; and J. Ward, Psychological Principles, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1920, chap. vi, sec. vii, and chap. vii, sections ii and iii.)

A thorough discussion of such views would require volumes. The single problem of depth-perception has been the subject of endless investigation and controversy and is still regarded as unsettled by psychologists (e.g., see J.E. Hochberg, Perception, p. 67). It is possible, however, to make two observations. First, the questions involved can be settled only by studying the phenomena directly. To argue from the nature of the physiological stimuli to what the phenomena should be would constitute a commission of the stimulus-error. Secondly, if such characteristics are given even when they are not found in the physical objects themselves, this is another argument against direct realism. Thus, the Gestalt psychologists, who are prominent in maintaining that solidity and depth are not simply inferred or recalled, but are actually given in visual sense perception, are forced by the fact that the given depth frequently conflicts with the actual depth of physical objects to distinguish between the depth of phenomenal space and the depth of physical space, which latter is the inferred space: see, e.g., W. Kohler, Gestalt Psychology, chap. i, where he speaks of the experienced vs. the physical world.

thing",[14] but he maintains that the previous experiences are only necessary conditions for more determinate perceptual consciousness.[15]

Nevertheless, references to this facet of Price's analysis, namely to the view that experience conditions subsequent perceptual acceptance and makes it more determinate, may mitigate somewhat the feeling of implausibility that one receives when he reads Price's statement that "any single perceptual act is as such provisional and requires confirmation by subsequent acts." (See p. 247 above). This implausibility is not simply due to the fact that--as Price admits--the provisionality is not experienced as such. It is due to the fact that when, for example, we walk into our study, the scene that we encounter is so familiar that it is difficult to imagine how we could be mistaken about the things present there or how we might obtain greater perceptual assurance. Despite our temporary absence from our room, our present experience is linked on, as it were, to the previous experiences which we have had in this room and in contact with these particular objects. In view of Price's theory that the process of perceptual assurance is simultaneously a process which makes possible more and more specifically

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14 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 155.

15 Ibid., pp. 154-156.

determined perceptual acceptances in the future, it becomes necessary to recognize that there are very different degrees of provisionality in single perceptual acts. Thus, because of this quasi-continuity of the new perceptual acceptance with the previous process of perceptual assurance, we can--it would seem--regard the new act as reinstating that perceptual assurance.[16]

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16 It is also possible that what might be taken as a single perceptual act really includes several. Mention has already been made of the opinion of some authors that "single observations can give us certain knowledge about objects" (see p. 201, n. 28 above). J.W. Blyth gives the example of a man driving an automobile and approaching another automobile parked at the side of the street. If a young child suddenly darts from behind the parked car into his path, Blyth says, "a single glance would assure the driver that there really was a child there" (J.W. Blyth, "A Discussion of Mr. Price's Perception", in Mind, 44 [1935], p. 59). Much of this assurance would come from the driver's previous experience--what would be the perceptual acceptance of an infant if this were his first experience? But it is also necessary to take into account the fact that even in this brief instant, there are many, not just one, sense-data being experienced: viz. the sense-data--visual, tactual, and auditory--which the man had been experiencing as he drove along, as well as those which he experiences in rapid succession as the child moves into his path. Contrast this situation, for example, with an experiment in which the man is placed while blindfolded into a stationary automobile at the same time that a cleverly-painted dummy that resembles a child darting across the street is placed in front of the car: if the blindfold is removed for just an instant, will the man have the same assurance? Similar considerations apply to the example spoken of by Quinton and mentioned above (p. 201, n. 28). He writes: "Consider standing in broad daylight three feet away from a large and perfectly normal chestnut cart-horse and saying 'that is a horse' or, more adventurously, 'that horse is brown'. . . . In these conditions, the challenge 'how can you tell?' is simply devoid of sense" (A.M. Quinton, "The Problem of Perception", p. 47). According to Quinton, the reason that the challenge is devoid of sense is because it represents an attempt to introduce the note of uncertainty or tentativeness into the original claim, whereas that claim is already certain. Even

III. PERCEPTUAL ASSURANCE AND THE COHERENCE THEORY

At the beginning of his chapter on perceptual assurance in Perception, Price poses the following problem. If perceptual assurance consists simply of a series of sensing and concomitant perceptual acceptances, and if each of the latter is liable to be mistaken, how can the final product be any less liable to be mistaken?

His answer is as follows:

> What was taken for granted in the original act is somehow progressively confirmed in the others. If so, it is not really true to say that each of the perceptual acts in the series is merely a taking-for-granted. The first really is no more than that; but it is not true that the later ones are. To put it roughly, each of the later ones would have been a mere taking-for-granted, if it had occurred in isolation, say as a result of a lightning flash in pitch darkness, or if it had not stood in these relations to other members of the series.[17]

But what does "confirm" mean? The ordinary meaning is that a later item of information is evidence for the truth of the original proposal. What Price seems to be saying, therefore, is that the first perceptual act proposes the

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16 (cont'd) here, however, there are many sensings and their accompanying perceptual acceptances involved. (Surprisingly enough, Quinton admits that deception is still possible: "The horse in the example may just possibly be a brilliantly contrived deception, a flat painted board" [op. cit., p. 49].)

17 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 172.

thesis "Here is a material thing of such-and-such a sort", and each subsequent act either harmonizes with this thesis and thus confirms it, or disagrees with the thesis and thus fails to confirm it. When we have had a sufficient number of confirmatory acts, our state of mind is one of settled conviction and assurance.

What is implied here, of course, is the coherence criterion of certitude. In fact, Price compares the entire process of perceptual assurance to what happens in a law-court when various witnesses confirm the story told by the defendant.[18] The more witnesses there are whose testimonies harmonize with it, the greater becomes our certainty that the defendant's story is the true one.[19] Similarly, in perceptual

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18 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 180ff.

19 A distinction must be made between the coherence that is connected with the nature of truth and the coherence that is connected with the criterion of certitude. Idealists often advocate a coherence theory to explain the nature of truth. The truth or falsity of a statement does not depend upon its correspondence to some fact that lies beyond it, just as an idea cannot--according to them--be true or false by reason of a relation to a material thing, since none exist. Rather, they hold, a statement is true or false because of its relation to other propositions or judgments. (Price examines such a theory in chapter six of Hume's Theory of the External World: see esp. pp. 217-218.) Those, on the other hand, who advocate a correspondence theory of truth may simultaneously hold that our criterion for discovering this correspondence (or lack of it) is coherence. Price discusses the meaning of this coherence in "Memory-Knowledge", pp. 22-23, and in Truth and Corrigibility, pp. 15-17. On the fundamental distinction between coherence as an explanation of the nature of truth and coherence as a criterion of certainty, see A.C. Ewing, The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy, London, Macmillan Co., 1951, chap. iii.

assurance, subsequent acts--provided they have the requisite relations to the first act[20]--give us conviction because they "tell the same story" as the first act, though from a new angle.[21]

How strong is the conviction that the process of perceptual assurance furnishes? It is Price's opinion that it never reaches the level of absolute certainty.

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20 See pp. 247-251 above.

21 Price's article "Our Evidence for the Existence of Other Minds", in Philosophy, 13 (1938), pp. 425-456, is an excellent example of a detailed argument, based on the criterion of consistency, for the existence of other minds. He enumerates several facts that each one can verify for himself and then concludes that because "these facts are 'explained' or 'accounted for' by our hypothesis" [that there are other minds which think and use symbols the same way that we do], the hypothesis is thereby substantiated (op. cit., p. 446). He admits that this is not verification in the strict sense of direct observation, but adds that it is such in a "weak" sense. (On the matter of strong and weak verification, see A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, 2nd ed., New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1946, pp. 9-11, 36-37. See also Price's own article, "Logical Positivism and Theology", in Philosophy, 10 [1935], pp. 313-331, in which he discusses strong and weak verification, as well as the application of the positivist "Principle of Verifiability" to statements about God's existence and nature.)

> This assurance is a rational conviction of the existence of a material thing. . . . That the thing does exist is then <u>almost</u> certain, though no specification-series of finite length can make it completely certain.[22]

The reason for this assertion is the never-perfectly-eliminated possibility that at some future data, new evidence may be found that will contradict the previously-acquired evidence.

There has been much controversy on this last point, concerning a question which it is not possible to pursue here.[23] But something must be said about the very possibility of acquiring certainty on the basis of coherence or

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22 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 203. He maintained this position throughout his early sense-datum writings: our certainty concerning the material world is always something less than absolute. In "Mill's View of the External World", he quotes with approval the remark of Bishop Butler to the effect that "Probability is the guide of life" (<u>op. cit.</u>, p. 134). See also "The Nature of Sensible Appearances", p. 178, "Logical Positivism and Theology", p. 320, and "The Permanent Significance of Hume's Philosophy", in <u>Philosophy</u>, 15 (1940), p. 29 (where he chides Hume for believing that inductive generalisations must be either certain or nothing, and says that Hume should have given some thought to the notion of a probability capable of a great if limited increase). Only in <u>Hume's Theory of the External World</u> (p. 54) and "Seeming" (p. 231) does he admit that the probability present in a perceptual series can be increased to the point that we have "empirical certainty." (On this subject, see the following footnote.)

23 The question is this: just what type of certainty is it that we lack? On matters of fact, we will never possess that analytic certainty which is proper to necessary truths, whose denial involves self-contradiction. But is it not true that after a certain number of perceptual acts, we have all of the <u>empirical</u> certainty that is possible or even desirable? To say otherwise would appear to be a reversion back to the error of Plato who denied that certitude could be

consistency. Is it conceivable that, despite the fact that the successive sense-perceptual acts harmonize with each other

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23 (cont'd) found in the region of contingent fact. Price himself refers to this problem, not in Perception, but in Hume's Theory of the External World, where he recalls Hume's distinction between the certainty connected with our knowledge of the "relations of ideas" and that which is connected with our knowledge of "matters of fact" (see Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, section IV, pt. i). On the one hand, Price says, the most that we can demand is sufficient testing by actual sense-experience, "where 'sufficiently' means 'enough to satisfy any reasonable man'" (H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 160-161). If this is our criterion, then the ordinary man would say "that it is unreasonable or silly to demand further confirmation by additional observations" (ibid., p. 161). On the other hand, he writes, some philosophers have maintained that "the plain man ought never to say 'it is a fact that there is an ink-bottle here'; he ought only to say at the most 'I have very strong evidence that there is an ink-bottle here'. Another way of putting their point is to say that any material-object statement, however well established, is still corrigible" (ibid., p. 162). In this work, Price himself adopts a non-committal attitude, pointing out merely that Hume would have said that we attain complete certainty: ibid., p. 162. There is an illuminating discussion of the question in R.J. Hirst, The Problems of Perception, pp. 136-144, where he analyses an article of N. Malcolm ("Certainty and Empirical Statements", in Mind, 51 [1942], pp. 18-46). After describing the different things a person would do in order to verify an empirical statement such as "There is a blue book on the table," he makes the interesting point that the process reaches a saturation point, after which new acts will be mere repetitions of previous ones. If, after the saturation point has been reached, new and contradictory evidence is uncovered, it is likely that, instead of declaring our previous conviction erroneous, we will adopt some hypothesis that will explain the new phenomenon while leaving intact the old one. See also A.J. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1956, pp. 124-127.

Analysis of the question would lead, it seems to us, to two conclusions: (1) there is a type of empirical certitude which is different from our certitude about mathematics, and this is the certitude which we have, for instance, with respect to the existence and some of the characteristics of sense-data; and (2) Berkeley's argument is valid, to the effect that there is no logical contradiction involved in holding that a spirit could cause it to happen that our experience

and with the initial taking-for-granted-that-a-material-thing-exists, there is no material thing present after all. Price raises the problem by returning to the example of the witnesses in court: it is not a logical contradiction to suppose that they are all lying, having concocted a consistent theory before taking the stand.[24] Just so, the statements in a novel are intrinsically coherent, yet they do not correspond to any facts.[25]

Nor is there any need to limit ourselves to these rather artificial analogies. We have an even better one in a traditional theory concerning the truth of scientific hypotheses. These hypotheses, many philosophers have maintained, are accepted simply because they are able to "explain" the greatest number of observed facts. They are not true in the sense that they "correspond determinately"[26] to the physical realities involved, but simply in the sense that they "save

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23 (cont'd) be the same as we now find it even though in fact, no material things actually exist.

24 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 182. For a lengthy treatment of the difficulties in the coherence criterion, see H.H. Price, Truth and Corrigibility, esp. pp. 19-27.

25 Ibid., p. 183.

26 This phrase (a translation of "corresponde déterminément") is used by J. Maritain (see his Degrees of Knowledge, trans. under the direction of G.B. Phelan, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1959, p. 62).

the appearances".[27] Is it not possible that the settled conviction which comes at the end of a series of perceptual acts and which assures us that a material thing of such-and-such a kind exists is "true" or "certain" only in the sense that it saves the appearances? If so, then it is conceivable that it is mistaken, and that material things do not exist after all.

This is a crucial question for Price, and it evokes from him a rather belabored answer which reveals his awareness of just how crucial it is. He starts out by admitting that coherence alone is an insufficient guarantee of factual truth. While it may satisfy the requirements for proof in purely theoretical matehmatics, more is demanded if we are to acquire certainty about the existing world.[28] The "more"

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27 "Saving the appearances" is an expression which goes back to ancient times: see A.C. Crombie, Medieval and Early Modern Science, Garden City, New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, revised ed., 1959, Vol. I, pp. 82-89. Very briefly, a theory that saves the appearances is one which would account for the phenomena if it were true, even though there is no irrefutable proof that it is so. For further discussion on the subject, as well as for bibliographical material, see B.M. Ashley, "Does Natural Science Attain Nature or only the Phenomena?" in The Philosophy of Science, ed. V.E. Smith, (St. John's University Studies, Philosophical Series 2), New York, St. John's University Press, 1961, pp. 63-82.

28 In Truth and Corrigibility, Price makes the point that unless some of the coherent propositions are independently probable (i.e. independently of their compatibility with other propositions), then the entire group of propositions amount only to a set of interrelated hypotheses. See also A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, ch. ii, pp. 84-91.

that is required will not always be the same. In court, for example, we have, in addition to the bare statements of the witnesses, the quite independent assumption "that anyone who makes a statement on oath is likely to be telling the truth."[29] In the case of perception, our assurance is based on what Price calls "the Principle of Confirmability", according to which we know

> . . . that the existence of a particular visual or tactual sense-datum is *prima facie* evidence (1) for the existence of a material thing such that this sense-datum belongs to it, (2) for the possession by this thing of a front surface of a certain general sort.[30]

According to this Principle of Confirmability, then, we know that sense-data are not simply entities existing for themselves, but that they also possess a *presentative function*.[31] But how do we know this?[32] How can we be certain

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29 H.H. Price, *Perception*, p. 183. When we read a novel, on the other hand, there is no independent ground for believing that the self-consistent statements and descriptions have a relation to fact.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 185. Price criticizes "some advocates" of the coherence theory for neglecting everything but inner consistency--something which even the novel possesses.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 104. The term comes, perhaps, from G.F. Stout who discusses the presentative function of sensations in *A Manual of Psychology*, 3rd ed., pp. 209-210.

32 This problem is basic to any theory which professes that the immediate objects of sense are images or signs. It does no good to merely *define* these immediate objects as "appearances" or "presentations" and to conclude from the *definition* that "objective reference" is contained

that this principle is true?

Price says that if anyone asks this further question, "it is not easy to give him an answer."[33] The validity of the principle is not something which Price finds self-evident (in the sense that it would be if anyone who knew what the terms of the proposition meant also would know at once that it was true), nor is he able to think of any way of deducing it from some other truth.[34] He denies that it is simply a postulate.[35] Yet he finds it difficult to give a convincing reason why it is not. In such a difficulty, he makes an appeal to us to put first things first.

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32 (cont'd) in the very notion that they are appearances or presentations. (One sometimes hears the conclusion put in the form of a question: "How can you have an appearance which is not the appearance of something [else]?") The problem then becomes: how do you know that the immediately sensed is an appearance and not simply an evanescent entity-in-itself? (R. Verneaux commits the same fallacy, merely substituting "accident" for "appearance" and then assuming that the immediately-sensed are accidents of material substances, and even--many of his remarks seem to imply--of extra-organic ones: see R. Verneaux, Epistemologie Générale, 2nd ed., p. 128.)

33 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 186.

34 Ibid., pp. 186-187.

35 The Principle is a postulate if in daily life we simply assume it to be true, though for no real reason at all. Price says that this "is what Hume and the Philosophers of the As-If would say" (ibid., p. 187).

> We must start our inquiry, so to speak, from the right end, from that which we are quite certain of. And the right starting-point here is simply the nature which perceptual consciousness is found as a matter of fact to have.[36]

And what is that nature?

> It simply is the case that the existence of the material thing (merely accepted at first) becomes more and more probable as we specify further. I cannot prove this, but I think it is just evident. We simply find this increase of probability going on (or this accumulation of evidence); we just do find ourselves passing beyond mere taking-for-granted, whether we like it or not.[37]

But if this is Price's ultimate basis for the validity of the Principle of Confirmability, i.e. for the fact that "if any visual or tactual sense-datum exists, then its existence is evidence that a material thing also exists,"[38] then it is difficult to see that he has accomplished what he set out to do, which was to justify perceptual assurance. His justification is supposed to be the fact that we do become more and more certain about the existence and nature of a material thing as we experience successive perceptual acceptances in its regard. But how, then, does this differ from saying that the Principle is a postulate, something which in daily life we do assume to be true? Everyone will admit that

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36 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 188.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 186.

we do make this assumption, but Price had set out to answer the question: "Are we entitled to the assurance which we reach in this way?"[39]

The truth is that Price himself suspects the tenuousness of his proposed answer. For, in effect, he asks the question all over again a second time.

> 'But still', it may be said, 'we have no positive reason for thinking that there is any matter, so that after all it is still possible that perceptual consciousness, even at its best, is nothing but consistent hallucination.[40]

As he attempts to allay this final nagging doubt about the validity of perceptual assurance, Price reveals what the ordinary realist will consider to be the major weakness in his account of perceptual consciousness: Price's analysis of perceptual consciousness is, in fact, compatible with phenomenalism.

For one thing, Price says, it is unreasonable to ask for any further reasons for the validity of perceptual assurance. It is not something we can give reasons for, but is itself our reason for other convictions.

> Our consciousness of the reality of matter in general cannot intelligibly be called either reasonable or unreasonable: it is that which enables us to give reasons of a particular kind for certain more specific beliefs.[41]

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39 Ibid., p. 180.

40 Ibid., p. 191.

41 Ibid.

Furthermore, it is not even certain that the question makes any sense. To say that the process of perceptual assurance "may perhaps be nothing better than consistent hallucination . . . is an incoherent suggestion."[42] The reason is that if all experience is hallucination, then the word "hallucination" loses any distinctive meaning, and, instead of designating as "hallucinatory" all the experiences previously thought of as non-hallucinatory, we can just as legitimately designate as "non-hallucinatory" all those experiences previously considered hallucinatory.

But is this true? It seems not. If we adopt an "internal" criterion of hallucination, then there would still remain the possibility of distinguishing "veridical" from "hallucinatory" experiences. If a person were to see a dagger-like shape before him but were unable to feel anything when he reached out to grasp it, he would judge himself to be the victim of an hallucination, whereas if he were also able to feel something dagger-shaped, he would judge this to be a veridical perception.

But this would be to <u>define</u> hallucination, not in terms of the absence of any material thing which could serve as its external stimulus[43] or corresponding object, but in

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42 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 192.

43 See pp. 117-118 above.

terms of the relation of one sense-datum to other sense-data. If we take the first and more ordinary view that an experience is to be designated as hallucinatory mainly on the grounds that no corresponding material thing is present at all, then it is still not an incoherent suggestion that all our experiences are hallucinatory, i.e. that no material things exist. Berkeley and the idealists have not only found it plausible to maintain that no material things exist, but have insisted that what is really incoherent is all talk about unsensed material things.

Why does Price maintain the opposite? The reason is that for the moment he is, in fact, making use of the phenomenalist's criterion of hallucination, namely, the relation of the sense-datum in question to other sense-data, and not of the more ordinary, realist criterion. This becomes apparent when he writes:

> Suppose for argument's sake that we did have an hallucinatory perceptual act which permitted of further and further specification by other perceptual acts, so long as we cared to try; what meaning would there be in calling it an hallucination? Let us, for instance, imagine a ghost which can be seen from all sides and from however short a distance, which is presented by means of tactual data as well as visual, and which you cannot walk through. Plainly it would not be a ghost at all: it would simply be a curious and unexpected sort of real object. To continue to call it hallucinatory after that is simply to misuse language; for the definition of 'hallucinatory' is 'incapable of being further specified with regard to back, sides, etc.'[44]

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44 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 192.

All of this is couched in ambiguous phrasing (he speaks of sensing the ghost and walking into it rather than of sensing visual and other sense-data), but it is more than obvious from the context that he is referring, not to the presence or absence of a material thing defined in realist terms, but to the obtainability--or lack of it--of confirmatory sense-data.[45] Thus, if phenomenalism is the theory which identifies a material thing with a "system of sense-data" (Perception, pp. 282-283), then what Price is saying is that, for all that our analysis of perceptual assurance has shown us, phenomenalism may still be true. But we do not have to conjecture about this: Price openly admits it:

> Whatever analysis of perceptual consciousness we give, Phenomenalism may still be true: for it is a theory not of the confirmation, but of the confirmatum, not of perceptual consciousness (in any of its grades) but of what we are perceptually conscious of.[46]

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45 Price's assertion that to call all experiences "hallucinatory" is incoherent is apparently based on the neo-positivist criterion of meaning, according to which the lack of any obtainable evidence either for or against a thesis renders debate about it meaningless. See A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, 2nd ed., pp. 39-40. In general, Price does not employ this criterion, except when he expounds Hume's views in Hume's Theory of the External World. The fact that he resorts to it here is in itself evidence for the fact that he recognizes the seriousness of the difficulty into which he has worked himself.

46 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 177. He reiterates this position on pp. 187 and 203 of the same work.

The situation we now face, therefore, is the following. According to Price, we are assured beyond reasonable doubt that material things exist, once we have terminated the series of acts constituting perceptual assurance. The next problem is to find out what a material thing is. Is it what the phenomenalists say it is, i.e. a system of phenomena? Or is it something more, as the realist maintains?

IV. WHAT IS A MATERIAL THING?

Already in chapter five of this thesis it was seen that there are obscurities in Price's explanation of the nature of perceptual acceptance. They chiefly concerned the existential status of the object, whether this object be taken as a material thing or as descriptive propositions about a material thing. It was assumed, however, that the notion of material thing was fairly clear. The difficulty that now arises is this: despite the fact that Price seemed to be taking material thing in an old-fashioned realist sense,[47] it now appears that he is re-interpreting that definition, or at least admitting the possibility of re-interpreting it in the phenomenalist sense. He does continue to emphasize that, however we construe the meaning of "material thing", it still remains true that in perceptual acceptance

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47 See pp. 111, and p. 232, n. 84, above.

we are taking-for-granted the existence of something which somehow transcends a single sense-datum. (This is obvious if "material thing" is interpreted in the traditional realist sense. But it is also true, Price says, if we apply a phenomenalist interpretation: in this latter case, "material thing" will denote a whole system of sense-data, of which the actually-sensed data are only some of the members.)[48] Nevertheless, it is now time to inquire just what Price believes a material thing is.

Let us first recall Price's argument up to the present stage. It will be remembered that he originally set out to investigate the nature of human sense perception. He discovered that there are two very different aspects to it. We enjoy one kind of cognition consisting of a direct intuitive acquaintance with sense-data. We also possess perceptual consciousness of material things. What is the nature of this latter? According to Price it is not a second type of direct intuition. Nor is it a matter of causal inference. It is rather a taking-for-granted, an act in which the innate concept of material thinghood is brought into play.

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48 If the phenomenalist is correct, Price writes, then "when we begin by taking for granted the existence of a material thing, this will really mean that we take the sense-datum now sensed to be a member of a system of this sort [i.e. of a very complicated system of actual and obtainable sense-data]" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 176).

But just a single act of perceptual acceptance or taking-for-granted is insufficient to assure us that a material thing really exists. Such assurance comes only at the end of a series of perceptual acts which display a particular kind of internal consistency.

Nevertheless, despite the empirical fact that the series of perceptual acts does convince one of the existence of a material thing, the question arises: "Is a person entitled to this conviction?" To answer this, Price turns once more to the sense-datum: the sense-datum, he says, is evidence for the validity of the perceptual act. But the further question intrudes: although it be granted that the sense-datum is evidence, precisely what is it evidence for? Is it evidence for the obtainability of further sense-data--the phenomenalist interpretation of "material thing"--or for the existence of a material thing in the realist sense?

The answer to this question will be sought by inquiring into the relation of sense-data to material things. Price himself in the beginning of Perception[49] declares that this relation is one of the two main subjects which he will investigate.

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49 Op. cit., p. 26.

From some of his remarks, it might seem that he views the relation as that of sign or representation to signified. For instance, he speaks of the

> . . . teleological or instrumental character of sense-data. . . . The truth is that the sense-data themselves are 'means' to something else, namely, to perceptual consciousness, which would be impossible without them. It seems likely that the meaningfulness of the sense-datum, the fact that it is pre-adapted to be taken as belonging to a particular material object is part of its essential nature and not a mere accident of it.[50]

Reference has already been made to the presentative function of sense-data, spoken of by Price,[51] and there are other indications that he may at times think of the relation between sense-data and material things principally in this fashion.[52] Perhaps it may even appear that he is maintaining a theory about sense-data that is similar to the Schoolmen's theory of species.

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50 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 50-51.

51 See p. 265 above.

52 In Perception, Price uses the actual phrase "presentative function" only once, and, then, simply in passing. (Perception, p. 104). There are other references to the view on pp. 4, 114, 126, 148, and 200 of the same work. One should keep in mind, moreover, the close connection that exists between the theory of sense-data and the theory of appearances: in "The Nature of Sense Appearances" Price writes that sensa "have the peculiar property of being 'appearances of' or 'manifestations of' substances other than themselves" (op. cit., p. 167). His own early theory was one of appearance and reality. And again in Thinking and Experience he treats sense-data as signs.

According to the Schoolmen, the species are cognitional intermediaries, serving to unite the knower and the thing known. Without entering into a long, technical discussion, it can be said that these species are thought of as a kind of sign whose function is purely to make something else known. Moreover, they make known without being known, so that knowledge by means of species is not conceived as implying any sort of causal reasoning from the sign to the signified.[53] Thomas Aquinas, for instance, says that "the species which is involved in vision is not what is seen but is that whereby vision sees; what is seen is the color which is in the [external] body."[54]

Is it possible to interpret Price as putting forward such a theory as this? The answer must be that, although

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53 According to the Scholastics, it would be impossible to reason from the species to the thing signified because the species' own nature and presence are known only by reflex-knowledge. Species are so exclusively intermediaries that it is the thing signified by them which is known in the first instance. The species are thus a very particular type of sign and came to be designated as "formal signs", i.e. as signs which are not first known in themselves but whose entire function is to make something else known. See J. Maritain, Degrees of Knowledge, Appendix I, trans. G.B. Phelan, esp. pp. 388-389.

54 "Species, quae est in visu, non est quod videtur, sed est quo visus videt; quod autem videtur est color, qui est in corpore" (Thomas Aquinas, Commentarium in Aristotelis Librum 'De Anima', Marietti ed., 1959, L. III, lect. viii, #718).

there are certain resemblances between this theory and his own (e.g., both sense-data and species are means to something else; both theories argue for an awareness of material things that is non-inferential), there are even greater differences. Price's sense-datum is the direct object of sensing and would not qualify as a purely "formal sign"--i.e. as something which makes known without being known.[55] It may be true that sense-data immediately put us in mind of material things, but there is no question of themselves being transparent or inconspicuous in the process. The colors, sounds, and other qualities of the sense-data are as immediately present as the material things they make known. Nor does Price ever speak

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55 There are some who, because of the problems with illusion and so forth, admit the existence of intermediaries in sense perception, but who nevertheless persist in regarding them as pure intermediaries, i.e. as making known without being known. J.F. Donceel has written, with respect to the retinal image: "The only picture the intentional form can be compared with is the retinal image of an object in my eye. That image . . . lasts only as long as the object is impinging upon the retina, and the image itself is never seen directly, but by means of it the object is seen. Technically speaking, such pictures are called formal signs" (J. Donceel, Philosophical Psychology, 2nd ed., New York, Sheed and Ward, 1963, p. 180). See also C.A. Strong, "Is Perception Direct or Representative?" in Mind, 40 (1931), p. 217; and J. Wild, "The Concept of the Given in Contemporary Philosophy--Its Origin and Limitations," p. 76. The arguments brought against direct realism in chapter four, above, are pertinent here: when I look toward a straight stick which is partially immersed in water, for example, I directly see the bent sense-datum (therefore it is not a formal sign), and I do not simultaneously see--in the same sense of "see"--something straight situated beyond it. (This same point is urged in the Appendix below.)

of sense-data as if they were mental replicas or representations of a second set of colors, sounds, and the like, inherent in material things: that is, he does not hold any sort of epistemological dualism with respect to colors, sounds, and the like. There exist, for him, only one set of colors and sounds--those, namely, which we sense.

How then does Price conceive the relation between sense-data and material things? The answer to this question will help answer the earlier question, "How, in fact, does Price conceive the nature of a material thing?" As we shall see, Price's views about the nature of both sense-data and material things are not what anyone familiar with the views of his remote ancestors, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, would expect.

In brief, despite his initial refutation of naive realism, Price maintains that sense-data are related to material things by being partial constituents of them. Sense-data are not the only constituents of material things, however, since, in addition to sense-data, one other type of entity is related to material things as partial constituents, namely, physical objects. He writes:

> The ordinary view, as we shall show, . . . is that a material thing consists of <u>two different elements in conjunction</u>, on the one hand a family of sense-data, on the other hand a causally-characterized physical entity, or physical object.[56]

But certainly this is an unexpected view. At least at first sight it is. Traditionally, those who rejected naive realism have kept the two elements apart: on the one hand, sense-data were usually spoken of as ideas or phenomena in the mind, while, on the other hand, the physical (or material) object was regarded as an entity in itself, existing outside the mind and unaffected by anyone's knowing or not-knowing of it. There were, of course, those who spoke of the phenomena, after their synthesis by the mind, as a "phenomenal object", and there were some who rejected the existence of the physical object-in-itself entirely. But now we find Price combining the two and maintaining that together they constitute a single entity, a material thing.[57]

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56 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 282. In a footnote he adds: "Thus 'material thing' and 'physical object' are not synonymous expressions. The material thing (or 'material object') <u>contains</u> the physical object, but is not identical with it. For it contains the sense-data as well."

57 C.D. Broad came close to formulating a similar theory in his <u>Scientific Thought</u>, where he writes of the relations between what he calls "perceptual objects" and "scientific objects", which would correspond roughly to Price's "families" and "physical objects" (though Price is far more agnostic about the second member of the composite than Broad is). Broad never did develop these particular suggestions of his into a systematic and consistent theory, however.

The reasons why Price adopts this unexpected position[58] seems to be his desire to avoid the opinion that perception is really causal inference or old-fashioned representationalism. In rejecting the view that sense-data are simply mental entities inhering in the mind or brain, he makes the following remark:

> If they [the sense-data] were literally inside the brain, we should have to fall back on the Causal Inference Theory to justify our beliefs about the material world (brains included), and, as we have seen in the last chapter, that theory is quite indefensible.[59]

Sense-data do, in his opinion, enable us to know material things, and "they only do this, as we shall contend later, by always purporting to be and in some cases actually being constituents of the surfaces of such objects."[60] In other words, having found other avenues to material things closed off, he now attempts to find a new and tenable theory. He thinks that a viable solution can be developed if sense-data, at least some of them, are <u>somehow</u> constituents of the things they enable us to know.

One other key to help us understand Price's adoption of this unusual view is his quite justified insistence that

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58 The position is especially unexpected since it seems to be a re-acceptance of the direct realism which Price has already rejected.

59 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 129, n. 1.

60 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 129.

the plain man's ordinary notion of a material thing, a tomato for instance, is not the notion simply of a colorless, soundless, neither-hot-nor-cold, odorless, and tasteless three-dimensional solid or swarm of particles, as Locke and modern science describe it; nor yet is it the notion of a collection of evanescent sense-data such as color-patches, sounds, odors, and tastes. When the ordinary person thinks of a material thing, he includes both: he thinks of something solid and enduring, and also of something which possesses a characteristic color, odor, taste, etc.[61] If this is what we ordinarily think of when we think of a material thing, then perhaps it is the correct concept after all, in spite of the falsity of Naive Realism.

However this may be, it is first necessary to investigate a bit into the nature of sense-data in order to find out whether they are the sort of entities which can be constituents of material things.

A. First Constituent of Material Things: the Family of Sense-Data.

Price makes use of a number of technical terms in explaining how sense-data help to constitute material things. Some of these terms are: "nuclear sense-data", "family", and

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61 Ibid., pp. 301-304. See also J. Laird, A Study in Realism, p. 27.

"standard solid".[62] As an introduction to these notions, let us begin with a passage from "Mill's View of the External World."

> Whenever we perceive , by sight or touch, a number of sense-data which are said to belong to the same thing, we notice the following fact. A certain three-dimensional figure can be conceived, such that the shape of every sense-datum in the set either exactly resembles or is a distortion of, part of the surface of that figure. . . . Further, we may divide the whole set of visual and tactual sense-data into sub-sets, such that each of them has one member whose shape exactly resembles the shape of some part of our three-dimensional figure, while the other members can be arranged in a series, each item of which is "more distorted than" the one before, i.e., differs from the first member more than the preceding item differed. Thus we have a series of increasing distortedness, which conducts us all the way from the "wildest" appearance, seen by a semi-conscious observer through uneven glass in moonlight, to the "tamest" perspective view.[63]

After some additional description of how we decide which member of each sub-set will be regarded as the norm, from which the others diverge by various degrees of distortedness, he concludes:

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62 For a full explanation of these terms, see esp. chapters viii and ix of Perception. His article, "Mill's View of the External World", provides valuable insights into his idea of a family and a standard solid. There are further remarks and clarifications of these notions particularly in his articles "On the So-Called Space of Sight", and "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", as well as in Hume's Theory of the External World.

63 H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", pp. 115-116.

> Thus there is only one solid figure, of which all the sense-data in the set are either copies or distortions. Let us call this solid figure the Standard Figure. And let us call the set of sense-data which are held together by their common relation to it, a Family of sense-data.[64]

This passage will give the reader an idea of what Price means by "standard figure"--in "Mill's View of the External World", at least. For the inconvenient fact about Price's use of the phrase "standard figure" is that he applies it to different things in different writings. Perhaps if the different things are simply described first, then it will be easier to sort out his different applications of terms.

First, there is that which serves to unite into a family all of the sense-data which pertain to a single material thing. (In the above passage, it was the standard figure which performed this function.) Secondly, there are--among the sense-data thus united--some which form a core or nucleus, i.e. those which are said above to be exact copies of parts of the standard figure. Finally, there is the shape of this nuclear group of sense-data.

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64 Ibid., p. 117. In this article, Price describes the Standard Figure as being, not an existent or actual, but a subsistent, entity, i.e., "something purely ideal, if we prefer that language" (ibid.). With respect to the word "family", it is possible that he took it from an analogy suggested by C.D. Broad in his Scientific Thought, pp. 544ff.

We have already seen how Price names some of these various things in "Mill's View of the External World". In Perception, he substitutes the innate concept of material thinghood in place of the earlier "standard figure",[65] and the nuclear group within the family is now named "the standard solid".[66] (Note, however, that--unlike the standard figure in "Mill's View of the External World"--the standard solid is not something which unites sense-data by virtue of being a common term to which they are all related, but rather it itself is constituted by the nuclear data.) The shape of the standard solid is called, in Perception, "the standard figure".[67] In Hume's Theory of the External World, this latter becomes "the standard shape."[68] Finally, in his article, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", Price uses the phrase "standard figure" to refer to what in Perception he calls the standard solid.[69]

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65 See pp. 216-218 above for the discussion of Price's opinion that the concept of material thinghood is a pre-requisite for the process of association or synthesis.

66 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 227.

67 Ibid.

68 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 206.

69 H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", p. 284.

Returning now to the problem of how sense-data can be partial constituents of material things, it will be noted that in the quotation from "Mill's View of the External World", Price proposed that it was on the basis that each of them resembled (exactly or in distorted fashion) part of the ideal standard figure. (Collectively, they resemble the whole.) Later on, however, he speaks rather of spatial synthesizability among the sense-data themselves. He writes:

> We find within this collection [of sense-data belonging to the same family] a certain small group which has a remarkable property. This property is that all the members of it fit together to form a single solid, i.e. that taken together they form a closed three-dimensional surface, totally enclosing a certain region. Let us call the sense-data which belong to such groups constructible or spatially synthesizable sense-data.70

One wonders, however, just how literally the phrase "fit together" is to be taken. Are we to think of sense-data as being the kind of entities from which one can build a three-dimensional solid in the way that a pyramid, say, is built out of blocks of stone? In order to answer this question, we must discuss the nature of sense-data.

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70 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 218. We find the same thing in "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", where he writes that the nucleus of the family "is made up of spatially synthesisable members; the several shapes and sizes of these are such that they together constitute a single three-dimensional solid (the 'standard figure' of the family)" (H.H. Price, op. cit., p. 284).

To begin with, there are two kinds of sense-data: those that are actual, and those that are merely possible or obtainable. Only those sense-data actually exist which are actually being sensed. This follows from Price's causal argument against direct realism, which concluded that the constant conjunction of somatic and environmental sense-data was a sign of causal dependency. The vast majority of sense-data constituting a family--all but a small handful, in fact--will be merely possible. The two kinds, actual and possible, have quite different natures. Let us briefly examine each.

1. Actual Sense-Data.

The first type of sense-data are those which actually exist. Price devotes chapter five of Perception to a consideration of their nature. To begin with, he says that the only description which will fit sense-data--at least those which are visual and tactual--is "expanses". They cannot be called surfaces, because to do so would imply that there is something of which they are the surface, and in the case of illusory and hallucinatory sense-data, this is impossible.[71]

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71 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 105-110.

But what else can be said about these expanses? After dismissing the possibility that they are substances,[72] Price goes on to say that they are "events or occurrences".[73]

This statement causes some difficulty in interpreting Price. In Perception, he refers to W.E. Johnson's Logic as the authority for his usage of such terms as "particular", "event", "occurrent", and "continuant".[74] Johnson, in turn,

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72 Price admits that no one seriously maintains that sense-data are substances; nevertheless, he devotes several pages to an examination of the opinion that they are (Perception, pp. 113-116). His reason for doing so is the failure of some to properly distinguish between particulars which are substances and particulars which are not (ibid., p. 116, n. 2). His rejection of the opinion that sense-data are substances is based on the fact that, unlike substances, sense-data are subject to instant creation and annihilation, they are parasitically dependent upon other entities for their conservation, and they are probably not capable of changing. (On the notion of "particulars", see footnote 74 below.)

73 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 116.

74 See H.H. Price, Perception, p. 103 and esp. p. 116. For Johnson's views, see his Logic, Vol. II, pp. xi,ff, and Vol. III, pp. xix,ff. The notions are not easy to summarize. Perhaps the best course would be to quote briefly from Johnson's own work: "My notion of substantive is intended to include, besides the metaphysical notion of substance--so far as this can be philosophically justified--the notion of occurrences or events to which some philosophers of the present day wish to restrict the realm of reality. Thus by a substantive proper I mean an existent; and the category of the existent is divided into the two subcategories: what continues to exist, or the continuant; and what ceases to exist, or the occurrent, every occurrent being referrible to a continuant" (W.E. Johnson, Logic, Vol. III, pp. xi-xii).

refers to "philosophers of the present day [i.e. c. 1924]" as his source for these notions.[75] They would be, notably, Whitehead, Russell, and their followers. Such authors present an alternative to the traditional substance-metaphysics, but an alternative which is difficult to understand. (The difficulty of understanding the theory of events, for instance, is sufficiently great for Price himself to remark that most contemporary British philosophers regard the Event-Metaphysics as "absurd or unintelligible".[76]) Moreover, there is the added problem here of knowing whether or not in Perception Price meant to adopt the event-metaphysics as such or not.[77]

At first, it seems quite clear that Price did adopt the event-metaphysics. In his most recent article on the subject, Price wrote:

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75 See the quotation from Johnson's Logic in the previous footnote.

76 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 4: ". . . anyone who regards the Event Metaphysics as absurd or unintelligible (as most contemporary British philosophers do)."

77 R.J. Hirst, in his The Problems of Perception, contends that Price was not adopting Whitehead's system, and that he seemed to "take the traditional [Aristotelian substance-metaphysics] for granted" (op. cit., p. 70).

> I would suggest that the sense-datum epistemology does not fit in at all well with the Substance Metaphysics, whereas it does fit in very well with the metaphysics of events or temporally-brief particulars. And I think that there must be some connection between the decline and fall of the sense-datum epistemology and the almost simultaneous decline and fall of the Event Metaphysics.[78]

Add to this his statements, in Perception, to the effect that "it appears plausible to say that sense-data are events",[79] that they happen "nowhere and to nothing,"[80] and that they are "not phases of any substance at all,"[81] and it would appear certain that Price did mean to adopt the event-metaphysics.

Nevertheless, the theory about material things which he presents in Perception is certainly not that of the event metaphysics. According to the latter,

> . . . the notion of substance or thinghood is both imprecise and derivative. On this view what is referred to by a thing-word such as "cat" or "tree" is a complex series of events or temporally-brief particulars, related to each other by relations of temporal and spatial continuity and by certain sorts of inductively establishable rules of sequence, sometimes called rules of "immanent causality". Hume's celebrated analysis of personal identity, and the very similar analysis offered by the Buddhists, afford an illustration of this way of looking at the world. So does Whitehead's remark that Cleopatra's Needle is a long event.[82]

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78 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 4.

79 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 316.

80 Ibid., p. 319.

81 Ibid., p. 136.

82 H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", p. 3.

Yet in Perception he writes that the doctrine regarding the continuing identity of material things which is offered by the event-metaphysics "gives a curious analysis of it."[83] And, as we shall see, he rejects the theory that material things are only families of sense-data (unlike the event-metaphysics, he contends that there are also physical objects as part-constituents of material things).

The most probable interpretation of Price's intentions seems to be the following. In Perception, he does accept the event-metaphysics--partially. That is, he does accept it for explaining the nature of sense-data.[84] But he does not accept it as adequate for giving a complete explanation of material things, since he feels it is necessary to add the notion of "physical object".

Having decided, therefore, that sense-data are events, Price asks what else can be said about their nature. Are they phases of the material things we perceive by means of

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83 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 202, n. 1.

84 This is all the more probable when it is remembered that Russell is one of the philosophers most admired by Price and one to whom he refers frequently in "Mill's View of the External World" and in Perception, and that Price identifies Russell as a major adherent of the event-metaphysics. (See H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", pp. 3-4). Russell most often speaks of facts and particulars, rather than of events, but he likewise proposes an analysis of material things in terms of classes of particulars, in opposition to the traditional analysis in terms of substances.

them (therefore "physical"), or phases of the percipient's mind (therefore "mental"), or of his brain (therefore 'cerebral")?[85] In answering this question, he first of all rejects the theory that sense-data are affections of the mind. His rejection of the theory in Perception is little more than a refutation of the arguments in favor of the theory; but even so, he indicates an awareness of the chief objections to the theory, namely, that only an act-object analysis of sensing is adequate. Sense-data "simply confront us as objects of acquaintance."[86]

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85 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 116. Price explains that by "phases of" he means the same as Johnson means by "inheres in": "Mr. Johnson distinguishes between characterizing which is a relation between 'substantives' and 'adjectives', and inherence which is a relation between events and continuants. Thus in the case of inherence, both the terms of the relation are 'substantives'" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 116, n. 3).

86 Ibid., p. 123. Thus, Price uses this fundamental fact, not only to assist in his delineation of sense-data as objects of sensing, but also in his discussion of their ontological status. Here, in other words, he is saying that sense-data confront us as objects of an act, and therefore cannot be modes of an act which has something else for its object.

It might be repeated that this is a very important feature of the sense-datum theory, since there was considerable obscurity on this point in many of the older writers. For a long time, the sensing of colors, sounds, odors, and the like, was compared to the feeling of pain, pleasures, and tickles. (Galileo, Descartes, Locke, and Reid all make this comparison, for instance.) Thus, it became customary to regard colors, sounds, odors, and the like, as our ways of being affected by things in the way that pain and pleasure regarded. This, in turn, led many to regard colors, sounds, odors, etc., as being punctiform or unextended, just as pain and pleasure are thought to be. Fichte wrote, for instance,

He likewise rejects the notion that sense-data are events inhering in the psycho-cerebral compound (which the percipient is presumed to be), chiefly on the grounds that there is no spatial continuity between the two, since visual and tactual sense-data are "events a long distance from the skull.[87] The opinion that sense-data are phases of material

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86 (cont'd) that the red which one sees ought to be regarded as something simple, like a mathematical point, and as something which acquires its spreadoutness only by association with the action of passing one's hand over an extended surface. See J.G. Fichte, The Vocation of Man, ed. R.M. Chisholm, Indianapolis, Liberal Arts Press, Inc., 1956, p. 41 and surrounding.

Except for some temporary doubts with respect to tactile and muscular sensation (see H.H. Price, "Touch and Organic Sensation", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 44 [1943-1944], pp. i-xxx), Price himself always upheld the act-object analysis for all kinds of sensing. In addition to a discussion of the subject in Perception (pp. 120-124), there is a long examination of it in his article "The Nature and Status of Sense-Data in Broad's Epistemology", pp. 457-471. Price leans to the opinion, in fact, that the act-object analysis applies even to our experience of a pain or an ache: see Perception, pp. 122-123, 232.

87 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 134. It will be recalled that according to Price, it is phenomenologically evident that depth is something given, not merely something inferred on the basis of previous experience. (See p. 254, n. 13 above). Events in the brain and those events which are sense-data are "separated by a blank interval of 'outness' ; . . . and further, this interval is physically occupied by particles of air and radiations of various kinds, which constitute a kind of barrier of irrelevant matter between the two [sets of events]" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 134). He also rejects the notion that sense-data inhere in the compound on the grounds that this is prevented by the qualitative discrepancy between sense-data and the events occurring in the psycho-cerebral compound (ibid., pp. 134-135).

With respect to the first reason, Price has been criticised--and justly so--by J.R. Smythies, who points out that Price speaks here as if the physical organism and the

things is ruled out because that would be equivalent to Naive Realism, which has already been rejected.[88]

Price's conclusion is that "sense-data are not phases of any substance at all."[89] Actual sense-data, therefore, can be called "neutral" rather than "physical" or "mental" or "cerebral",[90] though without implying that Neutral Monism is correct in maintaining that both minds and things consist entirely of sense-data.

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87 (cont'd) somatic datum were not distinct. In other words, it may be true enough that the visual data are related to the somatic datum (the sense-data which we take as belonging to or manifesting our body) by "a blank interval of 'outness'", but this is no proof that they are similarly related to the physical brain. (See J.R. Smythies, Analysis of Perception, pp. 112-115.) Price might also be asked how he knows that the two sets of events are separated by particles of air and radiations of various kinds. However he knows this, it is not by direct inspection, for it seems that nothing "physical" is in between us and the colors of which we are directly aware.

88 "It is no good suggesting that X [i.e. the substance in which the sense-datum events inhere] is a material thing other than the brain (that would be Naive Realism again)" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 132).

89 Ibid., p. 136. He adds, however, that "it looks as if a sense-datum is only not an event inhering in any one thing, because it is so intimately related to several different things at once: on the one hand, to the thing to which it 'belongs' and which it enables us to be perceptually conscious of; on the other, to the brain and the mind of the sentient" (ibid., p. 137).

90 Ibid., pp. 137-138.

2. Possible Sense-Data.

Among the sense-data which constitute a family, there are also merely possible ones. In fact, "not more than one or two will be actually existing at the time t, perhaps none at all; the rest, or perhaps all, are only obtainable."[91]

But what is meant by speaking of them as "obtainable" or "possible"? After ruling out the theory that this means simply that there is no logical contradiction involved in their conception, as well as the theory that they are possible only in the sense that even in mid-winter the "sense-data of green leaves and the smells of spring are possible, since they would certainly exist at this moment if the earth were at a different place in its orbit,"[92] Price tries to give a more defensible account of their possibility.

> The obvious suggestion is that, in the sense which concerns us here, a 'possible sense-datum' is one which would be actual if certain events occurred in the observer.[93]

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91 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 260.

92 Ibid., p. 263. His reason for rejecting these theories is that, according to them, "'possible' only means 'not impossible'. But plainly when we say that sense-data of the back of the house are now possible, we mean more than that they are not impossible" (ibid.).

93 Ibid.

These events are those which constitute a change of one's point of view, and they must be defined solely in terms of sense-data.

> When we say that S is obtainable the suppressed conditional clause turns out to be of the following sort: if there occur visual sense-fields containing a series of sense-data which has a certain general form . . . and if the first sense-field both includes A and exists from point of view p: then eventually there will be a sense-field including S and existing from a different point of view p.[94]

When he writes the words "if there occur sense-fields containing a series of sense-data which has a certain general form," Price has in mind the sense-fields and the nuclear sense-data belonging to different standard solids that we sense as we change our physical position in space, e.g., as we walk about a table or down a lane. That is how one speaks of physical change of position solely in terms of sense-data.[95]

But these accounts still do not give us what we need. It is alright to say that such-and-such a sense-datum is possible, but does this mean only that it will (or would) exist?

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94 Ibid., p. 266. 'A', of course, is an actual sense-datum observed from point of view p.

95 Price goes so far as to say that "the events in terms of which 'obtainable' is defined must certainly be themselves sense-data" (ibid., p. 264). This is identical with the well-known phenomenalist position, and, in fact, Price frequently refers to John S. Mill in the pages of Perception.

In other words, is it not necessary to say that something or other which now exists will (or would) cause it to exist when certain conditions are posited? When Price, like the phenomenalist, translates statements about events occurring in the observer (whether these statements refer to the stimulation of sense-receptors or to the change of position) into statements about what kind of sense-data will succeed one another, this in effect removes any basis for causal explanation, particularly in view of his insistence that sense-data are not themselves causes.[96] It may well be that Price regards the physical objects--to be discussed shortly--as the causes of the sense-data, but at this point of his argument, he is unable to make use of such an explanation, for the same reasons that he earlier rejected the causal-argument theory of perception.[97]

Thus, if one asks at the present stage of the argument, what sort of existence possible sense-data possess, the answer, in the words of Price himself, must be that

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96 See Perception, pp. 135-136, 146.

97 See chap. v above. At the very end of Perception, Price does admit that sense-data are caused by the physical object which forms the second ingredient in the complete material thing, as well as by the sentient's physical organism, but that is only after he has already tried to justify our belief in their existence. See Perception, pp. 318-320.

"obtainable sense-data do not exist at all."[98] In fact, "'obtainable sense-datum' is not really a possible subject of predicates."[99] Of what is one speaking, then, when he speaks of obtainable sense-data?

> The fact that the sense-data would exist if there were observers at such and such points of view--this is not a fact about particulars at all; for the very existence of these sense-data is admittedly at best problematical, and indeed we may happen to know that they do not actually exist. Like other 'existential' facts, it is really about certain universals (e.g. redness, hardness) and is to the effect that they would then have instances.[100]

Elsewhere he seems to say that possible sense-data are facts or truths. A family of sense-data, he writes, is a heterogeneous group:

> Some of its members are existent particulars (actual sense-data) and the rest--the vast majority--are facts or truths of the form 'if any observer were at such and such a point of view such and such a sense-datum would exist'.[101]

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98 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 284.

99 Ibid., p. 286.

100 Ibid., p. 292. What he says in this passage is incompatible with the interpretation that when we are speaking of obtainable sense-data, we are referring to the powers that physical things have of causing sense-data (which is Locke's theory of secondary qualities).

101 Ibid., p. 284. Notice the words "any observer" in this passage. They raise the question, "Do sense-data observed (actually or possibly) by different observers belong to the same material thing?" Though he does not specifically answer the question in this passage, Price elsewhere states that "there is no reason why the family should not include sense-data sensed by many different observers" (ibid., p. 273). This answer creates complications, however. Actual sense-data

3. Construction of the Family.

Having considered the nature of sense-data, it is now possible to return to the question, "Are they the sort of entities that can 'fit together' in order to constitute a standard solid?" The answer, it seems, must be in the negative.

Even if all of the sense-data constituting the standard solid were actual, it does not seem that an affirmative answer would be possible. Consider the theory that actual sense-data are events: in what sense can events be said to fit together? Certainly not in any literal sense. One can

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101 (cont'd) are private (ibid.), which means that the sense-datum which I am sensing now as I look toward the door is a sense-datum which no one but myself can ever observe. But how can something public, which the family--or its core, the standard solid--is, be composed of sense-data which are private?

Price seems to think there is no problem here, since you can know about my sense-datum if I describe it to you, even if you cannot personally sense it. (Ibid., p. 274). But this answer involves the paradoxical consequence that each standard solid is composed of a practically-infinite number of sets of sense-data: corresponding to every one of the sense-data that I sense from a particular position, there is an exactly similar (even if numerically distinct) sense-datum that you can sense from the same place, together with as many other similar ones as there are potential observers.

This is a consequence of making private sense-data from the sense-fields of many different observers to be constituents of the same public material thing. Such a consequence has led some thinkers to relate the various sense-data from the sense-fields of different observers by means of a more-than-three-dimensional space: see, e.g., B. Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, chap. iii, and IDEM, Mysticism and Logic, chap. viii.

speak of facts fitting together and constituting a "clear picture", but this is an extended use of the phrase "fitting together", signifying that one is able to see some sort of logical consistency among the facts. Without entering further into a discussion of the event-metaphysics,[102] it is sufficient to point out that Price speaks of the sense-data as fitting together in a much more literal fashion. For example, he says that the manner in which sense-data constitute the standard solid is by means of progressive adjunction.

> A nuclear sense-datum is directly or indirectly adjoined with certain other nuclear data; and these collectively <u>are</u> the standard solid.[103] . . . A standard solid is defined as a group of sense-data related to each other by progressive adjunctions.[104]

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102 It is not possible here to discuss the tenability of the event-metaphysics. Nor is it necessary. It is impossible to discover exactly on what points Price would agree or disagree with the explanation given to the nature of events (or durations or facts) by Whitehead or Russell, since nowhere does he explain his own theory of events in detail. He limits himself to brief remarks such as that quoted above on p. 289 (from "Appearing and Appearances", p. 3) or the following: "If by 'sensing' one means sense-datum-genesis, then it is plausible to say that what is sensed cannot exist apart from sensing; this would be just another way of saying that colour-patches, sounds, etc., are events" (H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 43). Moreover, when he speaks of how sense-data fit together, he treats them more as expanses which adjoin in a somewhat literal fashion than as events (see the text). Finally, even if it were possible to sustain the theory that sense-data are events, there remain other difficulties in the way of saying that they fit together to constitute part of a material thing.

103 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 250.

104 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 252.

We discover that sense-data adjoin to form a standard solid when we find that any two pairs of them fulfil the following conditions:

1. In each pair the members sensibly adjoin each other.
2. In each pair the two members face in sensibly different directions.
3. The two pairs have one member in common.
4. In each pair one member is sensibly to the right of another. (The relation might equally well have been 'to the left of', 'above', or 'below', provided it is the same in both pairs.)[105]

At first sight, all this appears straightforward enough. And yet, it is too straightforward. It creates the impression that the sense-data adjoin each other in space and together make up a three-dimensional whole composed of spatial parts in the way that the Great Pyramids are composed of stone-blocks. And, if this were the case, would it not be a reversion to the "Naive Realist thesis that visual and tactual sense-data are parts of the surfaces of material objects,"[106]--a thesis whose falsity, Price assures us, "is as nearly certain as anything in Philosophy can be"?[107]

Price is aware of the difficulty. He rules out this literal spatial interpretation of constitution.

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105 Ibid., p. 242. Notice that he speaks of the adjoining in terms that are clearly spatial.

106 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 55.

107 Ibid., p. 110.

> It may, however, be thought that the relation of nuclear data to standard solid is that of spatial part to spatial whole, like the relation between the pages and the book. But this is a mistake. No doubt they are in a sense 'parts' of the standard solid: but not in that way. (Accordingly, since 'part' usually means spatial part, we have avoided the word and used 'constituent' instead.) For that which is a spatial part of a solid must itself be a solid, and this a sense-datum is not. It is just an expanse with no back.[108]

The elimination of this possibility leaves us still in search of another, more acceptable interpretation. Price rules out the collective-resemblance theory which he had proposed in "Mill's View of the External World." (See p. 282 above.) According to that theory, the sense-data would constitute a standard solid on the basis of resemblance: a nuclear set of sense-data (standard solid) would be defined as

> . . . a class of sense-data collectively resembling an imaginary or ideal solid, i.e. which would collectively resemble a particular sort of solid (say a cube) if there were one; leaving it an open question whether there actually is one or not.[109]

Price states simply that "nobody can really think the theory is true",[110] on the grounds that pairs of sense-data do exhibit the characteristics mentioned above (see the passage from Perception, p. 242, and quoted on p. 300 above),

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108 Ibid., p. 250.

109 Ibid., p. 241.

110 Ibid.

i.e. they have the observable property of sensibly adjoining each other, in addition to merely resembling some ideal entity.

He also refuses to interpret the relation between sense-data and the standard solid as one of "coincidence". "Coincide" implies that "two solids have a surface in common", and this cannot be inasmuch as the sense-datum is not a solid, and especially not a solid in addition to the standard solid which it constitutes.[111]

The truth of the matter is that, although he continually writes as if sense-data fit together in a literal manner to constitute or compose a three-dimensional solid, he rejects every literal meaning that can be given to these words.

Nevertheless, even if some literal significance could be given to them, on the condition that all of the sense-data

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111 Ibid., p. 251. Price mentions this in connection with a proposal that the relation between the sense-datum and the standard solid might be that of surface to solid, but it is extremely puzzling to find him even mentioning this latter theory in view of his rejection of naive realism. If it was impossible to maintain that the sense-datum is part of the surface of a material thing, how can it be the surface itself? If Price actually were reconsidering such a theory, it would be obviously insufficient for him to refute it--as he does on p. 251--by writing that the sense-datum is not a solid: he could not know this until he had re-employed his arguments against naive realism, i.e. against the theory that what we sense are parts of the surfaces of material things. And once he had proven that theory wrong, there would be no reason--as there is none here--for proving that sense-data are not the (whole) surfaces of material things.

constituting the standard solid were actual, this becomes utterly impossible when it is recalled that the majority--at times the entirety--of the nuclear data are merely obtainable. It is inconceivable that facts, truths, or universals (see pp. 294-297 above) can fit together or adjoin in any but an extended use of the term. In other words, when one examines Price's explanation of the nature of obtainable sense-data, it becomes obvious that we are not dealing with an actually-existing complex of interlocking sense-data when we are dealing with the family or with its core, the standard solid.

But what are we dealing with, then? Price himself indicates a new possibility when, in the course of trying to explain what kind of being the family possesses, he writes:

> In the language of some writers, we may say that a family is a peculiar kind of construct.[112]

Let us examine this possibility by referring to the various things which Price has to say concerning "construction".

First of all, he does not seem to regard the family as a product of a purely fictional kind of construction whereby we form the concept, say, of a dragon.[113] Nor does

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112 Ibid., p. 286.

113 Price mentions this type of fictional construction in his review of R.I. Aaron's Our Knowledge of Universals, in Philosophy, 21 (1946), p. 190.

he mean simply the linguistic technique of translating one set of statements into another.[114]

There is another theory which Price attributes to Russell, according to which Russell would be proposing "that material things are collections of sensibilia."[115] Whether or not Price reports Russell correctly,[116] this theory would

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114 This is the type of "construction" proposed by A.J. Ayer, in his The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. Price sums up Ayer's view as follows: "His aim here is to show how material objects are 'constructed out of' sense-data. . . . He explicitly denies that material objects are composed of sense-data, as patchwork quitl is composed of bits of silk; or rather, he says that this suggestion is nonsensical. Phenomenalism is a theory about the relation between two languages; not between two sorts of entities, but between two notations for describing the same ones. As he says earlier, it is an attempt to exhibit one terminology as a function of another" (H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 289).

115 H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", p. 282. For the full quotation, see the next footnote. See also the quotation from Russell's Mysticism and Logic, on p. 164 above.

116 Price seems to have Russell equating what Ayer distinguished. Ayer writes: "I have found it convenient to deal with this problem as if it were a question of constructing one sort of objects out of another; but, strictly, it should be viewed as a problem about the reference of words" (A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, pp. 262-263). Price writes: "When he [B. Russell] says that the material world is a construction he means, I think, that all statements about material objects are reducible without remainder to sets of statements about sensa sensed and unsensed; or to put it otherwise, he means that material objects are collections of sensibilia" (H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", p. 282). Others interpret Russell's theory of construction only in something like the first way: M. Weitz writes that it is "a technique whereby certain symbols, because they are defective, are replaced by other symbols or groups of symbols" (M. Weitz, "The

regard reality as an immense system of sensibilia (unsensed sense-data) existing in the space-time continuum: a single material thing is one set of these sensibilia related to each other in a special way. Price, however, is prevented from adopting this theory by reason of his rejection of unsensed sensibilia.

Nevertheless, this last proposal may have influenced Price in his notion of construction. He himself has expressed his admiration for Russell's theory.[117] Even if the sensibilia do not actually exist, it is still possible to imagine them existing. By extrapolating from the sense-data which we actually do sense, we can think of those already

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116 (cont'd) Unity of Russell's Philosophy", in The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, ed. P.A. Schilpp, p. 92). The truth seems to be that Russell, like Price, is not thoroughly clear or consistent. In his earlier works he seems to base the theory that statements about material objects are reducible to statements about sensa, sensed and unsensed, on the fact that material objects are groups of correlated sensa: see, e.g., Russell's essay, "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics", which forms chap. viii of Mysticism and Logic.

117 This admiration for Russell's 1914-1920 writings is expressed many times by Price. For example, he writes that there are many Russells and everyone has his favorite, but his own "is the Russell of the Logical Construction period, beginning with Our Knowledge of the External World, and ending with the Analysis of Mind. Could anything be more brilliant, exciting and original that the two Mysticism and Logic essays on 'The Ultimate Constituents of Matter', and 'The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics'?" (H.H. Price, Review of T.E. Hill's Contemporary Theories of Knowledge, in Philosophical Quarterly, 13 [1963], p. 76).

sensed as continuing to exist in some way and of those yet to be sensed as already endowed with some kind of existence. Here is a more ample quotation of what Price himself means by "construct":

> In the language of some writers, we may say that a family is a peculiar kind of construct; meaning by this, first, that it contains within itself a number of elements (united in a peculiar way), secondly, that it is known to us not by acquaintance or intuitive apprehension, but by an activity of 'synthesis' or 'construction', i.e. by recalling and holding before the mind a number of data successively and separately presented and then recognizing that they form a whole of a certain kind.[118]

In this passage, Price ought to have added that the family also contains data that have never been presented but which must be supplied by the process of postulation:

> The systematic order in which they [presentations] occur--a fact just as solid as the sense-given qualia themselves--is known not by sense but by intelligence. . . . It may be said that the sensibles which we actually sense are in themselves far from systematic and orderly, but are on the contrary fragmentary and intermittent, and that we can only be aware of a systematic order of sensibles if we supplement the actually presented ones by means of the imagination: a point insisted upon by Hume and--less emphatically--by Kant himself.[119]

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118 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 286. In a footnote to this passage he adds: "This is the process described by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason, particularly in the Deduction of the Categories, first edition version (A 100-103)."

119 H.H. Price, Review of A.H. Smith's A Treatise on Knowledge, in Mind, 52 (1943), p. 337. See also Perception, pp. 21-22, and Hume's Theory of the External World, chap. iii.

Now Price's expression, "recalling and holding before the mind",[120] might lead us to think that for him the construct is a complex image, so that, in the words of A.J. Ayer, we have a "set of sense-data which can be fitted together in the imagination, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, in such a way as to yield a complete picture of the object."[121] This opinion might appear to be confirmed when we find Price referring, as he often does, to the imagination as the faculty involved in all this--when he writes, for instance:

> It is only the occurrence of a succession-indifferent group of impressions--of the interlocking of a number of gap-indifferent series--which enables the imagination to conceive of a complete material object, a three-dimensional whole enduring through time. . . . In order to conceive a complete object, or Thing, I must sense a number of such series, interlocking into a single succession-indifferent group. And not only must the imagination supplement them, filling up the gaps in each; it must also synthesize them into a single spatial whole, or rather into a spatio-temporal whole consisting of a number of concurrent and spatially united parts.[122]

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120 See the quotation from Perception, p. 286, on p. 306 above. Elsewhere he speaks of "collecting": "In order to bring the group before the mind, we should have to 'collect' the sense-data (to use a term of Mr. Russell's)--or perhaps this would be the bringing of it before the mind" (Perception, p. 21). On p. 227 of Perception, he uses the expression "conflate in the imagination".

121 A.J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 250.

122 H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 92.

It does not seem that Price intends to speak of a complex image, however. Though he uses the word "imagination", he is thinking of the faculty of forming hypothetical propositions, not of the faculty of imaging. Recall the distinction which he makes:

> The verb 'to imagine' is radically ambiguous. It does sometimes mean imaging. But also, and far more commonly, it means imagining <u>that</u> so and so is the case. If I ask you now to imagine that there is a crocodile in the bathroom, you can carry out my instructions without having any images at all. You can entertain this proposition in a purely verbal way.[123]

Thus, when we supplement actual sense-data with obtainable ones, this means, not that we picture them to ourselves (though this also sometimes occurs), but that we imagine--or believe, or take-for-granted--<u>that</u> others are obtainable.[124]

Now if this is what Price intends us to understand when he calls the family "a construct", it becomes very clear that we should not conceive of its core as an actual three-dimensional solid built of sense-data. Or rather, we <u>can</u> conceive, i.e. imagine--though we know it is not true--<u>that</u>

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123 H.H. Price, "Image Thinking", p. 145.

124 See H.H. Price, <u>Hume's Theory of the External World</u>, pp. 94-96. Recall his definition of obtainable sense-data: "[Possible sense-data] are facts or truths of the form 'if any observer were at such and such a point of view such and such a sense-datum would exist" (<u>Perception</u>, p. 284, quoted on p. 297 above).

there is a three-dimensional standard solid composed of all those sense-data which would exist from such and such points of view if observers were present there. Add to this the fact that we often sense pairs of simultaneously-existing sense-data, sensibly adjoining each other, and this is the manner in which we imagine our imaginary sense-data to compose the standard solid, viz., by literally "fitting-together."[125] That this is what Price has in mind appears to be confirmed by what he writes, apropos of the theory which regards sensibilia as actually existing:

> The theory is . . . correct in its psychological part. It is, I think, a psychological fact that this protasis [if there exist in addition to the sensa which we actually sense also certain spatially unitary complexes of unsensed sensa] is actually present to our minds when we perceive, and that we habitually ignore its falsity. What we do is to imagine the obtainable (or 'possible') sensa as if they were now actual, although they are not now being sensed. When I say 'Here is a door', not only do I believe that other sensa of such and such a sort are obtainable, confamiliar with this one which I now sense; I also imagine them as now existing, and as forming (together with this one) a simultaneous complex of colour-expanses, pressures, etc. I do not exactly

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125 The last three chapters of Price's work, Hume's Theory of the External World, are an attempt to expound alternative theories about the construction of the external world, once the premise is accepted that sensibilia do not exist. (Price believes that Hume would not regard the statement that sensibilia exist as false, but rather as "meaningless." He bases himself on the radical-empiricist criterion of meaning: since the statement is unverifiable in principle, it is neither true nor false.)

> believe these last propositions. It would be nearer the truth to say that I entertain them without disbelief, and that I fail to distinguish these merely entertained and probably false (in any case unverifiable) propositions as to the present and simultaneous actuality of the, as yet, unsensed sensa, from that believed and probably true one as to their successive obtainability.[126]

Does this not reduce the family--except for the actual sense-data--to the status of a fiction? It would certainly appear so. Yet a fiction is something created by the mind, and Price is at pains to deny that the family is something manufactured.

> Such synthesis or construction is not of course a form of making, but of discovery. There are these unitary wholes of sense-data whether we discover them or not. To that extent, words like 'construction' and 'synthesis' are misleading, and perhaps we ought rather to speak of syngnosis.[127]

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126 H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World," pp. 293-294.

127 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 286-287. Elsewhere he writes: "What is called 'synthesis' or sometimes 'construction' by philosophers is not really a putting together of entities originally separated: it is the detection or discovery of an objective complex which has been there all along" (ibid., p. 15), and "Whether Kant himself supposed that the phenomenal object was manufactured by our minds is a question which we need not discuss. That he sometimes thought this is quite possible; that he always or even usually did is extremely difficult to believe. In any case, if he did, he was certainly wrong. But fortunately, the main contentions of the Critique, though often carelessly stated, are independent of this error" (ibid., p. 296, n. 1).

Does there not seem to be a conflict, however, between this statement and the line of thought that was developed on the preceding pages and capped by the lengthy passage quoted above? If there is, it is not a conflict caused by any change in Price's thinking between the time he wrote the latter passage (1932) and the time he wrote the first-quoted (1935). Even in "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", he wrote:

> If we interpret it in the phenomenalistic way, there is no element of fiction in this theory at all, though plenty of induction. When we say that over and above the sensa which we actually sense, a number of other sensa are obtainable, and that a material object just is a family of actual and obtainable sensa, we may be giving a surprising account of what a material object is, but we certainly are not saying that it is something fictitious. Let us take the case of the table. It is certain that this brown trapeziform sensum now exists, for I am actually sensing it. And it is probable on inductive grounds that other sensa confamiliar with it are obtainable ad libitum. . . . There is no fiction about this proposition.[128]

What are we to conclude from all this? It seems obvious that the theory of families of sense-data, taken

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128 H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World," p. 291. See ibid., p. 289 also. This article, besides being a partial review of Stace's work, The Theory of Knowledge and Existence, is an excellent exposition of certain features of Price's sense-datum theory. In it, he mentions various alternative explanations of particular points. His own theory is the one which he calls "extrapolative", and which adopts the group theory of the family and the phenomenalistic interpretation of unsensed sensa.

together with Price's explanation of "construction", involves some major difficulties. Perhaps they can be summed up briefly under three headings.

To begin with, Price's account of construction is misleading, and seems to involve a contradiction. At times, he speaks as if constructing involved the mental activity of gathering before the mind sense-data that exist only disparately and at different intervals of time (some only by anticipation), thus forming a complex existing only in the mind. Faced with the fact that this would make families far less realistic than he would like them to be, he discards the analogy of construction and asserts that what is involved is a form of discovery, since "there are these unitary wholes of sense-data whether we discover them or not." His theory that the unitary wholes are constituted chiefly by merely-obtainable sense-data which "do not exist at all" and which are "not really a possible subject of predicates" seems to contradict such an assertion. Furthermore, his theory of merely-possible sense-data prevents us from interpreting him as saying that we form one (mental) complex in order to know an already existing one, since there does not seem to be any basis in his theory for any such dualism.

Secondly, his denial that the phenomenalist interpretation of material things is not a fiction is equivocal. It is not a fiction to say that a group of sense-data are

obtainable, but it is a fiction to say that they exist. Price, in common with the phenomenalist, repeatedly conflates the two expressions by saying things that are meaningful only if obtainable (therefore not-presently-existing) sense-data exist, which is impossible. In other words, he frequently appears to slip from thinking that a sense-datum is obtainable (however the obtainability may be explained) to thinking that an obtainable sense-datum exists.[129] Of course, Price is not the first philosopher to find difficulty in overcoming the problems connected with the merely-possible.

The third observation follows from the second. There are times when Price does indicate that our talk about families and obtainable sense-data is really talk about something else. But he does not thoroughly examine the question, and thus we find him now saying one thing, now implying another. In one place he writes that a fact about a possible sense-datum "is really [a fact] about certain universals (e.g. redness, hardness) and is to the effect that they would then have instances." (See p. 297 above.) Another time he

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129 The following passage may be an illustration of such thinking: "The system of families is what it is whether anyone thinks of it or not. . . . No doubt sense-data are only actual when sensed, though quite independent of thinking. Yet they do not cease to be obtainable even if no sentient actually obtains them; and for the existence of a family only their obtainability is required, not their actuality" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 283).

says that what the person who speaks about an obtainable sense-datum is "really doing is to state a law about the manner in which certain sorts of sensa follow one another".[130] In yet another passage, he comes close to interpreting statements about families as being statements about physical objects:

> It [the family] is not an actual sense-given particular (though such particulars are contained in it) nor a group or series of them; and yet we have to admit that in its own peculiar way it 'is' throughout the period in question. Even at those moments when no sense-data of the family are actually in existence, it would be very misleading to say that there is nothing in the place where the nuclear sense-data of the family (when they do exist) are wont to be situated. The place is not simply empty or unoccupied, though of course it is empty of actual sense-data; it is still differentiated from other places in a perfectly definite way, by the fact that sense-data of a particular sort are persistently obtainable there, and intermittently actual. This peculiar manner of being, which the something. . . has, is difficult to grasp, though we are perfectly

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130 "I am now looking at the front of a door. I say that a back view of it also exists, though no one is now sensing it. This will mean on the phenomenalistic interpretation that if anyone were to sense such and such a series of views (say the series which we describe as going down a particular passage) then he would eventually sense that back view. Thus what I am really doing is to state a law about the manner in which certain sorts of sensa follow one another" (H.H. Price, "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", p. 289.)

> familiar with instances of it; for when 'there is' a something coloured existing in a place throughout a period, there is always something more, namely, a physical object.[131]

In our opinion, this last is the most promising alternative, the only one in fact which is really satisfactory, but at this stage of his argument Price is unable to adopt it, since he has not yet shown that physical objects do exist.

4. Price's Theory of Families: a Summary.

Our ultimate aim is to evaluate Price's account of our perceptual assurance relative to the existence of material things. We have seen that Price grounds this assurance on the alleged fact that sense-data are evidence for the existence of material things, and that he justifies the latter fact by stating that the sense-data, because of their membership in a family of sense-data, are partial constituents--in addition to the physical object--of a material thing.

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131 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 285-286. Even though he adds that "nevertheless it is possible to isolate the coloured something in thought and to distinguish it from the physical object which occupies the same place", one wonders what sense the entire passage would have made, had reference to the physical object been omitted. The reason for raising the doubt is this: at the stage of his argument where Price introduces the above passage, he has not yet shown that the physical object exists. It is impossible for him to introduce it here in order to justify the continued "reality" of the family without laying himself open to the charge of circular reasoning. For a more detailed exposition of this objection, see sec. B 2 of this chapter, below.

We have found this last contention too vaguely stated and insufficiently verified. If we consider the handful of sense-data that are actual, it is hard to understand how they can be constituents of the standard solid in any way except that proposed by direct realism, i.e., by being spatial parts of the near surfaces of material things, and this latter opinion Price rejects. It is even more difficult to see how merely obtainable sense-data can be constituents of material things, since such sense-data do not exist, and since--in fact--it is necessary to look for something to constitute them and to be the existential basis for our ability to speak of them at all.

As far as our knowledge of the existence of unsensed data is concerned, it is apparent that Price's explanation does not entitle us to any assurance of it in a realist sense: he himself admits that the unsensed members of the family do not exist but are only obtainable. In other words, our assurance here is not about something that exists but about the future obtainability of certain sense-data. And, in "Mr. W.T. Stace on the Construction of the External World", he admitted that this assurance was only inductive, that is, our assurance about the obtainability of future sense-data is really grounded on the fact that such obtainable

sense-data have actually been obtained by us frequently in the past.[132]

Setting aside these problems connected with the families of sense-data, however, let us now examine Price's account of our assurance vis-a-vis the second ingredient of material things, i.e. the physical object.

B. Second Constituent of Material Things: the Physical Object.

1. Price's Theory of Physical Objects.

It has been seen that the question "Are we entitled to perceptual assurance?" developed into the question "What is the object of perceptual assurance?" The reason for this was the fact that, although both the realist and the phenomenalist call the object of perceptual assurance by the same name, viz. "material thing", they give different analyses of it. According to Price, both the realist and the phenomenalist agree in considering the material thing to consist at least partially of a family of sense-data. Having completed his analysis of the family, Price now asks whether

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132 "To be sure, the law [about the obtainability of future sense-data] is only inductive. But still, as inductive evidence goes, it is pretty strong. And I shall not disguise my conviction that outside of pure mathematics very little other evidence is to be had" (op. cit., p. 289).

the phenomenalist is correct in believing that this is the total analysis of "material thing".

> We have before us a system of families, spatially ordered and prolonging themselves through time. Does not this system of families look uncommonly like that system of material things which we call the External World? When we gain perceptual assurance with regard to the existence and the nature of a certain material thing, e.g., a table, are we not simply becoming assured of the existence and constitution of a certain family of sense-data--of this and nothing more?[133]

The ordinary reader, with his realist convictions, will surely agree with G.E. Moore when he remarks that such a theory is "utterly different from what we all commonly believe when we believe in the existence of material objects."[134] And, in fact, Price concurs:

> Nevertheless, when we are perceptually assured of the existence of a certain material thing, it is not really true that we are merely being assured of the existence of a certain family.[135]

On the contrary:

> From the first we took for granted the existence of two things (or, if you will, of a two-fold thing), a family of sense-data and a something which physically occupies the place where the family is; and we seek further determination of the causal characteristics of the second no less than of the sensory constitution of the first.[136]

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133 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 273.

134 G.E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, chap. vi, Collier ed., p. 132.

135 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 275.

136 Ibid., p. 293.

This last statement must not be taken to imply that Price is simply arguing that, because we initially take-for-granted the existence of something in addition to the family of sense-data, therefore this something exists. He goes on to contend that causality is a fact and that phenomenalism cannot account for it.[137]

Price begins by referring to the situations in which the exercise of efficient causation is manifested. For instance, there is the situation in which a material thing physically occupies a region and resists the penetration of that region by another thing. We find that, as one material thing approaches another and makes contact with it--the example Price gives is that of a chestnut falling onto a wall--its direction is abruptly altered. When this occurs, we say that the region is physically occupied or impenetrable. In addition to such alteration of direction, there are other changes undergone by material things when they are brought into contact with one another: e.g. the changes that occur when something is brought near a magnet, or when wax makes contact with a red-hot poker, etc.[138]

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137 As early as "Mill's View of the External World", he had indicated that phenomenalism would have to be attacked on this score: "If Mill's theory is to be attacked, the critic must take other grounds; he must ask, What account can Mill give of causal laws?" (op. cit., p. 139).

138 For these examples, see H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 277-279.

Now, in order not to beg the question--as the above, telescoped summary does--Price describes all of these changes in terms of families of sense-data.[139] (The question is whether anything besides these families exist.) At the conclusion of the description, he asks whether the families of sense-data are suitable subjects for the causal powers that

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139 If one adopts a strict sense-datum approach in describing causal laws, one must perform a two-fold supplementation. (See the quotation from Price's review of Smith's work, on p. 306 above.) To begin with, we seldom observe any sense-datum uninterruptedly for any length of time. As we would say in ordinary material-object language, we seldom look very long at any one object. We blink our eyes, we look at other objects, we walk out of the room, etc. Then, when we observe a new sense-datum which we take as pertaining to the same object to which an earlier one pertained, we "fill in the gap" of our experience by postulating or imagining that sense-data similar to these have either continued to exist or at least to be obtainable in our absence. (See H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 48ff.) The second supplementation is as follows. According to Hume, a causal law is a law of constant concomitance, to the effect that whenever event x occurs, it is followed by event y. Yet it is a fact that we frequently observe y without observing x and vice-versa. Hume mentions the case of hearing a creaking noise without seeing the opening of the door which presumably causes the noise (we fail to see the door because we have our back to it). (See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. I, pt. iv., sec. ii.) One might also, if his ears were stopped up or he were watching through a window, see a door slam without hearing any noise. Either way, the mind supplements the series of events, conformably with previous experience of the conjunction of x and y, so that the unperceived event or unsensed datum is imagined to have existed after all. (See H.H. Price, Hume's Theory of the External World, pp. 7, 52-56.) These elaborations are not mentioned in the text, but should be kept in mind.

are manifested on these occasions. This, as he sees it, is the theory maintained by phenomenalism.

The answer is that the families of sense-data are not suitable subjects to which these causal properties can be ascribed. This answer Price bases on the fact that merely possible sense-data or entities sometimes composed wholly of possible sense-data cannot give rise to actual effects. Yet this is what must happen if phenomenalism is correct. Consider the many times when unobserved parts of a region, i.e. parts occupied by merely possible sense-data, are exerting actual causal power. Price gives an example:

> When I take the red-hot coal out of the fire and look at it, only the front of it is present to my senses: in all the region reserved for that family of sense-data only one sense-datum is actual at that moment. But the causal characteristics of the coal are manifested behind, above, below, and to the sides of it. A piece of butter is melted here, a piece of paper is curled up over there, somewhere else a handkerchief is scorched, and the eyebrows of the observer are singed--all at the same time.[140]

Or consider the occasions when none of the sense-data belonging to a particular family are actual: e.g., when I go out of my room, leaving the logs burning in the fireplace, or when I put my clothes into the automatic laundry

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140 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 288. He also gives the example of a stone wall being impenetrable from all of its sides at once, even though we can only sense a sense-datum belonging to the near side of the wall.

machine and leave them unattended. In both instances, I find changes when I return. These changes have been caused by something, but if families of sense-data were the only things that existed, it would be necessary to conclude that the changes were caused by "mere systems of potentialities."

> Such facts as these show that the family is not the subject of those causal characteristics in terms of which physical occupation [Price's chief example of causality] is defined. For how can actual and manifest characteristics be said to characterize something at a time when the alleged characterizandum is but a system of potentialities?[141]

Only by attributing more reality to "possibilities of sensation" than they really possess can we be led to accept phenomenalism.

> Phenomenalism is only plausible so long as we do not examine the nature of families too closely: and so slip into thinking of a family as if it consisted of a plurality of actually existent particulars (simultaneous or successive), neglecting that heterogeneity, that large or indeed overwhelming admixture of the merely obtainable, which is so characteristic of it.[142]

Price's examination, therefore, leads to a negative verdict relative to phenomenalism, on the grounds that the actual cannot be caused by the merely possible. We have actual effects to explain, and consequently something more than families of sense-data--those systems of potentialities--

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141 Ibid., p. 291. On physical occupation, see p. 319 above.

142 H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 293-294.

must exist in order to explain them.[143] From time to time, Price has offered other arguments against phenomenalism,[144] but this remains his basic argument, at least in Perception.

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143 This line of reasoning is an argument against what might be called the "ontological version" of phenomenalism, i.e. against the theory which attempts to speak of real possibilities. More recently, there have been proposals of what might be termed "linguistic" phenomenalism, which is either anti-metaphysical or (allegedly) a-metaphysical: see R.J. Hirst, Perception and the External World, pp. 23-26. (See also H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, p. 289.) This latter version treats the problem as one of translating assertions about material thing into sentences which, although meaning the same thing, do not use any words that refer to material things. For a good criticism of this latter theory, see I. Berlin, "Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements," in Mind, 59 (1950), pp. 289-312.

144 They are chiefly two: (a) there is the argument that when an attempt is made to explain the bodily movement in terms of which other obtainable sense-data are defined, it is found that the bodily movement itself must be defined in terms of sense-data, [illegible] and then these latter must be defined in terms of still other obtainable sense-data, with the result that "the hypothetical statement, by means of which 'possible sense-datum' is supposed to be defined, contains an infinite series of subordinate hypothetical statements"--thereby rendering the proposed "translation" impossible (H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, pp. 292-293); and (b) there is the closely-allied argument that this is all a pseudo-problem inasmuch as it is impossible to get "out of" the material world into a world of sense-data alone, the reason being that the phenomenalist cannot analyse perceptual experience purely into sense-data without making use of expressions that refer to physical objects. This implies, therefore, that our knowledge of the latter is prior to our knowledge of sense-data since it is impossible to speak of the latter without reference to the former: see H.H. Price, Review of A.J. Ayer's Philosophical Essays, in Philosophical Quarterly, 5 (1955), p. 278.

It may appear that Price is adopting a causal argument for the existence of material things after all, however. As Price himself points out,

> . . . the account we have given of our manner of reaching assurance concerning the existence and nature of material thing has one point in common with that suggested by the Causal Theory; . . . according to both, observation of the effects which material things cause plays a part in giving us this assurance.[145]

There are differences, though, which Price enumerates.[146] The two most significant are (a) that whereas the causal theory says nothing about families, in Price's own argument "the discovery of families of sense-data is the first and most important step and causal considerations only come in after this,"[147] and (b) while the causal theory is concerned with the interaction between material things and the mind (what Price calls "vertical" causality), his own approach mentions only the interaction of one material thing with another (what Price calls "horizontal" causality).

For the moment, let us accept this answer and inquire a bit further into the notion of the physical object. So far nothing is known about it beyond the fact that it exists and

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145 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 309.

146 Ibid., pp. 309-310.

147 Ibid., p. 309.

is the bearer of causal powers. Is there anything else that can be learned about it?

On this, Price's view can be summed up in a single sentence:

> A pure physical object is something so shadowy that we can scarcely conceive of it at all.[148]

Even more explicit is the following passage:

> We must therefore maintain that we have no determinate knowledge of the intrinsic qualities of the physical object (or physical occupant), though we do know that it has some intrinsic qualities or other. . . . So far, Kant's conception of the thing in itself seems to be substantially justified.[149]

There are some passages in which Price seems to modify this total agnosticism. He writes:

> Can we say anything more about physical objects except that they possess such and such causal characteristics? . . . We can say that they have such and such sizes, shapes, and positions at such and such dates, and that they change in various ways.[150]

Nevertheless, when we examine what he says about our knowledge of such things as the physical object's causal characteristics, size, shape, and position, we find that he

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148 Ibid., p. 303.

149 Ibid., p. 296. I. Berlin refers to Price's theory of the physical object as an "attenuated version" of Locke's theory of insensible substance (I. Berlin, "Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements," p. 301).

150 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 294. Also: "We . . . have determinate knowledge of those causal characteristics in which physical occupancy consists" (ibid., p. 296).

is not speaking of a knowledge about the intrinsic properties of the physical object, but only about properties that we predicate of it on the basis of a very general a priori concept or else on the basis of the sense-data which we sense (i.e. we attribute to the physical object properties really belonging to the sense-data).

Consider first of all the causal characteristics. What are they? On this subject, Price's ideas are somewhat sketchy and must be pieced together.[151] To begin with, he considers the notion of causality to be part of the a priori concept of material thinghood.[152] Obviously the causal powers of one thing differ from those of the next, so it is only the notion of causality-in-general which is a priori.[153] Furthermore, there are two different ways of interpreting causality, namely the "Uniformity view" and the "Activity

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151 L.S. Stebbing, in her review of Perception, complained: "The main defect of Mr. Price's discussion is his failure adequately to consider the nature of the causal relation" (L.S. Stebbing, Review of H.H. Price's Perception, in Philosophy, 8 [1933], p. 354).

152 "What is innate and what is a priori must be the whole complex notion of material thinghood, in which causality is a factor, not just the notion of cause alone" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 102). See also ibid., pp. 306-307.

153 In his article, "Our Evidence for the Existence of Other Minds," Price points out that there is a difference between such categorical or formal universals as "cause" and "substance", and those which are more specific and empirically determined (op. cit., p. 438).

view."[154] These terms go unexplained in Perception, but what Price intends by them is clarified in a later article, "Touch and Organic Sensation".[155] According to the first view, to speak of causation is to speak mainly in terms of visual experience and in terms of uniform and regular succession (i.e. the constant concomitance) of events. The second view analyses causation as force, impulse, active efficacy, or enforcement, and involves reference to the experience of exerting muscular force or of moving one's body in the command of the will. Which view Price has in mind in Perception is difficult to say. In fact, he asserts that it makes no difference for his argument:

> It is necessary for us to maintain that the terms 'cause' and 'causal characteristics' have some meaning. But it does not matter to our argument what the right analysis of their meaning is.[156]

It is certain that he regards constant concomitance at least as the sign of causality: this much is clear from the fact that he regards the constant concomitance of somatic

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154 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 281.

155 This article is found in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 44 (1943-1944): see esp. pp. iii and xix-xxv. For a concise, informative exposition of the different views, see A.C. Ewing, The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy, chap. viii.

156 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 281, n. 1.

and environmental data as a sign of their causal interdependence.[157] But the meaning of the term "cause" is left very vague, and, to this extent, we can agree that his analysis gives us "no determinate knowledge of the intrinsic qualities of the physical object."

With respect to the more specific characteristics, causal as well as non-causal, the same thing turns out to be verified, since these characteristics really belong to the family of sense-data which, along with the physical object, constitutes the material thing. Thus, he writes that

> . . . in order to describe it [the physical object] in any definite way, e.g. to attribute to it a particular shape or size or location, and a determinate sort of causal characteristics, we have to conceive it to be related to certain families, with whose members we are actually acquainted in sense.[158]

When, for instance, he describes one of the specific kinds of causal characteristics which physical objects possess namely, impenetrability, everything is in terms of sense-data:

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157 See pp. 166ff above. Recall his remark that if "constant compresence and concomitant variation is not here a sign of causal connexion direct or indirect . . . [then] we must ask why should it be a sign of causation in other cases either?" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 48).

158 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 303. In fact, he says elsewhere, "the term 'physical object' is meaningless apart from reference to sense-data" (ibid., p. 299).

> When we say 'there is a stone wall here' the first thing we are sure of is that there is a family of grey sense-data having a more or less flat-sided visuo-tactual solid for its nucleus. . . . And when we say that a chestnut fall on to the wall, the first thing we are sure of is that there is another family F_2 having a different visuo-tactual solid Σ_2 for its nucleus . . . [etc.].[159]

The same is true for other non-causal characteristics, such as size, shape, and position in space.

> When we ask what is the real size of the match-box, what we are really asking about is the size relation of the match-box family to other families.[160] . . . Physical Space is itself defined in terms of nuclear data.[161] . . . The Standard Solid is of great importance, . . . for its shape (the Standard Figure) is identical with what we ordinarily call the real shape of the thing.[162]

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159 Ibid., p. 277. The way in which Price treats impenetrability shows that if one wishes to state the nature of causation either according to the Uniformity view or according to the Activity view, i.e. if anyone wishes to add any specification to the purely generic notion of "cause", then the notes of even such limited specification are drawn from acquaintance with sense-data. Price writes: "Some would make a great mystery of our consciousness of impenetrability or 'resistence'; but only because they think it has something to do with our will, or with our muscles or with both. But there is really no mystery at all, and neither the will nor the muscles have anything to do with the matter. A purely contemplative being having the sense of sight and an intelligence such as ours, but completely devoid of either will or muscles, could perfectly well be conscious of impenetrability just as we are" (H.H. Price, Perception, p. 275). This remark, incidentally, might lead us to suspect that Price favors the Uniformity over the Activity view.

160 Ibid., p. 239.

161 Ibid., p. 252. The same is true of position in space.

162 Ibid., p. 227.

Thus, except for the vague knowledge that a physical object is a cause in some unspecified sense, we have no knowledge of what might be the physical object's intrinsic properties. What appears to be determinate knowledge of its properties is really based upon--and even refers to--the family of sense-data with which it is associated.

> All our knowledge of the physical world, both of its macroscopic members and of its microscopic ones, is based entirely on our observations of ordinary large-scale objects, and therefore upon acquaintance with sense-data. It is <u>in terms of sense-data</u> that every physical object, be it small or great, perceptible or not, has eventually to be described, and if it cannot be described in terms of 'its own' family of sense-data (obtained or obtainable) with whose nuclear visuo-tactual solid it is coincident, then it must be described in terms of 'foreign' families of sense-data whose mode of self-prolongation alters in its neighborhood.[163]

2. Critique of Price's Theory of Physical Objects.

We have now seen how Price attempts to prove the existence of physical objects as well as his judgment concerning the extent of our knowledge of them. On neither point, however, is his position without its difficulties. Let us consider them in reverse order.

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163 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 298. ("Self-prolongation" signifies the mode by which a sense-datum or a family of such are said to alter their position in the sense-field.) <u>Perception</u> closes with the statement that "of the intrinsic qualities of physical occupants, apart from their relations to sense-data, we have no knowledge at all, and no prospect of getting any."

To begin with, we can ask just how far Price is justified in using the family of sense-data as the basis for predicating various characteristics of the physical object. It has already been seen that Price does not seek this justification from a causal-inference argument. Instead, he tries to find it in the fact that the physical object coincides with the nuclear members of the family. (See the passage from Perception, p. 298--the last passage quoted above.) This relationship of coincidence is such that, even though the physical object and the standard solid are distinct, we should not, Price says, take this "as a distinction between two separate somethings".[164]

> Sense-data cohere together in families and families are coincident with physical occupants: indeed a physical occupant of the ordinary macroscopic sort is defined as a causally characterized entity with which a family of sense-data is coincident. It simply is not the case that the sense-data and the physical occupants are related only in a causal way, though doubtless they are in fact causally related; and it simply is the case that thanks to this coincidence they form a complex of quite another sort. And this other sort of complex is precisely what we all have in mind when we speak about a 'piece of matter' or a 'material thing'. . . . All these terms stand for what we have called complete things, consisting both of physical occupants and of families coincident with them.[165]

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164 Ibid., p. 297.

165 Ibid., p. 302.

When we sense a particular sense-datum (s), therefore, and we say that it pertains or belongs to such-and-such a material thing (M), this is equivalent to saying that:

(1) s is a member of a family of sense-data F.
(2) There is a physical occupant O, with which F is coincident.
(3) M consists of F and O in conjunction.166

The problem with this theory is that it is extremely difficult to discover what "coincide" means in the present context. We sometimes use the word in a metaphorical sense, as when we say that the aim or purpose of one person coincides with that of someone else. But such an interpretation would be unintelligible here. The other possibility is that the word describes spatial relationships, and this is how Price uses the word elsewhere.[167] But there are strong objections to a spatial interpretation. Price says that we know about the physical object only in terms of the family of sense-data with which it is coincident. If this is so, one must ask how he knows that the physical object possesses the requisite characteristics which will enable it to coincide with a family of sense-data. For, until he has established the coincidence, he is unable--on his own premisses--

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166 Ibid., p. 303. (The above is direct quotation.)

167 See Perception, p. 237, (where he analyses coincidence of edges and areas), p. 246 (where coincidence is said to involve progressive adjunction and spatial relationships), and p. 251 (which has already been discussed on p. 302 above).

to attribute to it any "particular shape or size or location."[168]

Furthermore, we have already seen the problems involved in accepting the proposal that the standard solid is an actual three-dimensional entity. Rather, it appears that when we speak of a standard solid, we are really imagining that there is a three-dimensional entity. Is it plausible, then, to say that the physical object coincides with this, or should we not revert to "construction" and imagine that the physical object coincides with the imagined or hypothetical standard solid?[169]

The conclusion seems to be that this relation of coincidence which Price postulates between the standard solid and the physical object is left too vague and obscure to perform the task assigned to it. And when we try to make the nature of the relation more explicit, it appears to be

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168 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 303. For a more ample discussion of this objection, see G.N.M. Tyrrell, "Spatial Characteristics of Physical Occupants", in Mind, 43 (1934), pp. 483-486, and J.R. Smythies, Analysis of Perception, pp. 106-112.

169 If Price had grounded the reality of possible sense-data in the physical object, he might have spoken of a more literal "coincidence" of the two. But he would still have had to face the further question, "How do we know that the possible sense-data are grounded in physical objects?" And he would have had to say that the family possesses location in virtue of the physical object, not vice-versa as he does.

unintelligible unless certain assumptions are made which have already been excluded (such as the assumption that the standard solid is an actual entity or that we already know the properties of the physical object from an independent source). Consequently, even if physical objects do exist, there are no grounds for saying that they coincide with the core of the family of sense-data, i.e. with the standard solid, and thus no grounds for using the standard solid as a basis for predications concerning the physical object.

This is not all, however. It does not even seem that Price's argument for the existence of physical objects is entirely satisfactory. Recall that the aim of this chapter has been to inquire into the validity of perceptual assurance.

According to Price, we are--in addition to being assured of the existence of the family of sense-data--also assured of the existence of a physical object. But when his argument for this latter is examined carefully, it does not appear to be justified.

To begin with, the proof that there exists more than the actual sense-data (or the family, if we wish to include the obtainability of other sense-data) is valid only if it is true that every effect has a cause. Yet Price's attitude on the principle of universal causation is ambiguous.

> What of the proposition that every event has a cause? Is this proposition, we may ask, even true? Many people have held that some events have no causes, namely, human volitions. The most that could be maintained is that every event in the material world has a cause; and even this is only true of 'macroscopic' events, if the Principle of Indeterminacy be correct, not of 'microscopic' ones. . . . If in our major premise 'Every event has a cause' we take the term 'event' in its wider sense, and so mean only 'Everything which has a beginning has a cause', then it does not seem at all clear that the proposition is true.[170]

It is true that, despite this show of hesitancy, Price does accept the causal principle as valid in Perception. But even so, he is still unable to give conclusive reasons for supposing that physical objects rather than Berkeley's God are the cause of the effects which must be explained.

Recall what these effects were. Price mentions two types. There are the effects which we observe, and there are

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170 In his review of J. Wisdom's Problems of Mind and Matter, he wrote: "We may now turn to Mr. Wisdom's three general principles about causality. First, there is the principle that every event has a cause. I have to confess that I cannot on reflection find this to be self-evident; nor does there seem to be any satisfactory way of proving it. All that I can see is that we habitually take its truth for granted" (op. cit., p. 357). In "The Permanent Significance of Hume's Philosophy" we find the following: "What are we to say of this [the axiom "Every event has a cause"]? Is it self-evident? So far as I can see, Hume is right in saying that it is not. . . . Then is it demonstrable from self-evident premises? I can only say that Hume's refutation of the alleged demonstrations which were current in his own time seems to me absolutely conclusive, and I do not know of any better ones which have been produced since" (op. cit., pp. 24-25). See also Hume's Theory of the External World, p. 111.

those which no one observes. The case in which we observe the butter melt as the glowing coal approaches it is an example of the first, and the reduction-to-ashes of the logs burning in the unattended fireplace is an example of the second.[171] In each case, the observed changes or effects were such that an immaterial being rather than a physical object could produce them.

This is obvious in the first case where the only observable change occurs in the visual field itself: one sense-datum is altered as another approaches it. But the same is true in the second case. It is conceivable that the same Berkeleian agent which causes the sense-datum I sense before I leave the room (the sense-datum which is the appearance of fresh logs just beginning to kindle) also causes me--upon my return to the room, and in accordance with a predetermined plan of his--to sense different sense-data than before: now I sense an appearance of a burnt-down fire. Price is actually making two inferences in his second example, even though he only refers to one. He not only infers that the changes which occurred unobserved required a cause other than the family (that "system of potentialities"), but he first infers that there were unobserved changes actually occurring while I was out of the room. But it is conceivable

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171 See pp. 321-322 above for these examples.

that no unobserved changes occurred at all. Or, if we like, there was an unobserved change, but it was a change in the will of the Deity who produces all of our sense-data, not a change in the region of physical objects.

To conclude, then. Much of the present chapter has been occupied with an analysis of the object of perceptual assurance. According to Price, this object--the material thing--is a complex entity. So far as its first constituent--the family of sense-data--is concerned, our assurance is ultimately analysed as an assurance of the obtainability of certain sense-data. Price then attempts to justify our further assurance that the material thing contains a second constituent, the physical object, whose intrinsic nature remains closed to our minds. But an examination of his argument shows that his conclusion exceeds his premises. The only conclusion his premisses justify is that <u>some</u> cause of the sense-data exists, not necessarily one that is physical in any ordinary sense of that word.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

As was stated at the outset, the purpose of this thesis has been to present and to evaluate the theory which one contemporary philosopher has submitted as a solution to the problem of sense perception. Having sufficiently expounded that theory and pointed out some of its advantages and also some of its difficulties, it is now time to conclude our study. First, then, let us briefly recall the nature of the problem of sense perception as well as the main outlines of Price's solution. (This will form the first section of the conclusion.) After that has been done, some pages will be devoted to an overall evaluation of his theory on three main points. (This will constitute the second part of the conclusion.) Finally, for the interested reader, we will add some pages containing our own views on the approach to be taken to the problem of sense perception.

I. THE PROBLEM AND PRICE'S PROPOSED SOLUTION

We speak of a problem. Yet many people--perhaps most--live their entire lives never suspecting that there is any problem about sense perception. As R.J. Hirst puts it, "<u>surprise</u> is often expressed at the suggestion that our

that time, there have been endless disputes concerning the nature of colors, sounds, heat, cold, odors, and tastes: are they in material things themselves? are they in the mind or consciousness of the observer? if the latter, then how do we obtain knowledge of material things? etc.

Such, in general, is the problem to which Price addressed himself. We have seen that his own approach was to first search out certain fundamental facts regarding immediate experience. These facts are that there exists a particular class of entities which are henceforth given the name "sense-data" and that we can make various infallible judgments about some of the characteristics of these sense-data. (Thus, when we are gazing toward a ripe tomato, we can know with certainty that there is something red and round which immediately confronts us.)

Having ascertained such facts, Price then examined the hypothesis of direct realism. According to this hypothesis, sense-data are none other than ordinary material things--tables, chairs, trees, etc.--and the colors, sounds, and other characteristics which we immediately grasp in sense perception are inherent in the surfaces of these material things. Price's conclusion was that the hypothesis was untenable.

He did not come to this conclusion, however, as did many before him, on the basis of difficulties posed by the

perception of the external world presents serious problems."[1] Theoretical speculation about the deeper mysteries of nature presents problems, but what is the difficulty where simply seeing, hearing, feeling, and the like, are concerned? Even children are able to do these things.

Despite this apparent uncomplicatedness of seeing, hearing and other kinds of sensing, however, even the men who first undertook to explain the factors and processes involved in sense perception were not long in discovering certain puzzles and difficulties. As long ago as the time of Plato and Aristotle, thinkers were asking whether those features of reality which we see, hear and feel, such as colors, sounds, warmth, and coldness, belonged to material things even when no one was present to see, hear or feel them.[2]

Later this question became acute, when, during the rise of modern science, the most minute facts concerning the transmission of light and sound were sought out and systematized into the sciences of optics and acoustics.[3] Since

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1 R.J. Hirst, The Problems of Perception, p. 15. Italics added.

2 See Plato, Theatetus (151E,ff), and Aristotle, Metaphysics, Bk. IV, chap. v.

3 A.N. Whitehead points out that, although thinkers as far back as Democritus had speculated about the transmission of light and sound, it was only when the modern sciences were systematized and made exact in the seventeenth century and their consequences "ruthlessly deduced" that their full impact upon theories of sense perception was felt. See A.N. Whitehead, The Concept of Nature, pp. 26-27.

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so-called "facts of science", i.e. the difficulties that crop up if one tries to reconcile the theories of light and sound transmission with the theory of direct realism, but on the basis of a confrontation between phenomenologically-discovered facts about sense-data and the common-sense view that material things cannot simultaneously possess contradictory characteristics, (e.g. the stick cannot simultaneously be bent and straight).

The rejection of direct realism brings with it serious problems, though. The most notorious of these is the iron-curtain objection. If sense-data or what we immediately grasp in sense perception are not material things but entities distinct from them, then how does it come about that we have any knowledge of material things? Sense-data, it would appear, cut off our access to material things, just as an iron curtain would.

In order to meet this objection, Price distinguishes between sensing, the act whereby we enjoy direct acquaintance with sense-data, and perceptual consciousness, whereby we acquire our knowledge of material things. Most emphatically, our consciousness of material things is not, for Price, merely a synthesizing of sense-data, so that "material thing" would designate nothing more than a collection of sense-data. The fact that our concept of "material thing" is not gained by abstraction from intuited instances of it,

however, means that there is something innate whereby we conceive material thinghood in the proper circumstances, i.e. in conjunction with the sensing of sense-data.

If one asks what degree of confidence we can place in our perceptual consciousness of material things, Price's answer is that repeated acts of perceptual acceptance occurring in conjunction with repeated sensings of relevant sense-data give us all the certainty that we can reasonably wish for. He adds that to ask, as some philosophers have asked, whether material things exist, is to ask a question that is literally meaningless. Nevertheless, when Price's theory that a material thing is a composite of a family of sense-data and a physical object was carefully analyzed, it was found to involve some rather serious difficulties.

II. OVERALL EVALUATION OF PRICE'S SENSE-DATUM THEORY

It is not necessary in this conclusion to give a lengthy or detailed critique of the various opinions which Price has expressed or of the arguments by which he has sought to support them. For the most part, this has been taken care of in the body of the thesis, where his views and arguments were not only expounded, but also subjected to on-the-spot evaluation wherever this was possible and opportune. Here, then, we will limit ourselves to making a broad evaluation of his sense-datum theory, dealing in particular with

three chief topics: (1) sense-data as the objects of immediate sense apprehension; (2) perceptual acceptance as a taking-for-granted of the existence of material things; and (3) the nature of material thinghood as comprising both a family of sense-data and a physical object. Our evaluation will consist in presenting the pro's and con's of Price's views on each of these three topics.

A. Sense-Data as the Objects of Immediate Sense Apprehension

It is on this subject that we find the greatest accord between Price's views and our own. There have been many objections to the initial approach whereby Price sets out to describe what it is he is referring to when he speaks of "sense-data". But it is our conviction that none of these objections succeeds in undermining the substantial correctness of his approach. Even the most uneducated persons understand without difficulty what is meant by "color", "sound", "odor", and other sensuous-quality terms, and understand--furthermore--the differences between the things to which these terms refer. These differences are demonstrated by obvious facts, such as the fact that the blind person is capable of apprehending sounds without colors, whereas the situation is reversed for the deaf person. How else can this be explained if color and sound are not radically distinct? And the same fact shows that our awareness of the one is not identical

with our awareness of the other. It is perhaps the very obviousness of such familiar facts--facts that underlie the most fundamental chapter divisions in every textbook that deals with sensation--that makes us overlook them at times. But if such obvious distinctions are minimized or underplayed (because of the difficulties that follow?), it seems to us that no argument in favor of any distinction will retain its plausibility.

If the legitimacy of making such distinctions is granted, however, it is not difficult to understand what Price means by "sense-data", nor is it difficult to justify his contention that if we are able to make any empirical judgments that are certain, then many of our judgments about sense-data can be called "certain".

It is especially his emphasis on the real-ness, if we may put it so, of what are often called "apparent" characteristics of sensuous data that is most valuable. One often gets the impression, while reading philosophical treatments of sense-perception, that authors write about the subject either very cursorily or abstractly, with their attention fixed on some particular conclusion which they wish to justify, almost not seeing or hearing what is presented to their senses.[4] Such concrete and undeniably-present

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4 In a personal communication to this author, Price has voiced a suspicion that some philosophers never really look at things.

characteristics as the bentness we experience in looking toward a partly-immersed stick, the blueness we experience when looking into the sky, etc., tend to "evaporate" into shadowy non-existence when they are referred to only vaguely by such expressions as "the stick appears bent", or "the sky looks blue". Price's insight at this juncture is crucial. In our opinion, it is precisely here that the issue concerning the validity of direct realism is decided. Only by neglecting the clarifications mentioned in chapter four above[5] is it possible to maintain direct realism. On this same matter, Price's observations regarding the possibility of providing ostensive definitions, in illusory situations, for concepts which the direct realist would say are not actually exemplified is an instance of the tenacity of his insight.[6]

If there is anything for which Price can be criticized on this matter--apart from minor details--it might be the relatively scant attention which he devoted to the basic relation between the observer and sense-data. He speaks of it

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5 See chap. iv, sec. II, G, above.

6 See H.H. Price, "Appearing and Appearances", pp. 14-16. What he means is this: the realist would deny that bentness is actually exemplified, since the stick is straight, not bent. To this Price replies that if you wish to make someone understand the meaning of "bentness", you can use the situation where a straight stick is partially immersed in water just as well as you can use an actually-bent stick.

variously as "direct awareness", "acquaintance", "intuitive apprehension", and the like.[7]

For the most part, Price is careful to avoid one of the objections which has frequently been levelled against the sense-datum theorists, namely, that they make this basic relation equivalent to knowledge.[8] "Knowledge" generally connotes the notion of "knowledge about", which can be true or false. But if one places himself before some object, say, a pencil, and simply looks, i.e. if he puts from his mind every thought about what is before him, this attitude of attention slowly reduces itself to a dumb stare. There is no question of the datum disappearing. It continues to be present. But our relation to the object before us is less and less like the relation to which we would normally give the honorific title of "knowledge".[9] Nor can it be called true or false, properly speaking.

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7 See p. 87 above.

8 See p. 87, n. 56 above.

9 As was stated, Price avoids making our basic relation to sense-data one of knowing in the sense of "knowing about". In "Thinking and Meaning" he wrote as follows: "Now I admit that it may be misleading to speak of knowledge by acquaintance. . . . All the same, I think that the word 'acquaintance', even if not the phrase 'knowledge by acquaintance', is a useful one; and I do not see how we can get on without it or some equivalent. . . . Even though acquaintance is not itself knowledge, it does seem to be an indispensable precondition of knowledge that so and so is the case, at any rate where the knowledge is empirical" (H.H. Price, "Thinking and Meaning", pp. 247-248). He had also made somewhat the same point earlier, in Truth and Corrigibility, pp. 23-24.

But if this is not the fundamental relation between ourselves and sense-data, then what is? It does not seem that "intuitive apprehension" or "acquaintance" are perfectly clear and unambiguous as descriptions of it. For, it is one thing to place oneself before an object and--apart from any explicit thinking about it--to fix one's attention on it, i.e. to focus one's attention on the resulting sense-datum. But it is quite another thing when one merely chances to be looking in that same direction while thinking about some other, disconnected subject. (This brings us back to the problem of unnoticed or unattended-to sense-data: see pp. 94-96 above.) According to Price's sense-datum theory, the visual sense-datum is present to the observer even when it is not attended to.[10] That is, attention is not our most basic relation to sense-data but supervenes upon it.[11] Expressions such as "intuitive apprehension" and "direct awareness", however, seem much more appropriate for describing our cognitive relationship to sense-data when they are attended

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10 If, as Price holds, sense-data ultimately depend in part upon the nervous system of the observer, this is quite obvious. Sense-data do not depend upon our attending to them; for, even when our thoughts are wandering, the lights and colors before us are not annihilated. (Nor are they instantly re-created when our attention returns to them.)

11 See R. Taylor, T. Duggan, "On Seeing Double", in Philosophical Quarterly, 8 (1958), pp. 171-174.

to than for describing the more fundamental relationship which exists even when they are not attended to. It is extremely difficult to find proper words to describe this basic relationship: it resembles a bare presence, often one of a very tenuous nature.[12]

Nevertheless, Price has hardly mentioned this problem--which is perhaps remarkable for one who has devoted so much time and effort to just such facets of experience.

B. Perceptual Acceptance as the Taking-for-Granted of the Existence of Material Things.

Of all the sense-datum philosophers, Price has given the most thorough treatment of perceptual, as opposed to

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12 Without going into a long discussion of the matter, it may be well to refer here to an important point which Ryle makes against the sense-datum treatment of pains and tickles and similar feelings, which he calls "sensations". To say merely that a pain, for example, is a sense-datum which is present and observed seems inadequate as a description of the situation of having a pain. Ryle objects that such an analysis explains the having of pains as the not having of pains, since when we have a pain, we not only contemplate a pain, but we are pained. (See G.Ryle, The Concept of Mind, pp. 204-205.) Ryle is seriously mistaken, though, both in the conclusion he draws from this fact (he denies the validity of any act-object analysis here) and in the extension which he makes of such conclusions to seeing, hearing, and the like.

sensory, experience.[13] Perhaps one of the most welcome features of his treatment is that it attempts to study perceptual consciousness as it is actually found. In other words, even though he first determines the precise objects of sense apprehension, he does not forget that sensing is only one feature of the total consciousness which he had set out to analyse and therefore does not try to build up man's knowledge from sense-data alone. From the outset, he insists that perceptual consciousness is a given fact--we just do find ourselves with all sorts of beliefs and convictions regarding a world of material things--and that it is not reducible to an awareness of sense-data or to a mere construction from them.

The combination of these last two facts, the givenness of perceptual consciousness and its irreducibility-to-sense-data, is very important for the attempt to justify a

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13 As we saw in chapter four, Price's treatment of perceptual consciousness is both phenomenological and epistemological. That is, he attempts to describe how the process "feels" to us or how it appears, as well as to analyze and evaluate its claim to give us knowledge of material things. G.E. Moore treats perceptual consciousness only spottily, and then only from the more epistemological angle. B. Russell is much less concerned with perceptual consciousness as it actually occurs than he is with constructing a quasi-scientific world-view, using as few principles and data as possible. C.D. Broad, in his two main works on the sense-datum theory, Scientific Thought and The Mind and Its Place in Nature, devotes only minor attention to perceptual consciousness.

realist theory regarding the existence of the material world. Once the sense-datum theory is accepted, one must--if he is honest--face the iron-curtain objection. It is not necessary to prove that one possesses certain convictions about material things, but a curious person will at least ask himself if those convictions are justified. If, therefore, the sensing of sense-data is not an adequate explanation for our possession of these convictions--as Price sufficiently demonstrates--then some other explanation for them must be sought. This matter will be taken up a bit later, however;[14] for the present, we must be content to express approval of Price's general approach to perceptual consciousness.

Yet, if it is easy to commend his non-reductionist approach to perceptual consciousness (as well as his rejection of the theory that we originally come to a knowledge of material things by way of causal inference), we must admit that it is not so easy--for us at least--to pass judgment on his analysis of perceptual acceptance in terms of "taking-for-granted."

The reason for this is the fact that perceptual acceptance is something that takes place so instantaneously and effortlessly that we are not even aware of it except on the infrequent occasions when we stop and try to reflect upon

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14 See sec. III below.

what has occurred. A further reason is that much of what is involved in perceptual acceptance takes place entirely beneath the surface of explicit and implicit consciousness (i.e. beneath the surface of what Sartre would call positional and non-positional consciousness). Such factors are thus not open to phenomenological inspection. On the contrary, our only clue to their nature is the effects which they produce "above the surface".

Nevertheless, there is one area of Price's explanation of perceptual acceptance which is noticeably obscure. On the one hand, he denies that perceptual acceptance is a form of judging.[15] On the other hand, he says that the object which is accepted is a set of propositions.[16] Now, it would generally be thought that any act whose object is propositions involving concepts and universals, would merit the name of "judgment". As was pointed out in chapter five,[17] Price has been criticized for denying that perceptual acceptance involves judging.

The obscurity of Price's analysis at this point is to be found in his answer to the above difficulty. He seems

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15 H.H. Price, Perception, p. 167. See pp. 229-230 above.

16 See p. 236 above.

17 See p. 230, n. 80 above.

to say that the reason why only taking-for-granted and not judging is at the core of perceptual acceptance is because the propositions accepted are only implicit:

> Taking-for-granted . . . is something which is <u>included in</u> an act of judging, but is not itself an act of judging: as the act whose expression in words, if we did express it, would be the statement A is B may be said to be 'included in' the act whose expression is the statement AB is C. (Only, if it were actually expressed, it would not be a taking-for-granted. When I say that A is B, I am <u>judging</u> that it is so, and am no longer just taking it for granted.)[18]

But is this distinction between expressed and unexpressed propositions sufficient to distinguish the acts of which they are the objects? To this it must be replied that even if some such distinction is implicated, Price's own explanation of it is quite vague. What does "express" mean? Just to say out loud? (Mention of the words "statement" and "say" suggest this.) But certainly that cannot be the basis for such a distinction, for we often make judgments silently and "in our minds".

It is probable that Price has in the back of his mind Cook Wilson's notion of "judgment" as an assent given after a period of puzzlement and based on recognized evidence. (See p. 229, n. 78 above.) Now Price is certainly

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18 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 167.

correct in denying that perceptual acceptance is judgment in this sense, and if his point is merely terminological, cadit quaestio.

But others have used the term "judgment" in a wider sense, so that even when there is only question of implicit propositions which are accepted, these authors have referred to the acts which have these implicit propositions as their term as "judgments". And Price has not really explained the difference between implicit and explicit propositions, nor explained how there can be merely implicit propositions (involving, as was mentioned, concepts and universals). This part of his theory, then, remains undeveloped and obscure.

In addition, Price's exposition of the theory of perceptual acceptance seems to us to be marred by an ambiguity of which mention was made in chapter five (sec. V) above. At times, Price says that what comes before the mind in perceptual acceptance is not propositions, but a material thing, i.e. that which the propositions are about.

> There [is] no passage of the mind from the sense-datum to the taken-for-granted, . . . but also, within the taking for granted itself there is no passage from the front surface of the material thing to the back and sides and inside. . . . Somehow it is the whole thing, and not just a jejune extract from it, which is before the mind from the

> first.[19] . . . Even in the single perceptual act the material thing is 'presented bodily'.[20] . . . When we sense the sense-datum the house just presents itself to us 'bodily' and as a whole, without any reasoning or passage of the mind.[21]

His notion here is that perceptual acceptance, presumably by bringing into play the concept of material thinghood,[22] provides us with a subject, about which subsequent judgments can be made:

> What I perceptually accept . . . falls <u>as such</u> on the side of the subject thought about. In so far as it is merely the object of a perceptual act, it is simply something which is 'there for us to think about', something about which we then proceed in a further act to ask questions, or to attribute characteristics to it.[23]

Now this ambiguity appears frequently in the pages which Price devotes to an explanation of perceptual acceptance. He appears to shuttle back and forth in his expressions, sometimes writing as if what is perceptually accepted is a proposition (that such-and-such exists or is green, etc.) and at other times writing as if it is a material

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19 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 151.

20 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 152.

21 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 154.

22 The generic concept will be modified somewhat by virtue of previous experience as well as by the specific nature of that sense-datum, the sensing of which triggers the perceptual acceptance.

23 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 162.

thing. Why this happens is understandable, since, if perceptual acceptance is the taking-for-granted of various propositions, it is necessary for the subject of such propositions to be brought before the mind. (Perhaps temporal priority is not required; all that is meant is that there must be a subject before the mind in order for us to think--however implicitly--about it.) Nevertheless, even though he notes the distinction between having propositions and having material things as the term of the taking-for-granted, Price does not pay sufficient attention to the difference.[24]

Such considerations, however, raise a nest of very difficult problems. How is the concept of material thinghood brought into play? How is this general concept differentiated into such concepts as that of a cat, of a house, or of a tree? What explains why now one and now another specific concept is activated? What is the status of an "implicit

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24 And, of course, it <u>is</u> right to distinguish between merely bringing a material thing before the mind and taking something for granted about it. Perceptual acceptance is more than the mere bringing before the mind the idea of a material thing. When I look toward a house, I do not merely "get an idea" of a house, as I might if someone simply mentioned the word "house" in my presence. I am somehow vaguely aware that a house exists here before me. The same thing is shown by the fact that perceptual acceptance can be mistaken (which mere bringing-before-the-mind cannot be): when I reach out for the wax-imitation tomato in order to take a bite from it, I have more in mind that the mere idea of a tomato. I implicitly judge that what I am reaching for is a tomato.

proposition "? (It seems that Price's analysis calls for the simultaneous existence of a number of such propositions.) Etc. While Price does refer to the facets of experience which give rise to such questions, he does not always separate them enough. And while his treatment is sufficiently phenomenological and epistemological (i.e. he does describe the facts and then appraise the truth-value of the various takings-for-granted), there are only meager indications in his works of what he may call the "mechanics" involved in such processes.[25]

C. The Nature of Material Thinghood.

For many readers, the element of Price's sense-datum theory which they will find most curious will be his explanation of what constitutes a material thing. We refer to his

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25 We do find, in Thinking and Experience, a lengthy discussion of conceptual thinking, but by the time Price came to write it (1953), his views regarding both universals and the nature of concepts were no longer the same as they had been when he wrote Perception. In the later work, although he tries to remain neutral in the dispute between the theory of universals and the theory of resemblances (see H.H. Price, Thinking and Experience, chap. i), he in effect abandons the theory of universals. With respect to concepts, he repudiates his formerly-held views that they are inspectible and espouses the theory that they are only recognitional capacities or dispositions ("fundamentally a concept is a recognitional capacity"--op. cit., p. 255). In fact, the non-committal attitude which he adopts on so many vital questions in this work diminishes its value as a source for his personal opinions on the problems mentioned above in the text.

contention that a material thing is a composite which embraces both a family of sense-data as well as a shadowy entity referred to as a "physical object". His theory represents an effort to reconcile the facts that underlie the sense-datum theory with the common-sense description of particular material things while at the same time evading the full logical force of the iron-curtain objection. It seems, however, that the apparent advantages which such a theory of material thingness would possess are matched by even greater disadvantages.

1.--Price's theory has the advantage over Locke's, for instance, of being closer to common sense with respect to secondary qualities. The plain man's description of material things such as tomatoes, trees, houses, and the like, includes the colors he sees, as well as potential sounds, smells, tastes, and tangible surface-texture. (See pp. 280-281 above.) By making the sense-data, with their sensuous qualities, constituents of material things, Price's description of material things is closer to that of the plain man than is Locke's theory of colorless, soundless, odorless bodies.

Yet this advantage is bought at the expense of an even more important common-sense conviction according to which no feature of a material thing is literally begotten or changed in the process of becoming known. Price is forced

to admit that the tomato does not possess the color which we sense except when someone is actually looking at it and sensing a red sense-datum which belongs to it. Common sense will be contradicted in part, of course, no matter which alternative is adopted. And, while it may be difficult for two philosophers to agree on a criterion according to which one opinion can be judged "more" important to common sense and another opinion "less" important, it is our judgment that common sense would more readily surrender the conviction that material things actually possess colors, sounds, odors, etc., than to judge that they suddenly acquire these characteristics when someone stops to look at, listen to, or smell them.

2.--Price considers that by making sense-data constituents of material things, he is able to escape the force of the iron-curtain object. We have seen that, although we require an innate concept of material thinghood as a prerequisite for our knowledge of material things, all of our empirical knowledge of the existence and specific characteristics of material things depends upon our acquaintance with the sense-data which belong to them. This latter acquaintance is able to function this way only because its object, sense-data, are constituents of the material things we need to know about.

> If my sense-data were literally inside my brain . . . it would be impossible for them to manifest to me any material object; since they only do this . . . by always purporting to be and in some cases actually being constituents of the surfaces of such objects.[26] . . . If they were literally inside the brain, we should have to fall back on the Causal Inference Theory to justify our beliefs about the material world.[27]

The first disadvantage of this theory, namely, that sense-data are constituents of material things, is that it naturally suggests that sense-data are <u>parts</u> of the surface the way that wooden boards are spatially joined in order to form the sides of a house.[28] If that were the case, it would nullify Price's entire thesis that sense-data exist as entities distinct from the surfaces of material things. And even though Price denies that such is the meaning he gives to "constituent", it is apparent that this notion frequently slips back into his arguments. The most conspicuous example of this is found in his description of the manner in which nuclear sense-data "are <u>adjoined</u> to each other at various angles, so as to form a continuous closed surface in three dimensions."[29] Two sense-data in the same, presently-actual

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26 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, pp. 128-129.

27 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 129, n. 1.

28 See pp. 299-301 above.

29 H.H. Price, <u>Perception</u>, p. 240. See p. 300 above for this notion of progressive adjunction.

field do literally adjoin one another in space. The fact that Price uses this as his basic reference-term for explaining how sense-data from different fields adjoin is evidence of the tie there is in his mind between this literal meaning of "constitute" and whatever other meaning he believes he is offering for it.

Furthermore, as was shown in chapter six above, if we do eliminate the literal interpretation of "constitute" as meaning "be part of", we find that none of the other meanings of the word fit either. And so it turns out that nothing remains of Price's theory but the mere word "constitute", emptied of all intelligible content. It sounds comforting, perhaps, to say that the entities which we directly sense are partial constituents of the material things we originally believed ourselves to be in direct sensory contact with, but as soon as we attempt to discover what this means, we find that it is a statement without a meaning. It is not simply that the statement has several meanings, one of which is the true one--though we cannot be certain which one it is--but rather a case where none of the possible meanings can be correct.

3.--Our final observation will merely enlarge a little upon the objections brought against Price's theory of physical objects at the end of chapter six. Price proposes his argument as an improvement over the causal-inference

theory. And it is true that if one had to choose between the two theories to explain the psychological origin of our belief that perduring physical objects exist, Price's account would be the less implausible, since it is true that our original thoughts about causality refer to the activity of one material thing upon another (even of our body on things or vice-versa). The idea that our sensing or its objects are caused by things comes much later. (In fact, direct realism does not believe that we see only effects of material things, themselves, and we are all direct realists at an early stage in life.)

Price is not putting forward a psychological explanation of the genesis of our beliefs in physical objects, however, but rather a justificatory argument for the validity of that belief. And it is here that its lack of advantages over the causal-inference theory lies.

Take the instance where we "see" both the cause and the effect in a horizontal interaction: e.g., the chestnut falling on the wall. What we sense are two sense-data whose spatial relationship in our sense-field is altered or--better--series of temporally-successive data with each subsequent pair's spatial relationships differing from those of the previous pair. Price says that what must be explained is why one family of sense-data has its mode of prolongation altered in the presence of another (this means

its course of movement is altered, as when we say that the chestnut falls downward but is stopped by the wall).[30]

If this is broken down, though, it means simply that individual sense-data either were themselves moved, or were succeeded by sense-data whose position in the sense-field was altered. This is what must be explained, and then the question arises: is Price correct in assuming that the movement of one sense-datum with respect to another (or the different spatial positions of successive sense-data) is a better basis for positing the existence of physical objects than the existence itself of those sense-data is?

Consider Price's second illustration of horizontal causation, the case of effects coming into existence unobserved (as when the clothes are washed while I am out of the laundry-room). His argument here involves the positive disadvantage (relative to the causal-inference theory) of requiring two, rather than just one, inference: first, an inference to the existence of unobserved effects, and only then to the unobserved causes of those unobserved effects.[31]

We can conclude this third part of our evaluation, then, by recalling the motive for Price's theory of material thinghood. That motive appears to have been his reluctance

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30 See H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 277-279.

31 See the last pages of chap. vi above.

to adopt the logical conclusion of his arguments for the existence of sense-data as entities distinct from material things. Acceptance of sense-data does seem to cut one off from direct sensory access to material things, and in such a situation, Price had written in 1927, only two alternatives were open: either to argue for "some other, non-sensuous kind of awareness" of them, or else to "alter our conception of what a physical object is."[32] Yet, when he wrote Perception, and for some time afterwards, he tried to combine these supposed alternatives, with the results we have examined. In our opinion, it would have been preferable for him to have abided by his earlier view, i.e. to have continued to regard the positions as alternatives.

III. STARTING-POINTS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

The final portion of this conclusion will be a presentation of some aspects of the author's own approach to the problem of sense perception. This will afford the reader an insight into the vantage-point from which the thesis was written (if he has not already ascertained this) by indicating explicitly the extent of the author's agreement with

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32 H.H. Price, "Mill's View of the External World", p. 109. (Recall that in this article, he does not distinguish "material thing" and "physical object".)

Price on the question of the existence of sense-data and the untenability of direct realism, but more especially the lines along which we believe the major objection to the sense-datum analysis, namely, the iron-curtain objection, might be overcome. Hence the following pages.

A. On Giving a Place of Honor to Ontological Realism.

One point on which the author's opinion will already be quite apparent is his agreement with Price's rejection of direct realism. This, moreover, is based on his agreement with Price's initial approach to an analysis of the sense-perceptual situation. We are convinced that it is meaningful to make distinctions similar to the traditional distinctions between the sensing of sounds, odors, tastes, and colored expanses, and on the one hand, and the supplemental acts of synthesis and abstractive intellection on the other, and also to ask such questions as "Where and what is the colored expanse (or entity) that you see?"

There is another feature of Price's initial approach of which we approve. It was remarked earlier that, even though Price was not always sufficiently explicit on the matter, his rejection of direct realism was valid primarily as an internal critique of direct realism. (See chap. iv, sec. II, E above.) By this was meant that his arguments demonstrated the impossibility of simultaneously upholding both

epistemological realism (i.e. direct realism) and ontological realism. For us, "ontological realism" refers to the view that material things are three-dimensional substances (as opposed, for instance, to the "series of events" interpretation of material thinghood) whose properties are specific (as opposed to generic and indeterminate) and are unaltered by the process of becoming known. Despite the fact that Price subsequently compromised his earlier arguments against direct realism by later suggesting a partially phenomenalistic concept of material thinghood, those earlier arguments were based on questions about sense-data that were asked within the framework of ontological realism.

Now it seems that many of the contemporary thinkers who would reject a sense-datum analysis such as that of Price, would still agree that, given the traditional combination of epistemological and ontological realism, Price's analysis does demonstrate its internal inconsistency. Consequently, in formulating their alternative theories, they--unlike, say, the adherents of the Appearing Theory (which is also an anti-sense-datum theory)--look for some other starting-point than the categorical framework of ontological realism.

For example, it has been remarked that "both 'empiricism' and 'intellectualism' as theories of perception assumed from the start the validity of certain ways of describing the world, and were therefore incapable of either

explaining the origin, or making a critique of those categories which they presupposed."[33] Some thinkers, consequently, have felt that, in order to ascertain the really original deliverances of sense perception, it is necessary to "rid oneself of the realist prejudice . . . borrow[ed] from common sense."[34] In this way one may be able, if successful, to uncover that well-spring of experience from which arise all world-views, among them that of common sense (which we have called "ontological realism").

A second alternative is to more or less retain the terminology of ontological realism while at the same time reinterpreting its meaning. We refer particularly to the recent proposals that a material thing is "just a very complex assemblage of events or temporally-brief particulars related to each other in various complex ways."[35] Price himself has recently observed that perhaps, after all, his sense-datum analysis is more compatible with such an Event-metaphysics than with the traditional Substance-metaphysics.[36]

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33 M. Kullman and C. Taylor, "The Pre-Objective World", in Review of Metaphysics, 12 (1958-1959), p. 112.

34 M. Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. C. Smith, p. 10.

35 This is how Price describes the views of Whitehead and Russell, in his "Appearing and Appearances", p. 4.

36 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

For ourselves, however, we are convinced that, in any epistemological inquiry, what we have called "ontological realism" must be given a place of honor. This does not mean that we must steadfastly refuse to entertain the conceivability of any other world-view being the true one, i.e. we need not automatically declare false every view that is incompatible with realism. What then does it mean?

(a) It means, to begin with, that an explicitation of this view and of some of the opinions which it logically entails as well as some of those which it excludes should be one of the first tasks undertaken. However difficult--or easy--such a task may be, it will be found that the ontological realism to which all of us, sometime between our infancy and our introduction to science and philosophy, implicitly subscribe, embraces at least the few points mentioned by C.D. Broad when he writes:

> Common-sense is naively realistic . . . in the vast majority of its perceptions. When we see a tree we think that it is really green and really waving about in precisely the same way as it appears to be. We do not think of our object of perception being 'like' the real tree, we think that what we perceive is the tree, and that it is just the same at a given moment whether it be perceived or not, except that what we perceive may be only a part of the real tree.[37]

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37 C.D. Broad, Perception, Physics and Reality, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1914, p. 1.

(b) Giving this view an honored place would also mean that, before any alternative view is adopted in its place, a thorough and self-critical review should be made of one's reasons for rejecting this "common-sense" realism in either its epistemological or its ontological aspects. Not infrequently, the reasons given for such rejections do not necessarily support the conclusions drawn from them, whether because of faulty deductions or because of ambiguities in expression.

(c) Finally, it means that if ontological realism is subsequently rejected, then the chosen alternative should be defined, at least insofar as this is possible, with reference to the views of ontological realism. The reason for this is also the reason for the first requirement (i.e. of explicitating what is meant by the common-sense view): unless one's position is defined with reference to what is initially our common view, only ambiguity and confusion can result. Communication is possible only if there is a language common to the communicants. And even if there is, say, a pre-objective world of experience underlying our common-sense world view, we still have only one common language with which to refer to it. One of the arguments made against such sense-datum theories as Price's is that these analyses often suggest that our concepts of material things are derived from our experience of sense-data, whereas, in fact, no one can describe

sense-data except by first making references to material things.[38] Without conceding that this fact actually refutes the sense-datum theory, we do see it as an illustration of the point we are making about a common language.

The purpose of the above observations is to furnish a background for the following discussion.

B. The Significance of Giving a Place of Honor to Ontological Realism.

One of the most insistent objections made against the sense-datum position is, as we have already emphasized, the charge that such a position completely undermines the arguments upon which it supposedly rests. At times this charge is based on what we regard as an unwarranted assumption that the only way to establish the sense-datum theory is to argue, uncritically, from certain "scientific facts" which are themselves merely inferences from the observations whose validity they are used to attack.[39] We have tried to show that the rejection of direct realism can be treated as an internal critique. It is simply not possible to harmonize the theories of modern science--if they are interpreted

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38 See pp. 43-44 above.

39 See p. 169, n. 96 above. We are not denying that the charge is justified in many instances. We are objecting to an illicit universalization based on these particular instances.

realistically (in contradistinction to the "working-model-fictions" interpretation)--with epistemological and ontological realism as we defined them earlier p. 110ff above). But, in addition to this, many--perhaps most--of the arguments against direct realism are based on observations as common as that of noticing the time-gap between seeing the lightning and hearing the thunder, or that of looking toward the stick partly immersed in water, etc.

There is a more legitimate expression of this basic objection to the sense-datum theory, though. Let us assume that someone like Price sets out to demonstrate the intrinsic contradictions in combined epistemological-ontological realism. His initial position with respect to common-sense convictions concerning the factual state of affairs in the physical world is this: he assumes them for the purposes of discussion, but without necessarily assenting to them. What then is his position when he concludes his destructive criticism? Is he not left anchorless? He has undermined the position of direct realism, and now he has nothing left of which he can be certain except a meager collection of sense-data so unstable that they are continually being replaced by new ones? If he afterwards stops out of his role as devil's advocate arguing against realism and proceeds to re-adopt his belief in the material world, can this be any more than a purely pragmatic move (reminiscent of Hume's), since he has

shown that even if such a world exists, it lies forever out of reach, hidden behind a solid veil of sense-data?

Now, despite the fact that this objection is so widely accepted, it seems to us that it manifests one significant oversight. Or, if it does not necessarily involve an oversight, it at least makes certain implicit assumptions which require justification if they are to be accepted. We will treat, first the possible oversight, and then the hidden assumptions.

1.--To begin with, the iron-curtain objection overlooks or tends to overlook the important fact that the sense-datum philosopher need not deny the very special quality of "givenness" which is possessed by our common-sense convictions about material things. This is a feature of Price's theory whose importance was mentioned earlier. (See pp. 349-350 above.) "Givenness" is not to be taken here as implying absolute certitude, but rather in a larger sense to denote a kind of irreducibility and ineradicability.

We begin life without any such convictions about material things (or at least without any that we can recall). Then, gradually, with no effort or reasoning on our part, they become present. Explanations of how they become present are always the result of elaborate inference and reconstruction, whether offered in terms of "the first thing grasped by the intellect" or in terms of the synthesis of sense-data

and recalled images. But the phenomenalistic notion must be rejected, according to which our belief in the existence of material things is reducible to beliefs about the obtainability of certain sense-data (we are assuming the position of one holding the sense-datum theory).

To this irreducibility must be added the fact that even those who accept the sense-datum analysis of immediate sense-awareness cannot help but conduct the affairs of their practical lives--not merely as if material things exist, but--with the actual, though unspoken, conviction that they do. For, as Hume observed, no sooner do we desist from pursuing our philosophical reflections than "nature will display herself and draw us back to our former opinion".[40]

Thus, the sense-datum philosopher can make use of the fact that our common-sense convictions exist and that they are either given to us or acquired in a manner that suggests that it is our nature to acquire them.[41] The special

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40 D. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. I, pt. iv, ch. ii (Everyman's ed., p. 206).

41 The completely rigorous way of stating this, of course, would be in a way that would refer only to the first person singular, i.e. "these convictions are either given to me or they are acquired in a manner that suggests that it is my nature to acquire them." It is difficult to regard other persons as being in any other "epistemological boat", so far as my knowledge is concerned, than the one in which trees, houses and other corporeal beings are situated. I may truly be "in the world with other selves" from the very outset of my life, but the existence of those other selves is no more immune to critical reflection than the existence of non-selves.

character of these convictions, whose significance is strengthened by the point made earlier concerning the "unique common language" aspect of the view that material things exist, is a fact which the sense-datum philosopher has every right to exploit.

There are many, however, who put forward the iron-curtain objection, not because they overlook the fact that some adherents of the sense-datum analysis appeal to the special status of the common-sense conviction that material things exist, but because they feel that the sense-datum analysis destroys the effective basis for this conviction. If we believe that material bodies exist, is it not solely because we are simultaneously convinced that we experience (i.e. see, hear, taste, smell, and feel) them? Compare our attitude toward the material things in whose existence we do believe and our attitude toward the existence of unicorns on Mars. What other difference is there between our conviction that, say, the walls of the room in which we are sitting exist and our lack of conviction that there are unicorns on Mars, if that difference is not our equally strong conviction that we directly sense the first and our lack of conviction that anyone has sensed the second? Taken together, these convictions seem to add up to the conclusion that we do not have any belief in material things which are unexperienced and unexperienceable.

This argument, it must be conceded, is a forceful one. In order to meet it, it is necessary to point out that, however closely these two last-mentioned convictions are intertwined in our pre-critical consciousness, they are, nevertheless, logically independent. And once we have disentangled them, we will find that there are not merely two, but three distinct questions which must be kept apart. These are (a) the question of whether we do or do not possess some particular belief; (b) the question of how this belief came into being; and (c) the question of how we determine its truth or falsity. We have already treated the first question, i.e. we have tried to make clear our own conviction that we possess common-sense realist convictions. (There is no way of logically <u>proving</u> this.) The remaining two questions will be taken up in the following sections.

2.--The question of how we come to possess a particular idea or belief or conviction is independent of the fact that we possess it. At least this is so whenever we have no prior information about the existence of some necessary connection between the two. For instance, if we had some way of being certain that no idea of a material thing can exist unless it is obtained by the process of intellectual abstraction from particular material things, then we could no longer say that the two questions are logically independent.

As a matter of fact, however, it does not seem that we have prior information about any such necessary connection. Down through the history of philosophy, thinkers have found it logically conceivable that God might have knowledge of material things without abstracting such knowledge from sense-contact with them, and that subsistent spirits might have knowledge of material things infused in some mysterious fashion into their intellects, and even that human beings might be capable of telepathic cognizance of empirical states of affairs. There is also a long list of illustrious philosophers who have put forward the theory of innate knowledge which is awakened in some manner on the occasion of sense-experience, and their theories have not been rejected because they are logically impossible, but because of problems regarding certitude (to be taken up in the next section). Or, if the theory of innate knowledge is held to be intrinsically self-contradictory, we would ask on what grounds such an assertion is made.

It is, of course, perfectly easy to understand how it came to be thought that there <u>is</u> a necessary connection between our possession of knowledge about material things and one particular explanation of how we obtain that knowledge (or those beliefs), namely, that we obtain it by immediately sensing those things. For, whether or not sense experience is the causal origin of that knowledge, it is as certain as

anything can be that such knowledge normally comes about only on the occasion of our sensing whatever it is that we sense or else is inferred from other knowledge which does come about on such occasions. The link between sensing and our knowledge of material things is too overwhelmingly clear to permit the slightest doubt about it. Deprive a man of his sight, his hearing, and his sense of touch, and you have imprisoned him more truly than if you locked him in solitary confinement. Even such a thoroughgoing rationalist as Rene Descartes was alive to the need for experience as a decisive factor in determining contingent facts about the physical world.[42] Consequently, we cannot deny that there is a vital connection between our lack of belief in unicorns on Mars and our lack of any sense experience that would be pertinent to it.

All of this is true, and we are not denying that our knowledge of material things may in actual fact be caused by sense experience. We are only suggesting that Kant is right when he says that "though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience."[43] There are several conceivable explanations of

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42 R. Descartes, Discourse on Method, Pt. VI.

43 I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, 2nd ed., trans. N.K. Smith, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1963, Introduction, p. 41. Italics added.

how we acquire our knowledge of material things: by way of innate ideas, by means of analogy based on our knowledge of our own self-identical permanence in time, by postulating a sensus agens (in the same way that an intellectus agens is postulated as the most natural explanation of the undeniable fact of intellectual thought), etc.

We decline, however, to express any further opinion regarding these alternatives, both by reason of the tentativeness of our own ideas as well as by reason of the fact that such a decision is not relevant to our present task which is that of clearing away the major objection to the sense-datum analysis of sense-perception. The all-important point is that the rejection of one particular explanation of how we acquire our convictions about material things is not a sufficient reason to deny that we possess these convictions.[44]

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44 The point has been put admirably by D. Cory: "We all enjoy the epistemological innocence of naive realism in daily life, and I have tried to show that it is inevitable and appropriate that we should do so. But if under the fire of criticism, and taking into account the combined report of physics and physiology, we see good reasons to modify our primary unclarified realism, is it necessary to shake our heads and declare officially that what we thought we knew all our lives, namely, physical objects, we now find that we don't really know? . . . It seems to me that the reasonable thing to do is not to deny that we have any knowledge of them, but to try and explain the way in which we do know them" (D. Cory, "Are Sense-Data in the Brain?" in Journal of Philosophy, 45 [1948], p. 542.

3.--The last point which requires at least a brief comment is the problem of certitude. We have mentioned that our acceptance of the existence of the material things that surround us and our lack of acceptance of the existence of unicorns on Mars is intimately related to our conviction that we can directly sense the former but not the latter. Now it is probably true that most people would view this relation primarily with respect to the question of certitude, and only secondarily, if at all, with respect to the question of the causal origin of our convictions. The real reason why we are convinced, i.e. <u>certain</u> (the sense-datum theorist must add "certain--at least subjectively"), that material things exist is because they present themselves immediately, "in person" as it were. If we subsequently discover that those entities which present themselves immediately to our intuition are what the sense-datum analysts say, i.e. not material things at all but only ephemeral sense-data, then this seems to destroy the basis for our absolute certainty that material things exist.

The first thing to do in the face of such an objection is to agree with it. So far as this author can see, the objection is undeniably true.[45]

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45 Incidentally, the validity of this objection rests on the same common-sense insight that posits a connection between the phenomenological method and the given, on the one hand (see chap. iii, sec. III above), and between direct awareness and absolute certitude on the other (see chap. v, sec. II above).

This is not to say that agreeing with the objection is a matter to be taken lightly. The only reason which could justify such a concession is the fact that critical reflection, rigorously pursued, makes it impossible to simultaneously maintain both epistemological and ontological realism and does thereby destroy the usual basis for claims of absolute certitude in regard to the existence of physical things.

But, after this concession has been made, it is necessary to add immediately that idealism and phenomenalism are not the only alternatives. There can be no excuse for thinking that, because we are no longer able to claim absolute certainty that material things exist, therefore they do not exist. Only by introducing supplementary arguments--which the present author believes have never been established--can this further conclusion be justified. Nor is the despair of skepticism justified by the concession that our certainty regarding the existence of material things is less than absolute. Not only do we retain our complete certainty regarding the existence and some of the gross features of the sense-data which we immediately sense and regarding the existence of the self, both of which certainties are logically

independent of the existence of material things,[46] but there is not even any need to conclude that it is impossible to establish the reasonableness of retaining the common-sense conviction that material things exist. Undermining the absolute certitude which was originally invested in that conviction does nothing to the fact that this ineradicable conviction exists and therefore demands a reasonable explanation by virtue of the principle of sufficient reason.

The final situation, therefore, with respect to our knowledge of the existence and nature of material things is this. We do possess various beliefs or convictions regarding such things. But, starting from within the categorial framework of common-sense realism, we discover that, in addition to material things, it is necessary to admit the existence of another set of entities to which the name "sense-data" has been given. If what we believe we have learned about the history of philosophy is true (all beliefs about the material

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46 We are making no claims concerning which of these certainties is the first. It is frequently argued, against Descartes, that we learn of the existence of the Ego only after we learn of the existence of other (presumably material) things. If this is true, it is still--by itself--nothing more than an interesting psychological fact. (It must also be remembered that we do not argue by some kind of implicit reasoning-process from the existence of material things to the existence of our self [which knows them], but from the fact that we know them. From the mere existence of material things no inference concerning the existence of thinking human beings can be drawn.)

world in the course of history are now used as parts of a coherent pattern to support one another), then this history shows that it is natural to assume that these sense-data are caused by, or correlated with, various processes studied by physics and physiology. Within this same categorial framework, however, it is easy to conceive of the possibility that nothing physical exists beyond or transcending the sense-data if some alternative causal explanation for their existence can be provided. Precisely because Berkeley's suggestion would provide that alternative causal explanation, we have a case where sense-data remain evidence--but not perfectly conclusive evidence--for the existence of material things. That is, their existence, plus our natural, ineradicable inclination to take-for-granted the existence of material things on the occasion of sensing them (Price's perceptual acceptance), fits in remarkably well with the conclusion that material things exist and cause our sense-data, though there remains the logical possibility that the sense-data are caused by some immaterial principle.[47]

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47 Thus, with certain qualifications, a single sense-datum (or, to put it another way, a single act of sensing) is evidence for the probability of some proposition about the existence, and possibly even the nature, of a certain material thing. But no single sense-datum nor even an infinity of them is irrefutable evidence for the certainty of any such proposition. As has been emphasized, such a denial as this runs counter to our direct-realist epistemological convictions, according to which a veridical act of sensing (i.e.--in common-sense terminology--"when we see the

Of these two alternatives--viz., that sense-data are caused by or correlated with the activities of material things (which therefore must exist) or that they are produced, in the absence of material things, by an immaterial agent--the most reasonable is the first. Even if both alternatives can be made to satisfy the need for a causal explanation of the existence of sense-data and of our natural and inescapable inclination to believe in the existence of material things, only the first (traditional ontological realism) seems to satisfy our need for a teleological explanation. In many quarters mention of teleology is viewed with suspicion. Without making any attempt to justify it here, we will simply assert that for us, Aristotle's dictum that nature does nothing in vain contains an important insight. If material

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47 (cont'd) thing as it really is") provides the criterion for all certitude, because it provides us with the manifest and self-evident presence of the object known. (Such veridical acts would then function as the standards according to which other acts are judged to be certainly true or to be deficient. Or, alternatively, the self-evident presence of the object itself would be taken to be the required standard or criterion.) The sense-datum theory denies that there are any such self-sufficient criteria of certitude where questions about material things are concerned.

But if what was said in chapter five, sec. II, above is true, then even if we do directly and immediately grasp material things, the existence of illusions and the like shows that we can never be certain, from a single act of sense-perception, that a particular material thing exists. (We are speaking here of direct, not what we have called indirect, realism. For the latter, see the Appendix.)

things do not exist, for instance, it seems impossible to find any "motive" for why our nature inevitably brings us to the point of believing that they do exist.

This author, therefore, accepts what might be called "an argument based on the principle of sufficient reason"--not as an explanation of how we originally obtain our convictions about the existence and nature of material things, but as a critical justification for those convictions. Having agreed with Price's arguments against direct realism, but rejected his attempt to include sense-data in the ontological constitution of material things, we are left with difficulties respecting our certainty about the material world. But if the facts of experience, when subjected to rigorous examination, force us to recognise that we have no absolute certainty about material things, we must learn to live with the situation. And in the absence of absolute certainty, we accept the next-best substitute, a very reasonable assurance.

Still, despite the fact that this view is in some respects at odds with the instinctive convictions of the man-in-the-street, anticipations of its various facets can be found as far back as the writings of Aristotle, where that thinker divides into three categories those things which

people ordinarily say they see, hear, feel, etc.[48] The analysis here presented capitalizes particularly on the first and third of Aristotle's object-categories. Like Aristotle, it claims that there is one group of objects which can be singled out as "proper". As was seen in chapter three above, these objects are singled out partly on the basis that we can make infallible judgments about them--precisely one of the marks mentioned by Aristotle.[49] Further, if Aristotle's theory regarding the third kind of object, the "incidental" ones, (namely, his theory that they are not grasped as such

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48 See Aristotle, On the Soul, Bk. II, chap. vi (418a 6ff). In the first category are the things about which the senses never err, such as colors for sight, sounds for hearing, odors for smell, etc. These he calls "proper objects" of sense.(The term "proper object", as well as the others used here are taken from Hett's translation: see Aristotle, On the Soul, trans. W.S. Hett, London, W. Heinemann, Loeb Classical Library, 1957, pp. 101-103.) The second category consists of movement, rest, number, figure, and magnitude, and is given the name "common sensibles", since these objects are common to more than a single sense. The last category embraces those features of reality which, not the senses, but some other faculty grasps. Aristotle calls these features "incidental" since they are in some way incidental to what is grasped by the senses: he writes that when, for example, the white patch we see happens to be Diares' son, we can say that Diares' son is an incidental object of sight--see op. cit., 418a 20-26.

49 "By proper object I mean that which cannot be perceived by any other sense, and concerning which error is impossible" (Aristotle, On the Soul, trans. W.S. Hett, p. 101).

by the senses) is interpreted strictly enough,[50] then the position maintained here is somewhat similar since it also holds that if material things are known (as we believe they are), they are not known by the senses, but by some other faculty--albeit only in connection with the sensing of sense-data (whether the sense-data are regarded as being in some signs of material things or as the occasions for the cognition of material things, etc.).

We do not put forth these "starting-points for an alternative solution", nevertheless, without a measure of trepidation. Each of them has been challenged, and many present-day philosophers will regard at least some of them as having been definitively refuted. On the other hand, there is the consolation of knowing that many theories, at one time regarded as definitively refuted, are later seen to have contained their share of truth after all. There is also the consolation of realizing that the actual situation in contemporary philosophy justifies the serious attempt to rethink the problem, despite the risks involved, since the

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50 If--that is--it is interpreted as strictly as Thomas Aquinas interprets it in his commentary, where he writes: "Oportet igitur quod per se cognoscatur ab aliqua alia potentia cognoscitiva sentientis" (Thomas Aquinas, Commentarium in Aristotelis Librum de Anima, Marietti ed., L. II, lect. xiii, #395) or as he interprets it in his Summa Theologiae, P. III, q. 75, a. 5 ad 2am (quoted on p. 197, n. 24 above).

truth--as one writer has well expressed it--is that "the problem of perception remains the most unresolved in the whole of epistemology."[51]

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51 K.T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Knowledge, p. 122.

APPENDIX

THE THEORY OF INTRA-ORGANIC OBJECTS

One opinion which Price does not consider explicitly in his arguments against direct realism is what might be termed "The Theory of Intra-Organic Objects." In general, when the British philosophers ask whether we directly perceive material things or not, they are referring to such items as tables, chairs, trees, and other objects which exist at a distance from and outside of the percipient's organism.[1] There are some philosophers, however, who do not restrict "material thing" to the above-mentioned extra-organic objects. For instance, J. Owens writes:

> What is immediately seen is just the object which touches the retina, what is immediately felt is the inner surface of the skin in contact with the nerve ends, what is heard immediately is only the sound within the ear, and so on.[2]

This theory, viz., that the immediate objects of sense are within the sense-organ (therefore "intra-organic"),

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1 This is true even of those modified theories of direct realism which Price examines in chapter three of Perception.

2 J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, pp. 219-220.

is held by many neo-scholastics,[3] and is regarded as fulfilling two tasks at once. On the one hand, it allows for an explanation of such troublesome facts as perceptual illusions and perspectival relativity. (Perceptual relativity, it will be recalled, is the name given to the fact that a penny looks circular when viewed from the top, oval when viewed from an angle, flat when viewed from the edge.) The intra-organic-object theory would explain the latter as follows:

> It is, however, plain that according to our theory we do not sense the penny on the table, but the projection of light reflected by it to the eye, and this intra-organic object is in fact of different dimensions, shapes and colours according to the point of view from which the penny is looked at.[4]

(It is with respect to these intra-organic objects that some

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3 See, e.g., P. Geny, Critica, 3rd ed., Rome, Gregorian University Press, 1932, pp. 221-225; J. Gredt, Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae, 6th ed., Freiburg im Brisgau, 1932, Vol. I, pp. 383-391; IDEM, De Cognitione Sensuum Externorum, 2nd ed., Rome, Desclee et Socii, 1924; F.-X Maquart, Elementa Philosophiae, Paris, Andreas Blot, 1938, Vol. III, pp. 209-219 (this work contains a survey of scholastic opinions about the object of sensing); R.P. Phillips, Modern Thomistic Philosophy, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1946 (original, 1934-1935), Vol. I, pp. 233-236, Vol. II, pp. 65-75. The theory of intra-organic objects is one form of the theory frequently referred to as "Perceptionism" in scholastic writings (see Phillips, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 45). The other form of perceptionism is what we have called "direct realism".

4 R.P. Phillips, Modern Thomistic Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 70.

scholastics have attempted to defend the doctrine of the inerrancy of the senses.)[5]

On the other hand, the theory is felt to provide a basis for an objective knowledge of the physical world. The opinion that sensory qualities are nothing more than modifications of the knower which are caused by external stimuli has led many thinkers to conclude that we have no grounds for believing that they (in any way represent/ ~~are part of~~ the external world as it really is. Such an opinion tends toward agnosticism about the external world, to the effect that the only thing which can be known with any degree of certainty is the bare fact that the external world exists. The intra-organic-object theory asserts, on the contrary, that what is sensed is not something subjective, but the bodies in immediate contact with the sense organs. Referring to the object which touches the retina and to the sound in the ear, etc., Owens continues:

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5 That is, the senses are judged to be inerrant with respect to the characteristics of the intra-organic objects, and error enters in only when predications are made of extra-organic ones. See p. 150, n. 67, of chapter four above for the opinions of C. de Koninck and R. Verneaux on this point. Also see Y. Simon, "An Essay on Sensation", in The Philosophy of Knowledge, ed. R. Houde and J. Mullalley, Chicago, Lippincott Co., 1962, p. 86.

> These are all objects really distinct from the knowing subject. They are not subjective modifications of him as the knower. They are modifications of bodies immediately in contact with and reacted upon by the sensory organs. They are in the bodies that constitute the sustaining media of colors, sounds, odors, tastes, temperatures, hardness and softness, and so on.[6]

If this theory is true, then it is possible to interpret these data "in terms of different natures like stones, plants, animals, and men,"[7] and to arrive at an objective knowledge of the latter. The reason is that

> . . . we do not here have to pass from an internal subjective state to an assumed external cause of it; but from one physical fact to another, both of them belonging to the external world.[8]

Such is the theory--in broad outline--which we have called the theory of intra-organic objects (of sensation). As might be expected, there are numerous differences of

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6 J. Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, p. 220.

7 Ibid. (The word "interpret" is Owens' own.)

8 R.P. Phillips, Modern Thomastic Philosophy, Vol. II, pp. 68-69. See also J. de Tonquedec, La Critique de la Connaissance, 3rd ed., Paris, Beauchesne, 1929, pp. 93-95, and J. Gredt, De Cognitione Sensuum Externorum, pp. 113-115. Because of the insistence of these philosophers on the fact that the objects of sensing are the qualities of real, physical entities (albeit intra-organic ones) and not subjective modifications of the knower, we have referred to their theory as "indirect realism". (The addition of "indirect" is for the purpose of indicating that extra-organic things--the things which every realist is ultimately interested in knowing--are known only indirectly, by means of the intra-organic objects.)

opinion among the various authors concerning the theory's finer points. The above is merely a summary indication of the general approach which these authors take on the problem of the immediate object of sensing.

How should such a theory be evaluated? Perhaps without entering a great deal into details, it will be possible to offer a few remarks with respect to it.

To begin with, the theory is quite opposed to the ordinary person's instinctive convictions. The ordinary person is quite convinced that what he sees are the tables, chairs, trees, and people situated at a distance from himself (or at least the colors inherent in the near surfaces of those things), not objects positioned flush against his retinas. Prior to studying elementary physics, the ordinary person believes that, of the sounds he hears, one sound can be and usually is much farther away from him than another--e.g., it seems apparent that the rumble of thunder is much farther away than the sound he hears when he places a watch up to his ear. It does not seem that all of the sounds, when he hears them, are equidistant, i.e. immediately in contact with his eardrums.

It is true that under the prodding of scientific arguments, the ordinary person readily surrenders these opinions, to which the term "direct realism" has been

given.[9] But if such persons fully recognized the import of this surrender and compared it with their original convictions, they would probably react in much the same way that K.T. Gallagher reacts to the opinion that what we sense are configurations of nerve-impulses in the brain. Gallagher writes:

> Some will go so far as to assert that what I am aware of is inside my head, which is obviously nonsense. We have only to ask ourselves what is the comparative size of the table which I perceive and my head to convince ourselves that the perceived table is not inside my head--if we are not convinced by the immediately given externality.[10]

If a person does accept the theory that what he sees is what touches his retina and what he hears is the sound within his ear, then he is accepting the paradoxical view that, until he learns science, he never sees what he thinks about (tables, chairs, etc.) and never thinks about what he sees (the object in contact with the retina).[11] He is also

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9 Perhaps it would be truer to say that he surrenders them theoretically, since, in everyday affairs, most people--like the Humean skeptic--continue to believe that they see and hear the objects located at a distance from themselves.

10 K.T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Knowledge, p. 86, n. 21.

11 Some try to soften this paradox by maintaining that, even if it is true that we do not immediately sense the extra-organic objects, we nevertheless do see and hear them in some sense of those terms. Gredt, though admitting that the immediate object of sight is "the extended, colored object received in the eye and existing in the ether which immediately touches the retina," contends that "the eye, when it sees the image, sees that which is represented by the

accepting the paradox that we never touch the object we see, nor see the object we feel.

The reason for stressing this difference between the ordinary person's views and the intra-organic-object theory

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11 (cont'd) image, inasmuch as this is contained in the image. It therefore sees both: the image and that which is represented by the image, but not as distinct, since a simple sensation is not able to institute a comparison between them" ("oculus videns imaginem videt id quod imagine repraesentatur, prout hoc in imagine continetur. Videt proinde utrumque: imaginem et id quod imagine repraesentatur, sed non ut distincta, cum simplex sensatio non possit comparationem instituere inter utrumque"--J. Gredt, Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae, 6th ed., Vol. I, p. 385: repeated verbatim in De Cognitione Sensuum Externorum, 2nd ed., p. 26).

Such a contention is not verified in our experience, however. Let anyone ask himself, with reference to the most ordinary illusions, whether he thus "sees twice". Does he see, behind and beyond the bent-looking image, the straight stick partly immersed in water? Does he see, in addition to the apparently green surface, the blue of the book-cover and the yellow of the cellophane covering it? And, when a lens is suitably interposed between an object and himself, does he see both the inverted appearance of the object and the non-inverted object itself? The twinkling appearance of the star and the burnt-out cinder far off in the heavens? It seems to us that Gredt's view would make the direct object of sensing something imperceptible: since we do not in fact see two sets of objects (the intra-organic and the extra-organic), the proponent of the intra-organic-object theory psychologically tends to think that what he sees is extra-organic, thereby reducing the retinal image to the status of an imperceptible medium located somewhere between himself and what he believes he sees (the extra-organic object). For an explicit statement of such a view, see the quotation from J. Donceel's Philosophical Psychology, on p. 277, n. 55 above.

One method of demonstrating the fact that we see only the image but not the imaged (we are using those terms in Gredt's sense) is to alter the image while leaving unaltered the object represented by the image. This occurs, in fact, whenever the passage of light from the object to the eye is interfered with. In such instances, phenomenological inspection testifies to the fact that what we sense is

is that this difference is often minimized by its proponents in their effort to justify metaphysical and epistemological realism. To what extent the difference is minimized can be

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11 (cont'd) altered (this is how we can tell that the light-transmission has been interfered with), even though we can know by other means that the distant object itself is not affected.

Some scholastics would perhaps disagree with this analysis. They might, for instance, appeal to the theory of different kinds of existence or location. Something of the sort seems to be implied by the following assertions of J. Maritain: "The sense's intuition bears upon the external reality itself, grasped not from the point of view of nature or essence . . . but <u>according as it actually acts</u> on the sense by its qualities or as it exists outside <u>in its action</u> upon the sense (an action that is something real but accomplished in the organ). . . . The sensible quality is perceived, in fact, <u>as it exists in the action</u> the body exercises through it and at the instant it reaches the sense after being transmitted through a medium" (J. Maritain, <u>Degrees of Knowledge</u>, trans. G.B. Phelan, p. 118, n. 1). Since the physical object is quite unable to be simultaneously distant from the sense organ <u>and</u> within the organ, if existence and location are understood univocally (physically, in this case), there must be some new kind of existence or location involved. (Despite the fact that Maritain apparently believes himself to be presenting the same view as Gredt [see his <u>Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre</u>, Paris, Desclee de Brouwer, 1930, p. 31, n. 1], he--unlike Gredt--carefully avoids all mention of two distinct objects, one extra-organic and one intra-organic. At least one can say that Maritain's treatment is ambiguous, and that the passage quoted above can serve as an example of a possible alternative to Gredt's view.) Thus, Maritain seems to be using the phrase "in its action" in a technical fashion to refer to one of the object's "intentional" existences, i.e. not its presence in an intentional species, but its presence as a cause in its effect. (See his elucidations in the text to which the above quotation is a footnote, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 114-118; also see R. Verneaux, <u>Epistemologie Générale</u>, 2nd ed., pp. 130-132, and J. Owens, <u>Elementary Christian Metaphysics</u>, pp. 230-233, from which comes the quotation found on p. 245, n. 106 above.) If such a theory proves viable, it might be possible for its defender to say that in and through the undefined kind of presence of the object within the sense

seen in the following passage by one of the advocates of the intra-organic-object theory:

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11 (cont'd) organ we simultaneously sense the externally-existing object.

Two comments must be made, however, to such a proposal. First of all, it is not a theory which can be established phenomenologically. Even if we do sense objects as they exist in different places, this is not the least bit obvious just from "looking": mere looking, if it offers us any evidence on the question at all, tells us that, e.g., the greenness which we see is in one place, namely, in the leaves of the distant tree toward which we are looking. The theory of different-presences-of-the-one-object is established only by argumentation designed to protect the conviction that, in some literal meaning of the terms, what we sense are extra-organic objects. If this conviction is to be maintained, it is argued, then something like the above theory must be true.

Secondly, the theory is not sufficient by itself to explain how we verify the physical existence of the extra-organic object. The theory can only tell us that it is possible for us to sense the externally-existing object in and through the presence of the same object within the sense organ--if and when that object does exist extra-organically. In other words, the physical non-existence of the extra-organic object is compatible with our sensing of "the object as it exists within the sense organ" and with our conviction that what we are sensing is the physically-existing extra-organic object. This is admitted by Maritain when he writes that "even if a star has ceased to exist at the moment the light reaches us, it is at that moment present by its action" (ibid.). Perhaps the difficulty can be put this way: even if we can sense the physically-existing object as well as the same object as it exists within the sense organ, how can we tell on any occasion that we are sensing it? The fact that Berkeley's theory could quite as easily explain the new, non-physical existence of the sensed object without positing the physically-existing extra-organic object as its cause shows that a theory such as Maritain's must ground its justification for realism on something besides the immediate evidence of the senses. (N.B. If the immediate evidence of the senses does not assure us of the physical existence of the star, a fortiori it does not assure us of the physical existence of the eye, the retina or the light-energy within the eye, none of which things intrude their presence as we look toward the star. Their existence is learned only after the individual has long been familiar with stars, trees, and other extra-organic objects.)

> They [the advocates of the intra-organic-object theory, i.e. of one form of perceptionism] are plainly in agreement with ordinary experience, for it certainly seems to us that what we sense are the external objects, not our own sensations. In this simple fact we have a very strong foundation for the Perceptionist thesis, for there can be no doubt that this unhesitating adoption of it by the ordinary man is based on the testimony of consciousness.[12]

Such a passage gains its plausibility solely from the ambiguity of the phrase "external objects", for it plainly does not seem that the external objects which we sense are those which are located within our sense organs. In other words, the intra-organic-object theory cannot rely on the evident testimony of consciousness to establish its theory concerning the immediate object of sense cognition (i.e. of seeing, hearing, smelling, and the like), so long as it maintains that this object is intra-organic.[13]

In addition to the fact that this theory is not in harmony with the unreflective convictions of the plain man,

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12 R.P. Phillips, Modern Thomistic Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 66.

13 We are speaking here of the numerically individual object. It might be contended that the immediate object of sense cognition is a particular quality, e.g. color for visual cognition. In this restricted sense, the intra-organic-object theory can claim to be relying on the evident testimony of consciousness. In other words, any theory which maintains that we immediately sense colors or colored "somethings" is in agreement with the proverbial man-in-the-street. It is only when it is further stated that these colors or "somethings" are within the percipient's eye that the departure from the views of the ordinary man occurs.

the admission that we do not immediately sense chairs, houses, trees, and other extra-organic objects makes it necessary to provide some alternative explanation for our knowledge of them. Some authors, like Gredt, contend that both the intra- and the extra-organic objects are sensed by the same act of sensing, though the distinction between the two is learned only subsequently.[14] This is refuted by our experience, however, since it is obvious that we do not sense two sets of colors or shapes--particularly since they so

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14 Thus, were Gredt's theory correct (see p. 392, n. 11 above), there would be no problem in acquiring sense-cognition of certain features of the external world, since the qualities of both the objectum intus and of the objectum foris are sensed simultaneously. The only problem is to know that we sense two sets of objects, i.e. to learn to distinguish them. This occurs, says Gredt, only on the basis of much experience. For instance, by noticing the intermittency of our sense-contact with things distinct from us and then contrasting this with the constancy of our contact with all parts of our own body, we learn to distinguish between the external world and our own body-subject. Subsequently, we learn to locate external bodies by correlating, say, tactuo-muscular sensations and our visual experience (thereby acquiring the ability to visually perceive distance), by correlating the sounds we hear (particularly their varying strengths) with the movements of our head, and so on. See Gredt, Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae, 6th ed., pp. 386-387.

often conflict with each other.[15] Others resort to a causal argument concerning the existence and nature of the extra-organic object. Phillips, for instance, writes that after the accumulation of many and varied sensings of intra-organic objects, "the intellect comes into play, judging what sort of cause is necessary to produce a given set of intra-organic objects."[16] Such an opinion is exposed to the objections which Price raises in connection with traditional causal arguments for material objects. (See chapter five above.) In other words, even if it be granted that this is the most plausible of the different explanations for our knowledge of extra-organic objects, that is the most that can be said for it. It is hard to verify it phenomenologically (the child is

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15 This point is explained in n. 11, on p. 392 above. It might be objected that Gredt distinguishes between the object immediately sensed (the sensible qualities of the objectum intus) and the object mediately sensed (not the objectum foris itself, which is only a per accidens or incidental object of sense, but its sensible qualities, i.e. its color, sound, etc.): see op. cit., pp. 284-285. Our answer to this can only be a repetition of what was said in the text: we do not sense, i.e. see, hear, smell, etc., two sets of qualities, if the terms "see", "hear", "smell", and the like are taken in their ordinary meaning. We sense only one set, and argument shows that this is not the set of features inhering in the surface of extra-organic material objects. Thus, the phrase "to sense mediately" has a radically different meaning: only the intellect or some other faculty is able to know, not only what the second (external) set of sensible qualities is like, but even that there is such a second set.

16 R.P. Phillips, Modern Thomistic Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 69. Italics added.

not aware of reasoning from intra- to extra-organic objects), and it is not the only explanation that is logically conceivable. (It is still logically conceivable--however improbable--that some Berkleyan agent caused the retinal images, etc.)

Finally, it must be observed that although this theory seems able to explain certain of the perceptual illusions which make it impossible to maintain direct realism,[17] it is nevertheless beset with problems of its own.

Consider the proper object of sight. The theory of intra-organic objects assumes that the object in contact with the retinas (whatever it might be--a retinal image, undulations of the ether, etc.) possesses the color that is seen. Yet, a color-blind person and a non-color-blind person, with the same kind of object in contact with their retinas, will see different colors. Then, too, the different observers can have their retinas in contact with the same undulating ether--if such exists--and yet see different colors, depending upon their motion relative to the body which is the source of

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17 See pp. 388-389 above.

the undulations.[18] Furthermore, the intra-organic images are inverted, though what we see has the same spatial orientation vis-a-vis our bodies as have the extra-organic objects. We also might ask how this theory explains the fact that there are always two retinal images, though we ordinarily see only one. (By pressing the eyeball out of position, we can cause the duplication to reassert itself.)

These are some of the difficulties involving the sense of sight. There are further problems concerning the other senses. All of them involve a small but very real time-lapse, constituted by the time that passes between the moment that the peripheral organ is stimulated and the moment that the nerve-impulse reaches the cortex of the brain. This poses a question as to whether it is possible that what is sensed can be at the peripheral organ. Some answer this by allowing that there can be unconscious sensing (i.e. unconscious until the nerve-impulse reaches the brain).[19] Logically, it would seem, they ought to admit that all present

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18 This is a result of the Doppler effect: "If now, instead of occupying a succession of various positions at rest with respect to the luminous source, we move towards or recede from the light with sufficient speed, it will change color" (A. d'Abro, The Evolution of Scientific Thought from Newton to Einstein, 2nd ed., New York, Dover Publications, 1950, p. 390; see also p. 389).

19 E.g., J. Gredt, Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae, Vol. I, p. 393. IDEM, De Cognitione Sensuum Externorum, pp. 20-23.

sensing is unconscious: since there is always a time lapse, we are continually becoming conscious only of sensings that have occurred a brief moment before.

As was said earlier, however, this is not intended to be a thorough discussion of the theory of intra-organic objects. Its purpose is to fill a gap in Price's critique of realism, and to indicate some of the difficulties facing this modified theory of realism. Price himself does not consider the theory of intra-organic objects, and if he did, he would probably give more weight to the phenomenological objections to the theory[20] than is done here.

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20 For instance, he might dwell on the fact that what we see is three-dimensional and at a depth, away from us, whereas the retinal image is two-dimensional and very nearby. This is the argument which he uses against the theory that what we sense is located within the brain. See H.H. Price, Perception, pp. 128 and 134.

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JP -- Journal of Philosophy

PAS -- Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society

PASS -- Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplement

PPR -- Philosophy and Phenomenological Research

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SUMMARY

The present thesis deals with the theory of sense perception put forward, particularly during the 1930's, by the now-retired British philosopher, Henry Habberly Price. (It is, in fact, on his presentation of an elaborately-developed theory of sense perception that Price's reputation is chiefly based.) The particular aim of the thesis is to carefully expound the key notions of Price's theory and even to defend certain of them against objections which are frequently repeated in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy.

This thesis is divided into three parts and seven chapters. The first part consists of two chapters which serve as general background. Chapter one introduces the thesis by briefly describing the problem of sense perception and its importance, then situates Price and his theory in their historical context, and concludes by outlining the plan of the thesis. Since Price has not always adhered unwaveringly to the theory of sense perception for which he is best-known, the second chapter is devoted to a rapid survey of the various changes in his views.

The division between parts two and three of the thesis correspond roughly to the distinction which Price makes between sensory awareness and perceptual consciousness. That is, Price distinguishes between our awareness of colored expanses, sounds, pressures, warmth and coldness,

odors, and tastes, on the one hand, and the knowledge we have of material things, such as cars, chairs, trees, and houses, on the other hand. Thus, part two discusses his notion of sensing and its special objects (this constitutes chapter three), and goes on to argue that these objects are entities quite distinct from material things (this argument is contained in chapter four). Part three investigates Price's explanation of perceptual consciousness and comprises chapters five and six. Chapter five sets forth Price's conception of the way in which we initially become conscious of material things, and chapter six analyses the nature and extent of the certainty or assurance--relative to material things--which repeated experiences provide us with. Finally, the thesis is concluded, in chapter seven, with a summary of Price's theory, an overall evaluation of that theory, and a short exposition of the author's tentative suggestions concerning how one major difficulty in Price's theory might be overcome.

Technically, Price's theory of sense perception is called "a Sense-Datum Theory". This signifies that, like the philosophers who exerted perhaps the greatest influence on him, namely, G.E. Moore, B. Russell and C.D. Broad, he holds that the objects of immediate sense awareness are not material things but rather entities to which G.E. Moore gave the name "sense-data". Price comes to this conclusion by

first singling out, within the sense-perceptual situation, the objects which directly confront the observer. For example, in the very ordinary situation of standing before a table on which some object, such as a tomato, is placed, it is possible to isolate an object in the visual field which is red, round and bulgy. What the exact nature of this object is is something that cannot be determined with certainty by means of a single look--it may be a real tomato or it may be only a wax imitation of one. That the object is red, round and bulgy, however, can be seen in just a single look. This object, with these qualities, can thus be said to be immediately given to sense. Similarly, in the case of the senses other than sight, it is possible to distinguish objects which are directly and indubitably present to the sense. These objects are called "sense-data", a name which indicates nothing more than that they are given to sense.

Only after these objects have been thus singled out does Price inquire whether they are identical with, or at least parts of, the material things which we ordinarily take them to be, that is, cars, chairs, trees, etc. By means of a long and careful analysis, Price arrives at the conclusion that they are not. The reason is that certain characteristics which the sense-data indubitably possess are in conflict with the characteristics of the material things we take them to be. Since, in other words, reason judges it

to be impossible for the same object to simultaneously possess conflicting shapes or sizes or colors, etc., the conclusion is that the conflicting characteristics inhere in or belong to distinct things.

Once this conclusion has been reached, however, one must ask what sort of entities the sense-data are. Price, unlike the classical British empiricists (viz. Locke, Berkeley and Hume), does not view them as ideas in the mind, but calls them--vaguely--"events", adding that they are events which happen literally nowhere and in nothing, although they are intimately related both to the material things which they enable us to know and to the observer on whom they partially depend for their existence.

But if we do not immediately sense material things, then how is it possible for us to know them at all? This is the major problem which Price's theory faces. In solving it, he insists that we keep in mind the fact that, when we began our analysis of sense perception, we already possessed convictions about material things. It is not necessary, therefore, to pretend that we have obliterated those convictions and now to rebuild them from our knowledge of sense-data. (In fact, he argues that our consciousness of material things is irreducible to our knowledge of sense-data). It is only necessary to provide an explanation of <u>how</u> this consciousness may have originated, and then to inquire into

the degree of confidence that we can place in it.

According to Price, our consciousness of material things constitutes a type of cognition that is over-and-above our awareness of sense-data. He calls it "perceptual consciousness". When we sense a particular sense-datum, there is brought into play an innate concept of material thinghood, and we perceptually-accept (a technical term of Price's, meaning that we take for granted) the existence of a material thing. With respect to the question, "How much confidence can we place in such takings-for-granted?" Price replies that, although no number of sense-perceptual acts give us absolute certainty, a sufficient number of them give us all the assurance that anyone can reasonably demand.

There are a number of difficulties which Price's theory involves. The feature of it which the present writer finds most objectionable is Price's attempt to treat sense-data as being, in some inexplicable way, "constituents" of the material things--particularly after he has initially shown that sense-data are entities quite distinct from material things. There are times, in fact, when Price's theory borders on phenomenalism.

In his initial analysis of the sense-perceptual situation, however, viz., in his method of singling out certain entities which are directly and indubitably present to the observer, as well as in his arguments to the effect that

these entities cannot be identified with the material things which we originally take them to be, we are in agreement with Price and, in chapters three and four especially, have tried to show that recent objections against his and similar theories fail to prove their point.