**Ce qui est important 48 > PlusJApprends**

Sophocle, *Œdipe Roi*

[…]

QUATRIEME STASIMON

Chant du chœur

LE CHŒUR :

Pauvres générations humaines, je ne vois en vous qu’un néant !

Quel est, quel est donc l’homme qui obtient plus de bonheur qu’il en faut pour paraître heureux, puis, cette apparence donnée, disparaître de l’horizon ?

Ayant ton sort pour exemple, ton sort à toi, ô malheureux Œdipe, je ne puis plus juger heureux qui que ce soit parmi les hommes.

Il avait visé au plus haut II s’était rendu maître d’une fortune et d’un bonheur complets.

Il avait détruit, ô Zeus, la devineresse aux serres aiguës. Il s’était dressé devant notre ville comme un rempart contre la mort.

Et c’est ainsi, Œdipe, que tu avais été proclamé notre roi, que tu avais reçu les honneurs les plus hauts, que tu régnais sur la puissante Thèbes. […]

CINQUIÈME ÉPISODE ET EXODOS :

Sortie du chœur

LE MESSAGER : […]

Le désastre a éclaté, non par sa seule faute, mais par le fait de tous deux à la fois : c’est le commun désastre de la femme et de l’homme. Leur bonheur d’autrefois était hier encore un bonheur au sens vrai du mot : aujourd’hui, au contraire, sanglots, désastre, mort et ignominie, toute tristesse ayant un nom se rencontre ici désormais ; pas une qui manque à l’appel ! […]

Sophocle, *Œdipe Roi*

La chance existe t-elle ?

Est-ce illusoire de chercher à être heureux ?

Peut-on être heureux dans un monde injuste ?

Ne peut-on être heureux qu'au passé ?

Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 1912 – Introduction by John Perry, 1996

INTRODUCTION […]

A radical form of idealism is *solipsism* : all that exists is my mind and its ideas ; the world is just my dream. If one is a solipsist, one doesn’t have much motivation to share one’s view with others, so we seldom meet real solipsists in the literature of philosophy, but only philosophers like Russell who seek principled reasons for not being solipsists. We are more likely to meet advocates of another form of idealism, which had almost the status of common sense in the early parts of the century, at least in philosophical circles. According to this sort of idealism, space and time, tables and chairs, and other physical objects are not just the figments of one person’s imagination, but they are nevertheless basically mental ; consciousness pervades the whole universe in a most unexpected way. One version of this view, the easiest to grasp, is *theistic idealism* : Bishop Berkeley’s view that the world we know, including the physical world, is a system of God’s ideas. The God Berkeley had in mind was very much the Christian God, a personal creator and sustainer of the universe. Other forms of idealism, including the idealism of F.H. Bradley against which Russell and Moore revolted, conceive of a more impersonal Absolute to provide an all-encompassing consciousness.

La conscience fait-elle de l’homme une exception ?

Peut-on distinguer le rêve de la réalité ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Qu'est-ce que la matière ?

In philosophy the term « realist » is applied to some philosophers to contrast them with other philosophers who deny some category of objects. One can be a realist about all sorts of things. Philosophers have denied the existence of minds, matter, numbers, space, time, and objective moral principles, to mention just a few things, so other philosophers, who defended the reality of these things, were realists by contrast.

Russell was a realist on two key issues : universals and material objects. In both cases he was opposed to much of nineteenth-century idealism.

Que sait-on du réel ?

Universals are what particulars have in common. Suppose you are wearing a red sweatshirt and so am I. The sweatshirts are particulars. The properties they have in common are universals. *Being red* is a universal, and so is *being a sweatshirt*. Particulars are in one place at any given time; universals are not. Particulars instantiate or exemplify universals. The same universal can be exemplified by many particulars, in different places, at the same time.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

Philosophers have taken different attitudes towards universals over the centuries. Some—the realists, like Plato and Russell—are very enthusiastic about them. « Nominalists » think that all that particulars really have in common are the words we apply to them, like « red » and « sweatshirt. » « Conceptualists » think that all that particulars have in common are the ideas we have of them.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

Y a-t-il des choses que le langage ne puisse dire ?

You own your sweatshirt, and I own mine. Between you and your sweatshirt, and me and my sweatshirt, there is another commonality, the common relation, *owning*. So owning is a universal, but a universal relation rather than a quality like redness. Relations appear to be very important. Among the most important are spatial relations (being next to, above, below, and so forth), temporal relations (occurring before or after), and causation. Without these relations, it seems the world wouldn’t have much structure at all. Nevertheless many philosophers, including even some who were realists about qualities, denied the reality of relations. Russell thought that the denial of relations was one of the mistakes that led to idealism and that one thing that led to this mistake was an inadequate logic. His own logic treated relations on a par with other universals.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

The other important sense in which Russell was a realist concerned particulars. Idealists did not deny the whole category of particulars, and in fact would agree that tables, chairs, planets, and other physical objects were (in some sense) real. But they denied that there were any objects that were neither minds nor ideas, and didn’t depend on mentality of any sort for their existence-what we usually mean by « material objects. » In opposition to the idealists, Russell thought that material objects were real—although, as we shall see, he didn’t think we were acquainted with any of them.

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Qu'est-ce que la matière ?

Two other important ingredients in Russell’s ontology are facts and propositions, both of which are, in some way, complexes with universals and particulars as *constituents*. Facts constitute the way things are ; particulars having qualities and standing in various relations to one another. Propositions are the possibilities we grasp in thought ; they represent particulars as having qualities and standing in relations. True propositions correspond to the facts.

Russell says very little about facts in *The Problems of Philosophy* ; he says more about propositions. He uses the concept of a proposition to elucidate some of the main principles of his view, but propositions bothered him. And in Chapter XII he seems to do away with them. He considers the example of Othello’s false belief that Desdemona loves Cassio. Rather than supposing that there is a proposition which serves as *the* object of Otello’s belief, he supposes that the belief has *three* objects. Desdemona, Cassio, and the relation of loving. The belief is true if there is a complex unity ; a fact involving them in the right order, that is with Desdemona the subject and Cassio the object. If there is no such fact, it is false. This theory would allow Russell to do without propositions, but it was not easy to spell it out in detail. The beliefs that Desdemona loves Cassio, and the belief that Cassio loves Desdemona, for example, are quite different but involve just the same objects. Russell distinguishes these by the « sense » of the believing, but it is not clear exactly how this works. We’ll set Russell’s late chapter qualms about propositions aside, and return to his central ideas.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Ce qui est vrai en théorie peut-il être faux en pratique ?

Let’s call the table in Russell’s study « A » and the chair next to it « B. » Assume that the facts are as follows :

1) A is a table

2) B is a chair

3) A is next to B

The first two facts involve two particular objects and two properties that at least at first glance seem like qualities rather than relations : being a table and being a chair. The third fact involves two particulars and a spatial relation, being next to. A number of important philosophers, including Leibniz and nineteenth-century British idealists against whom Moore and Russell were revolting, held that relational facts could not be basic. Russell’s rejection of this doctrine of « internal relations » was a very important turning point in the development of his philosophy.

We are assuming each of 1-3 to be a fact. Facts for Russell have constituents, the objects, properties, and relations that are involved in them. Fact 1 has A and the property of being a table as constituents ; fact 2 has B and the property of being a chair ; fact 3 has A and B and the relation of being next to.

Every fact or proposition must have at least one universal as a constituent. You can’t get a proposition just by piling up particulars. For example, Socrates is not a proposition. If we add Plato, we still do not have a proposition. Even if we add Aristotle we do not have one. But if we take Socrates and the property of being a philosopher, we have enough to make a proposition.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

So Russell believes in particulars, universals, including both qualities and relations, and propositions. And he believes that these are *real* things. By this he means that they are not to be identified with either mental or linguistic objects, although, as mentioned above, he was to retreat from this position in the case of propositions.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Now suppose that one had a list of all the facts. What would it include ? Surely, of all the particulars, those qualities they had and in what relations they stood to other particulars. Would there be only positive facts (A is next top of B) , or would there also be negative facts (A is not on top of B) ? Would there be general facts (All tables have flat tops) ? Or only singular facts (This table has a flat top, that table has a flat top, and so on) ?

Whatever answer we give to these questions about facts, the answers we must give concerning propositions are clear. Surely there must be negative and general propositions, for these are the kinds of things we can know and believe. One can believe, the proposition *that every table has a flat top*, for example, even if one is not acquainted with most of the tables in the world. What sort of constituents does this proposition have ?

It has no particulars as constituents. It has the universals *being a table* and *having a flat top* and the relations, among universals, of *including* signified by « every. » This relation obtains between universals A and B, if everything that has A has B, the A’s are included in the B’s. The fact that one can have thoughts just involving universals is important for Russell’s account of *a priori* knowledge. Russell had a Platonic attitude towards universals ; one could be acquainted with them, and know things about them intuitively, without being acquainted with any particulars that exemplified them.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

One of the big accomplishments in the developments in logic at the turn of the century, in which Russell played a large part, was the development of an account of words like « every » and « some. » Without the tools logic provided, one might think that « every table has a flat top » expressed a proposition with an odd object, named « every table, » as a constituent. It is very hard to say what this thing, *every table*, might be, especially if one has to distinguish it from *some table, each table*, and so on. By taking « every » to stand for a higher order relation, we can avoid these ontological oddities and the problems that come with them.

Le langage n'est-il qu'un outil ?

So there are as many propositions, or possibilities, in the world of possibilities as there are sequences of universals and objects that fall under them. But what is involved in being able to think those propositions-what is involved in having thoughts that correspond to the various possibilities ?

At this point Russell enunciates the fundamental principle of his epistemology :

Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with

which we are acquainted.

What does Russell mean by « be acquainted » ? He has two things in mind, that pull in different directions. The word « acquainted » suggests the familiar distinction between people we have actually met, and those we have just heard about, and ideas based on this familiar distinction drive much of the discussion. But Russell also thinks of acquaintance as the fundamental relation that minds have to other objects. Since acquaintance is a relation between minds and other objects, those other objects must exist. This conception of acquaintance drives it away from the familiar one, as we shall see.

When I see something red, assuming I am not color blind, I have the experience of redness ; I am acquainted with the universal red. This allows me to think about redness, even after I am no longer experiencing the red thing. And if I see one thing to the left of another, I have experienced “being to the left,” a relation, and so I can think thoughts involving that universal.

Notre liberté de pensée a-t-elle des limites ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

What about particulars? At first pass, it seems we are acquainted with the particulars that we have experienced. So you are acquainted with your « acquaintances ; » the people you have met and know ; the places and buildings you have seen, and so forth.

Now we have the makings of a very simple account of thinking. We experience a variety of objects ; universals of various types and particulars. We experience the particulars as having various properties and standing in various relations to one another. But once we have experienced these tilings, we can pull our ideas of them apart. If you have met Fred who is bald and Gertrude who wears a dress, you can think of Gertrude as bald and Fred as wearing a dress. If you have seen Fred sitting beside Elmer and Gertrude racing with Frances, then you can think of Fred sitting beside Frances, or Ehner racing with Fred, or any combination you want. So thinking is taking apart and putting together ideas that one has on the basis of experience.

Les principes de la raison sont-ils issus de l'expérience ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Let’s consider again what we are acquainted with. Suppose you have never met Fred, but you have talked to him on the phone. Are you acquainted with him ? Of course in ordinary parlance we might say that vou were but are you in Russell’s sense ?

Or suppose you haven’t even talked to Fred, but you have read about him in the newspaper ? Or suppose you have read about Fred not in the newspaper but in the history books, since he was dead long before you were bom ? Are you acquainted with him in those cases ?

Here the two things Russell has told us about acquaintance tug in somewhat different ways. I don’t feel, for example, that I am acquainted with Russell himself. Although our lives overlapped, I never laid eyes on him. Never heard him speak in person. I have read a great deal about him, read a great deal by him, and seen photographs of him. But I never saw or talked to him in person. So it seems that I am not really acquainted with Russell.

But I can think about Russell ; I’d better be able to, since I am writing an essay about him ! But on Russell’s principle of acquaintance I must be acquainted with Russell if I am able to think about him. So I must be acquainted with Russell after all.

Russell solves this dilemma with his distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. This distinction rests on an important idea from his logic, his theory of descriptions.

In Russell’s logic, there are two kinds of terms that we use for particular objects, names, and definite descriptions. « Bertrand Russell » is a name ; « the author of *The Problems of Philosophy* » is a definite description.

Let us say that names and descriptions both designate objects, so both « Bertrand Russell » and « the author of *The Problems of Philosophy* » designate the same person. But they do it in quite different ways. Names name, while descriptions *denote*.

By using descriptions, we can think and say a lot of things about objects with which we are not acquainted, and even about objects that don’t exist. Someone might think, « the highest prime number must contain at least one zero, » even though there is no highest prime number. Someone might think, « the prime minister of the United States is probably a man, » even though the United States has no prime minister. Definite descriptions, then, pose a challenge to the principle of acquaintance.

Peut-on dire que le langage entrave la pensée ?

Le langage trahit-il la pensée ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L’imagination enrichit-elle la connaissance ?

Le langage ne sert-il qu'à communiquer ?

We saw earlier that by treating « all » and « some » as involving higher order relations among universals, Russell was able to avoid ontological oddities like the object *every man*. Russell’s famous « theory of descriptions, » is the discovery that these same ideas allow one to treat definite descriptions in a very satisfying way that allows us to have thoughts about all sorts of things, without having to give up the principle of acquaintance, or countenance all sorts of weird things to have thoughts about.

On Russell’s view, « the author of *The Problems of Philosophy* lived in Cambridge » says exactly the same thing as :

· Someone authored *The Problems of Philosophy*.

· Every person who authored *The Problems of Philosophy* is that person.

· That person lived in Cambridge.

Now if we look at the whole, three-part, proposition, we see that Russell himself is not a constituent of it. We have the relation of authoring, the book *The Problems of Philosophy*, the relation of living in, the town of Cambridge. Then we have the « logical apparatus » ; the relation of identity and two relation between universals, *every* and *some*. Russell isn’t a constituent at all.

So here is a proposition that doesn’t have Russell as a constituent, but still is about him in some sense. Since Russell wrote *The Principles of Philosophy*, and is the only person who did (that is, everyone who did is identical with him), then it is where he lived that will determine the truth of the proposition. As I think about Russell in writing this essay, and as you think about him in reading it, we know him by description, not by acquaintance.

But note that in this essay I do not restrict myself to descriptions of Russell, I also use the name « Russell. » How can I do this, if to understand its meaning I have to be acquainted with Russell himself ?

Russell held the doctrine that often what appear to be names are really descriptions. He would maintain that, because I am not acquainted with him, when I use the name « Russell » in this essay, it is really functioning for me as a description—probably a very complex one involving many items I believe about Russell.

Peut-on dire que le langage entrave la pensée ?

Le langage trahit-il la pensée ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

Le langage n'est-il qu'un outil ?

Le langage ne sert-il qu'à communiquer ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

Now notice one important feature of the theory of descriptions. Sometimes we have thoughts about things that don’t exist at all. For example, many people believe in Nessie, a monster that is supposed to five in Loch Ness in Scotland. So here is a proposition that we might want to discuss :

Nessie is slimy.

Let’s suppose that in fact the Loch Ness monster doesn’t exist. Still, some people might think that Nessie exists and is slimy. So there needs to be a proposition for them to think. But if there is going to be a proposition, it seems like there must be a constituent, Nessie, who in the proposition, if not in reality, is linked with the quality of being slimy. But then Nessie must exist after all.

It is generally believed that earlier in his career, Russell accepted the view that we must give Nessie and other figments of myth and imagination some sort of quase-existence, some sort of shadow reality. On this interpretation his views were not so different from Meinong, the German philosopher famous for his doctrine of nonexistent objects. After he discovered his theory of descriptions, Russell eschewed such doctrines and thought Meinongians had an inadequately robust sense of reality. All we need to get the proposition one thinks when one thinks « Nessie is slimy » are universals and particulars that really do exist, such as sliminess and Loch Ness itself. « Nessie » is really a description, something like « The monster who lives in Loch Ness, » and our proposition comes to « Some monster lives in Loch Ness, only one monster lives in Loch Ness, and it is slimy. »

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L’imagination enrichit-elle la connaissance ?

Le langage ne sert-il qu'à communiquer ?

Here then is a rule for when to apply the theory of descriptions.

Whenever a person *x* is thinking a proposition *P* about an object *a*, and *x*’s experiences don’t guarantee that *a* exists, then *x* must be thinking about *a* descriptively. That is, the proposition *P* doesn’t have *a* as a constituent.

We see that Russell adheres to this principle throughout *The Problems of Philosophy1*.

Les principes de la raison sont-ils issus de l'expérience ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

With this in mind let us turn to the Cartesian doubts that Russell considers in the beginning of the book. These doubts show that various of our experiences do not really guarantee the existence of the objects we think about.

Thus when Russell concludes that

« The real table, if there is one, is not *immediately* known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known »,

Part of what he is concluding is that we don’t really entertain propositions that have the table as a constituent at all ; we can only know it descriptively.

Let us suppose then that Russell says, « a is a table, » or perhaps pointing to it, says « that is a table. » This is something that Russell knows, but just what is it that he knows ?

Russell analyzes this situation as follows. He has a certain sensation. A sensation, according to Russell, is always an awareness of *something*. When he sees the table, he has a sensation of a brown oval patch. The brown oval patch is not the sensation, but what the sensation is *of*. This patch Russell calls a *sense-datum*. The distinction between sensations and sense-data is of paramount importance for Russell, for it is right at this point that he thinks idealists like Berkeley make a mistake. Berkeley does not distinguish between sensation and sense-data, and so in effect takes sense-data to be mental. But this, Russell says, is a mistake.

In describing the mistake he uses the terminology « act » (for the sensation) and « object » (for the sense-data), which may be a bit confusing since sensations don’t seem very much like acts. The terminology fits better with cases of thinking, where the mind is more active. Suppose I am thinking about London. One clearly wants to distinguish between my thinking, which goes on inside my head, and London, which is thousands of miles away and much too large to fit in my head. They couldn’t be more different. It is much easier to confuse my sensation of a brownish patch, and the brownish patch, but on Russell’s view the mistake would be the same. The brownish patch, the sense-datum, is not my sensation. But what my sensation is a sensation of.

The distinction between act and object, and its application to the case of sensation, was crucial to the philosophies of Russell and Moore at this time. Russell seems on the whole pretty confident about sense-data, while Moore’s discussion are more agonized. Do sense-data have backsides that we can’t see ? Are they the surfaces of things? Sense-data have played an important role in philosophy in the twentieth century, inspiring, among other works, J.L. Austin’s *Sense and Sensibilia*, an unremitting attack on the arguments for sense-data as an abuse of ordinary language.

For Russell, however, sense-data and some universals are beyond doubt, because we are acquainted with them (he is inclined to include the self, too, but isn’t quite sure). We know of other objects *via* these objects. The table is known by description, as the *cause* of the sense-data with which Russell is acquainted. That is, we take the sense-data to be *signs* of physical objects. And we take the features of our sense-data, to be signs of the features of the physical object. It is sense-data and their properties that are the constituents of all of our thinking about the physical world, for material objects, and, at least most of their properties, are known only by description.

Que sait-on du réel ?

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Suis-je le sujet de mes pensées ?

In asking which things he can and cannot question the existence of, Russell is using Descartes’s method of doubt. But the use he puts it to is quite different from the use Descartes puts it to. Descartes distinguished between the « light of nature »—Pure Reason—and our natal inclination to believe things. In the latter category is our belief in an external world, which our ideas represent. Descartes gave little credence to what we are inclined to believe, unless it was supported by derivations from indubitable principles disclosed by the Light of Nature. So, he argues, our belief in an external world is philosophically acceptable only when bolstered by an argument from indubitable principles for a benevolent, all-powerful God who doesn’t fool careful people. Supplying these derivations was the job of philosophy.

Russell is more modest about philosophy, expects less from the Light of Nature, and is more generous to our natural inclinations. He thinks we can accept what we are inclined to believe if it can be shown to be consistent and coherent ; the job of philosophy is to find and deal with apparent problems with what we are inclined to believe. In this spirit, Russell in *The Problems of Philosophy* accepts a world of material objects that we know only by description, as the best explanation we have of the data of our senses.

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

L’homme a-t-il nécessairement besoin de religion ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

La philosophie peut-elle parler de la religion ?

A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on avoir raison contre les faits ?

Peut-on croire sans savoir ?

Les principes de la raison sont-ils issus de l'expérience ?

Russell is not by any means a slave to Common Sense, however. As we noted, the material world of *The Problems of Philosophy* involves particulars and universals that we know only by description. The temporal and spatial relations we are acquainted with, as holding amongst our sense-data, for example, are but signs of the spatial and temporal relations that we obtain in the material world, and science discloses that there are a number of important differences. This view is not idealism, but it is not Common Sense either.

La perception peut-elle s'éduquer ?

Les apparences sont-elles trompeuses ?

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

One can divide Russell’s career as a realist into various phases : extreme realism, moderate realism, and constructive realism. Russell the extreme realist gave some sort of reality to everything we could think about. After 1905, armed with his theory of descriptions, Russell could moderate his realism ; he could explain how we can think about Nessie without there being a real Nessie. The theory of descriptions also gave him the equipment to distinguish between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, and arrive at the picture of the structure of our knowledge expressed in *The Problems of Philosophy*.

In his later works, however, Russell would try to dispense with physical or material objects as basic bits of the furniture of the world. He would attempt to construct them out of sense-data, rather than take them to be inferred as the best explanations of sense-data. Russell pursued this philosophy of *logical construction* in his next book on epistemology, *Our Knowledge of the External World*.

Russell’s philosophy of logical constructions was very influential, inspiring such twentieth-century classics as Rudolf Camap’s *The Logical Construction of the World* and Nelson Goodman’s *The Structure of Appearance*. On the whole, however, the picture of *The Problems of Philosophy* fits better with the temper of much of analytical philosophy as the century draws to a close. For philosophers of a moderately realistic temper, worried by the resurgence of holism and even forms of idealism in our own age, the main doctrines of *The Problems of Philosophy* are well worth re-examining.

John Perry, December 30, 1996

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?

Ce qui est vrai en théorie peut-il être faux en pratique ?

Interprète-t-on à défaut de connaître ?

L’imagination enrichit-elle la connaissance ?

THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

APPEARANCE AND REALITY […]

Let us give the name of ‘sense-data’ to the things that are immediately known in sensation : such things as colours, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses, and so on. We shall give the name ‘sensation’ to the experience of being immediately aware of these things. Thus, whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation *of* the colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation. The colour is that *of* which we are immediately aware, and the awareness itself is the sensation. It is plain that if we are to know anything about the table, it must be by means of the sense-data—brown colour, oblong shape, smoothness, etc.—which we associate with the table ; but, for the reasons which have been given, we cannot say that the table *is* the sense-data, or even that the sense-data are directly properties of the table. Thus a problem arises as to the relation of the sense-data to the real table, supposing there is such a thing.

The real table, if it exists, we will call a ‘physical object’. Thus we have to consider the relation of sense-data to physical objects. The collection of all physical objects is called ‘matter’. Thus our two questions may be re-stated as follows : (1) Is there any such thing as matter ? (2) If so, what is its nature ? […]

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Qu'est-ce que la matière ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

Other philosophers since Berkeley have also held that, although the table does not depend for its existence upon being seen by me, it does depend upon being seen (or otherwise apprehended in sensation) by *some* mind—not necessarily the mind of God, but more often the whole collective mind of the universe. This they hold, as Berkeley does, chiefly because they think there can be nothing real—or at any rate nothing known to be real—except minds and their thoughts and feelings. We might state the argument by which they support their view in some such way as this : ‘Whatever can be thought of is an idea in the mind of the person thinking of it ; therefore nothing can be thought of except ideas in minds ; therefore anything else is inconceivable, and what is inconceivable cannot exist.’

Such an argument, in my opinion, is fallacious ; and of course those who advance it do not put it so shortly or so crudely. But whether valid or not, the argument has been very widely advanced in one form or another ; and very many philosophers, perhaps a majority, have held that there is nothing real except minds and their ideas. Such philosophers are called ’idealists’. When they come to explaining matter, they either say, like Berkeley, that matter is really nothing but a collection of ideas, or they say, like Leibniz (1646-1716), that what appears as matter is really a collection of more or less rudimentary minds.

But these philosophers, though they deny matter as opposed to mind, nevertheless, in another sense, admit matter. It will be remembered that we asked two questions ; namely, (1) Is there a real table at all ? (2) If so, what sort of object can it be ? Now both Berkeley and Leibniz admit that there is a real table, but Berkeley says it is certain ideas in the mind of God, and Leibniz says it is a colony of souls. […]

It has appeared that, if we take any common object of the sort that is supposed to be known by the senses, what the senses *immediately* tell us is not the truth about the object as it is apart from us, but only the truth about certain sense-data which, so far as we can see, depend upon the relations between us and the object. Thus what we directly see and feel is merely ‘appearance’, which we believe to be a sign of some ‘reality’ behind. […]

Among these surprising possibilities, doubt suggests that perhaps there is no table at all. Philosophy, if it cannot *answer* so many questions as we could wish, has at least the power of *asking* questions which increase the interest of the world, and show the strangeness and wonder lying just below the surface even in the commonest things of daily life.

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Qu'est-ce que la matière ?

Que sait-on du réel ?

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

CHAPTER II

THE EXISTENCE OF MATTER […]

Descartes (1596-1650), the founder of modern philosophy, invented a method which may still be used with profit—the method of systematic doubt. He determined that he would believe nothing which he did not see quite clearly and distinctly to be true. Whatever he could bring himself to doubt, he would doubt, until he saw reason for not doubting it. By applying this method he gradually became convinced that the only existence of which he could be *quite* certain was his own. He imagined a deceitful demon, who presented unreal things to his senses in a perpetual phantasmagoria ; it might be very improbable that such a demon existed, but still it was possible, and therefore doubt concerning things perceived by the senses was possible.

But doubt concerning his own existence was not possible, for if he did not exist, no demon could deceive him. If he doubted, he must exist ; if he had any experiences whatever, he must exist. Thus his own existence was an absolute certainty to him. ‘I think, therefore I am,’ he said (Cogito, ergo sum) ; and on the basis of this certainty he set to work to build up again the world of knowledge which his doubt had laid in ruins. By inventing the method of doubt, and by showing that subjective things are the most certain. Descartes performed a great service to philosophy, and one which makes him still useful to all students of the subject.

But some care is needed in using Descartes’ argument. ’*I* think, therefore *I* am’ says rather more than is strictly certain. It might seem as though we were quite sure of being the same person to-day as we were yesterday, and this is no doubt true in some sense. But the real Self is as hard to arrive at as the real table, and does not seem to have that absolute, convincing certainty that belongs to particular experiences. When I look at my table and see a certain brown colour, what quite certain at once is not ‘*I* am seeing a brown colour’, but rather, ‘a brown colour is being seen’. This of course involves something (or somebody) which (or who) sees the brown colour ; but it does not of itself involve that more or less permanent person whom we call ‘ I ‘. So far as immediate certainty goes, it might be that the something which sees the brown colour is quite momentary, and not the same as the something which has some different experience the next moment.

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

Suis-je le sujet de mes pensées ?

Changer, est-ce devenir quelqu’un d’autre ?

Thus it is our particular thoughts and feelings that have primitive certainty. And this applies to dreams and hallucinations as well as to normal perceptions : when we dream or see a ghost, we certainly do have the sensations we think we have, but for various reasons it is held that no physical object corresponds to these sensations. Thus the certainty of our knowledge of our own experiences does not have to be limited in any way to allow for exceptional cases. Here, therefore, we have, for what it is worth, a solid basis from which to begin our pursuit of knowledge.

The problem we have to consider is this : Granted that we are certain of our own sense-data, have we any reason for regarding them as signs of the existence of something else, which we can call the physical object ? […]

In one sense it must be admitted that we can never *prove* the existence of things other than ourselves and our experiences. No logical absurdity results from the hypothesis that the world consists of myself and my thoughts and feelings and sensations, and that everything else is mere fancy. In dreams a very complicated world may seem to be present, and yet on waking we find it was a delusion ; that is to say, we find that the sense-data in the dream do not appear to have corresponded with such physical objects as we should naturally infer from our sense-data. (It is true that when the physical world is assumed, it is possible to find physical causes for the sense-data in dreams : a door banging, for instance, may cause us to dream of a naval engagement. But although, in this case, there is a physical *cause* for the sense-data, there is not a physical object *corresponding* to the sense-data in the way in which an actual naval battle would correspond.) There is no logical impossibility in the supposition that the whole of life is a dream, in which we ourselves create all the objects that come before us. But although this is not logically impossible, there is no reason whatever to suppose that it is true ; and it is, in fact, a less simple hypothesis, viewed as a means of accounting for the facts of our own life, than the common-sense hypothesis that there really are objects dependent of us, whose action on us causes our sensations. […]

Peut-on distinguer le rêve de la réalité ?

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF MATTER […]

So far as our sense-data afford evidence as to the physical sun they afford evidence as to the physical sun of eight minutes ago ; if the physical sun had ceased to exist within the last eight minutes, that would make no difference to the sense-data which we call ‘seeing the sun’. This affords a fresh illustration of the necessity of distinguishing between sense-data and physical objects. […]

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

CHAPTER V

KNOWLEDGE BY ACQUAINTANCE AND KNOWLEDGE BY DESCRIPTION

In the preceding chapter we saw that there are two sorts of knowledge : knowledge of things, and knowledge of truths. In this chapter we shall be concerned exclusively with knowledge of things, of which in turn we shall have to distinguish two kinds. Knowledge of things, when it is of the kind we call knowledge by *acquaintance* is essentially simpler than any knowledge of truths, and logically independent of knowledge of truths, though it would be rash to assume that human beings ever, in fact, have acquaintance with things without at the same time knowing some truth about them. Knowledge of things by *description*, on the contrary, always involves, as we shall find in the course of the present chapter, some knowledge of truths as its source and ground. But first of all we must make clear what we mean by ‘acquaintance’ and what we mean by ‘description’.

Que sait-on du réel ?

We shall say that we have *acquaintance* with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths. Thus in the presence of my table I am acquainted with the sense-data that make up the appearance of my table—its colour, shape, hardness, smoothness, etc. ; all these are things of which I am immediately conscious when I am seeing and touching my table. The particular shade of colour that I am seeing may have many things said about it— I may say that it is brown, that it is rather dark, and so on. But such statements, though they make me know truths *about* the colour, do not make me know the colour itself any better than I did before : so far as concerns knowledge of the colour itself, as opposed to knowledge of truths about it, I know the colour perfectly and completely when I see it, and no further knowledge of it itself is even theoretically possible. Thus the sense-data which make up the appearance of my table are things with which I have acquaintance, things immediately known to me just as they are.

My knowledge of the table as a physical object, on the contrary, is not direct knowledge. Such as it is, it is obtained through acquaintance with the sense-data that make up the appearance of the table. We have seen that it is possible, without absurdity, to doubt whether there is a table at all, whereas it is not possible to doubt the sense-data. My knowledge of the table is of the kind which we shall call ‘knowledge by description’. The table is ‘the physical object which causes such-and-such sense-data’. This describes the table by means of the sense-data. In order to know anything at all about the table, we must know truths connecting it with things with which we have acquaintance : we must know that ‘ such-and-such sense-data are caused by a physical object’. There is no state of mind in which we are directly aware of the table ; all our knowledge of the table is really knowledge of *truth*, and the actual thing which is the table is not, strictly speaking, known to us at all. We know a description, and we know that there is just one object to which this description applies, though the object itself is not directly known to us. In such a case, we say that our knowledge of the object is knowledge by description. […]

Que sait-on du réel ?

L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

Interprète-t-on à défaut de connaître ?

CHAPTER VI

ON INDUCTION […]

It might be urged, as against the view we are advocating, that we know all natural phenomena to be subject to the reign of law, and that sometimes, on the basis of observation, we can see that only one law can possibly fit the facts of the case. Now to this view there are two answers. The first is that, even if *some* law which has no exceptions applies to our case, we can never, in practice, be sure that we have discovered that law and not one to which there are exceptions. The second is that the reign of law would seem to be itself only probable, and that our belief that it will hold in the future, or in unexamined cases in the past, is itself based upon the very principle we are examining. […]

The inductive principle, however, is equally incapable of being *proved* by an appeal to experience. Experience might conceivably confirm the inductive principle as regards the cases that have been already examined ; but as regards unexamined cases, it is the inductive principle alone that can justify any inference from what has been examined to what has not been examined. All arguments which, on the basis of experience, argue as to the future or the unexperienced parts of the past or present, assume the inductive principle ; hence we can never use experience to prove the inductive principle without begging the question. Thus we must either accept the inductive principle on the ground of its intrinsic evidence, or forgo all justification of our expectations about the future. […]

Thus all knowledge which, on a basis of experience tells us something about what is not experienced, is based upon a belief which experience can neither confirm nor confute, yet which, at least in its concrete applications, appears to be as firmly rooted in us as many of the facts of experience. […]

L’expérience peut-elle démontrer quelque chose ?

Peut-on avoir raison contre les faits ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Ce qui est vrai en théorie peut-il être faux en pratique ?

Peut-on croire sans savoir ?

Une connaissance scientifique du vivant est-elle possible ?

Le futur n'existe-t-il que dans notre pensée ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

Toutes les croyances se valent-elles ?

CHAPTER VII

ON OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES […]

Whenever one thing which we believe is used to prove something else, which we consequently believe, this principle is relevant. If any one asks : ‘Why should I accept the results of valid arguments based on true premisses ?’ we can only answer by appealing to our principle. In fact, the truth of the principle is impossible to doubt, and its obviousness is so great that at first sight it seems almost trivial. Such principles, however, are not trivial to the philosopher, for they show that we may have indubitable knowledge which is in no way derived from objects of sense.

The above principle is merely one of a certain number of self-evident logical principles. Some at least of these principles must be granted before any argument or proof becomes possible. When some of them have been granted, others can be proved, though these others, so long as they are simple, are just as obvious as the principles taken for granted. For no very good reason, three of these principles have been singled out by tradition under the name of ‘Laws of Thought’.

They are as follows :

1) *The law of identity* : ‘Whatever is, is.’

2) *The law of contradiction* : ‘Nothing can both be and not be.’

3) *The law of excluded middle* : ‘Everything must either be or not be.’

These three laws are samples of self-evident logical principles, but are not really more fundamental or more self-evident than various other similar principles : for instance, the one we considered just now, which states that what follows from a true premiss is true. The name ‘laws of thought’ is also misleading, for what is important is not the fact that we think in accordance with these laws, but the fact that things behave in accordance with them ; in other words, the fact that when we think in accordance with them we think *truly*. But this is a large question, to which we must return at a later stage. […]

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?

A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

La pluralité des opinions est-elle un obstacle à la vérité ?

Y a-t-il d’autres moyens que la démonstration pour établir une vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

Toutes les croyances se valent-elles ?

One of the great historic controversies in philosophy is the controversy between the two schools called respectively ‘empiricists’ and ‘rationalists’. The empiricists—who are best represented by the British philosophers, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume—maintained that all our knowledge is derived from experience ; the rationalists—who are represented by the Continental philosophers of the seventeenth century, especially Descartes and Leibniz—maintained that, in addition to what we know by experience, there are certain ‘innate ideas’ and ‘innate principles’, which we know independently of experience. It has now become possible to decide with some confidence as to the truth or falsehood of these opposing schools. It must be admitted, for the reasons already stated, that logical principles are known to us, and cannot be themselves proved by experience, since all proof presupposes them. In this, therefore, which was the most important point of the controversy, the rationalists were in the right.

On the other hand, even that part of our knowledge which is *logically* independent of experience (in the sense that experience cannot prove it) is yet elicited and caused by experience. It is on occasion of particular experiences that we become aware of the general laws which their connexions exemplify. It would certainly be absurd to suppose that there are innate principles in the sense that babies are born with a knowledge of everything which men know and which cannot be deduced from what is experienced. For this reason, the word ‘innate’ would not now be employed to describe our knowledge of logical principles. The phrase ‘a priori’ is less objectionable, and is more usual in modern writers. Thus, while admitting that all knowledge is elicited and caused by experience, we shall nevertheless hold that some knowledge is *a priority* in the sense that the experience which makes us think of it does not suffice to prove it, merely so directs our attention that we see its truth without requiring any proof from experience. […]

Les principes de la raison sont-ils issus de l'expérience ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

Toutes les croyances se valent-elles ?

Y a-t-il d’autres moyens que la démonstration pour établir une vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

*A priori* knowledge is not all of the logical kind we have been hitherto considering. Perhaps the most important example of non-logical *a priori* knowledge is knowledge as to ethical value. I am not speaking of judgements as to what is useful or as to what is virtuous, for such judgements do require empirical premisses ; I am speaking of judgements as to the intrinsic desirability of things. If something is useful, it must be useful because it secures some end ; the end must, if we have gone far enough, be valuable on its own account, and not merely because it is useful for some further end. Thus all judgements as to what is useful depend upon judgements as to what has value on its own account.

We judge, for example, that happiness is more desirable than misery, knowledge than ignorance, goodwill than hatred, and so on. Such judgements must, in part at least, be immediate and *a priori*. Like our previous *a priori* judgements, they may be *elicited* by experience, and indeed they must be ; for it seems not possible to judge whether anything is intrinsically valuable unless we have experienced something of the same kind. But it is fairly obvious that they cannot be *proved* by experience ; for the fact that a thing exists or does not exist cannot prove either that it is good that it should exist or that it is bad. The pursuit of this subject belongs to ethics, where the impossibility of deducing what ought to be from what is has to be established. In the present connexion, it is only important to realize that knowledge as to what is intrinsically of value is *a priori* in the same sense in which logic is *a priority* namely in the sense that the truth of such knowledge can be neither proved nor disproved by experience. […]

Les principes de la raison sont-ils issus de l'expérience ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

Toutes les croyances se valent-elles ?

Y a-t-il d’autres moyens que la démonstration pour établir une vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Comment définir le bien ?

CHAPTER VIII

HOW A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE IS POSSIBLE […]

Apart from the special doctrines advocated by Kant, it is very common among philosophers to regard what is *a priori* as in some sense mental, as concerned rather with the way we must think than with any fact of the outer world. We noted in the preceding chapter the three principles commonly called ‘laws of thought’. The view which led to their being so named is a natural one, but there are strong reasons for thinking that it is erroneous. Let us take as an illustration the law of contradiction. This is commonly stated in the form ‘Nothing can both be and not be’, which is intended to express the fact that nothing can at once have and not have a given quality. Thus, for example, if a tree is a beech it cannot also be not a beech ; if my table is rectangular it cannot also be not rectangular, and so on.

Now what makes it natural to call this principle a law of *thought* is that it is by thought rather than by observation that we persuade ourselves of its necessary truth. When we have seen that a tree is a beech, we do not need to look again in order to ascertain whether it is also not a beech ; thought alone makes us know that this is impossible. But the conclusion that the law of contradiction is a law of *thought* is nevertheless erroneous. What we believe, when we believe the law of contradiction, is not that the mind is so made that it must believe the law of contradiction. *This* belief is a subsequent result of psychological reflection, which presupposes the belief in the law of contradiction. The belief in the law of contradiction is a belief about things, not only about thoughts. It is not, e.g., the belief that if we *think* a certain tree is a beech, we cannot at the same time *think* that it is not a beech ; it is the belief that if the tree *is* a beech, it cannot at the same time *be* not a beech. Thus the law of contradiction is about things, and not merely about thoughts ; and although belief in the law of contradiction is a thought, the law of contradiction itself is not a thought, but a fact concerning the things in the world. If this, which we believe when we believe the law of contradiction, were not true of the things in the world, the fact that we were compelled to *think* it true would not save the law of contradiction from being false ; and this shows that the law is not a law of *thought*. […]

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?  
Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

The fact seems to be that all our *a priori* knowledge is concerned with entities which do not, properly speaking, *exist*, either in the mental or in the physical world. These entities are such as can be named by parts of speech which are not substantives ; they are such entities as qualities and relations. Suppose, for instance, that I am in my room. I exist, and my room exists ; but does ‘in’ exist ? Yet obviously the word ‘in’ has a meaning ; it denotes a relation which holds between me and my room. This relation is something, although we cannot say that it exists *in the same sense* in which I and my room exist. The relation ‘in’ is something which we can think about and understand, for, if we could not understand it, we could not understand the sentence ‘I am in my room’, Many philosophers, following Kant, have maintained that relations are the work of the mind, that things in themselves have no relations, but that the mind brings them together in one act of thought and thus produces the relations which it judges them to have.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?  
L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?  
Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

This view, however, seems open to objections similar to those which we urged before against Kant. It seems plain that it is not thought which produces the truth of the proposition ‘I am in my room’. It may be true that an earwig is in my room, even if neither I nor the earwig nor any one else is aware of this truth ; for this truth concerns only the earwig and the room, and does not depend upon anything else. Thus relations, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, must be placed in a world which is neither mental nor physical. This world is of great importance to philosophy, and in particular to the problems of *a priori* knowledge. In the next chapter we shall proceed to develop its nature and its bearing upon the questions with which we have been dealing.

CHAPTER IX

THE WORLD OF UNIVERSALS […]

The word ‘idea’ has acquired, in the course of time, many associations which are quite misleading when applied to Plato’s ’ideas’. We shall therefore use the word ‘universal‘ instead of the word ‘idea‘, to describe what Plato meant. The essence of the sort of entity that Plato meant is that it is opposed to the particular things that are given in sensation. We speak of whatever is given in sensation, or is of the same nature as things given in sensation, as a *particular* ; by opposition to this, a *universal* will be anything which may be shared by many particulars, and has those characteristics which, as we saw, distinguish justice and whiteness from just acts and white things.

When we examine common words, we find that, broadly speaking, proper names stand for particulars. While other substantives, adjectives, prepositions, and verbs stand for universals. Pronouns stand for particulars, but are ambiguous : it is only by the context or the circumstances that we know what particulars they stand for. The word ‘now’ stands for a particular, namely the present moment ; but like pronouns, it stands for an ambiguous particular, because the present is always changing.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?  
L'esprit a-t-il accès aux choses ?

It will be seen that no sentence can be made up without at least one word which denotes a universal. The nearest approach would be some such statement as ‘I like this’. But even here the word ‘like‘ denotes a universal, for I may like other things, and other people may like things. Thus all truths involve universals, and all knowledge of truths involves acquaintance with universals.

Seeing that nearly all the words to be found in the dictionary stand for universals, it is strange that hardly any body except students of philosophy ever realizes that there are such entities as universals. We do not naturally dwell upon those words in a sentence which do not stand for particulars ; and if we are forced to dwell upon a word which stands for a universal, we naturally think of it as standing for some one of the particulars that come under the universal. When, for example, we hear the sentence, ‘Charles I’s head was cut off’, we may naturally enough think of Charles I, of Charles I’s head, and of the operation of cutting off *his* head, which are all particulars ; but we do not naturally dwell upon what is meant by the word ‘head’ or the word ‘cut’, which is a universal. We feel such words to be incomplete and insubstantial ; they seem to demand a context before anything can be done with them. Hence we succeed in avoiding all notice of universals as such, until the study of philosophy forces them upon our attention.

Even among philosophers, we may say, broadly, that only those universals which are named by adjectives or substantives have been much or often recognized, while those named by verbs and prepositions have been usually overlooked. This omission has had a very great effect upon philosophy ; it is hardly too much to say that most metaphysics, since Spinoza, has been largely determined by it. The way this has occurred is, in outline, as follows : Speaking generally, adjectives and common nouns express qualities or properties of single things, whereas prepositions and verbs tend to express relations between two or more things. Thus the neglect of prepositions and verbs led to the belief that every proposition can be regarded as attributing a property to a single thing, rather than as expressing a relation between two or more things. Hence it was supposed that, ultimately, there can be no such entities as relations between things. Hence if there are many things, they cannot possibly interact in any way, since any interaction would be a relation, and relations are impossible.

The first of these views, advocated by Spinoza and held in our own day by Bradley and many other philosophers, is called *monism* ; the second, advocated by Leibniz but not very common nowadays, is called *monadism*, because each of the isolated things is called a *monad*. Both these opposing philosophies. Interesting as they are, result, in my opinion, from an undue attention to one sort of universals, namely the sort represented by adjectives and substantives rather than by verbs and prepositions.

As a matter of fact, if any one were anxious to deny altogether that there are such things as universals, we should find that we cannot strictly prove that there are such entities as *qualities*, i.e. the universals represented by adjectives and substantives, whereas we can prove that there must be *relations*, i.e. the sort of universals generally represented by verbs and prepositions. Let us take in illustration the universal *whiteness*. If we believe that there is such a universal, we shall say that things are white because they have the quality of whiteness. This view, however, was strenuously denied by Berkeley and Hume, who have been followed in this by later empiricists. The form which their denial took was to deny that there are such things as ’abstract ideas’. When we want to think of whiteness, they said, we form an image of some particular white thing, and reason concerning this particular, taking care not to deduce anything concerning it which we cannot see to be equally true of any other white thing. As an account of our actual mental processes, this is no doubt largely true. In geometry, for example, when we wish to prove something about all triangles, we draw a particular triangle and reason about it, taking care not to use any characteristic which it does not share with other triangles. The beginner, in order to avoid error, often finds it useful to draw several triangles, as unlike each other as possible, in order to make sure that his reasoning is equally applicable to all of them. But a difficulty emerges as soon as we ask ourselves how we know that a thing is white or a triangle. If we wish to avoid the universals *whiteness* and *triangularity*, we shall choose some particular patch of white or some particular triangle, and say that anything is white or a triangle if it has the right sort of resemblance to our chosen particular. But then the resemblance required will have to be a universal. Since there are many white things, the resemblance must hold between many pairs of particular white things ; and this is the characteristic of a universal. It will be useless to say that here is a different resemblance for each pair, for then we shall have to say that these resemblances resemble each other, and thus at last we shall be forced to admit resemblance as a universal. The relation of resemblance, therefore, must be a true universal. And having been forced to admit this universal, we find that it is no longer worth while to invent difficult and unplausible theories to avoid the admission of such universals as whiteness and triangularity.

Berkeley and Hume failed to perceive this refutation of their rejection of ‘abstract ideas’, because, like their adversaries, they only thought of *qualities*, and altogether ignored *relations* as *universals*. We have therefore here another respect in which the rationalists appear to have been in the right as against the empiricists, although, owing to the neglect or denial of relations, the deductions made by rationalists were, if anything, more apt to be mistaken than those made by empiricists.

Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

Having now seen that there must be such entities as universals, the next point to be proved is that their being is not merely mental. By this is meant that whatever being belongs to them is independent of their being thought of or in any way apprehended by minds. We have already touched on this subject at the end of the preceding chapter, but we must now consider more fully what sort of being it is that belongs to universals.

Consider such a proposition as ‘Edinburgh is north of London’. Here we have a relation between two places, and it seems plain that the relation subsists independently of our knowledge of it. When we come to know that Edinburgh is north of London, we come to know something which has to do only with Edinburgh and London : we do not cause the truth of the proposition by coming to know it, on the contrary we merely apprehend a fact which was there before we knew it. The part of the earth’s surface where Edinburgh stands would be north of the part where London stands, even if there were no human being to know about north and south, and even if there were no minds at all in the universe. This is, of course, denied by many philosophers, either for Berkeley’s reasons or for Kant’s. But we have already considered these reasons, and decided that they are inadequate. We may therefore now assume it to be true that nothing mental is presupposed in the fact that Edinburgh is north of London. But this fact involves the relation ‘north of’, which is a universal ; and it would be impossible for the whole fact to involve nothing mental if the relation ‘north of’, which is a constituent part of the fact, did involve anything mental. Hence we must admit that the relation, like the terms it relates, is not dependent upon thought, but belongs to the independent world which thought apprehends but does not create.

This conclusion, however, is met by the difficulty that the relation ‘north of’ does not seem to *exist* in the same sense in which Edinburgh and London exist. If we ask ‘Where and when does this relation exist ?’ the answer must be ‘Nowhere and nowhen’. There is no place or time where we can find the relation ‘north of’. It does not exist in Edinburgh any more than in London, for it relates the two and is neutral as between them. Nor can we say that it exists at any particular time. Now everything that can be apprehended by the senses or by introspection exists at some particular time. Hence the relation ‘north of’ is radically different from such things. It is neither in space nor in time, neither material nor mental ; yet it is something.

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?

It is largely the very peculiar kind of being that belongs to universals which has led many people to suppose that they are really mental. We can think *of* a universal, and our thinking then exists in a perfectly ordinary sense, like any other mental act. Suppose, for example, that we are thinking of whiteness. Then *in one sense* it may be said that whiteness is ‘in our mind ‘. We have here the same ambiguity as we noted in discussing Berkeley in Chapter IV. In the strict sense, it is not whiteness that is in our mind, but the act of thinking of whiteness. The connected ambiguity in the word ‘idea’, which we noted at the same time, also causes confusion here. In one sense of this word, namely the sense in which it denotes the *object* of an act of thought, whiteness is an ‘idea’. Hence, if the ambiguity is not guarded against, we may come to think that whiteness is an ‘idea’ in the other sense. i.e. an act of thought ; and thus we come to think that whiteness is mental. But in so thinking, we rob it of its essential quality of universality. One man’s act of thought is necessarily a different thing from another man’s ; one man’s act of thought at one time is necessarily a different thing from the same man’s act of thought at another time. Hence, if whiteness were the thought as opposed to its object, no two different men could think of it, and no one man could think of it twice. That which many different thoughts of whiteness have in common is their *object*, and this object is different from all of them. Thus universals are not thoughts, though when known they are the objects of thoughts.

Le langage trahit-il la pensée ?

We shall find it convenient only to speak of things *existing* when they are in time, that is to say, when we can point to some time *at* which they exist (not excluding the possibility of their existing at all times). Thus thoughts and feelings, minds and physical objects *exist*. But universals do not exist in this sense ; we shall say that they *subsist* or *have being*, where ‘being‘ is opposed to ‘existence ‘ as being timeless. The world of universals, therefore, may also be described as the world of being. The world of being is unchangeable, rigid, exact, delightful to the mathematician, the logician, the builder of metaphysical systems, and all who love perfection more than life. The world of existence is fleeting, vague, without sharp boundaries, without any clear plan or arrangement, but it contains all thoughts and feelings, all the data of sense, and all physical objects, everything that can do either good or harm, everything that makes any difference to the value of life and the world. According to our temperaments, we shall prefer the contemplation of the one or of the other. The one we do not prefer will probably seem to us a pale shadow of the one we prefer, and hardly worthy to be regarded as in any sense real. But the truth is that both have the same claim on our impartial attention, both are real, and both are important to the metaphysician. Indeed no sooner have we distinguished the two worlds than it becomes necessary to consider their relations.

Exister, est-ce profiter de l’instant présent ?  
Cela a-t-il un sens de vouloir échapper au temps ?

CHAPTER X

ON OUR KNOWLEDGE OF UNIVERSALS [...]

*All* a priori *knowledge deals exclusively with the relations of universals*. This proposition is of great importance, and goes a long way towards solving our previous difficulties concerning *a priori* knowledge.

The only case in which it might seem, at first sight, as if our proposition were untrue, is the case in which an *a priori* proposition states that *all* of one class of particulars belong to some other class, or (what comes to the same thing) that *all* particulars having some one property also have some other. In this case it might seem as though we were dealing with the particulars that have the property rather than with the property. The proposition ‘two and two are four’ is really a case in point, for this may be stated in the form ‘any two and any other two are four’, or ‘any collection formed of two twos is a collection of four’. If we can show that such statements as this really deal only with universals, our proposition may be regarded as proved.

One way of discovering what a proposition deals with is to ask ourselves what words we must understand—in other words, what objects we must be acquainted with—in order to see what the proposition means. As soon as we see what the proposition means, even if we do not yet know whether it is true or false, it is evident that we must have acquaintance with whatever is really dealt with by the proposition. By applying this test, it appears that many propositions which might seem to be concerned with particulars are really concerned only with universals. In the special case of ‘two and two are four’, even when we interpret it as meaning ‘any collection formed of two twos is a collection of four’, it is plain that we can *understand* the proposition, i.e. we can see what it is that it asserts, as soon as we know what is meant by collection’ and ‘two’ and ‘four’. It is quite unnecessary to know all the couples in the world : if it were necessary, obviously we could never understand the proposition, since the couples are infinitely numerous and therefore cannot all be known to us. Thus although our general statement *implies* statements about particular couples, as soon *as we know that there are such particular couples*, yet it does not itself assert or imply that there are such particular couples, and thus fails to make any statement whatever about any actual particular couple. The statement made is about ‘couple’, the universal, and not about this or that couple. [...]  
  
Qu'est-ce qu'une idée ?

It will serve to make the point clearer if we contrast our genuine *a priori* judgement with an empirical generalization, such as ‘all men are mortals’. Here as before, we can *understand* what the proposition means as soon as we understand the universals involved, namely *man* and *mortal*. It is obviously unnecessary to have an individual acquaintance with the whole human race in order to understand what our proposition means. Thus the difference between an *a priori* general proposition and an empirical generalization does not come in the *meaning* of the proposition ; it comes in the nature of the *evidence* for it. In the empirical case, the evidence consists in the particular instances. We believe that all men are mortal because we know that there are innumerable instances of men dying, and no instances of their living beyond a certain age. We do not believe it because we see a connexion between the universal man and the universal *mortal*. It is true that if physiology can prove, assuming the general laws that govern living bodies, that no living organism can last for ever, that gives a connexion between *man* and *mortality* which would enable us to assert our proposition without appealing to the special evidence of *men* dying. But that only means that our generalization has been subsumed under a wider generalization, for which the evidence is still of the same kind, though more extensive. The progress of science is constantly producing such subsumptions, and therefore giving a constantly wider inductive basis or scientific generalizations. But although this gives a greater *degree* of certainty, it does not give a different *kind* : the ultimate ground remains inductive, i.e. derived from instances, and not an *a priori* connexion of universals such as we have in logic and arithmetic. [...]

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?  
Les principes de la raison sont-ils issus de l'expérience ?

It is, that we may sometimes know a general proposition in cases where we do not know a single instance of it. Take such a case as the following: We know that any two numbers can be multiplied together, and will give a third called their *product*. We know that all pairs of integers the product of which is less than loo have been actually multiplied together, and the value of the product recorded in the multiplication table. But we also know that the number of integers is infinite, and that only a finite number of pairs of integers ever have been or ever will be thought of by human beings. Hence it follows that there are pairs of integers which never have been and never will be thought of by human beings, and that all of them deal with integers the product of which is over 100. Hence we arrive at the proposition : ‘All products of two integers, which never have been and never will be thought of by any human being, are over 100.’ Here is a general proposition of which the truth is undeniable, and yet. From the very nature of the case, we can never give an instance ; because any two numbers we may think of are excluded by the terms of the proposition.

This possibility, of knowledge of general propositions of which no instance can be given, is often denied, because it is not perceived that the knowledge of such propositions only requires a knowledge of the relations of universals, and does not require any knowledge of instances of the universals in question. Yet the knowledge of such general propositions is quite vital to a great deal of what is generally admitted to be known. For example, we saw, in our early chapters, that knowledge of physical objects, as opposed to sense-data, is only obtained by an inference, and that they are not things with which we are acquainted. Hence we can never know any proposition of the form ‘this is a physical object’, where ‘this’ is something immediately known. It follows that all our knowledge concerning physical objects is such that no actual instance can be given. We can give instances of the associated sense-data, but we cannot give instances of the actual physical objects. Hence our knowledge as to physical objects depends throughout upon this possibility of general knowledge where no instance can be given. And the same applies to our knowledge of other people’s minds, or of any other class of things of which no instance is known to us by acquaintance.

Que pouvons-nous savoir des autres ?  
Que sait-on du réel ?

We may now take a survey of the sources of our knowledge, as they have appeared in the course of our analysis. We have first to distinguish knowledge of things and knowledge of truths. In each there are two kinds, one immediate and one derivative. Our immediate knowledge of things, which we called *acquaintance*, consists of two sorts, according as the things known are particulars or universals. Among particulars, we have acquaintance with sense-data and (probably) with ourselves. Among universals, there seems to be no principle by which we can decide which can be known by acquaintance, but it is clear that among those that can be so known are sensible qualities, relations of space and time, similarity, and certain abstract logical universals. Our derivative knowledge of things, which we call knowledge by *description*, always involves both acquaintance with something and knowledge of truths. Our immediate knowledge of *truths* may be called *intuitive* knowledge, and the truths so known may be called *self-evident* truths. Among such truths are included those which merely state what is given in sense, and also certain abstract logical and arithmetical principles, and (though with less certainty) some ethical propositions. Our *derivative* knowledge of truths consists of everything that we can deduce from self-evident truths by the use of self-evident principles of deduction.

If the above account is correct, all our knowledge of truths depends upon our intuitive knowledge. [...]

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?  
La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?

CHAPTER XI

ON INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE

There is a common impression that everything that we believe ought to be capable of proof, or at least of being shown to be highly probable. It is felt by many that a belief for which no reason can be given is an unreasonable belief. In the main, this view is just. Almost all our common beliefs are either inferred, or capable of being inferred, from other beliefs which may be regarded as giving the reason for them. As a rule, the reason has been forgotten, or has even never been consciously present to our minds. [...]  
  
Toutes les croyances se valent-elles ?  
Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

It would seem that there are two kinds of self-evident truths of perception, though perhaps in the analysis the two kinds may coalesce. First, there is the kind which simply asserts the *existence* of the sense-datum, without in any way analysing it. We see a patch of red, and we judge ‘there is such-and-such a patch of red’, or more strictly ‘there is that’ ; this is one kind of intuitive judgement of perception. The other kind arises when the object of sense is complex, and we subject it to some degree of analysis. If, for instance, we see a *round* patch of red, we may judge ‘that patch of red is round’. This is again a judgement of perception, but it differs from our previous kind. In our present kind we have a single sense-datum which has both colour and shape : the colour is red and the shape is round. Our judgement analyses the datum into colour and shape, and then recombines them by stating that the red colour is round in shape. Another example of this kind of judgement is ‘this is to the right of that’, where ‘this’ and ‘that’ are seen simultaneously. In this kind of judgement the sense-datum contains constituents which have some relation to each other, and the judgement asserts that these constituents have this relation.

Another class of intuitive judgements, analogous to those of sense and yet quite distinct from them, are judgements of *memory*. There is some danger of confusion as to the nature of memory, owing to the fact that memory of an object is apt to be accompanied by an image of the object, and yet the image cannot be what constitutes memory. This is easily seen by merely noticing that the image is in the present. Whereas what is remembered is known to be in the past. Moreover, we are certainly able to some extent to compare our image with the object remembered. So that we often know, within somewhat wide limits, how far our image is accurate ; but this would be impossible, unless the object, as opposed to the image, were in some way before the mind. Thus the essence of memory is not constituted by the image, but by having immediately before the mind an object which is recognized as past. But for the fact of memory in this sense, we should not know that there ever was a past at all, nor should we be able to understand the word ‘past’, any more than a man born blind can understand the word ‘light’. Thus there must be intuitive judgements of memory, and it is upon them, ultimately, that all our knowledge of the past depends. [...]

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

Truths of perception and some of the principles of logic have the very highest degree of self-evidence ; truths of immediate memory have an almost equally high degree. The inductive principle has less self-evidence than some of the other principles of logic, such as ‘what follows from a true premiss must be true’. Memories have a diminishing self-evidence as they become remoter and fainter ; the truths of logic and mathematics have (broadly speaking) less self-evidence as they become more complicated. Judgements of intrinsic ethical or aesthetic value are apt to have some self-evidence, but not much.

Degrees of self-evidence are important in the theory of knowledge, since, if propositions may (as seems likely) have some degree of self-evidence without being true, it will not be necessary to abandon all connexion between self-evidence and truth, but merely to say that, where there is a conflict, the more self-evident proposition is to be retained and the less self-evident rejected. [...]

A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?  
Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

CHAPTER XII

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD [...]

We are asking what is meant by the question whether a belief is true or false. It is to be hoped that a clear answer to this question may help us to obtain an answer to the question what beliefs are true, but for the present we ask only ‘What is truth ?’ and ‘What is falsehood ?’ not ‘What beliefs are true ?’ and ‘What beliefs are false ?’ It is very important to keep these different questions entirely separate, since any confusion between them is sure to produce an answer which is not really applicable to either.

There are three points to observe in the attempt to discover the nature of truth, three requisites which any theory must fulfil.

(1) Our theory of truth must be such as to admit of its opposite, falsehood. A good many philosophers have failed adequately to satisfy this condition : they have constructed theories according to which all our thinking ought to have been true, and have then had the greatest difficulty in finding a place for falsehood. In this respect our theory of belief must differ from our theory of acquaintance, since in the case of acquaintance it was not necessary to take account of any opposite.

(2) It seems fairly evident that if there were no beliefs there could be no falsehood, and no truth either, in the sense in which truth is correlative to falsehood. If we imagine a world of mere matter, there would be no room for falsehood in such a world. And although it would contain what may be called ‘facts’, it would not contain any truths, in the sense in which truths are things of the same kind as falsehoods. In fact, truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs and statements : hence a world of mere matter. Since it would contain no beliefs or statements, would also contain no truth or falsehood.

Qu'est-ce que la matière ?  
La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?  
A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

(3) But, as against what we have just said, it is to be observed that the truth or falsehood of a belief always depends upon something which lies outside the belief itself. If I believe that Charles I died on the scaffold, I believe truly, not because of any intrinsic quality of my belief, which could be discovered by merely examining the belief, but because of an historical event which happened two and a half centuries ago. If I believe that Charles I died in his bed, I believe falsely : no degree of vividness in my belief, or of care in arriving at it, prevents it from being false, again because of what happened long ago, and not because of any intrinsic property of my belief. Hence although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, they are properties dependent upon the relations of the beliefs to other things, not upon any internal quality of the beliefs.

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?  
A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

The third of the above requisites leads us to adopt the view-which has on the whole been commonest among philosophers—that truth consists in some form of correspondence between belief and fact. It is, however, by no means an easy matter to discover a form of correspondence to which there are no irrefutable objections. By this partly—and partly by the feeling that, if truth consists in a correspondence of thought with something outside thought, thought can never know when truth has been attained—many philosophers have been led to try to find some definition of truth which shall not consist in relation to something wholly outside belief. The most important attempt at a definition of this sort is the theory that truth consists in *coherence*. It is said that the mark of falsehood is failure to cohere in the body of our beliefs, and that it is the essence of a truth to form part of the completely rounded system which is The Truth.

There is, however, a great difficulty in this view, or rather two great difficulties. The first is that there is no reason to suppose that only *one* coherent body of beliefs is possible. It may be that, with sufficient imagination, a novelist might invent a past for the world that would perfectly fit on to what we know. And yet be quite different from the real past. In more scientific matters, it is certain that there are often two or more hypotheses which account for all the known facts on some subject, and although, in such cases, men of science endeavour to find facts which will rule out all the hypotheses except one, there is no reason why they should always succeed.

In philosophy, again, it seems not uncommon for two rival hypotheses to be both able to account for all the facts. Thus, for example, it is possible that life is one long dream, and that the outer world has only that degree of reality that the objects of dreams have ; but although such a view does not seem inconsistent with known facts, there is no reason to prefer it to the common-sense view, according to which other people and things do really exist. Thus coherence as the definition of truth fails because there is no proof that there can be only one coherent system.

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?  
A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?  
L’expérience peut-elle démontrer quelque chose ?

Peut-on distinguer le rêve de la réalité ?

The other objection to this definition of truth is that it assumes the meaning of ‘coherence‘ known, whereas, in fact, ‘ coherence ‘ presupposes the truth of the laws of logic. Two propositions are coherent when both may be true, and are incoherent when one at least must be false. Now in order to know whether two propositions can both be true, we must know such truths as the law of contradiction. For example, the two propositions, ‘this tree is a beech’ and ‘this tree is not a beech’, are not coherent, because of the law of contradiction. But if the law of contradiction itself were subjected to the test of coherence, we should find that, if we choose to suppose it false, nothing will any longer be incoherent with anything else. Thus the laws of logic supply the skeleton or framework within which the test of coherence applies, and they themselves cannot be established by this test.

For the above two reasons, coherence cannot be accepted as giving the *meaning* of truth, though it is often a most important *test* of truth after a certain amount of truth has become known.

A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Hence we are driven back to *correspondence with fact* as constituting the nature of truth. It remains to define precisely what we mean by ‘fact’, and what is the nature of the correspondence which must subsist between belief and fact, in order that belief may be true.

In accordance with our three requisites, we have to seek a theory of truth which (1) allows truth to have an opposite, namely falsehood, (2) makes truth a property of beliefs, but (3) makes it a property wholly dependent upon the relation of the beliefs to outside things. [...]

Othello believes falsely that Desdemona loves Cassio. We cannot say that this belief consists in a relation to a single object, ‘Desdemona’s love for Cassio’, for if there were such an object, the belief would be true. There is in fact no such object, and therefore Othello cannot have any relation to such an object. Hence his belief cannot possibly consist in a relation to this object. [...]

believing, plainly, is not a relation which Othello has to *each* of the three terms concerned, but to *all* of them together : there is only one example of the relation of believing involved, but this one example knits together four terms. Thus the actual occurrence, at the moment when Othello is entertaining his belief, is that the relation called ‘ believing ‘ is knitting together into one complex whole the four terms Othello, Desdemona, loving, and Cassio. What is called belief or judgement is nothing but this relation of believing or judging, which relates a mind to several things other than itself. An *act* of belief or of judgement is the occurrence between certain terms at some particular time, of the relation of believing or judging.

We are now in a position to understand what it is that distinguishes a true judgement from a false one. For this purpose we will adopt certain definitions. In every act of judgement there is a mind which judges, and there are terms concerning which it judges. We will call the mind the *subject* in the judgement, and the remaining terms the *objects*. Thus, when Othello judges that Desdemona loves Cassio, Othello is the subject, while the objects are Desdemona and loving and Cassio. The subject and the objects together are called the *constituents* of the judgement. It will be observed that the relation of judging has what is called a ‘sense’ or ‘direction’. We may say, metaphorically, that it puts its objects in a certain *order*, which we may indicate by means of the order of the words in the sentence. (In an inflected language, the same thing will be indicated by inflections, e.g. by the difference between nominative and accusative.) Othello’s judgement that Cassio loves Desdemona differs from his judgement that Desdemona loves Cassio, in spite of the fact that it consists of the same constituents, because the relation of judging places the constituents in a different order in the two cases. Similarly, if Cassio judges that Desdemona loves Othello, the constituents of the judgement are still the same, but their order is different. This property of having a ‘sense’ or ‘direction’ is one which the relation of judging shares with all other relations. The ‘sense’ of relations is the ultimate source of order and series and a host of mathematical concepts ; but we need not concern ourselves further with this aspect.

We spoke of the relation called ‘judging ‘ or ‘believing’ as knitting together into one complex whole the subject and the objects. In this respect, judging is exactly like every other relation. Whenever a relation holds between two or more terms, it unites the terms into a complex whole. If Othello loves Desdemona, there is such a complex whole as ‘Othello’s love for Desdemona’. The terms united by the relation may be themselves complex, or may be simple, but the whole which results from their being united must be complex. Wherever there is a relation which relates in a certain terms, there is a complex object formed of the union of those terms ; and conversely, wherever there is a complex object, there is a relation which relates its constituents. When an act of believing occurs, there is a complex, in which ‘believing’ is the uniting relation, and subject and objects are arranged in a certain order by the ‘sense ‘ of the relation of believing. Among the objects, as we saw in considering ‘Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio’, one must be a relation—in this instance, the relation ‘loving’. But this relation, as it occurs in the act of believing, is not the relation which creates the unity of the complex whole consisting of the subject and the objects. The relation ‘loving’, as it occurs in the act of believing, is one of the objects—it is a brick in the structure, not the cement. The cement is the relation ‘believing’. When the belief is *true*, there is another complex unity, in which the relation which was one of the objects of the belief relates the other objects. Thus, e.g., if Othello believes *truly* that Desdemona loves Cassio, then there is a complex unity, ‘Desdemona's love for Cassio ‘, which is composed exclusively of the *objects* of the belief, in the same order as they had in the belief, with the relation which was one of the objects occurring now as the cement that binds together the other objects of the belief. On the other hand, when a belief is *false*, there is no such complex unity composed only of the objects of the belief. If Othello believes *falsely* that Desdemona loves Cassio, then there is no such complex unity as ‘ Desdemona’s love for Cassio’.

Thus a belief is *true* when it corresponds to a certain associated complex, and *false* when it does not. Assuming, for the sake of definiteness, that the objects of the belief are two terms and a relation, the terms being put in a certain order by the ‘sense’ of the believing, then the two terms in that order are united by the relation into a complex, the belief is true; if not, it is false. This constitutes the definition of truth and falsehood that we were in search of. Judging or believing is a certain complex unity of which a mind is a constituent ; if the remaining constituents, taken in the order which they have in the belief, form a complex unity, then the belief is true ; if not, it is false.

Thus although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, yet they are in a sense extrinsic properties. For the condition of the truth of a belief is something not involving beliefs, or (in general) any mind at all. But only the *objects* of the belief. A mind, which believes, believes truly when there is a *corresponding* complex not involving the mind, but only its objects. This correspondence ensures truth, and its absence entails falsehood. Hence we account simultaneously for the two facts that beliefs (a) depend on minds for their *existence*, (b) do not depend on minds for their *truth*.

We may restate our theory as follows : If we take such a belief as ‘Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio’, we will call Desdemona and Cassio the *object-terms*, and loving the *object-relation*. If there is a complex unity ‘Desdemona’s love for Cassio’, consisting of the object-terms related by the object-relation in the same order as they have in the belief, then this complex unity is called the *fact corresponding to the belief*. Thus a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact.

It will be seen that minds do not *create* truth or falsehood. They create beliefs, but when once the beliefs are created, the mind cannot make them true or false, except in the special case where they concern future things which are within the power of the person believing, such as catching trains. What makes a belief true is a *fact*, and this fact does not (except in exceptional cases) in any way involve the mind of the person who has the belief. [...]

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?  
A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

Toutes les croyances se valent-elles ?

Peut-on avoir raison contre les faits ?

CHAPTER XIII

KNOWLEDGE, ERROR, AND PROBABLE OPINION [...]

At first sight we might imagine that knowledge could be defined as ‘true belief’. When what we believe is true, it might be supposed that we had achieved a knowledge of what we believe. But this would not accord with the way in which the word is commonly used. To take a very trivial instance : If a man believes that the late Prime Minister’s last name began with a B, he believes what is true, since the late Prime Minister was Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman. But if he believes that Mr. Balfour was the late Prime Minister, he will still believe that the late Prime Minister’s last name began with a B, yet this belief, though true, would not be thought to constitute knowledge. If a newspaper, by an intelligent anticipation, announces the result of a battle before any telegram giving the result has been received, it may by good fortune announce what afterwards turns out to be the right result, and it may produce belief in some of its less experienced readers. But in spite of the truth of their belief, they cannot be said to have knowledge. Thus it is clear that a true belief is not knowledge when it is deduced from a false belief.  
  
N’y a-t-il aucune vérité dans le mensonge ?

In like manner, a true belief cannot be called knowledge when it is deduced by a fallacious process of reasoning, even if the premisses from which it is deduced are true. If I know that all Greeks are men and that Socrates was a man, and I infer that Socrates was a Greek, I cannot be said to *know* that Socrates was a Greek, because, although my premisses and my conclusion are true, the conclusion does not follow from the premisses.

But are we to say that nothing is knowledge except that is validly deduced from true premisses. ? Obviously we cannot say this. Such a definition is at once too wide and too narrow. In the first place, it is too wide, because it is not enough that our premisses should be *true*, they must also be known. The man who believes that Mr. Balfour was the late Prime Minister may proceed to draw valid deductions from the true premiss that the late Prime Minister’s name began with a B, but he cannot be said to *know* the conclusions reached by these deductions. Thus we shall have to amend our definition by saying that knowledge is what is validly deduced from *known* premisses. This, however, is a circular definition : it assumes that we already know what is meant by ‘known premisses’. It can, therefore, at best define one sort of knowledge, the sort we call derivative, as opposed to intuitive knowledge. We may say : ‘*Derivative* knowledge is what is validly deduced from premisses known intuitively’. In this statement there is no formal defect, but it leaves the definition of *intuitive* knowledge still to seek. [...]

Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

So long as we are dealing with derivative knowledge, we have the test of intuitive knowledge to fall back upon. But in regard to intuitive beliefs, it is by no means easy to discover any criterion by which to distinguish some as true and others as erroneous. In this question it is scarcely possible to reach any very precise result: all our knowledge of truths is infected with *some* degree of doubt, and a theory which ignored this fact would be plainly wrong. Something may be done, however, to mitigate the difficulties of the question.

Our theory of truth, to begin with, supplies the possibility of distinguishing certain truths as self-evident in a sense which ensures infallibility. When a belief is true, we said, there is a corresponding fact, in which the several objects of the belief form a single complex. The belief is said to constitute *knowledge* of this fact, provided it fulfils those further somewhat vague conditions which we have been considering in the present chapter. But in regard to any fact, besides the knowledge constituted by belief, we may also have the kind of knowledge constituted by *perception* (taking this word in its widest possible sense). For example, if you know the hour of the sunset, you can at that hour know the fact that the sun is setting : this is knowledge of the fact by way of knowledge of *truths* ; but you can also, if the weather is fine, look to the west and actually see the setting sun : you then know the same fact by the way of knowledge of *things*.

Thus in regard to any complex fact, there are, theoretically, two ways in which it may be known : (1) by means of a judgement, in which its several parts are judged to be related as they are in fact related ; (2) by means of *acquaintance* with the complex fact itself, which may (in a large sense) be called perception. Though it is by no means confined to objects of the senses. [...]

Peut-on avoir raison contre les faits ?  
Interprète-t-on à défaut de connaître ?  
Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?  
Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

What we firmly believe, if it is true, is called *knowledge*, provided it is either intuitive or inferred (logically or psychologically) from intuitive knowledge from which it follows logically. What we firmly believe, if it is not true, is called *error*. What we firmly believe, if it is neither knowledge nor error, and also what we believe hesitatingly, because it is, or is derived from, something which has not the highest degree of self-evidence, may be called *probable* opinion. Thus the greater part of what would commonly pass as knowledge is more or less probable opinion.

In regard to probable opinion, we can derive great assistance from *coherence*, which we rejected as the *definition* of truth, but may often use as a *criterion*. A body of individually probable opinions, if they are mutually coherent, become more probable than any one of them would be individually. It is in this way that many scientific hypotheses acquire their probability. They fit into a coherent system of probable opinions, and thus become more probable than they would be in isolation. The same thing applies to general philosophical hypotheses. Often in a single case such hypotheses may seem highly doubtful, while we consider the order and coherence which they introduce into a mass of probable opinion, they become pretty nearly certain. This applies, in particular, to such matters as the distinction between dreams and waking life. If our dreams, night after night, were as coherent one with another as our days, we should hardly know whether to believe the dreams or the waking life. As it is, the test of coherence condemns the dreams and confirms the waking life. But this test, though it increases probability where it is successful, never gives absolute certainty, unless there is certainty already at some point in the coherent system. Thus the mere organization of probable opinion will never, by itself, transform it into indubitable knowledge.

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

Peut-on distinguer le rêve de la réalité ?  
A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

CHAPTER XIV

THE LIMITS OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE [...]

Hegel’s philosophy is very difficult, and commentators differ as to the true interpretation of it. According to the interpretation I shall adopt, which is that of many, if not most, of the commentators, and has the merit of giving an interesting and important type of philosophy, his main thesis is that everything short of the Whole is obviously fragmentary, and obviously incapable of existing without the complement supplied by the rest of the world. Just as a comparative anatomist, from a single bone, sees what kind of animal the whole must have been, so the metaphysician, according to Hegel, sees, from any one piece of reality, what the whole of reality must be— at least in its large outlines. Every apparently separate piece of reality has, as it were, hooks which grapple it to the next piece ; the next piece, in turn, has fresh hooks, and so on, until the whole universe is reconstructed. This essential incompleteness appears, according to Hegel, equally in the world of thought and in the world of things. In the world of thought, if we take any idea which is abstract or incomplete, we find, on examination, that if we forget its incompleteness, we become involved in contradictions ; these contradictions turn the idea in question into its opposite or antithesis ; and in order to escape, we have to find a new, less incomplete idea, which is the synthesis of our original idea and its antithesis. This new idea, though less incomplete than the idea we started with, will be found, nevertheless, to be still not wholly complete, but to pass into its antithesis, with which it must be combined in a new synthesis. In this way Hegel advances until he reaches the ‘Absolute Idea’, which, according to him, has no incompleteness, no opposite, and no need of further development. The absolute Idea, therefore, is adequate to describe Absolute Reality; but all lower ideas only describe reality as it appears to a partial view, not as it is to one who simultaneously surveys the Whole. Thus Hegel reaches the conclusion that Absolute Reality forms one single harmonious system, not in space or time, not in any degree evil, wholly rational, and wholly spiritual. Any appearance to the contrary, in the world we know, can be proved logically—so he believes—to be entirely due to our fragmentary piecemeal view of the universe. If we saw the universe whole, as we may suppose God sees it, space and time and matter and evil and all striving and struggling would disappear, and we should see instead an eternal perfect unchanging spiritual unity.

In this conception, there is undeniably something sublime, something to which we could wish to yield assent. Nevertheless, when the arguments in support of it are carefully examined, they appear to involve much confusion and many unwarrantable assumptions. The fundamental tenet upon which the system is built up is that what is incomplete must be not self-subsistent, but must need the support of other things before it can exist. It is held that whatever has relations to things outside itself must contain some reference to those outside things in its own *nature*, and could not, therefore, be what it is if those outside things did not exist. A man’s nature, for example, is constituted by his memories and the rest of his knowledge, by his loves and hatreds, and so on ; thus, but for the objects which he knows or loves or hates, he could not be what he is. He is essentially and obviously a fragment : taken as the sum-total of reality he would be self-contradictory.

This whole point of view, however, turns upon the notion of the ‘nature’ of a thing, which seems to mean ‘all the truths about the thing’. It is of course the case that a truth which connects one thing with another thing could not subsist if the other thing did not subsist. But a truth about a thing is not part of the thing itself, although it must, according to the above usage, be part of the ‘nature’ of the thing. If we mean by a thing’s ’nature‘ all the truths about the thing, then plainly we cannot know a thing’s ’nature’ unless we know all the thing’s relations to all the other things in the universe. But if the word ‘nature’ is used in this sense, we shall have to hold that the thing may be known when its ‘nature’ is not known, or at any rate is not known completely. There is a confusion, when this use of the word ‘nature’ is employed, between knowledge of things and knowledge of truths. We may have knowledge of a thing by acquaintance even if we know very few propositions about it—theoretically we need not know any propositions about it. Thus, acquaintance with a thing does not involve knowledge of its ‘nature’ in the above sense. And although acquaintance with a thing is involved in our knowing any one proposition about a thing, knowledge of its ‘nature’, in the above sense, is not involved. Hence, (1) acquaintance with a thing does not logically involve a knowledge of its relations, and (2) a knowledge of some of its relations does not involve a knowledge of all of its relations nor a knowledge of its ‘nature’ in the above sense. I may be acquainted, for example, with my toothache, and this knowledge may be as complete as knowledge by acquaintance ever can be, without knowing all that the dentist (who is not acquainted with it) can tell me about its cause, and without therefore knowing its ‘nature’ in the above sense. Thus the fact that a thing has relations does not prove that its relations are logically necessary. That is to say, from the mere fact that it is the thing it is we cannot deduce that it must have the various relations which in fact it has. This only *seems* to follow because we know it already.

It follows that we cannot prove that the universe as a whole forms a single harmonious system such as Hegel believes that it forms. And if we cannot prove this, we also cannot prove the unreality of space and time and matter and evil, for this is deduced by Hegel from the fragmentary and relational character of these things. Thus we are left to the piecemeal investigation of the world, and are unable to know the characters of those parts of the universe that are remote from our experience. This result, disappointing as it is to those whose hopes have been raised by the systems of philosophers, is in harmony with the inductive and scientific temper of our age, and is borne out by the whole examination of human knowledge which has occupied our previous chapters. [...]

Que sait-on du réel ?  
Ne fait-on que fuir le réel ?

Philosophical knowledge, if what has been said above is true, does not differ essentially from scientific knowledge ; there is no special source of wisdom which is open to philosophy but not to science, and the results obtained by philosophy are not radically different from those obtained from science. The essential characteristic of philosophy, which makes it a study distinct from science, is *criticism*. It examines critically the principles employed in science and in daily life ; it searches out any inconsistencies there may be in these principles, and it only accepts them when, as the result of a critical inquiry, no reason for rejecting them has appeared. [...]  
  
Y a-t-il des questions auxquelles aucune science ne répond ?  
Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

When, however, we speak of philosophy as a *criticism* of knowledge, it is necessary to impose a certain limitation. If we adopt the attitude of the complete sceptic, placing ourselves wholly outside all knowledge, and asking, from this outside position, to be compelled to return within the circle of knowledge, we are demanding what is impossible, and our scepticism can never be refuted. For all refutation must begin with some piece of knowledge which the disputants share ; from blank doubt, no argument can begin. Hence the criticism of knowledge which philosophy employs must not be of this destructive kind, if any result is to be achieved. Against this absolute scepticism, no *logical* argument can be advanced. But it is not difficult to see that scepticism of this kind is unreasonable. Descartes’ ‘methodical doubt’, with which modern philosophy began, is not of this kind, but is rather the kind of criticism which we are asserting to be the essence of philosophy. His ‘methodical doubt’ consisted in doubting whatever seemed doubtful ; in pausing, with each apparent piece of knowledge, to ask himself whether, on reflection, he could feel certain that he really knew it. This is the kind of criticism which constitutes philosophy. Some knowledge, such as knowledge of the existence of our sense-data, appears quite indubitable, however calmly and thoroughly we reflect upon it. In regard to such knowledge, philosophical criticism does not require that we should abstain from belief. But there are beliefs—such, for example, as the belief that physical objects exactly resemble our sense-data—which are entertained until we begin to reflect, but are found to melt away when subjected to a close inquiry. [...]

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?  
Toute croyance est-elle contraire à la raison ?

CHAPTER XV

THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY

Having now come to the end of our brief and very incomplete review of the problems of philosophy, it will be well to consider, in conclusion, what is the value of philosophy and why it ought to be studied. It is the more necessary to consider this question, in view of the fact that many men, under the influence of science or of practical affairs, are inclined to doubt whether philosophy is anything better than innocent but useless trifling, hair-splitting distinctions, and controversies on matters concerning which knowledge is impossible.

This view of philosophy appears to result, partly from a wrong conception of the ends of life, partly from a wrong conception of the kind of goods which philosophy strives to achieve. Physical science, through the medium of inventions, is useful to innumerable people who are wholly ignorant of it ; thus the study of physical science is to be recommended, not only, or primarily, because of the effect on the student, but rather because of the effect on mankind in general. Thus utility does not belong to philosophy. If the study of philosophy has any value at all for others than students of philosophy, it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it. It is in these effects, therefore, if anywhere, that the value of philosophy must be primarily sought.

But further, if we are not to fail in our endeavour to determine the value of philosophy, we must first free our minds from the prejudices of what are wrongly called ‘practical’ men. The ‘practical’ man, as this word is often used, is one who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that men must have food for the body, but is oblivious of the necessity of providing food for the mind. If all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society ; and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body. It is exclusively among the goods of the mind that the value of philosophy is to be found ; and only those who are not indifferent to these goods can be persuaded that the study of philosophy is not a waste of time.  
  
Le besoin est-il l'origine du travail ?  
Quelle différence peut-on faire entre l'esprit et le corps ?

Philosophy, like all other studies, aims primarily at knowledge. The knowledge it aims at is the kind of knowledge which gives unity and system to the body of the sciences, and the kind which results from a critical examination of the grounds of our convictions, prejudices, and beliefs. But it cannot be maintained that philosophy has had any very great measure of success in its attempts to provide definite answers to its questions. If you ask a mathematician, a mineralogist, a historian, or any other man of learning, what definite body of truths has been ascertained by his science, his answer will last as long as you are willing to listen. But if you put the same question to a philosopher, he will, if he is candid, have to confess that his study has not achieved positive results such as have been achieved by other sciences. It is true that this is partly accounted for by the fact that, as soon as definite knowledge concerning any subject becomes possible, this subject ceases to be called philosophy, and becomes a separate science. The whole study of the heavens, which now belongs to astronomy, was once included in philosophy ; Newton’s great work was called ‘the mathematical principles of natural philosophy’. Similarly, the study of the human mind, which was a part of philosophy, has now been separated from philosophy and has become the science of psychology. Thus, to a great extent, the uncertainty of philosophy is more apparent than real : those questions which are aIready capable of definite answers are placed in the sciences, while those only to which, at present, no definite answer can be given, remain to form the residue which is called philosophy.

La philosophie peut-elle parler de la religion ?   
Y a-t-il des questions auxquelles aucune science ne répond ?  
L'art est-il moins nécessaire que la science ?

This is, however, only a part of the truth concerning the uncertainty of philosophy. There are many questions—and among them those that are of the profoundest interest to our spiritual life—which, so far as we can see, must remain insoluble to the human intellect unless its powers become of quite a different order from what they are now. Has the universe any unity of plan or purpose, or is it a fortuitous concourse of atoms ? Is consciousness a permanent part of the universe, giving hope of indefinite growth in wisdom, or is it a transitory accident on a small planet on which life must ultimately become impossible ? Are good and evil of importance to the universe or only to man ? Such questions are asked by philosophy, and variously answered by various philosophers. But it would seem that, whether answers be otherwise discoverable or not, the answers suggested by philosophy are none of them demonstrably true. Yet, however slight may be the hope of discovering an answer, it is part of the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable knowledge. […]

Y a-t-il des questions auxquelles aucune science ne répond ?  
La chance existe t-elle ?  
Qu'est-ce qui a du sens ?  
La conscience fait-elle de l’homme une exception ?   
Comment définir le bien ?  
La détermination du bien n’est-elle qu’une affaire d’opinion ?

Pourquoi un acte est moral ?

La vérité dépend-elle de nous ?

A quoi peut-on reconnaître la vérité ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

The value of philosophy is, in fact, to be sought largely in its very uncertainty. The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason. For such a man the world tends to become definite, finite, obvious; common objects rouse no questions, and unfamiliar possibilities are contemptuously rejected. As soon as we begin to philosophize, on the contrary, we find, as we saw in our opening chapters, that even the most everyday things lead to problems of which only very incomplete answers can be given. Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be ; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never travelled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect.

Notre liberté de pensée a-t-elle des limites ?  
La conscience de l’individu n’est-elle que le reflet de la société à laquelle il appartient ?

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

Commentez cette pensée de Nietzsche: « Ce n'est pas le doute, c'est la certitude qui rend fou. » ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Apart from its utility in showing unsuspected possibilities, philosophy has a value—perhaps its chief value—through the greatness of the objects which it contemplates, and the freedom from narrow and personal aims resulting from this contemplation. The life of the instinctive man is shut up within the circle of his private interests : family and friends may be included, but the outer world is not regarded except as it may help or hinder what comes within the circle of instinctive wishes. In such a life there is something feverish and confined, in comparison with which the philosophic life is calm and free. The private world of instinctive interests is a small one, set in the midst of a great and powerful world which must sooner or later, lay our private world in ruins. Unless we can so enlarge our interests as to include the whole outer world, we remain like a garrison in a beleaguered fortress, knowing that the enemy prevents escape and that ultimate surrender is inevitable. In such a life there is no peace, but a constant strife between the insistence of desire and the powerlessness of will. In one way or another, if our life is to be great and free, we must escape this prison and this strife.

One way of escape is by philosophic contemplation. Philosophic contemplation does not, in its widest survey, divide the universe into two hostile camps— friends and foes, helpful and hostile, good and bad— it views the whole impartially. Philosophic contemplation, when it is unalloyed, does not aim at proving that the rest of the universe is akin to man. All acquisition of knowledge is an enlargement of the Self, but this enlargement is best attained when it is not directly sought. It is obtained when the desire for knowledge is alone operative, by a study which does not wish in advance that its objects should have this or that character, but adapts the Self to the characters which it finds in its objects. This enlargement of Self is not obtained when, taking the Self as it is, we try to show that the world is so similar to this Self that knowledge of it is possible without any admission of what seems alien. The desire to prove this is a form of self-assertion and, like all self-assertion, it is an obstacle to the growth of Self which it desires, and of which the Self knows that it is capable. Self-assertion, in philosophic speculation as elsewhere, views the world as a means to its own ends ; thus it makes the world of less account than Self, and the Self sets bounds to the greatness of its goods. In contemplation, on the contrary, we start from the not-Self, and through its greatness the boundaries of Self are enlarged ; through the infinity of the universe the mind which contemplates it achieves some share in infinity.

For this reason greatness of soul is not fostered by those philosophies which assimilate the universe to Man. Knowledge is a form of union of Self and not-Self ; like all union, it is impaired by dominion, and therefore by any attempt to force the universe into conformity with what we find in ourselves. There is a widespread philosophical tendency towards the view which tells us that Man is the measure of all things, that truth is man-made, that space and time and the world of universals are properties of the mind, and that, if there be anything not created by the mind, it is unknowable and of no account for us. This view, if our previous discussions were correct, is untrue ; but in addition to being untrue, it has the effect of robbing philosophic contemplation of all that gives it value, since it fetters contemplation to Self. What it calls knowledge is not a union with the not-Self, but a set of prejudices, habits, and desires, making an impenetrable veil between us and the world beyond. The man who finds pleasure in such a theory of knowledge is like the man who never leaves the domestic circle for fear his word might not be law.

The true philosophic contemplation, on the contrary, finds its satisfaction in every enlargement of the not-Self, in everything that magnifies the objects contemplated, and thereby the subject contemplating. Everything, in contemplation that is personal or private, everything that depends upon habit, self-interest, or desire, distorts the object, and hence impairs the union which the intellect seeks. By thus making barrier between subject and object, such personal and private things become a prison to the intellect. The free intellect will see as God might see, without a *here* and *now*, without hopes and fears, without the trammels of customary beliefs and traditional prejudices, calmly, dispassionately, in the sole and exclusive desire of knowledge—knowledge as impersonal, as purely contemplative, as it is possible for man to attain. Hence also the free intellect will value more the abstract and universal knowledge into which the accidents of private history do not enter, than the knowledge brought by the senses, and dependent, as such knowledge must be, upon an exclusive and personal point of view and a body whose sense-organs distort as much as they reveal.

The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion. It will view its purposes and desires as parts of the whole, with the absence of insistence that results from seeing them as infinitesimal fragments in a world of which all the rest is unaffected by any one man’s deeds. The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable. Thus contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts, but also it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man’s true freedom, and his liberation from the thraldom of narrow hopes and fears.

Thus, to sum up our discussion of the value of philosophy ; Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves ; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation ; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.

Peut-on aimer son prochain comme soi-même ?

Est-ce réaliste de prétendre pouvoir aimer tous les hommes ?

Dans tout amour n'aime t-on que soi-même ?

Pour aimer autrui faut-il le connaître ?

Le désir nous éloigne-t-il du vrai ?

Prendre conscience de soi est-ce devenir étranger à soi ?

Est-on soi même ou le devient-on ?

Ne sommes-nous que la somme des choix que nous faisons ?

Exister, est-ce agir ?

L'exigence de justice et l'exigence de liberté sont-elles séparables ?

Le juste et l'injuste ne sont-ils que des conventions ?

Toute prise de conscience est-elle libératrice ?

Pourquoi voulons-nous être libres ?

Notre liberté de pensée a-t-elle des limites ?

La conscience de l’individu n’est-elle que le reflet de la société à laquelle il appartient ?

Le bonheur est-il le but de la philosophie ?

Peut-on percevoir sans juger ?

Le temps est-il la limite de l’homme ?

L’homme doit-il se résigner à mourir ?

Quel besoin avons-nous de chercher la vérité ?

Le doute: Une force ou une faiblesse ?

Peut-on être sûr d'avoir raison ?

Comment définir le bien ?

Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 1912 – Introduction by John Perry, 1996