



Dr. Anab Whitehouse

*Philosophical
Perspectives*

© 2018,
Anab Whitehouse
Interrogative Imperative Institute
Brewer, Maine
04412

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For Hilary Putnam, Morton White, John Rawls, and Robert Nozick who each – in his own way – introduced me to processes of thinking critically about a great many issues ... as well as for Dr. M.Q. Baig who helped introduce me to an entirely different way of engaging many of these same issues.

Table of Contents

Preface – page 7

1.) The Hermeneutics of Experience – page 13

2.) The General Character of the Horizon – page 39

3.) Husserl and the Source of Apodicticity – page 71

4.) Locke and Innate Ideas – page 91

5.) Identifying Reference – page 111

6.) Meaning – page 219

7.) Belief and Knowledge – page 309

8.) Building Models – page 369

9.) Freud, Jung and Myths – page 493

10.) Return of the Hero – page 519

11.) Ma & Pa T. Riarchy Lose Their Minds – page 553

12.) Mystical Reflections – page 581

13.) Mapping Mental Spaces (Appendix) – page 625

Preface

Some of the best books I have read were ones with which I had many disagreements and in relation to which I developed an array of criticisms. Nevertheless, those books challenged me to rigorously reflect on different issues and, in the process, not only helped me to clarify my own thinking about this or that topic, but, as well, induced me to pursue a variety of issues into mental spaces with which I was not familiar or, necessarily, even comfortable. Such books assisted me to push the boundaries of, as well as re-work the contents of, the envelope containing my methods for mapping mental spaces.

Consequently, I don't think it matters whether a reader agrees or disagrees with what is said in the present book. As long as what is written here induces a person to work toward becoming more competent in the methodology of working to understand various philosophical perspectives, then this work will have served one of its purposes.

Many people believe that philosophy is a discipline that helps one to gain insight into how to go about gaining answers to some of the great questions of life concerning ontology, metaphysics, ethics, identity, and the like. I do not share that view of things, nor do I work out of such a framework of understanding with respect to engaging philosophical issues.

Nonetheless, I do think that philosophy – when pursued appropriately – has tremendous practical potential. Issues revolving about logic, thinking, conceptual frameworks, methodology, consistency, proof, analysis, model-building, meaning, belief, and knowledge all have numerous ramifications for enhancing or weakening the viability of the methodological processes through which one seeks to engage experience.

Being able to ask the right kind of question can save one a great deal of time that might otherwise have been spent wandering down fruitless paths of exploration. Being able to develop and apply the right kind of diagnostic system can assist one to repair, replace, and correct processes of reflection that might be dysfunctional ... that is, which might be problem generators rather than problem solvers.

As intimated earlier, I do not believe that philosophy can transport one to destinations such as: truth, wisdom, reality, or justice. However, I do believe that philosophy can, under the proper circumstances, offer an individual something like a tool chest that might just help an individual to maintain certain aspects of one mode of existential transport – namely, rational thinking – in relatively good running order so that a person can continue the quest to journey toward the horizons of truth, wisdom, reality, and justice through other means ... at least to whatever extent such things can be discovered and understood by human beings.

In one sense, the material in the present book constitutes a series of exercises involving different problems that are entailed by issues of: hermeneutics, innate ideas, apodicticity (or certainty), belief, meaning, model-building, psychology, mythology, mysticism, and so on. Perhaps, what is most important about these exercises is that they provide an individual with opportunities to engage issues, topics, and questions while critically reflecting on not only what is being said by me but, as well, to critically reflect on what is going on within the reader, as she or he works through the material.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with what is being expressed through the following material is, as noted previously, largely irrelevant. The object of the various exercises in the present work is to induce a reader to engage, analyze, question, reflect upon, critique, and improve on (where necessary) the process of mapping mental spaces.

There are no definitive answers given in *Philosophical Perspectives*. There are, however, a lot of possibilities that are presented for consideration.

At the end of this book is an appendix entitled: '*Mapping Mental Spaces*', and it gives expression to sort of a distilled version of what is going on -- methodologically speaking -- in the rest of *Philosophical Perspectives*. In a sense, the chapters of this book are the appendix writ large in the context of specific topics and problems.

The contents of the chapters of *Philosophical Perspectives* constitute applications or reflections of the principles that are set forth in the appendix. In this sense, the chapters of this book represent something of a transform space that is generated when one activates

the operational principles that are inherent in the aforementioned appendix.

The format of the appendix is, in part, homage to -- or an acknowledgment of -- *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Ludwig Wittgenstein. However, there is no one-to-one mapping correspondence between the numbered premises in the appendix of *Philosophical Perspectives* and Wittgenstein's system of numbering premises in his work.

More than thirty years ago, I encountered the *Tractatus*. Because there were many issues in Wittgenstein's work that I considered problematic, the appendix in *Philosophical Perspectives* is, in a sense, something of a response in kind to the *Tractatus*.

Going through Wittgenstein's exercise induced me to begin thinking about a variety of issues that have continued to haunt the corridors of my mind over the more than three decades that have passed since my initial reading of the *Tractatus*. Perhaps, the present work might help prompt this or that reader to become involved in a journey of a similar nature.

I first encountered the *Tractatus* when taking a course with Hillary Putnam at Harvard. Before switching over to Social Relations, I took other courses in philosophy with John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Morton White, and a few others.

In the case of Rawls and Nozick, they were -- at the time I took their courses -- both working through material that would shape their first books -- *A Theory of Justice* and *Anarchy, State and Utopia* -- respectively. That material served, in many ways, as the primary content of the courses that I took with them, and, as such, helped introduce me to the point-counterpoint of philosophical exploration.

I did moderately well in some of the courses to which I alluded above, and I did less well in some of the other courses in philosophy that I sampled. In many ways and for a variety of reasons -- having more to do with my mental space at the time than with the content of such courses or their instructors -- I struggled with philosophy early on, and this was one of the reasons why I switched majors and began pursuing psychology rather than philosophy.

Yet, I soon found that many of the problems, questions, and issues that I began to discover in psychology were only variations on a theme with respect to the kinds of problems, questions, and issues that earlier I had engaged and by which I had been confronted – however dimly at the time – in philosophy. In fact, many of these same issues re-surfaced when I began to explore, and take an interest in, the realms of mysticism and spirituality.

Philosophical Perspectives is pretty much accessible to everyone. Nonetheless, it contains challenges and difficulties here and there.

Taken collectively, the chapters and appendix of this book constitute something of a 'How To' book. In other words, by going through the exercises (i.e., chapters) and engaging, reflecting on, challenging, and questioning what is written, one will be journeying toward a better understanding of what is involved in the process of mapping mental spaces in one's own life – and, this will be true irrespective of whether, or not, one agrees with me on this or that topic or theme.

As stated before, *Philosophical Perspectives* is not – strictly speaking -- about truth, purpose, identity, wisdom, reality, justice or the like. That is, once one travels through the pages of this book, one will not have arrived at a definitive understanding of what the nature of truth or reality is.

Nonetheless, after completing *this work*, I do believe that an individual will have a much better appreciation of the critical problems, issues, and questions that surround any attempt to work toward grasping the nature of truth and reality than might be the case prior to reading the present work. As such, *Philosophical Perspectives* gives expression to a journey rather than a destination, and if one does not like traveling through the conceptual countryside, then one is unlikely to feel any sort of affinity for these two volumes.

Nonetheless, I believe that *Philosophical Perspectives* is a very good example of what philosophy has to offer when pursued in what I consider to be an appropriate way ... although you might disagree with me on this. But if you do disagree with the perspective being given expression through this book, then that's okay as well, since these sorts of disagreements are likely to be due to a reader's constructively

critical engagement of my book ... something that is quite consistent with the purposes underlying this work.

The topographical landscape of *Philosophical Perspectives* encompasses a wide variety of topics. These include: epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, semantics, mythology, mysticism, and psychology.

Consequently, a reader will have an opportunity to learn a fair amount about the themes, problems, and possibilities that populate those sorts of landscapes. In addition, the journey that is laid out has considerable heuristic potential with respect to inducing readers to actively engage some of the great questions of life involving: truth, wisdom, reality, knowledge, mind, identity, purpose, and justice.

Naturally, if you or any of your IM team should be apprehended by hostile forces during the course of your mission with respect to *Philosophical Perspectives*, I will disavow all knowledge of that undertaking. Good luck!

Chapter 1: The Hermeneutics of Experience

Whatever the nature of one's philosophical position, generally speaking there is likely to be an acceptance of the reality of one's own individual experience. Even if the contents of one's experience were assumed to be totally illusory, there still exists, nonetheless, the undeniable presence of experience qua experience.

A question that seems to continually bubble to the surface in relation to such experience is the following: How is experience possible at all? This question not only acknowledges the reality of experience, it also seeks to explore what the source and nature of that reality is.

In other words, the question points in the direction of fundamental principles or themes which, if discoverable, could give insight into the very ground of experience itself and how experience of such structural character is possible. The reality and character of such principles are the primary focus of what might be referred to as 'absolute metaphysics'.

Objectivity, Significance and Hermeneutics

In his book, *Hermeneutics*, Richard Palmer asserts:

"Dialogue, not dissection, opens up the world of a literary work. Disinterested objectivity is not appropriate to the understanding of a literary work."¹

Palmer's primary interest in his book is to develop a suitable framework for understanding literature. Nonetheless, the discussion throughout his book indicates, quite clearly, that the problems of interpretation surrounding literature are, by and large, the same sort of problems encountered by anyone who seeks to interpret written or cultural works in general.

In any event, there seems to be an assumption implicit in the foregoing quote. The assumption is this: in order for analysis to be objective, it must be 'disinterested and removed' from the object being analyzed.

The foregoing quote also indicates that what is required in literary analysis is not disinterested objectivity but something else. This 'something else' must provide one with a means of entering into an intimate dialogue with the work to be examined or explored. This perspective raises several issues.

First of all, there is the issue that attempts to deal with what a work (literary or otherwise) means in and of itself. What is the significance or purpose of such a work? Why does it exist?

In addition, there is the issue of evaluation concerning a given work. One would like to know the extent, if any, to which a given work either accurately describes some aspect of reality/experience or provides some degree of insight into such issues.

However, no matter how deeply into dialogue one ventures with a given work and no matter how subjectively involved one becomes with that work, one has difficulty in understanding how one can avoid the issue of objectivity. Even with respect to the problem of a work's meaning within its own frame of reference, one runs into the issue of objectivity, in one way or another.

After all, before one can be said to understand a work (and aside from the issue of whether or not one agrees with the work's perspective), one must go through a methodological process of some sort that is designed to help one eliminate false conceptions and inappropriate ideas concerning the work's meaning, purpose, significance, and so on. This process of elimination is an expression of objectivity (attempted or actual) at work.

For example, one of the terms used by Palmer is the idea of surrender. This is part of the conceptual equipment Palmer feels is necessary in order for an individual to be able to come to understand a literary work as that work originally was intended to be understood by the author of the text.

However, the would-be interpreter of a given work needs to guard against surrendering to a mistaken conception of the work being examined. Indeed, there is often a tendency for an individual to surrender to his or her own ideas about a work's meaning rather than surrender to the actual meaning of the work as conceived by its author. Consequently, considered in terms of the idea of surrender,

objectivity would be a matter of distinguishing between: (a) what truly is a reflection of the intended meaning of a work; (b) what does not belong to such an intended meaning and is, instead, imposed from outside (i.e., from the would-be interpreter).

A short while after the previous quote, Palmer, in an attempt to add further distance between hermeneutics and natural science, says:

"Hermeneutics is the study of understanding, especially the task of understanding texts. Natural science has methods of understanding objects; 'works' require a hermeneutic, a 'science' of understanding appropriate to works as works."²

While one can sympathize with the idea that not necessarily everything needs to be investigated in the same way natural science advocates, and while one might agree that inquiry must display a flexibility that is sensitive to the idiosyncrasies of whatever is being studied, one might not be warranted in separating human works such as literature from the natural sciences, -- reserving hermeneutical considerations only for the former. The natural sciences also constitute works or creations of human beings involving the text of human experience, and in this respect these sciences share a common set of themes with their literary counterparts.

Furthermore, the issue of understanding human works, such as literature, cannot be limited to discovering the meaning of a work merely in terms of itself. Eventually, one must ask: what does that work tell me, if anything, about the nature of reality or the place of human beings in such reality? Or, what insights does a given work provide one with respect to what makes experience, of the sort to which the work makes identifying reference, possible?

Without this added dimension of questioning the value of a work - of trying to place a work in the context of experience in general -- the process of establishing the meaning of a work largely becomes little more than a pointless puzzle. Indeed, one might seriously question why one should be bothered attempting to solve such a puzzle at all. Is it merely an amusing way to pass time, or is there some point to it that leads beyond the work?

Presumably, there is a point to a literary creation that transcends that work qua work. Moreover, presumably this point coincides with that of doing natural science. In other words, one seeks to better understand the nature of different facets of experience, as well as to better understand that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

Interpretation and Language

According to Palmer:

"One of the essential elements for an adequate hermeneutical theory, and by extension an adequate theory of literary interpretation, is a sufficiently broad conception of interpretation itself Interpretation is ... perhaps the most basic act of human thinking; indeed, existing itself might itself be said to be a constant process of interpretation.

"Interpretation is more encompassing than the linguistic world in which man lives, for even animals exist by interpreting ... Yet human existence as we know it does in fact always involve language, and thus any theory of human interpreting must deal with the phenomenon of language Language shapes man's seeing and his thought -- both his conception of himself and his world ... His very vision of reality is shaped by language ... If the matter is considered deeply it becomes apparent that language is the 'medium' in which we live, and move, and have our being."³

Without wishing to deny or down play the tremendous effect that language can have on one's conceptions of, and interactions with, reality, the "medium in which we live, move and have our being" appears to be the phenomenology of experience and not language. Language represents but one manifestation and expression (although, granted, an important one) of the phenomenology of experience.

Even though Palmer starts off, in the foregoing quote, by saying: "interpretation is more encompassing than the linguistic world in which man lives", Palmer seems to shift emphasis somewhat toward the latter part of that quote. In effect, he appears to claim that language is the chief architect underlying the drawing of interpretive blueprints.

This perspective is problematic, however, since the process of seeking an understanding extends far beyond the horizons of language.

Psychologists have been putting forth evidence for many years now which strongly indicates that pre-linguistic children exhibit a wide variety of intellectual activities and capacities. What is more important, even the learning of the semantics of a language presupposes intellectual processes that might not be primarily linguistic in nature.

In other words, in order for an individual to be able to grasp the connection between a word (or its usage) and the complexities of the structural character of those aspects of experience to which the word makes identifying reference, an insight or realization must occur that is itself not necessarily a function of language. That is, language, in and of itself, might not be able to give the required understanding -- even though language might help draw the individual's attention to certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field and even though language might serve as a catalyst for helping to speed up the rate at which an understanding is achieved.

This process of hermeneutical insight or realization is the phenomenological ground in which the semantics of any language is rooted. Thus, in this sense, one of the basic reasons semantics is possible is because there is an ocean of experience and understanding, past and present, in which language is immersed.

This experience and understanding are colored by, among other things, sensory, emotional, motivational approach/avoidance themes, likes/dislikes and so on ... all of which are non-linguistic in character. In addition, the inferential links that run, like currents, through such experiences establish networks that are capable of shaping, and being shaped by, language but that are not necessarily reducible to language. They are, in a sense, prerequisites to the possibility of linguistic experience.

In short, both the learning and usage of a language is directed, shaped, organized, colored and oriented by aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that stand outside of language and that predate the appearance of language. Syntax and semantics emerge in the context of these capabilities.

Even if one wishes to adopt a Chomskian-like position in which the principles of 'universal grammar' are considered to be innate -- in some manner -- within human beings, there must be capabilities that are able to identify the aspects of that universal grammar that reflect the syntax of local language usage. Such matching capabilities cannot necessarily be considered to be linguistic in character without risking making anything and everything a function of language, and, thereby, losing any sense of what language is and is not.

The aforementioned recognition and matching processes are an expression of a more general set of capabilities through which a wide variety of congruencies and similarities are established. In fact, through these processes, congruencies are generated that link language usage together with the structural character of various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field.

The foregoing comments suggest there is no need to suppose that the processes of understanding and interpretation are linear, exclusive functions of language. In fact, something quite the opposite might be the case.

Thus, instead of reducing understanding to being a function of language (although this is the case sometimes), understanding also can be seen as a manifestation of an internal dialectic into which one enters. This internal dialectic has a variety of modes of expression such as: (1) reflexive awareness, (2) identifying reference, (3) characterization, (4) the interrogative imperative, (5) inferential mapping operations, and (6) congruence functions.

These modes of expression permit the individual to explore, test, analyze, probe, criticize, evaluate, link, match, question, and locate various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field, together with the ontology that makes a phenomenology of such structural character possible. Through the aforementioned internal dialectic, themes, values, principles, rules, concepts, and ideas, are generated as well as abandoned. Through this dialectic, word usage is altered, modified, and infused with new significance.

The understandings to which the words of a language attempt to give reference do not wait for a new word or usage to be invented before they come into existence. New words are invented, old words are invested with new meanings, and alternate usages are developed.

This is all done according to the manner in which the structural character of underlying frameworks of understanding change their shapes as a function of processes that identify, reflect upon, characterize, question, inferentially map, and establish congruence relationships among a variety of different aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field.

When language is considered to be the fundamental architect of understanding -- rather than merely the construction company employed to translate the architectural blueprints into concrete structures -- problems tend to emerge on a variety of fronts. As a result, language is seen as an end instead of a means. That is, language is considered to be the official, authoritative master of understanding, instead of just one of the doorways through which understanding can be engaged.

Proclamation need not preclude information

As an example of the sort of problem being alluded to in the foregoing, consider the following quote from Palmer's book. In this quote Palmer is discussing the problems associated with delivering an oral rendition of some given written work. Palmer intends to use this discussion to begin his examination of the three main themes he believes are inherent in the Greek verb *hermeneuein* (to interpret) and the Greek noun *hermeneia* (interpretation) from which the term *hermeneutics* is derived.

"Oral interpretation is not a passive response to the signs on the paper like a phonograph playing a record; it is a creative matter, a performance, like that of a pianist interpreting a piece of music ... the reproducer must grasp the meaning of the words in order to express even one sentence. How does this mysterious grasping of meaning take place? The process is a puzzling paradox: in order to read, it is necessary to understand in advance what will be said, and yet this understanding must come from the reading."⁴

Palmer seems to be confusing two different levels of understanding in his alleged paradox. On the one hand, one can read a

sentence because one knows the general meanings of the individual words of that sentence (assuming, of course, one encounters no words with which one is unacquainted in, at least, a rough fashion). In other words, one has a general knowledge of the way in which the semantic and syntactic features of a language operate. However, on the other hand, coming to understand the intended meanings of the author of a sentence, involves much more than a general knowledge of how the semantic and syntactic features of a language work.

In trying to grasp the meaning of a sentence in the sense in which the author intended it to be understood, one must decide whether the meaning of the sentence can be limited to the general meanings usually associated with the words that make up the sentence in question. Quite frequently, the intended meaning underlying a sentence attempts to expand upon, modify, develop, or limit the generally accepted meaning of various words.

In other words, the underlying, intended meaning attempts to provide words with more precise boundaries and structural properties in order to remove some of the looseness and ambiguity that surrounds normal word usage. Consequently, the would-be interpreter of a sentence must study that sentence for clues that suggest possibilities of tone, slant, emphasis, orientation, attitude, direction, mood and so on that add nuances, structural complexities and resolution to the general or usual semantic meanings associated with the words being used in a given sentence.

Palmer elaborates on the idea of hermeneuein, in its sense of asserting or proclaiming or saying out loud, by providing an illustration from theology. At one point, Palmer remarks:

"Christian theology must remember that a 'theology of the Word' is not a theology of the written word but of the spoken Word, the Word that confronts one in the 'language event' of spoken words ... Certainly the task of theology is to explain the Word in the language and context of each age, but it also must express and proclaim the Word in the vocabulary of the age ... The Bible's language operates in a totally different medium from a direction manual for building something or an information sheet. 'Information' is a significant word; it points to a use of language different from that found in the Bible. It appeals to the

rational faculty and not the whole personality; we do not have to call upon our personal to risk ourselves in order to understand information ... But the Bible is not information; it is a message, a 'proclamation', and it is meant to be read aloud, and meant to be heard. It is not a set of scientific principles; it is a reality of a different order from that of scientific truth. It is a reality that is to be understood as an historical story ... The interpretational processes appropriate to historical happenings, or to the happenings theology or literature tries to understand."⁵

Even if one were to accept Palmer's claim that the Bible "is a message, a proclamation" and not information, nevertheless, one still might ask what the nature of the proclamation or message is that is being given in the Bible. In other words, if the reply were to come (as Palmer might maintain, given the foregoing quote) that the message or proclamation of the Bible is an historical happening that appeals to the whole personality, one still could proceed to inquire about the nature of that appeal, how it takes place, and what is its significance.

From the perspective of one who believes in God, the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms, the Qur'an, or any proclamation that is considered to be revealed Truth, these 'proclamations' give expression to a dimension of Grace. This Grace is believed to be bestowed on one who recites, or a person who listens to, the sacred text, providing the activity is undertaken with the proper attitude of sincerity and humility.

Nevertheless, part of the dimension of Grace being conveyed resides in the character of the Truth, both literal as well as symbolic, that is being communicated through the text. Consequently, one who believes might very well maintain that a legitimate book of revelation can be engaged on many levels ... only one of which entails accurate information.

One should make a distinction, however, between peripheral and essential information. For example, in terms of a religious believer's perspective, the fact that the Los Angeles Dodgers won the 1988 World Series might be a piece of accurate information. On the other hand, such a piece of information is clearly peripheral (even if the believer were assumed to be a Dodger fan) when compared to the sort of

essential information that is believed to be transmitted through a true revelation.

The essential information of revelation is capable of inspiring and uplifting an individual's spiritual condition in a variety of ways. One of these ways is to confront and challenge the individual with respect to the sorts of weaknesses and moral blindness to which most of us are far too vulnerable.

Confrontation by this kind of information can be very hard and bitter to take since if accepted, it tends to destroy so many illusions that one has about oneself. Thinking one is generous, caring, modest, open and loving, a person might see his/her true condition of selfishness, pride, arrogance, and hostility reflected in the parables, descriptions and historical incidents that are related in the sacred text.

When such essential information is seriously taken to heart, an individual needs to risk herself or himself. Or, more precisely, one needs to risk losing the ego to which one is attached. In order to be able to accomplish this, one must examine and re-evaluate the meaning and significance of all past and present experience against the standard of revealed truth that is being communicated through the essential information of a sacred text.

Apparently, in his eagerness to get away from what he perceives as the foreboding and distorting shadow that the scientific model of investigation has cast over literary and religious studies (e.g., by denying that one of the levels of a proclamation concerns information), Palmer has introduced what, in many cases, might be an unnecessary set of divisions between, on the one hand, the aim and intent of science (which, ultimately, is to uncover the truth), and, on the other hand, the aim and intent of other kinds of interpretational processes such as history, theology and literature (which also, ultimately, is to uncover the truth).

As a result, one ends up with a disjointed sense or understanding of the world or reality. Such disjointed understanding often tends to create more problems than it resolves.

Among other things, one's experience becomes compartmentalized into separate boxes of science, history, literature, theology and so on. Consequently, one has little sense of how, or if, one

compartment is related to other compartments. Yet, all of these boxes are challenged by a common problem: namely, the mystery of experience. Moreover, all of these boxes employ various kinds of methodologies that attempt to determine the extent to which the contents of the boxes are reflective of, or provide insights into, the nature of the reality that makes experience of such structural character possible.

Pre-understanding

In developing the second dimension of hermeneutic – which Palmer considers to be 'explanation' (the first dimension being the aspect of proclamation discussed above) -- Palmer says the following:

"... meaning is a matter of context; the explanatory procedure provides the arena for understanding. Only within a specific context is an event meaningful ... Significance is a relationship to the listener's own projects and intentions; it is not something possessed by Jesus in himself outside of history and outside of a relationship to his hearers. We might say that an object does not have a significance outside of a relationship to someone, and that the relationship determines the significance. To speak of an object apart from a perceiving subject is a conceptual error caused by an inadequate realistic conception of perception and the world.

"... explanatory interpretation makes us aware that explanation is contextual, is 'horizontal'. It must be made within a horizon of already granted meanings and intentions. In hermeneutics, this area of assumed understanding is called pre-understanding It might be asked what horizon of interpretation a great literary text inhabits, and then how the horizon of an individual's own world of intentions, hopes and pre-interpretations is related to it. This merging of two horizons must be considered a basic element in all explanatory interpretation."⁶

Having said the foregoing, Palmer goes on to describe what he terms the "hermeneutical problem". The hermeneutical problem is actually a variation on the paradox previously considered in the discussion of oral interpretation.

In the earlier paradox, Palmer puzzled over how to come to grips with the fact that: (a) understanding a text seemed to be a prerequisite for reading a text, but (b) understanding was what the text was supposed to supply. Consequently, how could one possibly have the necessary understanding required to read a text when, supposedly, only a reading of the text could provide such an understanding? Understanding seems to presuppose itself in the reading of a text.

The hermeneutical problem, which is similar to the foregoing puzzle, manifests itself through the notion of pre-understanding. This is the "horizon of already granted meanings and intentions" with which a given work is approached and that makes such an approach possible. Thus, pre-understanding appears to shape and define the process of inquiry. According to Palmer, this means that the object of study becomes a function of the mode of inquiry. Consequently, on this view, one really cannot separate the object of study from the method used to study the object.

However, if the foregoing perspective is correct, then how, Palmer wonders, can the individual discover a means of permitting the horizons surrounding his or her inquiry to merge with the actual meaning and intentions that are given expression through the work being studied? In other words, how is one to arrive at a proper explanation of a given text since, according to Palmer, methodology is rooted in pre-understanding, and such pre-understanding might appreciably alter or distort the structural character of what one is attempting to explain?

Part of Palmer's so-called hermeneutical problem might be due more to an unnecessary restriction on the idea of 'horizon' than it is due to any philosophical crisis or paradox inherent in the process of hermeneutics. More specifically, Palmer has construed horizon in terms of a set of parameters of meaning and intention that accompany, guide and shape a person's exploration of some text or work. Without denying that this kind of pre-understanding does exist, one need not suppose that the capacity of a horizon to guide and shape understanding must automatically mean such a capacity is inherently antagonistic to the individual's working toward a merging of horizons with the structural character of the text being engaged.

Part of what is entailed by the process of merging horizons with a given text is an altering of one's own horizons, or pre-understanding, as a result of the dialectic that takes place between the horizons of a text and the horizons of the individual engaging that text. This dialectic is given expression through the way an individual explores, probes, questions, reflects on, analyzes, experiments with, and is challenged by, a given text. Through such a process, one has an opportunity to change the shape and content of one's pre-understanding in a way that would be congruent with, or reflect, or merge horizons with, the structural character of the text.

In the previous quote, Palmer claims that "significance is a relationship to the listener's own projects and intentions". Furthermore, he maintains that objects do not have significance outside of such a relationship. In other words, Palmer's position (which seems to have a sort of Berkelian-like overtone to it) is predicated on the assumption that significance, if not reality, is something that only can be conferred by virtue of the perceiving relationship through which something is invested with significance by the individual.

The very idea of a hermeneutical problem in which one seeks to find a way of merging horizons with another point of view suggests Palmer believes, at least tacitly, that there really does exist significance, of sorts, quite apart from the projects, intentions and meanings of an individual's personal horizons. If this were not the case, then the hermeneutical problem would be a purely illusory one in which there is no point to bringing about a merging of horizons between individual and text since all significance would be purely a function of the individual's understanding.

In any event, there seems to be at least two senses of 'significance'. One sense gives expression to what a given individual means or intends by that which the individual thinks, says and does.

The other sense of significance is deeper and more encompassing than the first sense. In effect, this second sense raises questions about the significance of an individual's conception of significance as measured against the reality of that which makes experience -- through which the individual's ideas about significance arise -- possible at all. Just as one can ask about the extent to which one's

current perspective encompasses the meaning and intent of a given text (i.e., to what extent do horizons, so too, one can ask about the extent to which one's conception of the significance of some aspect of experience coincides with the actual significance of that aspect of experience.

Irrespective of whether one believes reality is, ultimately, rooted in a Divine Being, or one believes the physical universe is all that exists (or some other alternative), one cannot escape being confronted by the 'fact' there is some standard(s) of absolute metaphysics against which all individual conceptions of significance are to be measured. Yet, in effect, Palmer implies that the latter sense of significance is not possible since it is not a function of the meanings and intentions of individuals that, according to Palmer, are the sole sources of significance.

Translation: the heart of hermeneutics

The third dimension inherent in the meaning of hermeneutics (proclamation being the first dimension and explanation the second) concerns the idea of translation. Palmer believes:

"The phenomenon of translation is the very heart of hermeneutics: in it one confronts the basic hermeneutical situation of having to piece together the meaning of the text, working with grammatical, historical and other tools to decipher an ancient text. Yet, there are always two worlds, the world of the text and that of the reader, and consequently there is the need for Hermes to 'translate' from one to the other."⁷

However, Palmer goes on to point out that when one attempts to translate, for instance, the Bible, then one is confronted with a variety of problems. Most noticeable among these problems are the differences in language, times and culture that exist between the 'modern' era and the days in which the Bible was originally recorded.

After all, how does one compare the problems associated with the modern capacity for annihilation through biological, chemical and nuclear accidents/warfare with the problems of Biblical days? Or, how does one compare the problems generated by the increasing scarcity

of basic resources (including food and water) in modern times with the difficulties encountered by Biblical peoples?

Do not Biblical days, Palmer asks, constitute a "radically different context" from those of the modern era? How can people of today hope to merge horizons with the people of Biblical times?

Palmer contends that the task of translation:

"... is to bring what is strange, unfamiliar, and obscure in its meaning into something meaningful that speaks our language."⁸

To accomplish such a task, Palmer maintains one must show the original significance of the given work. If one is successful in accomplishing this, then the individual of modern times might come to appreciate the significance of the work in question for him or her.

Moreover, in order for the individual to be able to show (i.e., translate) the significance of the original work, the individual must uncover the "metaphysics" and "ontology" of the work being engaged. For Palmer, "metaphysics" involves determining the "definition of reality", whereas "ontology" gives expression to the "character of being-in-the-world".

Not surprisingly, Palmer points out there is a sharp divergence of opinion in scholastic circles concerning the character of the process of 'uncovering' that is to take place through translation. For example, at one point, Palmer informs us that:

"There is the tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, whose adherents look to hermeneutics as a general body of methodological principles that underlie interpretation. And there are the followers of Heidegger, who see hermeneutics as a philosophical exploration of the character and requisite conditions for all understanding."⁹

Palmer proceeds to say that, in his opinion, the two leading advocates of these competing views in the present era are Emilio Betti and Hans-Georg Gadamer.

"Betti, in the tradition of Dilthey, aims at providing a general theory of how 'objectivations' of human experience can be interpreted, and Betti argues strongly for the autonomy of the object of interpretation and the possibility of historical 'objectivity' in making valid interpretations. Gadamer, following Heidegger, orients his thinking to the more philosophical question of what understanding itself is, and, in doing so, he argues, with equal conviction, that understanding is an historical act and, as such, it always is connected to the present. To speak of 'objectively valid interpretations' is naive, according to Gadamer, since to do so assumes that it is possible to understand from some standpoint outside of history."¹⁰

In an attempt to help place Gadamer's side of the controversy in proper perspective, Palmer undertakes a discussion of Rudolf Bultmann. Although Palmer acknowledges that Bultmann's work has its own peculiar flavor and emphasis that distinguishes it from the work of both Heidegger and Gadamer, nonetheless, Palmer places Bultmann on the Gadamer/Heidegger side of the fence in relation to the academic schism concerning the nature of hermeneutics.

Subjectivity and historical truth

One of the predominant themes of Palmer's discussion of Bultmann's conception of hermeneutics focuses on the issue of subjective bias that Bultmann believes can never be eliminated from one's view of history. In Palmer's words:

"...each interpretation of history or an historical document is guided by a certain interest, which in turn is based on a certain preliminary understanding of the subject. Out of this interest and understanding, the 'question' put to it is shaped. Without these, no question could arrive, and there would be no interpretation. All interpretation, then, is guided by the interpreter's 'pre-understanding'.... However objectively he may pursue his subject, the historian cannot escape his own understanding."¹¹

Because an individual allegedly cannot escape from the pre-understanding that ties the individual to the object of study, Palmer likens the situation to a variation on Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. In other words, in both cases, the methodology one uses to observe a given aspect of reality alters the structural character of the way in which the object being engaged behaves or manifests itself. Moreover, in both cases, the subject and object seem to become so inextricably intertwined during the process of observation or methodological engagement that one cannot tell where the subject leaves off and the object begins.

As far as generating an historical understanding is concerned, the bottom line of the foregoing is that history can never be seen for what it objectively is. There always will be individual pre-understandings that prevent the individual from arriving at an unbiased view of the nature and structure of history.

Therefore, according to that perspective, history always must be seen from within history in terms of the interests, meanings and intentions of an individual's pre-understanding. History can never be seen from some vantage point that is objective or external to history.

One question that arises in relation to the above point of view is the following one. Why must historical understanding be required to be seen from some standpoint outside of history in order for that understanding to be considered as an objectively valid interpretation?

Seemingly, to be objective, historical understanding needs to express a correct, epistemological engagement of history on one or more levels of interpretation. If one's historical methodology leads one to the truth (or parts thereof) concerning the structural character of certain aspects of historical events, then presumably, the primary condition for objectivity would seem to be satisfied. Whether such methodology stands inside or outside of history is irrelevant.

One can examine the foregoing issue from another perspective. One might inquire whether all human "interests" must be biased in a closed-ended manner. In other words, must one suppose that the pre-understanding with which one begins can never be allowed to get outside of itself and change in a direction that is more reflective of the character of the reality (historical or otherwise) being considered or engaged?

For example, what if the "interest" that initially oriented an individual toward a given engagement of historical events (and which, therefore, shaped how the individual dialectically interacted with those events) was a function of a sincere desire to seek the truth, regardless of where that search might lead? Certainly, seeking the truth is based on some sort of preliminary value system of what one believes is necessary to acquire truth, to whatever extent such truth can be acquired.

However, one doesn't start with only these sorts of values. One also starts with an acknowledgment of one's ignorance concerning the unknown factors, themes, issues, and so on, which surround the subject matter that one is engaging.

Ignorance of some sort always accompanies one's hermeneutical perspective since it marks the horizontal limit of understanding's actual penetration of a given area of experience. As such, ignorance is a shadow haunting pre-understanding.

Furthermore, if seriously and sincerely entertained, ignorance is one of the main subjective factors that initially compel one to seek an interpretation or understanding of some aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field. If one already knew (or thought one knew) what one was going to find, one would not approach a given area of experience or reality as a problem needing to be explored or solved or resolved.

Whatever the nature of an individual's pre-understanding might be with respect to a given issue 'history-as-object' is being studied in order to try to uncover its significance as a reality of experience. In this respect, the problems left unresolved, the questions left unanswered, the inconsistencies left in conflict with one another, and so on, often guide, shape and direct subsequent exploratory and interpretive activity as much as does the pre-understanding with which one began. In short, the unknown and the problematical aspects of experience serve as potential roadways leading away from the present limitations and biases of certain aspects of one's pre-understanding.

Simply because one is part of history doesn't mean one cannot question, explore, criticize, analyze, probe, and reflect upon that of which one is a part. Furthermore, precisely because one is part of history, one cannot ignore the data, problems and questions that arise

in relation to one's engagement of and engagement by historical events.

One's pre-understanding and understanding are answerable to the whole range of one's experience, and they must be matched against, and reconciled with, such experience in a way that will permit one to come to grasp the structural character of that which makes experiences of such structural character possible. Just as one does not passively accept what is presented to one through experience, absolute metaphysical reality does not have to passively accept what we present to it in the way of theories, models, concepts, belief systems and so on. Often times, reality's way of responding to such theories, etc., is, in a manner of speaking, to throw back problems, questions, puzzles, paradoxes, challenges, crises, and so on, in the face of our models and belief systems.

If Bultmann believes history cannot be known objectively, then one might suppose that whatever implications Bultmann claims history has for the Christian faith are entirely arbitrary. One's interpretation of history, whatever its nature, would only represent one's subjective viewpoint and, therefore, would be incapable -- if Bultmann is correct -- of expressing any ultimate or fundamental insight in relation to the actual nature of history.

Presumably, one of the reasons for doing history is not merely to generate interpretations as ends in themselves. Presumably, one seeks to arrive at interpretations that are capable of accurately reflecting various aspects of the structural character of history. Presumably, one seeks interpretations that are capable of providing one with insight into the meaning and significance, if any exists, of historical events.

Yet, Bultmann's perspective, at least as it is related through Palmer, appears to condemn one to inescapable relativity. In other words, Bultmann's position does not appear to offer one anything that would persuade one that his approach to interpretation provides one with a means of discovering anything called 'historical truth' that is independent of, or free from, the biases of the sort of subjectivity that is impermeable to the things in themselves. In short, Bultmann does not appear to provide one with a defensible basis for: (a) accepting Bultmann's position, while, simultaneously, (b) rejecting the theoretical positions of others.

The process of demythologizing

When discussing Bultmann's views in the context of the translation aspect of hermeneutics, Palmer says:

"... the whole world view of the New Testament times clashes with the modern "scientific" or post-deistic world view. This issue is exactly the one which the German theologian Rudolf Bultmann tried to confront with his controversial project of demythologizing. Bultmann notes that the Biblical message is set in the context of a cosmological conception of the heavens above, the earth in the middle, and the underworld below -- the three-level universe. His response to this situation is to assert that the message of the New Testament is not dependent on its cosmology, which is only the context of a message about personal obedience and transformation into a 'new man'. Demythologizing is an attempt to separate the essential message from the cosmological 'mythology' which no modern man can believe."¹²

As far as the claim is concerned that "no modern man can believe" the cosmological mythology of Christianity -- especially its conception of a three-level universe -- one might entertain the following possibility. People of the modern era might be as much a product of the pre-understanding that underlies their modernity as are those who accept the Christian notion of a three-level universe.

If objective, historical truth cannot be determined, then the inability of people of the modern era to believe in a three-level cosmological mythology has nothing to do with the falsehood or inadequacy or inaccuracy of such a mythology. The inability in question is purely a matter of subjective bias or preferences.

Given the foregoing considerations, one might easily argue that what must be demythologized is not some essential view of human beings wrapped up in an allegedly outdated cosmological mythology. What must be demythologized is modern man's apparent unwillingness to see that modernity is inextricably caught up in its own mythology.

This modern mythology is not necessarily better than, or more accurate than, or more insightful than, a three-level Christian cosmological mythology (or any other mythology for that matter). Instead, as would be the case with respect to all mythologies, given the perspective outlined above, the judgments that issue forth from modern mythology are a function of a hierarchy of likes and dislikes rather than a function of being a closer approximation to the truth concerning the nature of reality.

Somewhat ironically, Palmer cites Ricoeur's assessment of the present status of hermeneutical inquiry:

"... there are two very different syndromes of hermeneutics in modern times: one represented by Bultmann's demythologizing, deals lovingly with the symbol in an effort to recover a meaning hidden in it; the other seeks to destroy the symbol as the representation of a false reality. It destroys masks and illusions in a relentless rational effort at 'demystification'."¹³

The irony in the above quote is that Bultmann seems every bit as intent on destroying a certain religious cosmological perspective or world-view (namely, the three-level universe) as were Freud, Nietzsche or Marx, who are individuals that Ricoeur singles out as demystifiers of an iconoclastic bent. Indeed, Bultmann's wish to salvage something from the religious context (i.e., the "hidden meaning") does not alter the essentially destructive effect that Bultmann intends to produce with respect to the three-level cosmology of traditional Christian eschatology.

Bultmann intends to preserve the symbol (in the present case, a religious cosmology) not because it reflects some essential truth, but because it serves as a convenient gateway to that which lies beneath the symbol (i.e., the 'hidden' meaning). Once one has passed through the threshold of this gateway, it can be dispensed with, or relegated to a purely ceremonial role, since, in and of itself, the gateway/symbol entails nothing of essential significance or value. What is of importance is the hidden meaning on the other side of that gateway/symbol.

One wonders, however, why one should accept Bultmann's judgment in this matter. Moreover, even if one were prepared to endorse the general character of his position, one still could ask why one should accept Bultmann's interpretation of the hidden meaning as the correct one. In addition, one could inquire about the justifiability of the methodological criteria that supposedly permit one to identify the true character of the hidden meaning.

The hermeneutics of experience

Although the preceding discussion has been relatively brief, enough has been said to establish the beginnings of a point of view with respect to the idea of construing metaphysics -- in one of its senses -- as the hermeneutics of experience. On the one hand, the general intent of hermeneutics (disregarding, for the moment, differences among the particular aspects of various theoretical approaches) seems to be directed toward uncovering the truth about a given work or text. On the other hand, hermeneutics also seems to be about the influences and shaping factors that surround, as well as permeate, one's attempt to put forth an interpretation that is intended to uncover, or gain access to, some aspect of the truth concerning the phenomenology of the experiential field or that which makes a field of such structural character possible.

In hermeneutics, one not only seeks to come to grips with the significance of a work or text from the perspective of the creator of the text, one also seeks to discover something about the structural character of the interpretive process that links one to texts and works in general. Nevertheless, the determining of a work's significance in terms of its creator's perspective, and the developing some appreciation for how, in general, interpretive understanding operates and unfolds might not represent the end of the matter.

The central issue of hermeneutics is about making sense of experience. One seeks to determine the significance of something in someone else's eyes in order to be in a position to ask the following sort of questions: (1) What significance does the work in question have for oneself? (2) To what extent do individual conceptions of significance (whether one's own conception of that of other individual) reflect the structural character of that to which such conceptions

attempt to give identifying reference? (3) What relevance do individual conceptions of significance have for helping one to understand the structural character, or portions thereof, of the reality that makes possible the sort of experiences through which conceptions of significance are generated?

In order to ask these kinds of question, one necessarily must be concerned about the extent to which one can understand 'understanding'. One also needs to be concerned with the extent to which understanding is capable, under the right sort of circumstances, of accurately reflecting or grasping some aspect of absolute metaphysical reality -- i.e., that which defines the parameters not only of understanding but of that which engages, or is engaged by, understanding and, as well, gives both experience and understanding their structural character or qualities.

While one might use the works and texts of others as a sort of catalyst for thinking about issues of meaning, significance, understanding, reality and so on, one approaches these works through the field of one's own individual field of experience. In effect, one is using these sorts of experience (i.e., the works and texts of others) as a means of coming to terms with the undeniable reality of one's own experience.

The fundamental text or work with which everyone is preoccupied, either knowingly or unknowingly, is individual experience or the phenomenology of the experiential field. The works, intentions and meanings of all human beings return, as well as presuppose, the reality of that field. When one attempts to understand the nature and meaning of the contents of experience, one is engaging in the hermeneutics of experience in order to journey toward -- to whatever extent possible -- the absolute metaphysical reality that surrounds, underlies, permeates and extends beyond the realm of individual experience.

Under such circumstances, the task of hermeneutics becomes one of seeking to merge, as much as is possible, the horizons of one's pre-understanding with the horizons of whatever aspect of reality is being engaged. From this point of view, the hermeneutical problem is not only a matter of inquiring how one goes about merging horizons with the text to be understood (i.e., experience and its

ontological/metaphysical ground), but whether such a project is possible at all. In Bultmann's terminology, the hermeneutical problem is to determine if a program of demythologization is possible with respect to distinguishing between the myth and reality of the phenomenology of the experiential field in relation to a determination of the structural character of that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

Footnotes

1.) Palmer, Richard E. Hermeneutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), page 7.

2.) Ibid, page 8.

3.) Ibid, pages 8-9.

4.) Ibid, page 16.

5.) Ibid, page 19.

6.) Ibid, pages 24-25.

7.) Ibid, page 31.

8.) Ibid, page 29.

9.) Ibid, page 46.

10.) Ibid

11.) Ibid, page 51.

12.) Ibid, page 28.

13.) Ibid, page 44.

Chapter 2: The General Character of the Horizon

According to Van Peursen¹ the word "horizon" is traceable to a Greek verb that means "to delimit". Van Peursen argues, however, there is a tremendous diversity in the way in which people go about delimiting certain aspects of experience.

Van Peursen notes there are a number of basic features that are characteristic of the horizontal property. First of all, horizons recede.

In other words, as one approaches what previously had been the horizon, the 'old' horizon is replaced by a new, horizon. Thus, although the horizon is always present, it simultaneously seems to elude our grasp.

Secondly, no matter where an individual gazes -- whether inwardly or outwardly -- there is a horizontal component inherent in all such experience. Moreover, there is a horizontal component present irrespective of the sensory mode an individual uses to engage the world.

Thirdly, each individual both encounters, as well as generates, a horizon. On the one hand, the horizon is a subjective reflection of the individual's circumstances. On the other hand, the horizon seems to be something that is external to us.

Fourthly, although there is an evanescent quality to the horizon -- in as much as it is constantly changing its character as one moves about in life -- the horizon also serves as a reference point or point of orientation. Consequently, there are both transitory as well as stabilizing characteristics associated with an individual's experience of the horizon.

According to Van Peursen, the combined effect of all these features is to permeate the experience and idea of the horizon with an aura of the problematic. As such, it constitutes a challenge to the individual ... beckoning the individual to explore the mysterious quality of the horizon as it, simultaneously, recedes from us while remaining nearby.

Van Peursen emphasizes that a primary characteristic of the horizon is to both recede as well as to be displaced. As a result, the horizon has a fleeting, illusory quality to it. At the same time, there also are objective qualities associated with the horizon that are capable of leaving traces of themselves.

More specifically, the horizon is a relationship in which certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field come together and make contact with certain aspects of ontology. However, this horizontal relationship never occurs except in the context of focal relationships. Consequently, focal relationships give expression to a second, fundamental, thematic current in the process of dialectical engagement between certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field and certain aspects of ontology.

The dialectics of focus and horizon

These dialectical relationships between phenomenology and ontology -- via the agencies of focus and horizon -- help frame experience by establishing a spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom. This spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom gives functional expression to certain aspects of the dialectical engagement, or encounter, between the individual and the world.

The aspects of the engagement to which focus and horizon give expression are different from one another, but they also are complementary to one another. In fact, not only are they complementary to one another, but they are intimately related, as well, by virtue of the manner in which they mutually shape, orient, organize, direct, and modulate one another.

In this respect, one should keep in mind that the nature of this dialectical relationship is not just about delimiting experience. There are degrees of freedom that exist side by side with the delimiting or constraining aspects of experience. Indeed, there is a sense in which degrees of freedom help shape the character of a constraint as much as constraints help lend shape to the character of a set of degrees of freedom.

Parts of this dialectical engagement are recorded through learning. Learning is a process through which memories are generated or constructed.

Unless the structural character of such memories represents a total fabrication of a given dialectical engagement, memory contains traces of previously encountered aspects of ontology. So although, in

one sense, horizons are fleeting in character and disappear or recede as soon as one approaches them, in another sense, we are continually recording bits and pieces of the horizontal relationships that previously had been encountered through hermeneutical engagement of various facets of reality.

Indeed, these bits and pieces of previously encountered horizontal relationships that have been recorded as memory become part of the on-going horizontal dialectical relationship. Through recall, one can actually extract horizontal elements, examine them through focal analysis, and then -- by switching focus to some other aspect of experience -- return the elements to a horizontal status where they will continue to exert a certain pressure or force with respect to on-going focal activity.

Consequently, although considered as whole, the horizon is always receding and being displaced, there is a way for certain aspects of previously encountered horizontal relationships to be temporally deactivated as horizontal components and, in the context of focal activity, explored, probed, analyzed, queried, altered, and shaped, before being returned to active duty as horizontal components.

There is another sense in which memory plays a role in helping one to differentiate among a variety of horizontal relationships. Different horizontal relationships are characterized by different ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom. Among the differences involved in these ratios will be various patterns of phase relationships.

For now, one might characterize phase relationships as expressions of the way different aspects of ontology interact with one another while in certain states, conditions, and cycles of manifestation. These states, conditions, and cycles constitute the phases of an object or process during particular modes of being that give expression to various dimensions of possibility inherent in an object's or process' being.

While in these phase modalities, the interaction that such modalities have with other modalities of being might be referred to as phase relationships. Moreover, the features of phase through which one object or process can be differentiated from other objects and/or processes, could be referred to as phase differences.

These phase differences are stored in memory and become a basis for recognizing horizontal relationships that previously have been encountered. Thus, one develops a sense of the 'taste' or 'flavor' of a variety of different horizontal relationships even if such relationships are not brought into the realm of focal activity.

In Polanyi's terms, memory of phase differences would be a part of tacit knowledge. This capacity to differentiate among a variety of horizontal relationships plays a fundamental role in helping to shape, orient, and organize the way one goes about hermeneutical processes involving identifying reference, characterization, inferential mappings, congruence functions, model building and so on.

Although traces of previously encountered horizontal relationships might be brought into the sphere of focal activity, there is a level of scale property that accompanies this process. In essence, this means that for every instance of focal spotlighting that occurs, there still will be, nonetheless, a horizontal component that is present.

No matter how broad or general one makes the beam of the focal spotlight, or irrespective of how narrow and particular one makes the beam of the focal spotlight, there will be horizontal factors present that interact with, shape, and are shaped by, focal activity. Consequently, one can explore the structural character of the horizontal relationship across a variety of levels of scale, both with respect to issues of detail, as well as with respect to more prominent, larger scale themes (whether of a primary, secondary, tertiary, etc. nature) that run as vectored currents through hermeneutical and phenomenological manifolds.

Entailment, implication and inference

A further aspect of the interactional dialectic between focus and horizon concerns inferential activity or inferential mapping in which one seeks to determine the structural character of the phase relationships that are established between, and among, various aspects of the constraints and degrees of freedom of focus and horizon. During such states of phase relationship, semiotic quanta, sensory quanta and phenomenological quanta are exchanged that give expression to inferential currents that link focus and horizon in the

form of entailment relationships, implicational relationships and inferential relationships.

An entailment relationship is a special sort of congruence function. It involves a mutually compatible merging of phase relationships from two or more structures that allows one to hermeneutically root one structure (or an aspect thereof) in another structure (or aspect thereof) in such a way that the rooting has ontological ramifications concerning the manner in which the structures are related.

An implicational relationship is a mapping function that links two or more structures together through phase relationships such that there is a certain degree of mutuality in the process of the exchange of semiotic quanta between, or among, structures. However, the character of this 'mutuality' is not able to support or sustain a congruence relationship without being supplemented by further evidence, data, argument, and so on. In short, implicational relationships give expression to certain possibilities but require further work in order to establish them as entailment relationships.

An inferential relationship is a mapping function that an individual projects onto a given subject matter or structure, but that -- in and of itself -- is not necessarily able to support or sustain either an implicational or entailment relationship. Stated in another way, there might, or might not be, a relative lack of evidence of any mutuality in the semiotic exchange process that has been made possible by the establishing of a state of phase relationships through the inferential mapping.

Nevertheless, the fact there might be a relative lack of evidence to support or sustain an inferential relationship does not mean there is a complete absence of such evidence. It means that a considerable amount of interpolation and/or extrapolation is necessary to link together the aspects of structures that are being joined in a particular inferential relationship. Thus, an inferential relationship is a mapping function that stands in need of even more hermeneutical work than does an implicational relationship, if the former sort of relationship is to be placed on some sort of a defensible basis.

An inferential mapping relationship can have the kernel of a truthful or reflective insight in it. As a result, in time, it might develop into either an implicational relationship or an entailment relationship.

An inferential relationship that can be shown, subsequently, to have this sort of kernel of insight inherent in its projection is warranted, whereas an inferential relationship that does not contain such a reflective kernel of insight inherent in its projection is not warranted.

Thus, inferential mapping relationships stand as a basic component in both implicational and entailment relationships. The kind of mapping relationship a given inferential mapping relationship is will be determined by the character of the set of phase relationships to which it gives expression, as well as by the nature of the process of semiotic quanta exchange that is manifested within, and through, that set of phase relationships.

Horizons and the nature of human beings

According to Van Peursen, the horizon adds nothing to the world and, consequently, the world would not be impoverished in any way if the horizon were to disappear. He maintains, nonetheless, the world would be altered if the horizon were not present.

For the horizon is, he believes, an inherent feature of what it is to be a human being. Therefore, if the horizon were absent from the world, so too, would human beings be absent from the world.

He further argues that the property of the horizon is something that is made possible by the biological, sensory or perceptual capabilities of the human body. In other words, the horizontal quality or property is rooted in, and shaped by, corporeality.

The mystics have long made an argument that, in effect, would suggest that while the horizontal property might be part of the structural character of a certain level or condition of human existence, nevertheless, the essence of human beings is without discernible limits and, therefore, without horizon. According to many mystics, at the very heart of the meaning of the unity of existence is the individual's realization of how everything, including himself or herself, is a manifestation of one Reality.

In the veiled condition of our everyday world of spiritual darkness, we see horizons everywhere due to the delimiting character of such a level or condition of existence. However, the mystics point in

the direction of levels or conditions of existence that are not delimited and, therefore, without horizon.

This latter sort of condition or level of existence is an expression of the essential potential of humankind when all veils have been removed through the purification of the heart and the perfection of the spirit. In fact, one might put forth the argument that the presence of horizons could be an indication or index that veils are present. In other words, the individual who is hemmed in or delimited by horizons has not, yet, come to realize there is a basic unity to multiplicity, as well as a multiplicity to which unity gives expression.

One also might take exception with Van Peursen's contention that horizon is entirely a function of corporeality or the human body. To be sure, the human body plays a fundamental role in generating a variety of horizontal properties. However, one might not be able to successfully reduce either hermeneutics or the phenomenology of the experiential field to being simple, or even complex, functions of the human body.

Both hermeneutics and the phenomenology of the experiential field give expression to a variety of other dimensions that are capable of generating and sustaining horizontal properties. Beliefs, values, attitudes, spirituality, patience, trust, love, repentance, understanding, ideas, concepts, reflexive awareness, identity, and interpretation all tend to give expression to horizontal considerations on different levels of scale. Yet, to date, no one has been able to show how one plausibly can reduce such considerations to being entirely the result of brain functioning.

Van Peursen speaks about the horizon's dual quality of being. On the one hand, the horizon is an inaccessible border. On the other hand, the horizon constitutes the outer boundary of a space within which exploration and development is possible.

Thus, the horizon both lures one to activity, while, simultaneously, placing limits on that activity. According to Van Peursen, this dualistic aspect of horizon makes the horizon a presupposition for the realization of what being human means.

Van Peursen's position at this point might be somewhat problematic. Before the horizon can lure one, one has to have some motivating curiosity, desire, reason, need or interest in treating the

horizon as something worth being lured by. Thus, Van Peursen appears to be failing to pay sufficient attention to the structural character of that which is lured -- i.e., the individual.

Van Peursen seems to be saying that what being human means is all a matter of horizon. However, the structural character of the horizon in any given case is, in part, dependent on how the individual goes about attending to experience under a certain set of circumstances. As such, the horizon is but the outermost manifestation of the spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom that give expression to the structural character of experience.

Furthermore, before the horizon can place limits on exploratory activity, the horizon must be grasped as something that has a delimiting quality about it that can have a differential structural character over the course of time. Awareness, focus, and understanding are all necessary for an individual to be able to see the nature and role that the horizon plays in the phenomenology of the experiential field.

So, once again, the horizon assumes its value and character only in the context of a particular person, under particular circumstances, with a certain kind of awareness, understanding, memories, and so on. As such, the horizon's delimiting qualities are a complex functional expression of a variety of hermeneutical and phenomenological scalars, vectors and tensors.

In either case, the horizon is not so much a "presupposition for the realization of man", as it is an expression of a human being's realization about certain aspects of the structural character of the phenomenology of the experiential field. The horizon is not some sort of Kantian-like category that is necessary for the possibility of one's having experience at all.

The horizon doesn't predate experience, either ontologically or logically. The horizon forms, instead, an important part -- but not the only part -- of the answer to the question of why experiences, on a certain level of scale, have one kind of structural character rather than another.

The horizon as a complex membrane-manifold

Van Peursen contends "the horizon is the translation of man into the world". Elsewhere, he says an individual is connected to the world through the horizon. He adds that: "man lives in the horizon, the horizon is himself".

The horizon doesn't so much seem to be the "translation of man into the world", as it gives expression to the outermost portion of the individual's zone of exchange with the world. Moreover, the horizon, in and of itself, does not connect the individual to the world.

One also must take focal components into consideration. Consequently, one might be more accurate if one were to say that an individual lives within the parameters of the constraints and degrees of freedom that are jointly generated, shaped, organized, colored, and constructed by the dialectic of focus and horizon.

The horizon is only one part of a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenological and hermeneutical membrane-manifold that dialectically links the individual with ontology. This membrane-manifold consists of a spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom on a variety of levels of scale.

Furthermore, this membrane-manifold marks the boundary through which focus and horizon together enter into shifting phase relationships with various aspects of the world or with various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field. The phenomenological/hermeneutical membrane-manifold is the boundary across which, and through which, there is an exchange of quanta of various kinds -- chemical, biological, sensory, emotional, spiritual, behavioral, and semiotic. Irrespective of whether or not an individual translates himself/herself into the world, a person continues to enter into exchanges with the world.

Van Peursen maintains that the "horizon outlines the oriented space whose center is the body". A short while later he says that "the horizon shows the mental dimension of the human body".

He believes these two senses of horizon are really only flip sides of one-and-the-same coin. As a result, he contends the nature of the horizon is such that it is able to cut through traditional dualisms such as physical/mental, objective/subjective and so on.

One might be more correct in saying that the horizon outlines the oriented space "whose center is the on-going focal hermeneutic of a given aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field. The body itself is horizon to this on-going focal hermeneutic.

Moreover, many aspects of mental life that are manifested in the phenomenology of the experiential field also form part of the horizontal component. In fact, when one reflexively turns the spotlight of the focal hermeneutic onto itself, different aspects of that hermeneutical activity become horizon to the focus of intentionality.

This aspect of 'horizontality' can be introduced across many levels of scale of focal activity. As a result, certain facets of what previously had been an expression of focus, become horizontal as one examines, with ever increasing depth and detail, a given aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field. Here, the dialectic between focus and horizon manifests its fractal potential.

Consequently, the horizon can, depending on circumstances, give expression to both mental as well as corporeal components. Yet, it is not necessarily reducible to either one of them.

Secondly, contrary to Van Peursen's contention, the notion of horizon does not appear to cut through dualisms such as the distinction between the physical and the mental, and so on. The notion of a horizon seems neutral, in the sense that it can fit in with a variety of metaphysical positions.

The primary aspect of horizon is that it, together with focus, generates a complex membrane-manifold that dialectically interacts with different aspects of ontology on various levels of scale. Whether the focal/horizontal dialectic is generated through physical processes, mental processes, spiritual processes, or some other set of processes, nonetheless, as far as the hermeneutics of experience are concerned, the structural character of the interaction is what matters ... not the process that produced it. In a sense the focal/horizontal dialectic cuts through dualisms because it isn't really intended to address that issue and, as a result, avoids the issue altogether.

According to Van Peursen, the horizon circumscribes human beings in such a way that one is unable to flee it. By circumscribing the

individual, the horizon determines who and what a human being is through the manner in which the horizon delimits the human being.

In this way, the individual is confronted with one's finitude. In this way, human finitude is reflected in the delimiting quality of the horizon.

Van Peursen believes the horizon "takes shape around sight". Moreover, he maintains that all the various activities that are given expression in human life owe their existence to the presence of horizon. Thus, all manner of: creativity, institutional practices, cultural manifestations, rational activity, and so on, are defined by the structural character of the horizons that accompanies and delimits each of these spheres of activities.

One might take exception with the way in which Van Peursen expresses the delimiting properties of the horizon. In point of fact, the horizon does not delimit human kind.

The structural character of the horizon is an expression of how an individual has delimited himself or herself. As such, the horizon doesn't so much delimit the individual, as it is a reflective index of the presence of limitation as a function of the character of the experience and understanding of a given individual. The presence of such limitation is given expression through a spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom that lends shape and form to the structural character of the horizon.

Van Peursen's way of putting things seems to give horizon an aura of mysterious substantiality that is capable of affecting human understanding, cultural process, and so on. However, this way of stating things, tends to gloss over the fact that the horizon cannot be considered in isolation from its dialectical relationship with focal activity. The structural character of the horizon is as much a function of focal activity, as focal activity is a function of horizontal influence.

Secondly, to say that "horizon takes shape around sight" might be somewhat misleading. To begin with, horizon doesn't take shape around sight. Horizon is the outermost parameter of sight. Horizon is not something in addition to sight ... it is part of that sight.

If horizon were something beyond sight, we wouldn't be able to see it. In point of fact, the outermost parameter of sight constitutes, as

well, the nearest parameter of that which, for the most part (although not entirely) lies beyond the scope of sight. Therefore, horizon marks the point at which what is beyond comes into partial contact with what is experienced.

Furthermore, horizon does not just occur in relation to sight. Horizon gives shape to the spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom that are manifested in the context of all sensory modalities. What we hear, smell, feel, touch, or taste, as well as the way we hear, smell, feel, touch, and taste, or what we do and do not attend to when we hear, smell, and so on ... all give expression to the structural character of horizon.

A third issue that needs to be raised revolves around Van Peursen's contention that "all human life owes its existence to the horizon". While one might be prepared to accept the idea that horizon has a role to play in helping to shape various human activities, nevertheless, horizons, themselves, get shaped and generated by focal activities. Horizons also get shaped and generated by the impact of forces that fall outside of what is normally meant by conscious awareness (e.g. physiological processes).

Moreover, one cannot necessarily argue that human life presupposes, or is predicated on, the presence of horizons. In fact, horizons will not get generated without the presence of life. In addition, the kind of horizons that emerge often will be functionally dependent on, and reflective of, the sorts of institutional practices, cultural rituals, and rational activities that exist in, and around, an individual.

According to Van Peursen, "man finds his bearings in the horizon in front of him". However, the horizon is not just in front of one. Human beings – both individually and collectively -- are surrounded and permeated by all manner of horizons.

In addition, given that the horizon forms the outermost parameter of a focal-horizonal dialectic that extends across a large number of levels of scale, this dialectic generates an extremely complex fractal membrane-manifold, consisting of many convolutions, themes, currents, layers, niches, and so on. Consequently, one's focal orientation is established in the context of an extremely rich set of horizontal vectors/tensors that impinge on focal activity from all

manner of sources and not just in terms of what is in front of one -- physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, and/or spiritually.

Horizons, orientation and the hermeneutical operator

Orientation is not just a matter of the realm of focal activity passively acquiescing to horizontal vectoring. Orientation also is a function of reflecting on the structural character of such vectoring in accordance with, among other things, the activity of the hermeneutical operator.

In other words, the operations of: (1) identifying reference, (2) reflexive awareness, (3) characterization, (4) the interrogative imperative, (5) inferential mapping, and (6) congruence functions engage various horizontal considerations and work toward a hermeneutical orientation. Thus, orientation is as much a function of focal, reflexive activity as it is of horizontal vectoring/tensoring.

The aspect of reflexive awareness does not seem to be reducible to being a function of any of the other components of the hermeneutical operator -- taken either individually or collectively. Reflexive awareness seems, instead, simultaneously to accompany the other components ... illuminating them, joining them, surrounding them, and permeating them. Indeed, there is a sense in which reflexive awareness is sort of the glue that holds the hermeneutical operator together, as well as the medium through which the various components of the hermeneutical operator communicate with one another or exchange semiotic quanta with one another.

Reflexive awareness keeps something within the boundaries of primary focal awareness so that it can be engaged by other aspects of the hermeneutical operator. Reflexive awareness also permits one to keep short-term tract of the products of various facets of hermeneutical activity. As a result, one is in a position to decide about further disposition of such products (for example, should it be stored in memory; or, should it be operated on further; or, should it form the hermeneutical roots for some sort of action).

There might be an oscillatory character to the way non-reflexive awareness and reflexive awareness relate to one another under

various circumstances. Much of the time, we seem to be capable of proceeding with just non-reflexive awareness operating.

However, such non-reflexive awareness is often interspersed with elements of reflexive awareness. Consequently, depending on circumstances, there can be an alternating or shifting back and forth between the two.

In any event, the two together give expression to the awareness component of the phenomenology of the experiential field. Primary focal awareness would be a manifestation of reflexive awareness, whereas secondary focal awareness would be a manifestation of non-reflexive awareness.

On the other hand, whether one is dealing with reflexive or non-reflexive awareness, one does not seem able to reduce the other components of the hermeneutical operator to being functions of either kind of awareness. That is, awareness, in and of itself, whether of a high-grade quality or a low-grade quality, does not seem to be capable of generating the other components of the hermeneutical operator. The basic function of awareness seems to be to make focal activity -- whether of a concentrated or diffuse nature -- possible.

For example, the structural character of the identifying reference operation is to introduce an element of selection into the realm of the phenomenology of the experiential field. Awareness or phenomenology, in and of itself, does not introduce this directed component.

One might be more accurate if one were to say there is a diffuse awareness of various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field and that identifying reference (as an expression of intentionality and focus) singles out some region of the field as a candidate for closer scrutiny or added attention. Once an aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field has been singled out, then a decision can be made -- or, perhaps, it happens spontaneously or is induced -- with respect to whether reflexive awareness should be brought into the matter.

Thus, non-reflexive awareness did not introduce the element of identifying reference as much as it: (a) provided a medium through which that component could be expressed, and (b) provided the initial, diffuse illumination of the phenomenology of the experiential field

from which identifying reference selected a candidate for directed intentionality. Furthermore, reflexive awareness does not introduce the element of identifying reference, as much as it provides an opportunity to be oriented, in a reflexive manner, toward what identifying reference has singled out for attention.

Identifying reference is one of the ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom that are part of the spectrum of such ratios that constitutes the structural character of the hermeneutical operator (which gives expression to the interaction of the six, previously noted components). Indeed, all of the components of the hermeneutical operator give expression to one of the ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom that form part of the spectrum of such ratios that constitute the structural character of the hermeneutical operator.

Visibility, vision and perspective

Van Peursen argues that the visible world forms a ground for an endless probing of the possibilities that emerge through the horizon. If Van Peursen means, by the idea of ground, to refer to the visible world as a staging area from which various kinds of exploratory, probing or investigatory activity are to be launched, then one might accept this. However, even if this is the case, one might have to qualify Van Peursen's position somewhat.

For instance, one might not be willing to concede -- as Van Peursen seems to be suggesting should be the case -- that the physical/material world is the only form of the visible world from which an exploratory probe can be launched. To be sure, Van Peursen does point out he believes that the mental domain forms part of the visible world, but often times, his article seems to be suggesting that, ultimately, everything is rooted in, and a function of, the physical/material world ... whether construed in terms of the external ecology in which the corporeal body is immersed or construed in terms of just the corporeal body considered on its own.

Visibility is a function of vision, and one cannot necessarily restrict vision to the purely sensory variety. There is, in addition, emotional vision, intellectual vision, creative vision, as well as spiritual vision.

The visible world is whatever vision -- in this extended sense -- makes manifest.

Furthermore, irrespective of whatever kind of visibility one is considering, what is visible does not necessarily constitute the ground for what is possible. Of course, in one sense, what is visible to a person tends to place limits on what one considers to be possible. On the other hand, what is visible is itself an expression of that which makes possible a visible world of such structural character.

The visible world is not self-sufficient and autonomous. It is not capable of generating itself. The visible world – qua visibility -- does not explain its presence or its structural character. The visible world, on whatever level of scale, stands in need of explanation with respect to what makes a visible world of such structural character possible. Consequently, the visible world is not so much the ground of possibility (although it is a staging area from which one can launch an exploration of certain aspects of possibility) as it is one of the expressions or manifestations of what an unknown Ground makes possible in the way of constraints and degrees of freedom.

As such, the present visible world is just one of the doorways through which one might encounter and engage the possibilities to which the horizon alludes. Indeed, the very fact there is an aspect of the horizon that transcends, or lies beyond, the world that is currently visible to an individual, suggests the ground of possibility is rooted in something that extends beyond the visible world.

Similarly, the fact there can be intersubjective differences of opinion about what constitutes the visible world suggests there is some ground that encompasses all of these differences and makes them possible but that cannot be reduced to any one experience of the visible world ... or not necessarily even to any combination of such experiences. When the visible world changes, as a result of alterations of vision (e.g., such as come with changes in levels of scale, or as come with a deepening of understanding), then new doorways open up that link the individual with different aspects of the underlying ground of such possibilities.

A term that Van Peursen uses in conjunction with horizon is "perspective". Just as, according to Van Peursen, one cannot escape the

presence of the horizon, so too he feels, one cannot escape the presence of perspective.

In other words, one has difficulty avoiding the basic fact -- at least, on a non-mystical level -- that one cannot view a thing simultaneously from all sides. One is required to engage a given subject matter or object or event, a little bit at a time. As a result, any given engagement will exhibit itself in terms of the perspective that unfolds through the structural character of that engagement.

As far as Peursen is concerned, however, one needs perspective in order to be situated in the world and in order to be oriented. He contends that if one were to suddenly lose perspective, one would be cast adrift without any means to orient oneself. One would not even be able to locate oneself spatially since terms like "here" and "there" would have lost all semblance of meaning.

Van Peursen goes on to speak about the complementary relationship that horizon and perspective have with one another. On the one hand, Van Peursen believes perspective lends clarity to the idea of horizon since perspective shows that horizon permeates every aspect of the way in which one experiences, structures, and understands the world. On the other hand, he feels the horizon not only forces an individual to adopt a perspective, but he also maintains the horizon represents a summary of all the perspectives that are available to the individual.

Van Peursen argues that there is no such thing as a pure expression of facticity. All facts are situated within a horizon and oriented by a perspective that has been called into existence by that horizon.

As such, all facts are horizon-laden. All facts are perspective-laden.

Facts exist only in the context of the coherency of a given horizon and perspective. That is to say, no fact comes in an isolated, autonomous, independent form.

Any given 'fact' relates to, or refers to, or alludes to, other 'facts'. It is this network of facts that hangs together. This network of facts lends coherency to those facts by virtue of the way they fall within the parameters of the horizons that summarize the perspectives to which such facts give expression.

Van Peursen's way of stating things is seriously misleading, if not fundamentally flawed. To be sure, we usually do encounter reality from within or through, the horizontal frames of a given perspective or set of perspectives.

What Van Peursen fails to take into account, however, is that the structural character of a given perspective is, in part, a vectored function of those facets of ontology that have impinged upon, tangentially touched, engaged, encountered, and interacted with the individual's phenomenology of the experiential field. Therefore, to varying degrees, the contours of perspective are, or can be, shaped, vectored, structured, organized and oriented by that (i.e., reality, ontology) which both transcends, as well as makes contact with, the individual's outermost perimeter of being -- namely the horizon.

Unless one wishes to adopt a solipsistic position, one cannot avoid acknowledging that human consciousness did not generate ontology or the 'objects', events, conditions, states, processes, relationships, etc., to which such ontology gives expression. Indeed, one of the major obstacles standing in the way of advocating a solipsistic position is the following consideration: One can neither explain, in terms of human consciousness -- taken in and of itself -- why such consciousness has the structural character it does, nor can one explain how the solipsistically projected world is filled with a collection of objects, events, and so on which can be shown to be pure functions of different states of such consciousness.

In both cases, human consciousness cannot produce an adequate account of its own experiences strictly in terms of itself. In each case, human consciousness is forced to go beyond its own properties in an attempt to provide a more accurate, more tenable, and more complete account of why experiences of such structural character are possible.

Once one acknowledges that ontology is not reducible to human consciousness, one is faced with the following problem. How does one determine what the structural character of the relationship is between ontology in general and the particular manifestation of ontology that is referred to as human consciousness?

The two come into contact. They interact. They leave traces of themselves with one another. They shape one another in various ways. However, they confront one with the problem of trying to determine

what the structural character of this process of dialectical exchange or interaction entails.

Congruence and the manifold problem

Kant, of course, argued², in principle, one could never resolve the foregoing problem -- which might be dubbed the manifold problem. The noumena, the things-in-themselves, are forever beyond our reach. All that we can know is a function of the categories that are indigenous to the human understanding and that are conditions for the very possibility of having any sort of experience at all.

Thus, we can never have direct contact with the noumena. We only can have contact with the categories that are imposed on experience and that experience presupposes.

However, Kant never really provides an answer for the following questions. How do we know how to assign different categories to various parts of the experiential manifold in order to generate a consistent, coherent set of experiences? What are the criteria for organizing the application of categories to generate a coherent picture of experience? What is it that determines: when, where, to what extent, and in what combinations the different categories should be applied or assigned to various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field? What is the precise nature of the process that induces categories to be assigned in a differential manner? That is, why are categories assigned in one way on one occasion and in another way on another occasion?

Although Kant accepts that we receive sensory impressions as a result of coming into contact, in some sense of the word, with the noumenal world, he never explains the process of transduction that allows one to generate a series of sense impressions ... especially in view of the fact that he says we can never know things in themselves. In other words, if we can never know the noumena, then how do sensory impressions arise with the structural character they do? How do we know how to assign values to experiences such that one can give differential categorical expression to them?

In short, Kant never solves the manifold problem. Instead, in a sense, he assumes his conclusions. He takes the structural character of

sensory experience as a given, then he argues that categories provide the explanation for why experience has the observed structural character it does.

He also argues that these categories are a condition for even the possibility of such experience. Yet, if the latter assertion is true, then one cannot take the structural character of sensory experience as a given. That structural character stands in need of an explanation -- namely, how and why did the precise alignment of the assignment of categories take place to generate sensory experience of the observed structural character?

Ultimately, one seems required to come to the conclusion there is some kind of contact with noumena that permits one, within certain limits, to know something -- limited though this might be -- of the noumena's structural character. If this is so, then the task is to solve the manifold problem in a way that allows one to separate out, to whatever extent one can, the contributions of the noumena from the contributions of the phenomenal side of things, so that one can put forth an account of why experience has the structural character it does.

In view of the foregoing, one senses that the response that Van Peursen has given is far too simplistic. His contention that all facts are perspective-laden or all facts are horizon-laden is ambiguous. One could agree with his position without feeling obligated to suppose one never has 'contact with' -- in some sense of this term -- or sight of the bare facts of existence.

To say facts are perspective-laden or horizon-laden doesn't really give clear expression to the following consideration. Part of the structural character of perspective and of horizon can be a function of, or shaped by, the way noumena engage, and are engaged by, the phenomenology of the experiential field and the hermeneutical operator.

Consequently, to say the 'facts' cohere is not enough. There must be congruence between the structural characteristics of the two sides of the manifold. This manifold is formed by the engagement of, on the one hand, the focal/horizontal dialectic and, on the other hand, that which vectors and shapes the horizon from beyond the phenomenological side of that horizon.

Thus, when Van Peursen says "reality can be considered as a coherence", there must be a double sense of coherence that is present if his statement is to be accepted. There must be coherence to the way that an individual's sense of understanding, or perspective, hangs together, in and of itself. In addition, there also must be coherence to the manner in which one's perspective accounts for why a certain aspect of ontology and/or the phenomenology of the experiential field has the structural character it does.

If one's understanding does not include this double sense of coherence (which could be referred to as congruence), then there is something of a puzzle inherent in the coherency of one's perspective considered in and of itself. Indeed, this is exactly why Van Peursen's position at this juncture is problematic for it is missing the requisite element of double coherence or congruence.

The facet of ontology that lies on the other side of the phenomenological side of the horizon engages, and is engaged by, the phenomenological side of the horizon in a number of places. Sometimes these points of contact are in the form of tangential point-structures. Sometimes these points of contact are in the form of neighborhoods (Roughly speaking, a neighborhood is a collection of points that exhibit certain relational properties.). Sometimes these points of contact are in the form of latticeworks (One might characterize a 'latticework' as a group of neighborhoods that are linked through phase relationships of a coherent kind.)

One of the hermeneutical tasks facing an individual is to take cognizance of the structural character of these points of contact, and then proceed to generate, or construct, a latticework that is capable of organizing these points of contact into a coherent perspective that is capable of accounting for why those points of contact have the structural character they do. This means one must be able to express such points of contact as a simple or complex function of the vectored/tensored contributions that are made by factors on both sides of the horizontal membrane-manifold.

Transductions and transformations

The foregoing comments bear on a variety of statements that Van Peursen makes in his article. For example, at one point, Van Peursen says:

"All the characteristics of the surrounding world are characteristics of our own body".

To be sure, the sensory modalities that are inherent in our bodies do contribute to one's conception of the structural character of the world as a result of the way these modalities transduce incoming stimuli. However, the body does not solipsistically generate these sensory structures.

The transductions that take place are transforms of the waveforms impinging on the body's sensory cells. As such, transforms are operations that are applied to a given object, form, structure, or process.

Although these transforms do shape and alter the character of what is being operated on, there is a continuity that links the structural character of that which is operated on by the transform and the structural character of that which is generated by applying the transform to a given object, form, and so on. Therefore, just as the transform does alter and structural character of what is operated on, the structural character of what is operated on also is capable of affecting and shaping the kinds of structures that can be generated by applying a given transform under certain circumstances.

An object, form, structure, or process that is going to be operated on by a given transform encompasses a spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom. This means that when a transform is applied to this object, form, or process, the transform must dialectically interact with the aforementioned spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom.

The manner in which a transform vectors or tensors or alters a given object or form will occur within the parameters of what that object's or form's spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of

freedom permits. In other words, the object's structural character places inherent limitations on what a transform operation can do.

Consequently, when the various sensory modalities perform different sorts of transform operations -- by way of the transduction process -- with respect to the waveforms of incoming stimuli, one cannot necessarily argue that the structural character of the post-transformation, transduced form is purely a function of what the transduction transforms bring to the situation. The post-transformation, transduced forms are also a function of the spectrum of ratios of constraints and degrees of freedom that the incoming waveform stimuli bring to the transduction process.

In short, transduced structures are a collaborative effort of both the transduction transforms of the body's sensory modalities, as well as of the waveform properties of the in-coming stimuli. Consequently, one cannot entirely agree with Van Peursen when he claims that "all the characteristics of the surrounding world are characteristics of our own body".

The body does, indeed, color and shade and highlight various aspects of one's perception of the surrounding world. Moreover, the body does introduce a variety of characteristics into the way in which one construes the surrounding world.

However, the vectored, shaping influences flow the other way as well -- that is, the structural character of the surrounding world colors, shades and highlights various aspects of the way the body experiences the world. Furthermore, the structural character of the surrounding world introduces a variety of vectored and tensored themes that help form the seeds of the ways in which one hermeneutically construes the surrounding world.

At certain points, Van Peursen's position is something like Saussure's position. For example, Van Peursen says that:

"All science is conditioned by a coherence wherein each symbol refers to another".

Like Saussure³, Van Peursen seems to make the mistake of failing to take into account that symbols and their relationships arise out of a

more fundamental, non-linguistic hermeneutical context of dialectical activity, and this dialectical activity does make contact, to a certain extent, with various aspects of the noumena.

Understanding need not be restricted, as Van Peursen is arguing, merely to the realm of interacting symbols divorced from the underlying hermeneutic that generated them or divorced from contact with the aspects of the noumena that helped lend shape to the structural character of those symbols. Understanding might not be absolute, but neither is it entirely a matter of relative or arbitrary choices. Reality places constraints and limits on the kinds of coherency that will work or be successful or be able to resolve problems or answer questions in an acceptable way.

Temporality, dimensionality, and the expansion of horizons

Van Peursen maintains that one of the most fundamental features of a 'horizon' is this: It is the means by which time is linked with space. Although space provides perspective and gives expression to a range of possibilities that can be explored, according to Van Peursen, space is itself "oriented by means of the future".

Because time is irreversible, it points in only one direction -- the future. Therefore, the only way in which one can proceed to explore the range of possibilities to which space gives expression, is in the context of time that draws one inexorably toward the future.

Van Peursen goes on to say that a space-time field is formed by the presence of the horizon. As a result, he believes the horizon not only "encircles space-time" but that truth is revealed to the individual through the horizontally generated field of space time. In addition, he contends that, for human beings, "truth ... does not exist outside the framework of the horizon".

The horizon is part of a dialectic that engages, among other things, space-time. At best, the horizon represents the individual's hermeneutical mode of partitioning space-time. However, what actually is partitioned in such cases is not time and space themselves. What is partitioned is one's orientation toward, or way of relating to, space and time.

One cannot claim, as Van Peursen does, that the horizon encircles space-time. Although the horizon does not always give expression to the spatial -- at least when this is interpreted to mean physical space -- the fact is, the horizon always gives expression to the temporal.

The horizon is one of the indices of the presence of time since it is only in the presence of time that the horizon unfolds. Indeed, rather than say the horizon encircles time, the interests of accuracy might be better served if one were to say that not only does the temporal encircle the horizon, the temporal also permeates the horizon's every nuance.

In addition, there is a sense in which the horizon does not so much encircle time, as much as the horizon arbitrarily and distortedly delimits the structural character of time by abstracting only a very small segment of the temporal realm. One even could argue that through its delimiting aspects, the horizon partitions time into hermeneutically manageable units -- that is, units capable of being made sense of in the context of measurements, planning, day-to-day living, and so on.

Moreover, while our contact with certain aspects of the truth does come through our horizontal contact with space-time, the fact is, physical space is not the only kind of 'space' that exists. Somewhat paradoxically, there are a whole variety of non-spatial (in the physical sense) spaces through which one makes contact with, and interacts with, different aspects of truth.

Non-space spaces (i.e., manifolds, dimensions) refer to those aspects of ontology that occupy no physical space, yet, which permit relationships to form among the constituent structures, neighborhoods and latticeworks that are manifested in such dimensional 'space'. For instance, time does not occupy space, but it does permit a variety of linkages to be given expression in the form of temporal phase relationships that unfold over the course of time.

There are other dimensions, as well, that, like time, do not occupy space (although they might be associated with, and interact with, space, as time does). Truth can come through one's horizontal contact with the 'spaces' of all these dimensional modes.

As far as Van Peursen's contention is concerned -- namely, that "truth ... does not exist outside the framework of the horizon" -- while one understands what he is getting at here, his position might not be defensible. In fact, only because truth exists outside the framework of the horizon can truth exist inside the framework of the horizon. Only by virtue of what we can grasp of the structural character of that which is impinging on, engaging, shaping, organizing, orienting and structuring the focal/horizontal dialectic, do we come to understand that the structural character of what exists inside the horizon has an intimate, if not functionally dependent, relationship with what exists outside of, or beyond, the horizons that limit us as human beings.

Any understanding that is restricted to the confines of the parameters of the horizon and that does not reflect something of that which is extra-horizonal and that help makes possible a horizon of such structural character is, at the very best, extremely limited in the amount of truth to which it gives expression. In fact, only by gradually gaining access to the truth (or aspects of it) that lies beyond the limits of present horizons, can one be said to be expanding one's horizons in any non-arbitrary and legitimate sense.

Any other kind of horizontal expansion is merely illusory. In other words, while these other kind of horizontal expansion (arbitrary and illegitimate) might open one up to a variety of possibilities, one will never have a means of determining if any of these possibilities are capable of accurately reflecting, or giving expression to, any aspect of the truth.

Therefore, the generating of possibilities -- in and of themselves -- is not enough. One needs a means of separating the wheat from the chaff. The means of doing this is to show how the structural character of a given possibility reflects something of the truth that lies beyond the present horizons and that makes a horizon of such structural character possible.

To some extent, what has been said above sounds paradoxical. After all, it seems to say that in order to expand horizons one must transcend present horizons. Yet, the very idea of a horizon suggests that which delimits the individual and that determines the individual's understanding. So, the obvious question is this: how does the individual transcend that which determines him or her?

The means of working toward a resolution of this apparent paradox has several aspects. To begin with, the individual's capacity to alter perspectives as a result of the hermeneutical activity of the focal/horizontal dialectic plays a fundamental role in being able to look at the structural character of the horizon in different lights and from different vantage points.

Sometimes one's perspective veils one from, or closes one off to, certain possibilities concerning the structural character of that which could be responsible, in part, for helping to generate a horizon of such structural character. Under these sorts of circumstances, what one needs to do is to re-examine the relationship between the structural character of one's present perspective and the structural character of certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field (e.g., a given region of the horizon). One undertakes this reexamination in order to determine if there might not be some other perspective capable of providing a better congruence function with respect to accounting for why such aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field have the structural character they do.

This process of reexamination has the potential to lead to a discovery that brings one closer to grasping the nature of the truth that is being manifested in a horizon of such structural character. As such, although, in a sense, the horizon doesn't change, one's perspective concerning it does change, and with a shift in perspective comes an expansion of horizons.

One's perspective moves in the direction of greater congruence with, and understanding of, the structural character of that (namely, extra-horizonal ontology) which helps make horizons of such structural character possible. Consequently, by transforming the structural character of a given perspective's hermeneutical account of why a certain aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field has the structural character it does, one can transcend the horizons of the previous perspective. This permits one to work toward developing a better congruence function with respect to those aspects of the horizon that are given expression in the region of that part of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which identifying reference is being made.

One needs to understand there are a whole set of perspectives that can arise in relation to various aspects of the horizon. However, not every perspective that arises necessarily concerns every aspect of the horizon.

Moreover, there might be aspects of the horizon for which one has not developed any sort of perspective except, perhaps, an attitude or orientation of neglect or disinterest. On the other hand, one can have more than one perspective relating to the same aspect of the horizon.

In the latter case sometimes these multiple perspectives concerning one-and-the-same aspect of the horizon are complementary, dealing with different facets or themes of that horizontal aspect. For example, emotional facets, motivational facets, heuristic facets, problematic facets, and so on could all deal with one given aspect of the horizon.

Sometimes the multiple perspectives are antagonistic to one another, offering different accounts of the same phenomenon. Sometimes these multiple perspectives are the result of having learned, through intersubjective communications, about a variety of philosophical, scientific, religious or political approaches to the issues that tend to arise in relation to the aspect of the horizon to which identifying reference is being made.

Not all of these perspectives are necessarily equally reflective of the horizontal character of a given aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field. By hermeneutically sorting through these various perspectives and altering or transforming or supplementing or eliminating various features where necessary, one alters the structural character of the horizon with respect to individual perspectives. On the other hand, ipso facto, the horizon - - in Van Peursen's terminology -- summarizes all of these perspectives.

In the context of such alterations, one is looking for a perspective (or perspectives) that is (are) capable of merging horizons with the summary-horizon. This merging process must be done in such a way that it allows one access, within certain limits, to the extra-horizonal truth that is being given expression through the structural character of certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that also form part of the summary-horizon.

The summary-horizon consists of all the perspectives that exist within the various facets of a person's understanding. The summary-horizon also consists of all the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that have given, and/or are giving, expression to experiential point-structures, neighborhoods or latticeworks, but toward which one doesn't have, or hasn't yet generated, a hermeneutical perspective. Consequently, one can expand one's hermeneutical-horizons within the context of, and against the background of, the summary-horizon.

Given that certain aspects of the summary-horizon have had, or are having, contact with the noumena, by merging horizons with such aspects of the summary-horizon, the hermeneutical-horizon can gain access -- to varying degrees -- with the aspects of truth that are being manifested through the summary-horizon. Thus, by transcending the horizons of certain hermeneutical perspectives, one becomes opened to the possibilities of the summary-horizon that previously had fallen beyond the horizons of a given hermeneutical perspective.

Even if the summary-horizon stays the same, the hermeneutical-horizon can be altered ... sometimes expanding; sometimes contracting; sometimes neither expanding nor contracting, but merely changing the character of the ratio of constraints and degrees of freedom to which a given hermeneutical-horizon gives expression. However, in point of fact, the summary-horizon does not stay static or quiescent. New experiences are being added to the summary-horizon all the time. Therefore, there are new possibilities emerging on a fairly regular basis that provide the hermeneutical-horizon with the opportunity for engagement and possible expansion toward seeking greater congruence with the ever-changing summary-horizon.

The relation between the horizon and reality

According to Van Peursen, something becomes real only by virtue of its having a relation to man. In fact, he goes beyond this and contends that nothing has value except as it relates to human beings.

The hold human beings have on the world through the horizon is the means through which the world is provided with its reality. The horizon renders the world real because the horizon makes the world

accessible to human beings. Moreover, Van Peursen characterizes time as reality's way of making the world come within the reach of human beings.

Van Peursen believes there is no need to posit the existence of a reality that underlies the world of phenomenal manifestation. At the same time, he holds that the horizon gives expression to the idea of a realm that lies beyond the horizon.

However, he contends this realm of the beyond -- to which the horizon alludes -- is not a hidden reality that is operating beneath or behind the world of phenomenal manifestations. He argues, instead, that the realm of the beyond is only provisionally hidden since it becomes manifest as the horizons of various perspectives are expanded to encompass such realms.

Even if Van Peursen wishes to argue that reality is a solipsistic expression of the human condition, he will have considerable difficulty avoiding the fact that there are innumerable aspects of experience that cannot be accounted for in terms of what value or meaning or reality are assigned to them by a human being. Indeed, the meanings and values that have been assigned to various aspects of experience over the years by different cultures, philosophers, theologians, scientists, and so on, have, repeatedly, been questioned and re-questioned, modified, qualified, probed, expanded, critically analyzed, and, where necessary, thrown out. All of this has occurred as a result of the way the proffered meanings and values have proven to be incongruent with a variety of persistent qualitative and quantitative features, themes, and characteristics of the phenomenology of the experiential field.

If reality is purely a function of its relationship to human beings, if the world becomes real only when it is within the reach of the horizon, and if reality is only actualized by being manifested through the temporal that is encircled by the horizon, then one is faced with a number of problems. How does one account for the presence of human beings as that which is capable of experience of such diverse structural character?

What is it that makes human beings -- as the generator of experiences of different structural character -- possible? How do human beings generate time when the very existence of human beings

seems to presuppose the presence of time as the means by which the process of generation can unfold?

If the world does not become real unless it relates to human beings, then people must necessarily have sprung into existence instantaneously, spontaneously, autonomously, and independently of all realities, since reality is a function of the human being, and, therefore, there cannot be any reality prior to the existence of human beings. If this is the case, then the existence of human beings becomes problematic since it is inexplicable.

How is it possible to suppose that a being of such capabilities arose *ex nihilo*? Yet, this seems to be the implication of Van Peursen's position.

In order for meanings and values to be assigned, one must presuppose there is something which is capable of doing this. This suggests there is a reality which makes possible the generation of human meanings and values, together with their assignments.

This reality cannot itself be dependent on such a process of generation ... otherwise it would be a matter of that process presupposing itself, resulting in a circular argument that has very little plausibility. The upshot of such a circular argument is that one would never be able to answer the following questions: (a) How did such a meaning/value generating process come into being? (b) What it is that makes it possible? (c) Why is it that the meaning/value generating process has the structural character it does rather than some other structural character?

Footnotes

1.) Cornelius A. Van Peursen, "The Horizon" in Elliston, Frederick and McCormick, Peter, eds., *Husserl* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), page 182.

2.) Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965), page 74; pages 266-275; pages 290-294; page 382; Ewing, A. C., *A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), pages 190-194.

3.) Pettit, Philip, *The Concept of Structuralism: A Critical Analysis*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pages 1-10 and Sturrock, John, *Structuralism*, (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1986), pages 1-30.

Chapter 3: Husserl And The Source of Apodicticity

The central focus of the following essay concerns one of the most prominent themes in Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* -- apodicticity. More specifically, an attempt will be made to investigate the form of the argument that Husserl uses in the *Meditations* to arrive at apodictic principles that can serve as a fundamental, essential, and certain grounds through which true 'philosophy' (in Husserl's sense of a phenomenological self-critique) can arise.

The term "form" is emphasized in the foregoing in order to isolate the 'shape' of the argument used by Husserl in the *Meditations* from the issue of whether his argument is, ultimately, tenable in the manner in which Husserl intends it to be. Although I believe the answer to the latter issue is that Husserl's argument concerning the possibility of acquiring apodicticity through purely rational means is not capable of being proven, the substantiation of my contention would involve a separate, though related, critical analysis that falls beyond the horizons of the present essay.

Moreover, the nature of the 'form' of Husserl's argument has been selected as the primary focus of the present essay for another reason. Before one can pursue a serious critical exploration of Husserl's position with respect to apodicticity and whether, or not, such an approach is able to withstand close philosophical scrutiny, one must try to come to terms with the character of the argument that one proposes to critically analyze.

In other words, before one critically can explore the 'legitimacy' of Husserl's perspective concerning apodicticity, one must understand the nature of his position. However, achieving such an understanding is not always easily accomplished.

Indeed, part of the plan of this essay is to try to demonstrate how one philosopher, David Michael Levin -- in his book *Reason and Evidence in Husserl's Phenomenology* -- has taken a critical stance concerning Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* that seriously distorts the latter's position vis-à-vis apodicticity and the issue of 'adequate' evidence (in Husserl's sense). In addition, Levin appears to overlook what might be the very heart of the *Meditations*.

One of themes in Levin's book -- or, at least, the portion of it dealing with the *Meditations* -- is to chart the relationship between adequate evidence and apodicticity. Without, I believe, being unfair to Levin, his thesis might be construed as one of attempting to show the "intrinsic untenability" of the apodictic principle, while, simultaneously, trying to salvage certain other aspects of Husserl's phenomenology that Levin considers philosophically worthwhile.

More precisely (and leaving aside the issue of what Levin considers worthwhile in Husserl), Levin is bothered by what appear to be the inconsistencies between, on the one hand, Husserl's statements about adequate evidence and, on the other hand, Husserl's statements about achieving apodicticity. According to Levin, if apodictic principles are to serve as the foundations upon which the edifice of a rigorous science of philosophy is to be built, and if apodictic principles are to be truly absolute, essential, universal and necessary such that they cannot be challenged or overturned by any means whatsoever, then, obviously, those principles cannot be functionally dependent on that which can be challenged or overturned.

Levin feels, however, that Husserl is committed to making apodicticity a function of evidence and, consequently, opens himself (i.e., Husserl) up to criticism on this point since "evidence" can be demonstrated to be always in an unfulfilled condition with respect to the endless horizons that surround one's attending to any object of consciousness ... horizons that must be explicated if the "object" is to become fully concrete and perfectly known. But since adequate evidence (in the sense of rendering an "object" fully concrete) is -- as even Husserl himself would admit -- only an ideal that serves to guide certain aspects of one's meditating and is not actually realizable, then to the extent that apodicticity is functionally dependent on the notion of evidence, one seriously could question the indubitability of any principles that Husserl claimed were apodictic.

In short, according to Levin:

(1) Husserl's strong sense of apodicticity presupposes (requires) the demonstration of adequate evidence (as Husserl originally thought in *Erste Philosophie*).

(2) Husserl has neither demonstrated such adequacy, nor shown how it is possible for there to be (strong) apodicticity when the evidence is either demonstrably non-adequate or else not demonstrably adequate.

(3) Indeed, the objective transcendence of the items to which Husserl wants to ascribe apodicticity counts as weighty (though not, of course, apodictically conclusive) grounds for thinking adequacy is impossible, or at least not demonstrable.

(4) So either Husserl has to admit his case for (strong) apodicticity is thus far inconclusive, or he has to forego this sense altogether and embrace an explicitly weaker sense, a defensible evidential claim defined in terms of inadequacy (or at least, the non-demonstrability, thus far, of adequate evidence). (page 132)"

Levin proceeds to develop a number of criticisms directed toward supporting the skeletal outline of the foregoing argument.

Given that Levin binds the notion of apodicticity to the issue of adequate evidence and that many of his criticisms of Husserl's position in the *Meditations* rest on the legitimacy of such an interpretation, then considering the manner in which Husserl approaches the issues of evidential adequacy and apodicticity such that someone (for example, Levin) might have been led to believe apodicticity entailed a certain number of fatal flaws (of the sort noted by Levin in the previous quote), might be a worthwhile exercise. The following meditations, however, are not intended to be a definite analysis but are provided as being suggestive of certain possibilities.

In Husserl's First Meditation, one comes across the following:

"Any evidence is a grasping of something itself that is, or is thus, a grasping in the mode "it itself", with full certainty of its being, a certainty that accordingly excludes every doubt. But it does not follow that full certainty excludes the conceivability that what is evident could subsequently become doubtful, or the conceivability that being could prove to be illusion." (page 15, Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*).

Shortly after encountering the above quotation, one runs into Husserl's conception of 'apodictic evidence' that:

"... is not merely certainty of the affairs or affair -- complexes (states-of-affairs) evident in it; rather it discloses itself, to a critical reflection, as having the signal peculiarity of being at the same time the absolute's unimaginableness (inconceivability) of their non-being, and thus excluding in advance every doubt as "objectless", empty." (page 15-16).

However, earlier in the First Meditation, Husserl had stated there was an equivalency between the phrases "absolute certainty" and "absolute indubitability". Given this equivalency of phraseology, together with the material in the foregoing two excerpts, one is confronted with what seems to be a potential ambiguity or confusion – namely, if evidence is capable of signifying a "full certainty of its being" (i.e., absolute certainty) in the process of its being consciously grasped and, yet, subsequently, such evidence might be shown to be doubtful or illusory (at least Husserl doesn't rule out such a possibility, and he claims that full certainty doesn't rule out such a possibility either), then one wonders how "absolute certainty" can be construed as equivalent to "absolute indubitability" when the latter tends to be associated with the apodictic notion of an evidence that discloses itself in a manner such that its non-being is considered to be inconceivable and every doubt concerning its being (it's possible being that is) is said to be empty?

One's puzzlement is further expanded when Husserl -- in the context of the same discussion that establishes an equivalency between "absolute certainty" and absolute indubitability" – differentiates between an "adequate evidence" that represents the perfected, harmonious synthesis involved in the bringing to fulfillment of attendant meanings (i.e., the exhaustive explication of horizons) and the "different perfection" entailed by apodicticity that not only can occur with respect to evidences that are inadequate but has, according to Husserl, "a higher dignity" as well. Again, one has difficulty understanding exactly how "absolute certainty" and "absolute indubitability" can be considered to be equivalent phrases.

Unfortunately, because there are only some fleeting, oblique references to this problem in the remainder of the First Meditation or within the Second Meditation, one's puzzlement is not quickly resolved. One does not encounter these issues again, in any concentrated fashion, until the relatively short Third Meditation when Husserl, fairly cogently, elaborates on his position concerning the notion of evidence.

The Third Meditation is an explication, as it were, of some of the factors surrounding the idea of "evidence" and serves to reconfirm the synoptic version of "adequate evidence" that appears on page 16 of the First Meditation. Thus, for example, when discussing the experiential evidence related to specific objects in the "real Objective world", Husserl speaks of:

"... a multiform horizon of unfulfilled anticipations (which, however, are in need of fulfillment) and, accordingly, contents of a mere meaning, that refer us to corresponding potential evidences. This imperfect evidence becomes more nearly perfect in the actualizing synthetic transitions from evidence to evidence but necessarily in such a manner that no imaginable synthesis of this kind is completed as adequate evidence: any such synthesis must always involve unfulfilled, expectant and accompanying meanings. At the same time there always remains the open possibility that the belief in being, that extends into the anticipation, will not be fulfilled, that what is appearing in the mode "it itself" nevertheless does not exist or is different." (pages 61-62)

Against the foregoing background, Husserl reiterates the idea of adequate evidence in relation to "actually existing objects" as:

"... the system of evidences relating to the object and belonging together in such a manner that they combine to make up one (though perhaps an infinite) total evidence. This would be an absolutely perfect evidence, which would finally present the object itself in respect of all it is -- an evidence in whose synthesis everything that is still unfulfilled

expectant intention, in the particular evidences founding the synthesis, would attain adequate fulfillment." (page 63)

However, Husserl acknowledges that the idea of "adequate fulfillment" (or "total evidence" or "absolutely perfect evidence") is only an 'ideal'. The actual attainment of such an ideal is out of the question in relation to objectively real objects because there always remains the possibility of illusion and disconfirmation creeping in through one of the potentialities of the expectant meanings implicit in the horizons concerning one's investigation of the given "object" to which one is attending.

Consequently, one seems to have returned to (or, perhaps, one has never left) the position of the First Meditation ... namely, that which is made evident to consciousness can be grasped with absolute certainty in the moment of grasping but the evidence represented by that which is made evident is insufficient to guarantee the apodicticity of what has been grasped. In other words, the evidence has not been perfected, or is incomplete, due to the unfulfilled expectant meanings that arise in conjunction with a given "object".

Yet, because Husserl has equated "absolute certainty" with "absolute indubitability" -- an equivalency, moreover, that is fraught, as previously indicated, with a certain ambiguity, lending an aura of confusion to the relationship between evidence and apodicticity -- and because "absolute certainty" has been shown, in the context of evidential considerations, to be of a potentially, transitory nature, then a shadow has been cast on the status of absolute indubitability (i.e., apodicticity) with respect to that which is given as evident to consciousness.

Furthermore, to the extent one interprets apodicticity to mean: "an evidentially guaranteed incorrigibility" (as Levin does, page 126), then one seems well on one's way to demonstrating that "Husserl's strong sense of apodicticity presupposes the demonstration of adequate evidence" (Levin's first claim listed previously in this essay). One also appears to be in a position to claim that Husserl has not "shown how there can be (strong) apodicticity when evidence" is inadequate (Levin's second claim).

In conjunction with the foregoing, Levin (in pointing out the differences between Husserl's position in the *Erste Philosophie* and the reformulation appearing in the *Cartesian Meditations* concerning the adequate evidence/apodicticity distinction -- the latter no longer requiring adequate evidences in the *Meditations*), claims that Husserl:

"... gives us not the slightest trace of an argument to support his new position" (page 127),

but proceeds to try to piece together an argument that is, according to Levin, fair to Husserl's overall position.

What is of interest here is that the interpretation that Levin proceeds to work-out involves suggesting Husserl might have relied on:

"... his insights into the eidetic structure of the transcendental ego. And it undoubtedly seemed to him that the purely a priori elucidation of this egological structure could be blessed with a certain freedom from temporal determination. Now this freedom, as he saw it, is precisely the condition for the possibility of apodicticity." (p. 129)

Levin, however, rejects his own interpretation, that is unfortunate since this could have provided an opportunity -- had it been pursued -- for demonstrating a way through which Husserl might have been able to meet Levin's criticisms of the notion of apodicticity. Moreover, given that Levin had provided considerable indications, earlier in his chapter dealing with the *Meditations* (for example, see the discussion on pages 120-125), about having understood the importance of eidetic structure for Husserl's approach, one is mystified why Levin did not further investigate the issue of eidetic structure with respect to his own proffered suggestion in order to determine if Husserl does have -- at least, in the form of Husserl's argument -- a legitimate means of countering his (i.e., Levin's) criticisms.

Although one understands how Levin could have developed doubts concerning the indubitability of apodictic evidence due to the

problems surrounding the relationship between "absolute certainty" and "absolute indubitability", one of the basic errors that Levin makes in his analysis of the *Meditations* is to tie apodicticity to adequate evidence. In other words, in maintaining that the former is generated through, and guaranteed by, the latter, Levin sets-up the problem in an incorrect manner by directing attention away from what should be the primary focus.

For example, according to Levin, Husserl cannot:

"... deny that the apodictic title of an evidence presupposes (requires) its demonstrable adequacy." (page 130)

However, in a very significant sense, evidence is not what bears the apodictic title. Rather, one's mode of consciousness concerning the evidence (that which is evident to consciousness) is what can, potentially, lay claim to the title of apodicticity.

The foregoing distinction leads to, at least, two possibilities -- or, perhaps, one should say that the distinction leads to, at least, one possibility that can be considered from two different, but intimately related, perspectives. (a) One needs to examine the fundamental nature of the modes of consciousness in which the evidence appears in order to arrive at a theory of how apodicticity is generated; (b) one needs to explore the manner in which evidence contains, even when inadequate, sufficient properties to allow, under appropriate conditions, an apodictic identification of the state of affairs to which the evidence is related.

What is important here is that both (a) and (b) suggest avenues to pursue that might not require the presupposition of adequate evidence in order to establish apodicticity. Implicit in the first possibility is the suggestion that the structures of different modes of consciousness are such that apodicticity is a function of conscious insight into the characteristics manifested by the evidence given to consciousness, rather than being a function of accumulating or perfecting evidence with respect to establishing adequate evidence. The second possibility indicates that the structural aspects of the evidence might reveal a sufficient amount of information -- when

attended to in the appropriate manner -- to give rise to apodicticity ... not in the sense of the potentially transitory manner of "absolute certainty" discussed previously, but in a manner that concerns universal and necessary (i.e., lasting) dimensions that disclose the fundamental nature of the evidence to one's consciousness.

Moreover, obviously, both (a) and (b) might be interconnected in such a way that the features of consciousness merge with the features of the evidence given to consciousness in something akin to a 'perfect fit' that is independent of the adequate evidence requirement posited by Levin. For example, mystics, from a variety of spiritual traditions, have been alluding to something of this sort for thousands of years.

The question to ask at this point is whether there is anything in the *Meditations* that, on the one hand, might permit an individual to interpret Husserl as denying what Levin claims he cannot deny -- namely, that the apodictic title of an evidence presupposes (requires) its demonstrable adequacy -- yet, which, on the other hand, could assume a form similar to the possibilities (a) and (b) outlined above. The position being put forth in this essay is that not only is there much in Husserl that might permit such an interpretation, but these features of the *Meditations* represent the very heart of Husserl's position.

Generally, Husserl uses the term "noetic" to refer to those descriptions concerning the issue of conscious modes of the cogito, while those descriptions involving references to the intentional object (i.e., that which is given as evident) are usually termed "noematic". Presumably, possibility (a), mentioned previously, signifies a noetic theme while possibility (b) is more oriented (although not entirely) toward a noematic theme.

Together, they determine the interfacing with respect to which a phenomenologist or meditator works a series of methodological reductions in order to penetrate, ultimately, to the underlying rules and laws that govern the possibilities according to which the interfacing manifests itself or could manifest itself. Furthermore both the notion of phenomenological reduction and the dimension of rules that are said to underlie the 'noetic-noematic' interaction are of considerable importance in documenting the nature of Levin's misconceptions concerning Husserl on the matter of apodicticity, and consequently, each will be examined briefly in order to provide a

minimal basis for analyzing Levin's position in relation to Husserl on the matter of apodicticity.

Toward the end of the Fourth Meditation (a meditation that seems to contain the very fiber from which many of the most central themes of phenomenology are woven), Husserl makes the following statement:

"If these (i.e., the tasks of uncovering implicit intentionality) are seen and undertaken, there results a universal phenomenology, as a self-explication of the ego, carried out with continuous evidence and at the same time with concreteness. Stated more precisely; first, a self-explication in the pregnant sense, showing systematically how the ego constitutes itself, in respect of its own proper essence, as existent in itself and for itself; then, secondly a self-explication in the broadened sense, which goes on from there to show how, by virtue of this proper essence, the ego likewise constitutes in itself something "other", something "Objective", and thus constitutes everything without exception that ever has for one, in the Ego, existential status as non-Ego." (page 85)

The foregoing statement is both very problematical, as well as being, potentially, very revealing with respect to Husserl's position in the *Meditations*. The statement is problematical in that Cairns (the translator of the *Meditations*) has given a footnote indicating that in Husserl's written manuscript there had been "three exclamation points opposite the passage beginning with: "Stated more precisely...".

Cairns went on to stipulate that Husserl had marked the passage (which according to Cairns extends until the end of the paragraph) as being unsatisfactory. A problem arises, however, since the meaning of "unsatisfactory" is ambiguous.

One doesn't know whether Husserl meant the passage was misleading in some way, or whether the passage conveyed a, generally, correct sense but needed further work, or even whether the "unsatisfactory" notation referred to the whole passage (as Cairn presumes is the case). A further problem emerges in relation to the passage in question since the passage contains methodological

material for establishing phenomenological priorities that relate, on a fundamental level, to the possibilities (a) and (b) mentioned earlier in this essay ... the problem being whether or not Husserl was committed to maintaining the approach suggested in the passage.

Fortunately, there seem to be enough indications elsewhere in the Fourth Meditation to establish that whatever Husserl's misgivings were about the passage, they did not alter the phenomenological importance of the meditator's task -- namely, to determine his or her own "proper essence" as a mandatory first step before proceeding to explore the noematic characteristics of consciousness. Noematic issues, as pointed out earlier, are related to (from the perspective of the ego or cogito) the "other" -- both in the sense of mere "objects" as well as to a special class of phenomena that concerned monads that were 'separate from', in a sense, the ego pole of identity that was the ground in which such phenomena appeared.

As substantiation for this essay's claim with respect to a meditator's priority task to seek her or his essence, consider the following:

"I must develop a purely eidetic phenomenology and that in the latter alone the first actualization of a philosophical science ... takes place or can take place. After transcendental reduction, my true interest is directed to my pure ego, to the uncovering of this de facto ego. But the uncovering can become genuinely scientific, only if I go back to the apodictic principles that pertain to this ego as exemplifying the eidos ego: the essential universalities and necessities by means of which the fact is to be related to its rational grounds (those of pure possibility) and those made scientific (logical)." (page 72)

In other words, once having made the transcendental turn, as it were, and suspended one's belief concerning matters of ontology that extend beyond the being of consciousness, the next step is to pursue a process of eidetic reduction that involves the uncovering of the de facto ego in a way that will allow one to arrive at the eidos ego ... the source of all essential universalities and necessities that structure and constitute consciousness. This marks the phenomenological point

through which one hopes to actualize a rigorous philosophical science with respect to the rest of conscious experience.

This same point is brought out at the beginning of the Fourth Meditation -- although not as explicitly and as clearly as the foregoing - - when Husserl changes the thematic focus of the discussion that had dominated, in many ways, the first three meditations:

"Since we were busied up to now with the intentional relation of consciousness to object, cogito to cogitatum, only that synthesis stood out for us which "polarizes" the multiplicities of actual and possible consciousness toward identical objects, accordingly in relation to objects as poles, synthetic unities. Now we encounter a second polarization, a second kind of synthesis, which embraces all the particular multiplicities of cogitationes collectively and in its own manner, namely as belonging to the identical Ego, who, as the active and affected subject of consciousness, lives in all processes of consciousness and is related, through them, to all object-poles." (page 66)

According to Husserl, the principles underlying, and manifested through, this second kind of synthesis involving the "ego pole" place one in the realm of the *eidos ego* -- that is, the source of all essential universalities and necessities through which consciousness is structured and constituted. Moreover, since Husserl's previously quoted words clearly indicate that this second kind of polarization "embraces all the particular multiplicities of cogitationes collectively and in its own manner, namely as belonging to the identical Ego", one seems justified in concluding that this second issue of phenomenological polarization was of more fundamental importance than the sort of polarization involving objects since the ego pole serves as a ground for the latter.

The foregoing conclusion becomes more substantial in the context of Husserl's discussion of active and passive generation, during which he says:

"... anything built by activity necessarily presupposes, as the lowest level, a possibility that gives something beforehand; and when

we trace anything built actively, we run into constitution by passive generation." (page 78)

Surely, for Husserl, it is the *eidos ego* that signifies the most basic level of phenomenology and that gives beforehand -- by way of its, allegedly, necessary and universal laws -- the rules by which generation or constitution of particularized consciousness is to proceed. In a sense, the *eidos ego* represents an activity (or set of activities) that presupposes its own passivity ... a passivity that is manifested in the form of the structural properties and principles that make active genesis possible.

All of which is to say, but in a different way, that:

"Eidetic phenomenology, accordingly, explores the universal a priori without which neither I nor any transcendental Ego whatever is "imaginable"; or, since every eidetic universality has the value of an unbreakable law, eidetic phenomenology explores the all embracing laws that prescribe for every factual statement about something transcendent the possible sense ... of that statement." (pages 71-72)

Throughout the Fourth Meditation, Husserl is immersed in trying to construct the transition from: an emphasis on the empirical descriptions of a *cogito-cogitatum* relationship, to: an emphasis on eidetic descriptions that set the contexts of possible meanings and senses that can be explicated as expectant and attendant dimensions of the horizons that follow from any given noetic-noematic synthetic interfacing of conscious experience. Indeed, it is this sort of shift in emphasis and focus that, if realized, can fulfill an expectant meaning contained in a quote early in the Second Meditation -- namely:

"The bare identity of the "I am" is not the only thing given as indubitable in transcendental self-experience. Rather there extends through all the particular data of actual and possible self-experience -- even though they are not absolutely indubitable in respect of single details -- a universal apodictically experienceable structure of the Ego (for example, the immanent temporal form belonging to the stream of

subjective processes), perhaps it can also be shown, as something dependent on that structure, and indeed as part of it, that the Ego is apodictically pre-delineated, for itself, as a concrete Ego existing with an individual content made up of subjective processes, abilities, and dispositions." (pages 28-29)

By participating in the process of eidetic reduction and, if successful, uncovering the various layers that exist between the naive "self" of the Lebenswelt (the life world) and the eidos ego of transcendental idealism, one is placed in a position of showing the manner in which the Ego is "apodictically pre-delineated for itself as a concrete Ego". Allegedly, this concrete Ego gives expression to certain structural features and operational aspects representing the absolute, necessary basis for the constituting of experience and that, therefore, allow for the possibility of knowing, apodictically, the essential structure of what is so constituted ... even though the particularizations horizontally surrounding this structure might not be "absolutely indubitable in respect of single details.

Although the manner in which pre-delineation relates to the universal a priori (i.e., prior to, and independent of, experience) that is to be explored through means of phenomenological analysis is fairly obvious in Husserl's presentation of the Fourth Meditation, one might note that there is a sense in which horizons too are pre-delineated, as Husserl himself points out in the Second Meditation:

"The horizons are "pre-delineated" potentialities of conscious life at a particular time. Precisely thereby we uncover the objective sense meant implicitly in the actual cogito, though never with more than a certain degree of foreshadowing. This sense, the cogitatum qua cogitatum, is never present to actual consciousness as a finished datum; it becomes "clarified" only through explication of the given horizon and the new horizons continuously awakened. The pre-delineation itself, to be sure, is at all times imperfect; yet, with its indeterminateness, it has a determinate structure." (page 45)

Despite the fact that Husserl does not seem to make an overt, easily identifiable connection between the determinate structure of horizontal pre-delineation and the determinate structure of eidetic pre-delineation, it seems perfectly consistent with, if not implicit in, Husserl's position to maintain that the determinateness of horizontal pre-delineation is due, in large part, to the passive genesis associated with the *eidos ego* and its alleged, a priori characteristics. In other words, because the *eidos ego* is what it is, horizons are what they are -- that is, the latter (at least structurally) are functionally dependent on the pure possibilities inherent in the former in accordance with the innate a priori principles of constitution.

Consequently, for Husserl, there might be an essential, structural bridge linking the horizontal component of the *cogitatum qua cogitatum* and the eidetic dimension of the *cogito qua cogito*, that, potentially, involves apodicticity. Nevertheless, this bridge, if it actually exists, entirely by-passes the issue of adequate evidence since the bridge is not so much a function of evidential considerations of the indefinite sort associated with the clarification of horizons, as it is a matter of what is apodictically evident on the basis of eidetic, a priori universals that bind together the noetic and the noematic and that represent the structural pre-delineation through which conscious experience is made possible and intelligible.

One might even say that evidence, in the context of adequacy, has not been completely purified (through eidetic analysis) of its objective or naive prejudices. This is because the establishing of adequate evidence involves an indefinite explication of horizons and is, therefore, already removed from the realm of determinate structures associated with universal and necessary principles that, theoretically, are apodictically and directly intuited by the *eidos ego*.

At one point during the Second Meditation (see page 49), Husserl acknowledges that a phenomenological meditator, when first considering the possibility of a transcendental phenomenology, is very likely to consider such an enterprise as being extremely suspect due to the fleetingness and transitoriness of conscious phenomena. Moreover, Husserl indicates that any methodological attempt to treat conscious processes in a manner similar to the procedures employed by 'objective science' is bound to fail since conscious processes are not

capable of being subsumed "under the idea of objects determinable by fixed concepts" as is said to be true of objects of the objective sciences.

Then, Husserl goes on to contend that:

"In spite of that, however, the idea of an intentional analysis is legitimate, since, in the flux of intentional synthesis (which creates unity in all consciousness and that, noetically and noematically, constitutes unity of objective sense) an essentially necessary conformity to type prevails and can be apprehended in strict concepts." (page 49)

The phrase "an essentially necessary conformity to type" that appears above is intimately related to two further developments that are elaborated upon immediately following the foregoing quotation. In the first development, Husserl speaks of how:

"In the particularization of that type (i.e., ego-cogito cogitatum), and of its description, the intentional object (on the side belonging to the cogitatum) plays ... the role of "transcendental clue" to the typical infinite multiplicities of possible cogitationes, that in a possible synthesis, bear the intentional object within them ... as the same meant object." (page 50)

The emphasis here is on the notion of "transcendental clue" since it relates to the second development concerning the transcendental theory in which Husserl maintains that:

"Each type brought out by these clues is to be asked about its noetic-noematic structure ... If one keeps no matter what object fixed in its form or category and maintains continuous evidence of its identity throughout the change in modes of consciousness of it, one sees that no matter how fluid these might be ... still they are by no means variable without restriction. They are always restricted to a set of structural types which is "invariable. ... To explicate systematically just this set of structural types is the task of transcendental theory, which,

if it restricts itself to an objective universality as its clue, is called theory of the transcendental constitution of any object whatever, as an object of the form or category in question." (page 51)

On the basis of these last three quotes, one seems to have legitimate grounds for interpreting Husserl as, in effect, claiming that the cogitatum is capable of playing a role of transcendental clue that allows the eidos ego to access the essential identity of the structural typology reflected in the clue. If one adds to this a second development in the Fourth Meditation in which eidetic analysis provides a means of exploring the principles that underlie the constitution of the synthetic unity of the noetic-noematic interfacing, then one again arrives at a methodological framework that allows -- at least in terms of the form of the argument -- for the possibilities of apodicticity concerning the structure of conscious phenomena despite the presence of inadequate evidence.

One can, of course, question if the apodictic status of the eidetic understanding is justified in terms of whether Husserl has provided a legitimate means of reaching the eidos ego such that one's understanding is absolute, necessary and universal and, therefore, apodictic. Nonetheless, as indicated in the first part of the present essay, this sort of question remains, to an extent, separate (though, obviously, closely related to) the issue at hand that concerns the form of Husserl's argument, and this 'form' of argument is what Levin appears to have overlooked in the latter's analysis of the *Cartesian Meditations*.

Thus, when Levin claims Husserl has not shown that the transcendental ego is capable of producing adequate evidence and asks one to remember:

"... that adequate evidence is an intuitional completeness and fullness corresponding perfectly to the noetic intentional sense..."

and, further, stipulates that:

"Adequacy for an intentional meaning occurs if and only if the meaning is exhaustively filled out by the evidence ...",

he (i.e., Levin) confuses the issue by focusing on only one possibility (adequate evidence) to the exclusion of a theme that is central to Husserl's concerns in the *Meditations* -- namely, the notion of apodicticity as a function of the *eidos ego*. Indeed, when Levin speaks of "intuitional completeness" he interprets this phrase as something that only can be satisfied through the fulfillment of the attendant potentialities inherent in, and surrounding, the original meaning, while, simultaneously, neglecting the sense of intuitional completeness that, allegedly, is rooted in the *eidos ego*'s recognition of the a priori, universal principles that generate the structure of conscious experience in terms of the way noetical and noematic dimensions of such experience are synthetically unified or constituted.

In short, the issue is not whether the transcendental ego permits an adequate evidence that will guarantee apodicticity (as Levin argues) but whether, on the one hand, an individual meditator is capable (as Husserl argues) of reaching the essential, purified ground of a priori, universal principles through eidetic analysis and whether, on the other hand the *eidos ego* -- once reached (by means of various rounds of phenomenological reduction) -- is actually capable of directly intuiting the principles underlying noetic-noematic structures that are reflected in the typology contained in the transcendental clues provided by cogitata or intentional objects.

On the basis of the foregoing considerations and with respect to the form of Levin's argument that was stated earlier in this essay, the thrust of his basic criticism (premise 1) that makes apodicticity dependent on adequate evidence appears to be misconceived as far as Husserl's actual position on apodicticity in the *Meditations* is concerned. Furthermore, Levin's claim (premise 2) that Husserl has not shown how apodicticity is possible in the face of inadequate evidence is misdirected in a fashion parallel to the first premise of Levin's argument since Levin has not given sufficient weight to the very heart of Husserl's position concerning the *eidos ego* ... despite his (i.e., Levin) having briefly considered such a possibility (although in a superficial fashion) during the course of his analysis. Moreover -- and,

for reasons similar to those that relate to Levin's first two premises -- Levin seems to be in no position to maintain the third claim of his argument involving Husserl's desire to ascribe apodicticity to certain aspects of transcendental experience since, once again, Levin has misunderstood the form of Husserl's argument with respect to the source of apodicticity.

Consequently, Levin does not appear to have demonstrated that Husserl must back down on the issue of apodicticity. Levin does state a number of other criticisms concerning the *Meditations* that might profitably be explored in detail but involve a certain number of issues (e.g., the question of the apodictic critique and the problem of inter-subjectivity) that would lead substantially beyond the scope of the present essay and must be postponed, therefore, for some other appropriate set of circumstances.

However, the foregoing exercise has served to bring out the form of Husserl's argument concerning apodicticity. In addition, during the process of bringing out the general form of Husserl's position in the *Meditations*, an attempt has been made to correct what seems to be a serious misconception of Husserl's position concerning apodicticity ... a misconception that -- given Husserl's somewhat ambiguous and confusing treatment of the meaning of "absolute certainty" and "absolute indubitability" in the First Meditation -- might be shared by various, other investigators of Husserl's phenomenology as well.

Chapter 4: Locke and Innate Ideas

In the opening pages of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, one quickly encounters the focus of Locke's critical analysis in Book I:

"It is an established opinion amongst some men that there are in the understanding certain innate principles, some primary notions, characters, as it were, stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being and brings into the world with it."¹

By attacking the notion of innate ideas, Locke hopes to lay the groundwork for the main thesis of the *Essay's* second book:

"Our observation, employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the foundations of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring."²

In this campaign that he mounts against the notion of innateness, Locke devises a number of arguments that he feels are (both individually and collectively) triumphant -- demonstrating, beyond any shadow of doubt (or so he supposes) -- the weakness of the forces that can be rallied in defense of innateness.

One argument in Locke's arsenal focuses on the use of reason with respect to allegedly innate principles and/or ideas. He questions why reason should be necessary to uncover such principles/ideas. Indeed, if these "truths" are imprinted on the mind from the beginning, Locke argues that one is using reason to discover what one, in fact, already knows; one is using reason:

"... to make the understanding see what is originally engraven in it, and cannot be in the understanding before it be perceived by it."³

From the foregoing perspective, Locke accuses those who subscribe to innatism in some form or other of adopting an argument that he feels is palpably absurd -- namely, that a person should both know and not know at the same time. Moreover, he marvels at the seemingly inexplicable problem of why nature would imprint something on our minds as a "foundation and guide" for the exercise of reason and, yet, still require reason to reveal these very foundations.

Locke's attack contains at least one questionable assumption concerning the notion of innateness. More specifically, innateness does not imply, necessarily, that a person 'knows' -- in any active sense of the word -- certain truths or principles from the very beginning or that such truths, etc., must be in the understanding right from the start.

Conceivably, such truths/principles might be elicited or triggered under the appropriate circumstances or at a given stage in maturational development. Consequently, while the eliciting mechanism or medium might be external, the 'idea/truth/principle' that is uncovered might have existed in some form before the eliciting occurred ... but not necessarily in some known, conscious and understood form.

Furthermore, beside the dubious legitimacy of Locke's using his own ignorance as a criterial basis for 'illuminating' the issue under consideration, there is no inherent contradiction in, on the one hand, Nature's imprinting something that acts as a 'foundation and guide' for some aspects of the reasoning process, yet, on the other hand, still requiring other aspects of the reasoning process to reveal the presence of such a 'foundation and guide'. Some of the potential (when properly exercised) working principles inherent in reason's structural character might be inclined toward uncovering various innate principles ... that is, one set of innate principles might be activated -- however this might happen -- to 'seek out' other innate principles.

Simply because we do not know why or how this occurs is no more of an argument against such a possibility than is Locke's confessed puzzlement of why Nature would behave in this manner. Nature is under no a priori obligation to reveal its mysteries or even to make sense to human understanding ... rather, we project our hopes onto 'reality', often taking the former to be the latter.

In a foreshadowing of the main thesis of Book II, Locke says:

"The knowledge of some truths, I confess, is very early in the mind, but in a way that shows them not to be innate. For if we will observe, we shall find it still to be about ideas, not innate, but acquired: it being about those first that are imprinted by external things, with which infants have earliest to do, which makes the most frequent impressions on their sense. In ideas thus got, the mind discovers that some agree and others differ ..."4

Shortly thereafter, he contends:

"... but the truth as it appears to him (the child) as soon as he has settled in his mind the clear and distinct ideas that these names stand for."5

And again, a few sentences further down:

"... the later it is before anyone comes to have those general ideas about which these maxims are, or to know the signification of those general terms that stand for them, or to put together in his mind the ideas they stand for, the later also will it be before he comes to assent to those maxims; whose terms, with the ideas they stand for, being no more innate than those of a cat or weasel, he must stay till time and observation have acquainted him with them ..."6

In the three quotes noted above, Locke refers to thinking in three different, but, related ways: (1) "the mind discovers that some (ideas) agree and others differ"; (2) ideas become "settled in his mind", and (3) ideas are "put together".

The foregoing manner of describing thinking is fairly typical of Locke, and, generally, throughout the *Essay*, one does not find anything much more complex than this. In Chapter XI of Book II, he is somewhat more formal in his presentation, listing 'discerning,' 'composition' and 'abstraction' as aspects of thinking. In Chapter XIX of Book II ("Of the Modes of Thinking") he talks of 'reasoning', 'judging', 'volition', and

'knowledge' as the more prominent operations of the mind. And, of course, in the opening chapter of Book II, Locke speaks of 'reflection'.

However, invariably, these 'technical' words are defined in terms similar to: 'agreeing and disagreeing', becoming 'settled in the mind', and being 'put together'. Furthermore, in all these instances, thinking tends to be depicted as a rather linear, somewhat neutral process.

Thinking takes the givens (i.e., ideas) and combines them with other ideas in an additive fashion or subtracts various particulars of an idea to yield a general, abstract idea. Rarely, is there even a suggestion of anything resembling dialectical interaction of ideas ... interaction that does not just involve adding to ideas or taking away from them but that shows how juxtaposing different ideas creates meaning fields where the whole represents something more than the cumulative total of the individual ideas.

In addition, with respect to the innatism issue, Locke appears not to consider the possibility that 'agreement' (or any of the other words Locke uses to designate thinking) might be determined according to criteria that themselves are innate principles. In other words, such criteria are not necessarily either passively neutral or even learned but might represent categories and/or principles that shape the contours and content of experience, and, therefore, the nature and extent of our knowledge ... perhaps somewhat analogously to the way the cones of the retina color one's vision and, thereby, gives expression to one of the many dimensions that shapes or helps structure experience through hardwired or semi-hardwired neurological networks.

Even on the level of simple ideas connected with substances, understanding is not necessarily a straightforward function of primary qualities directly giving rise to ideas or of secondary powers affecting our constitutions in certain ways to give rise to certain other sensations and subsequent ideas. Rather, the receiving organism must have a certain predisposition or sensitization toward a given phenomena. Locke, himself, gives indirect support to this when he discusses (in sections 12 and 13 of Chapter XXIII in Book II) the possibility of beings with a wider range of sensory faculties than humans possess.

Differences in 'perceived reality' correspond with differences in faculties. Thus, simple ideas are not just a matter of an object acting upon a passive organism but also involve the capability and predisposition of a being's sensory equipment to receive such impressions, and, consequently, this leaves open the question concerning the degree to which an organism acts upon the incoming data.

To some extent, Locke indirectly refers to the dialectical relationship between an organism's internal constitution and the secondary characteristics associated with a given substance in the sections of Book II concerning secondary powers (e.g., sections 13-22 of Chapter VIII). He notes how when we are healthy, certain substances have a particular taste, and when we are ill, this same substance might either lose its 'familiar' taste or acquire a somewhat different one.

Moreover, Locke argues that, for example, sweetness is not in the substance per se but is a power of the substance -- supported by the substance's unknown internal constitution -- which acts on our faculties, giving rise to our sensation of sweetness. However, just as Locke wonders:

"... why the pain and sickness, ideas that are the effects of manna, should be thought to be nowhere, when they are not felt: and yet the sweetness and whiteness, effects of the same manna on other parts of the body by ways equally as unknown, should be thought to exist in the man, when they are not seen nor tasted, would need some reason to explain"⁷

one also might ask Locke why one couldn't assume the given secondary quality associated with sweetness to be in the substance while, simultaneously, stressing the contributing role that is played by an organism's condition and how that condition influences perceived reality.

One should not infer that what is being suggested here positions the sweetness in the substance. Rather, substances might have a

quality that, under the appropriate circumstances, can be interpreted as sweet.

Like Locke, this argument holds that sweetness is an experience that results from the interaction of organism and object. Unlike Locke, the foregoing argument does not contend that the secondary quality is somehow absent from the substance yet still supported by the object's internal constitution -- i.e., the powers that act upon the mind to give rise to the experience of secondary qualities.

Locke never explains what the relationship is between the unknown substratum and the powers associated with or residing in the primary qualities, or how such powers are able to produce the experience of secondary qualities such as color, taste, smell, etc.. Of course, Locke says he is not interested in exploring the physical mechanism of the mind and, therefore, doesn't feel compelled to offer such explanations. Thus, one finds Locke stipulating very early in Book I:

"This, therefore, being my purpose, to inquire into the original certainty and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion and assent. I shall not at present meddle with the physical consideration of the mind; or trouble myself to examine wherein its essence consists; or by what motions of our spirits or alterations of our bodies we come to have any... ideas in our understandings; and whether those ideas do in their formation, any of them, depend on matter or no."⁸

Nonetheless, one must question exactly what it is that Locke has provided in the way of explanation. One wonders whether Locke can inquire, with any degree of success, legitimacy and/or significance, into the original certainty and extent of human knowledge without investigating the essence of mind from whence the understanding comes.

With respect to outlining the relationship among primary qualities, powers and secondary qualities, one might be on philosophically more tenable grounds -- both in terms of consistency and simplicity -- to place (to a degree) secondary qualities in the

objects themselves. Certainly, Locke's arguments explaining why this cannot be so are easily countered by positing a dialectical interaction between the organism and the substance similar to the argument that was presented in this essay previously. And, in point of fact, Locke's whole use of "powers" can be reduced, for the most part, to such a dialectical relationship in which secondary qualities are as much a function of the properties of a given object as they are a function of an individual's sensory equipment.

Implicit in the foregoing is the question of the extent to which an organism's internal constitution interprets, alters or distorts information supplied by physical/material objects. To some degree, Locke raises this issue when he says:

"Nature, I confess, has put into man a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery: these indeed are innate practical principles that do continue constantly to operate and influence all our inclinations of the appetites to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding. I deny not that there are natural tendencies imprinted on the minds of men."⁹

In other words, Locke allows for innate, "natural" principles that provide a contextual setting from which certain kinds of behavior emerge. Such principles are general guidelines or tendencies generated by an organism's internal constitution.

Something (a person in this case) is what it is because that is how Nature designed it. However, according to Locke, such proclivities make:

"... nothing for innate characters on the mind, which are to be the principles of knowledge."¹⁰

Yet, just as there is a sort of dialectical relationship between an organism's internal constitution (in the form of certain appetites or biological inclinations) and the environment (in the form of some particular substance), there might be a similar relationship between

the mind's intellectual rational, and judgmental faculties and the so-called 'real' world.

As outlined previously, understanding need not be a linear, simple matter of ideas strung together in some additive fashion. Such principles might result from the way the medium in which ideas are often suspended (namely, reason itself) arranges or structures the pattern of ideas ... which might not be strictly equivalent to, or reducible to, an additive or subtractive process.

The point to emphasize here, however, is not entirely a matter of any failure on Locke's part to provide some explanatory framework -- general as this might be -- concerning the different aspects of mental functioning. Instead, the point to be highlighted is Locke's continual oversight concerning the very essence of such functioning ... that is, his failure, among other things, to ask questions focusing on the nature of reason itself.

He assumes that if he can successfully attack the notion of 'innate characters of the mind', he is done with the issue of innateness. He does not appear to realize that the very tools of his philosophical trade -- reason, judgment, analysis, abstraction, etc. -- might themselves be governed, in varying degrees, by specific innate principles.

Locke continues to push his belief in the untenability of innateness during his discussion of self-evident propositions. Such principles are considered not to be the result of innate impressions, but are:

"... because the consideration of the nature of the things contained in those words (i.e., of the self-evident proposition) would not suffer him to think otherwise ..." ¹¹

Seemingly, Locke is indicating that the meanings of the individual words that are used somehow necessitate the logical force of a given proposition. Once one learns the meaning of the individual words, then the learned meanings -- taken as a collective, cumulative total -- provide the logical necessity of the given 'self-evident' proposition ... for Locke, nothing innate is involved at all.

Again, Locke is avoiding the real issue. He has not really explained why or how 'meaning', of itself, should be able to be at all.

Of course, he presupposes that the various faculties of the mind receive the 'correct' meaning, once learned, of any given word that might be used by another person. For Locke, understanding a proposition is nothing more than knowing what all the individual words mean.

Thus, once the words of a statement are received and understood in terms of their given definitions, the mind cannot do anything but assent to, or deny, the truth of such a statement. However, even if one were to grant Locke the point that particular ideas are not innate (which in the case of 'mixed modes' is open to question since, according to Locke, these are entirely creatures of the mind -- bearing little, or no, resemblance to actual patterns of ideas in current existence), the relationships existing among the various ideas, and from which the collective or overall meaning of the proposition is drawn, might be innate ... that is, the pathways of logic (or reason, or judgment or abstraction or reflection) which engage, analyze, question and reflect on the given meanings of a statement might, themselves, be innate.

Another approach taken by Locke that has bearing on the foregoing revolves around the argument from universal consent. As Locke states it:

"There is nothing more commonly taken for granted than that there are certain principles, both speculative and practical, universally agreed upon by all mankind: which therefore, they argue, must needs be constant impressions which the souls of men receive in their first beings and which they bring into the world with them ..."¹²

At one point, through his discussion of self-evident truths (touched on above), Locke hopes to show that even if there were principles that were universally agreed upon, this would not prove the existence of innate principles, per se. By attempting to give an account of self-evident maxims based entirely on a combination of learned meanings, experience, time and understanding, Locke feels he has countered the argument of innatism at this point.

First, however, he tries to build-up his case by pointing out the lack of any evidence indicating the existence of principles to which the whole of mankind give their consent. In fact, Locke reports, the evidence is precisely the opposite; there are large portions of mankind to whom so-called 'innate principles' are not even known. He lists children, savages, idiots and illiterate people as obvious counter-examples to the universal consent argument.

Indeed, Locke argues that amongst his list of counter-examples are those who are the:

"... least corrupted by custom or borrowed opinion."¹³

and who, consequently, should manifest most clearly innate impressions; yet:

"... alas, amongst children, idiots, savages and the grossly illiterate, what general maxims are to be found? What universal principles of knowledge?"¹⁴

There does not seem to be any necessity, however, which requires that innate ideas/principles must have universal assent or that they must be in more than one individual. This point is directed as much to those supporting a position of innatism who subscribe to the universal consent argument as the foregoing point is directed at Locke for incorporating the issue of universality into his critical attack on innate ideas.

Why should one suppose that if innate ideas exist that, therefore, everyone should have the same sort of innate ideas? Only certain people are artistically gifted, or musically talented, or intellectually creative, or inventively imaginative ... only certain people have blond hair, or are tall, or have a multiple language ability (i.e., people who have an 'ear' for languages and pick them up relatively easily).

We do not consider such differences odd. To some extent, diversity among human beings might seem to favor an argument (by

no means conclusive, however) against the necessary universality of any given innate principle or idea.

Moreover, as intimated previously, throughout Book I, Locke seems to feel innate principles and ideas are entities that should be obvious to everyone ... that they should be radiating with such certainty that the mind cannot deny them. In a manner that is typical of his position on this point, Locke says:

"... if there were certain characteristics imprinted by nature on the understanding, as the principles of knowledge, we could not but perceive them constantly operate in us and influence our knowledge."¹⁵

Apparently, it has never occurred to him we might have to struggle to get any clear impression of these innate principles or ideas. Perhaps, part of the reason for the 'oversight' is his belief that innate principles must necessarily be implanted in our minds, rather than in some other faculty of understanding.

For example, spiritually speaking, moral precepts and other related principles might metaphorically speaking, be imprinted on our hearts (spiritual hearts). Yet, our minds might be responsible for putting veils between reflection or consciousness and such innate ideas.

Both the mind and heart might be faculties of understanding ... each with its own appropriate jurisdiction and sphere of influence. However, in certain instances, the mind might interfere with the individual's gaining a clear vision of what is innately present "in the heart". As a result, the person might have to struggle to subdue the mind's tendency to usurp certain areas of jurisdiction that are inappropriate to it (e.g., which might belong within the province of the heart's sphere of operations) in order for the individual to be able to come to know what has been present "in the heart" from the beginning ... though, perhaps, greatly obscured.

Contrary to Locke's contention:

"But in truth, were there any such innate principles, there would be no need to teach them."¹⁶

one still might have to be taught how to discover what has been present from the moment of birth or earlier. For thousands of years, the mystics have been suggesting precisely this.

Curiously enough, Locke outlines a position in Chapter XXIII of Book II that very closely parallels some of the foregoing. At one point during his discussion of how the complex ideas of substances are formed, he admits:

"The same thing happens concerning the operations of the mind, viz., thinking, reasoning, fearing, etc., which we are concluding do not subsist of themselves, nor apprehending how they can belong to body or be produced by it, we are apt to think these the actions of some other substance, which we call spirit; ... by supposing a substance wherein thinking, knowing, doubting and a power of moving, etc., do subsist, we have as clear a notion of the substance of spirit as we have of body -- the one being supposed to be without knowing what it is the substratum to those simple ideas we have from without; and the other supposed (with a like ignorance of what it is) to be the substratum to those operations which we experiment in ourselves within."¹⁷

In short, Locke has, by his own admission, no more understanding of the basis of mental activity than he has of the basis of activity in the external world. Each seems to presuppose a substratum he 'knows not what'.

This position, when juxtaposed with the intent of his efforts in Book I, is somewhat ironic. In his attempt to dispense with innateness and rid human beings of those systems that would tend to constrain us from continuing further examination, exploration and the exercise of critical reason, Locke has argued a position that cuts him off from certain kinds of investigation.

If he truly believes he lacks guidance in his attempted penetration of the 'real' essence of mind and matter, one might think he wouldn't be eager to close out his options. Or, at least, one might suppose he

would temper his judgment and reconsider some of the issues that emerge in Book I, given his avowed realization that he paints his picture of the unknown with a brush of self-professed ignorance.

Empiricism, Rationalism And Innatism

At this juncture, one might find value in taking a look at an article by Douglas Greenlee, entitled: "Locke and the Controversy over Innate Ideas". An analysis of Greenlee's position might help to clarify, and expand upon, a few issues already introduced in the preceding discussion of Locke and the latter's rejection of innate ideas.

According to Greenlee:

"The standard picture of Locke, the arch-empiricist, battling rationalist adversaries across the channel, is spoiled by a close look at the facts ..."¹⁸

Among the facts Greenlee cites are several that are intended to dispel the notion that Locke believed there was "nothing ... in the mind that was not first in the senses". In other words, these 'facts' are intended to dispel the idea that Locke entertained a philosophical position that could be characterized as a naive empiricism.

For example, Greenlee points out that in Book IV of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke contends that knowledge is not a function of the senses but a creation of the mind or understanding "as it goes about its business of relating ideas". Consequently, in Greenlee's view, since Locke is completely willing to acknowledge the existence of innate capacities that play a fundamental role in the generation of knowledge, such an acknowledgment undermines the position of anyone who would attribute to Locke a passive epistemology that depicts man as merely the recipient of what comes to him via the senses.

Who Greenlee has in mind as exemplars of those who have a mistaken conception of Locke's position and, therefore, are in need of such comments, is obscure. Certainly, as Chomsky and Katz point out ("On Innateness: A Reply to Cooper", *Philosophical Review*, January

1975, page 70) -- and as many others have pointed out during their discussions of Locke's view on these matter (e.g., see Anthony Savile's article "Leibnitz's Contribution to the Theory of Innate Ideas", pages. 113-114, as well as John Harris' article "Leibnitz and Locke on Innate Ideas", page 228.) -- it is not a question of innatism versus non-innatism, because Locke, obviously, did believe that the human being came equipped with a certain amount of sensory equipment, with certain predispositions concerning pain and pleasure as well as with certain mental capacities such as reflection, abstraction, understanding, etc. Rather, a more important question concerns exactly what Locke is willing to build into these faculties, capacities, and predispositions.

As the previous section's discussion of Locke pointed out, Locke is very vague as to how "understanding", "reflection", and so on operates within a human being. They represent a kind of black-box in which sensory data go in one side and 'knowledge' comes out the other, but very little is said about what goes on in between and, therefore, very little is said about what really constitutes, for example, "understanding" or "reflection".

Locke seems to rely on a reader being able to phenomenologically identify with what he is saying (i.e., we all have had experiences of reflecting or understanding). Therefore, he is able to create the illusion (whether consciously or unintentionally) of having understood, for instance, "understanding" without having explained anything at all.

In any event, one has difficulty agreeing with Greenlee when he contends that:

"As one looks further into the controversy, it becomes increasingly difficult to make out a genuine issue, until eventually it appears that, after all, there was no real issue."¹⁹

This difficulty is because Greenlee has not shown in his article how -- if Locke is willing to admit that the mechanisms of 'reflection', 'reason', 'understanding', and so on, are innate -- the presence of such innate capacities does, or does not, predispose an individual to structure ideas according to specific, pre-established principles and patterns of

logic. In other words, that Locke believes we structure ideas -- in the sense of combining them in different ways -- is clear, but the various modes cited by Locke for producing compound, complex and mixed ideas are rather simplistic, linear and generally (though not always) tied, directly or indirectly, to the simple ideas emanating from the sensory order.

Although one might agree with Greenlee's implication that Locke is certainly not a naive empiricist, the acknowledgment of certain innate capacities and dispositions does not automatically exclude Locke from the empiricist camp and, thereby, place him on the rationalist side of the river. Locke believes that the nature of external reality is known by its impressing itself on our mental capacities and sensory faculties.

Reason is not what penetrates the nature of reality as a rationalist would argue. Rather, reality is what penetrates to the mind of the individual through the way in which our sensory and rational faculties are receptive to what reality will imprint on our -- more or less -- tabula rasa.

In comparing rationalism and empiricism, there is not only a difference in emphasis on the degree of passivity (or activity) of the knowing subject, there also is a difference in emphasis on the degree of specificity that is to be associated with mental capacities, etc. However, as his previous quote indicates, Greenlee tends to dismiss, prematurely, the underlying issues of innatism, without having come to grips with what is really at stake.

There is, of course, a reason why Greenlee wishes to minimize the basic differences between Locke and those advocating some more rigorous form of innatism than might be acceptable to Locke. Greenlee wants to contend that the whole series of arguments appearing in Book I of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is not directed so much toward disproving the existence of innate ideas as aimed at disproving the existence of innate truths as represented by various moral principles and maxims. According to Greenlee, Locke wants to demonstrate there is a manner of accounting for our assent to various principles that is not a function of innate truths but merely a function of our general capacity to understand the meanings conveyed by the ideas that constitute the principle.

Greenlee comments further by proposing that it is Locke's intention to undermine: (a) the scholastic method of relying on authority, and (b) the scholastic belief that certain moral truths are innate and, thereby, to break the dogmatic and, in Locke's opinion, unhealthy hold that various doctrines of the Church have had upon the minds of men such that the common man will not question the value or truth of certain doctrines and the associated principles and maxims. In short, Greenlee believes that Locke objects to the thesis of innatism being advocated in the seventeenth century because:

"... its close-ended methodology is essentially based on its recommendation that certain principles, those said to be innate, be accepted without thinking and without understanding."²⁰

Since Greenlee sees the foregoing as the main focus and intention of Book I of the *Essay*, he considers Locke's concern with innate ideas as secondary to the main purpose of arguing against the notion of innate truths, maxims and principles. Thus:

"What, then, Locke disagrees with in the controversy over innate ideas turns upon the right way of discovering truth. To grasp Locke's position on the issue requires the realization that the target of his philosophic ire is not a wrong psychology, which holds that men are born with ideas and truths imprinted upon the mind, but is rather a wrong methodology."²¹

Consequently, in the view of Greenlee, it seems to follow that if Locke wishes to (a) discredit the scholastic practice of determining conclusions prior to inquiry, or if Locke wishes to search for the means of evidentially supporting the predetermined conclusions, and, furthermore, if Locke wants to (b) encourage the practice of deriving conclusions that are solidly rooted in the available evidence and reasons, then Locke's most pressing concerns in the *Essay* are, according to Greenlee, primarily methodological and not epistemological in character. In other words, Locke, supposedly, is

more concerned with a proper method of discovery than he is with the nature of man as a knowing subject.

One might agree that among Locke's goals is the one that Greenlee outlines in the latter's paper (and which is summarized above). Nevertheless, Greenlee's arguments tend to oversimplify and obscure certain themes that are, given the entire context of the *Essay*, more fundamental than Greenlee would have one believe.

First of all, although one can agree with Locke's attack upon dogmatism (in the sense of unthinking acceptance -- certainly one must consider the evidence on its particular merits with respect to a given set of circumstances), this does not constitute a tenable argument against innate ideas. Instead, it might merely serve as a cautionary note against too easy acceptance of something as innate.

If a given principle or maxim is true and is somehow related to innate structures, refusal to accept that principle as an expression of truth, is as dogmatic and problematic as accepting something as innate and true without reflection. As we shall see later on, only a naive form of innatism requires one to be able to recognize innate truths without effort -- mental or otherwise.

Secondly, Locke's concern with the issue of innatism in Book I is not just a matter of methodology of discovery ... although this is certainly a basic concern of Locke's brand of empiricism (Greenlee's disavowal of Locke's empiricist leanings notwithstanding). Locke's methodology of discovery is derived from his conception of human understanding that does not operate according to innate truths, principles, ideas, beliefs, disposition, etc., but according to a mysterious, generalized capacity to somehow grasp different sorts of meaning.

Locke is attempting to develop a framework for the understanding of human understanding. He is also attempting to give an account of: where our ideas come from; how they are combined; and, how they provide one with an understanding of reality. As such, he has a number of targets in mind simultaneously -- one of which is, no doubt, the one for which Greenlee argues.

Locke, however, is also attacking any notion of innatism that might be construed in terms other than that of a 'generalized capacity for

understanding' ... whatever this ultimately means. Under such circumstances, the question of methodology is necessarily secondary because there can be no way of approaching such an issue until one knows how human understanding operates since human understanding is what determines the nature and possibility of methodological form and technique.

What lays outside of, or beyond, such capabilities represents the boundary conditions of methodology and influences the general sort of shapes one's methodological approach can assume. If one treats methodology as primary, then one runs a serious risk of confusing the structure of one's methodology with the structure of reality ... or of limiting one's modes of investigating the nature of reality by supposing that the methodology one has is all that is or could be.

At one point Greenlee argues that:

"... Locke throughout his attack maintains staunchly the position that there are self-evident truths or principles and that often what are called "innate" are really only "self-evident" truths. ... To put the matter another way, Locke is attacking innate principles, while embracing self-evident truths. These self-evident truths, according to Locke's epistemology, constitute a part of human knowledge, and the part they compose is not 'based on experience', at least, not if "based on experience" means "known on the basis of observational evidence." In his polemic, then, Locke is not in the usual sense an "empiricist" objecting to a rationalist doctrine of non-empirical knowledge. Rather, he is a methodologist."²²

Aside from the dubiousness of Greenlee's accuracy concerning the "usual sense" of empiricism, his conception of Locke's position seems to be flawed, seriously, in a number of ways. For example, to say Locke staunchly maintains there are self-evident truths and that what are called 'innate ideas' are really only self-evident truths, this does not at all align Locke with the rationalists.

According to Locke's definition, self-evident truth is that which our general capacity for understanding is immediately capable of recognizing as true. As a result, self-evident truths do not necessarily

imply any innate structures that specifically shape what we recognize as true or right.

Moreover, the following question also arises. If these self-evident truths are not to be based on observational experience, then from whence do they come ... from reflections on the operations of the mind?

Clearly, Locke's account of what he means by 'reflection' and what he means by the 'operations' of the mind do not come close to providing a means of explaining how we recognize self-evident truths. Seemingly, for Locke, self-evident truths must be 'built-into' -- in some sense of this term -- the 'understanding' or built-into the structure of 'reflection'.

If this is not the case, then Locke has no way of accounting for such truths. He has not explained: either (1) what it means to say that a 'general capacity to understand' is capable of recognizing self-evident truths, or (2) how such a general capacity to recognize such truths is possible.

Presumably, his only alternative is to concede the innatist point concerning the specific dispositional nature of our understanding toward such truths. If so, then Locke's position tends to reduce down to a position of innatism.

This is not because he is, as Greenlee suggests, consciously adopting and advocating a position that is similar to that of innatism but because Locke's position has lacunae for which Locke has no adequate means of conceptually filling except by means of something approaching a position of innatism that Locke is trying to camouflage as something other than what it is.

Footnotes

1). John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Abridged and edited by John W. Yolton (Don Mills, Ontario: M. M. Dent & Sons (Canada) Limited, 1965), page 9.

2). Ibid, page 58.

3). Ibid, page 13.

4). Ibid, page 16.

5). Ibid.

6). Ibid, pages 16-17.

7). Ibid, page 75.

8). Ibid, page 5.

9). Ibid, page 27.

10). Ibid

11). Ibid, page 20.

12). Ibid, page 10.

13). Ibid, page 24.

14). Ibid

15). Ibid, page 27.

16). Ibid, page 33.

17). Ibid, page 134.

18). Douglas Greenlee, "Locke and the Controversy over Innate Ideas", *Journal of the History of Ideas*: 33 (April-June, 1972), page 253.

19). Ibid, page 252.

20). Ibid, page 263.

21). Ibid, page 260.

22). Ibid, pages 262-263.

Chapter 5: Identifying Reference

Introduction

Of the many things that Strawson attempts to explore and accomplish in his book *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, one might list three features that tend to encompass the very heart of the philosophical perspective that is delineated in the first part of his book. First, Strawson wants to demonstrate that the process of identifying reference is thoroughly rooted in the category of material body particulars. Through this, Strawson intends to show that other categories of particulars such as 'events', 'states', 'conditions', etc. form asymmetric, identifiable, dependence relationships with the category of material body particulars.

As a result, for Strawson, all processes of identifying that involve various categories of particulars (material body and otherwise) are a function, directly or indirectly, of the category: material body particulars. Therefore, they are tied, ultimately, to some context of demonstrative identification involving material body particulars.

Secondly, Strawson is determined to establish that the ascriptive processes that accompany instances of identifying reference are generated by persons. For Strawson, the term: 'persons', refers to an unanalyzable, primitive concept. As such, states of consciousness and bodily characteristics are both analyzable in terms of personhood, and personhood is not analyzable in terms of states of consciousness or bodily characteristics or some combination of the two.

Moreover, Strawson's concept of person is one that tends to exhibit what is called non-solipsistic consciousness. This means that a person is one who finds value in, or has use for, making a distinction between self and other-than-self. Furthermore, as it turns out, such a being is one who, according to Strawson, would show category preference for material body particulars.

Consequently, Strawson's concept of a person is one that would construe the process of identifying reference as one that involves the generation of patterns of asymmetric, identifiability, dependence relationships that are rooted in material body particulars. Strawson believes his manner of handling the concept of a person allows him to

escape some traditional problems of philosophy that have plagued, among others, Cartesian dualists.

Finally, Strawson wants to show that his rendering of descriptive metaphysics as "the actual structure of our thought about the world" is, in fact, reflective of precisely those characteristics that have been outlined in the first and second features noted above. In other words, by joining (a) the issues surrounding the giving of category preference to material body particulars together with (b) the Strawsonian concept of person, Strawson believes he has provided a basis for understanding what the character is of "the actual structure of our thought about the world" ... something that he sees to be the task of descriptive metaphysics.

Much of the discussion throughout the first part of *Individuals* is directed toward either: (1) clearing conceptual ground for or (2) delineating and clarifying various aspects of the three features that have been summarized in the previous several pages. Furthermore, whatever discussion of *Individuals* that is not geared toward (1) or (2) usually is devoted to arguing against various alternative conceptual schemes in order to be able to explore different dimensions of his position and, thereby, illustrate the strengths and tenability of his own perspective.

In the present essay, I will take issue with each of the aforementioned features that represent the philosophical core of Strawson's position as set forth in Part One of *Individuals*. Thus, to begin with, I intend to challenge Strawson's contention that identifying reference is tied functionally to asymmetric, identifiability, dependence relationships that are rooted in material body particulars.

I also intend to argue not only against Strawson's belief that his concept of person is a tenable position but also against his belief that a person is likely to exhibit non-solipsistic consciousness. Consequently, I will be attacking the idea that the concept of a person forces one to use asymmetric, identifiability, dependence relationships that are, supposedly, a function of giving category preference to material body particulars.

Finally, I intend to challenge Strawson's contention that "the actual structure of our thought about the world" requires one to adopt, or be reliant on, Strawson's concepts of material body particulars,

persons and related issues. In fact, I intend to argue in this essay that Strawson consistently makes a number of fundamental errors in his program of descriptive metaphysics.

Essentially, I will argue that he fails to establish and appreciate the role of various considerations that have methodological priority over the sorts of points and issues with which Strawson is preoccupied. In this respect, I intend to argue that identifying reference is a function, first and foremost, of the phenomenology of the experiential field from which an individual begins his or her investigation into trying to determine "the actual structure of our thought about the world".

Equally important, and related to the foregoing emphasis, is the following point. Namely, in making the phenomenology of the experiential field the philosophical or methodological starting point for subsequent exploration, one cannot forget -- as I believe Strawson has done -- that methodological considerations are extremely important in determining how one proceeds in such exploratory processes.

As such, methodological considerations have an essential bearing upon the problem of determining what the character is of "the actual structure of our thought about the world". Because Strawson has lost sight of these considerations, his theoretical model for descriptive metaphysics contains some substantial problems.

The foregoing points notwithstanding, the present essay should not be construed merely as an exercise that is to be restricted to examining the question of the tenability of Strawson's position in the first part of *Individuals*. Indeed, ultimately the discussion that follows is pointed towards providing some concrete material against which to push conceptually in order to gain some familiarity with the methodological roles that the issue of identifying reference plays in contributing to the structures and structuring of human understanding.

Through the various issues and problems that emerge during the course of a critical analysis of Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics, the present essay attempts to provide a means of directing attention toward various methodological characteristics of identifying reference and how these characteristics contribute to the structure of, and structuring of, understanding. In effect, the critical

discussion of Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics becomes a reflexive study of the way in which my hermeneutical structures and structuring processes engage the way Strawson's hermeneutical structures and structuring processes respectively establish a position with respect to one another, as well as, potentially, in relation to "the actual structure of our thought about the world".

Descriptive Metaphysics and Identifying Reference

Early on in his book *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, P.F. Strawson makes a distinction between what he terms "descriptive metaphysics" and "revisionary metaphysics". The former term focuses on describing: "the actual structure of our thought about the world" (page 9), whereas the latter attempts to improve upon the quality of the structure or framework generated through the enterprise of descriptive metaphysics.

Historically, Strawson lists Kant and Aristotle among those who were preoccupied with descriptive metaphysics, and he considers Leibniz, Berkeley and Descartes to be among the practitioners of revisionary metaphysics. As the title of his book would clearly seem to indicate, Strawson either wishes to place himself in the same descriptive tradition as that of Kant and Aristotle, or he wishes, at least temporarily, to pursue that tradition during the course of his book. In any event, he has very little to say about revisionary metaphysics beyond his introductory remarks, and he leaves largely unaddressed the question of what constructing a "better" descriptive structure would mean.

In Part One of *Individuals*, Strawson begins his program of descriptive metaphysics by exploring the issue of identifying particulars. Strawson stipulates:

"Among the kinds of expression that we, as speakers, use to make references to particulars ... include some proper names, some pronouns, some descriptive phrases beginning with the definite article, and expressions compounded of these. When a speaker uses such an expression to refer to a particular, I shall say that he makes an identifying reference to a particular.... When a speaker makes an

identifying reference to a particular, and his hearer does, on the strength of it, identify the particular referred to, then, I shall say, the speaker not only makes an identifying reference to, but also identifies, that particular. So we have a hearer's sense, and a speaker's sense of 'identity'." (page 16)

After distinguishing the notions of "identifying reference" and "identifies" from one another, Strawson proceeds to offer a critical basis through which, according to Strawson, one will be able to determine when a hearer can be said to have correctly identified the given particular that has been identifyingly or descriptively referred to by a speaker. In this respect, Strawson clearly indicates he is interested in something more than mere "story-relative" identifications, as Strawson calls them.

In this sort of identifications, a hearer can identify the general thrust of what is said by being able to consider various particulars that are mentioned in terms of the conceptual context painted by the speaker. However, in these "story-relative" identifications, the hearer could not identify the particulars being referred to outside or beyond the immediate frame of reference represented by the speaker's "story".

For example, if a speaker says that: "The boy hit the woman," the hearer can identify that particulars are being talked about in terms of the speaker's storyline (which might or might not be true), but the hearer cannot necessarily be said to be able to identify precisely that boy hit that woman in the so-called real world. Moreover, the hearer of a story-relative identification could not even determine whether the described event actually occurred.

Consequently, since Strawson wishes to deal with the issue of specific identification of particulars above and beyond story-relative identification, he introduces the idea of "demonstrative identification". In this mode of identification, Strawson maintains that "the hearer is able directly to locate the particular referred to" (page 19).

Strawson follows up his account of demonstrative identification with a consideration of situations in which the speaker refers to particulars not sensibly present either to him or her (i.e., the speaker)

or the hearer or to both. One means of identification used in these sorts of circumstance involves the use of names, but Strawson points out that names are useless unless they are supported by some sort of descriptive network that can fix the name's referential context.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of rooting the use of identifying names firmly in a descriptive context, Strawson also attempts to show the role of 'uniqueness' in being able to identify particulars that cannot be identified demonstratively. According to Strawson:

"... even though the particular in question cannot itself be demonstratively identified, it might be identified by a description which relates it uniquely to another particular which can be demonstratively identified. The question, what sector of the universe it occupies, might be answered by relating that sector uniquely to the sector which speaker and hearer themselves currently occupy." (page 21)

Strawson believes this stratagem of, sooner or later, being able to relate an issue of non-demonstrative identification to a descriptive context that has at least one component that has been identified demonstratively, is a means of overcoming all theoretical difficulties that someone might care to cast in the way of solving problems of non-demonstrative identification.

Developing an Asymmetric Referential Framework

With respect to this stratagem of tying non-demonstrative identification to demonstratively identified particulars, Strawson asks and, then, answers the following question:

"Can we plausibly claim that there is a single system of relations in which each has a place, and which includes whatever particulars are directly locatable? ... For all particulars in space and time, it is not only plausible to claim, it is necessary to admit, that there is just such a system: the system of spatial and temporal relations, in which every

particular is uniquely related to every other ... For by demonstrative identification we can determine a common reference point and common axes of spatial direction; and with these at our disposal we have also the theoretical possibility of a description of every other particular in space and time as uniquely related to our reference point." (page 22)

If one is not careful here, there is a real danger of confusing -- if not conflating -- two separate issues. When Strawson speaks of "all particulars in space and time" or of "the system of spatial and temporal relations, in which every particular is uniquely related to every other", one gets the distinct impression Strawson believes he is referring to objective reality independent of human cognition.

Yet, the issues of demonstrative and non-demonstrative identification concern the manner in which speaker and hearer attempt to enter into a common understanding with respect to the identity of particulars being referred to in a given discussion. Quite conceivably, speaker and hearer could establish a means of uniquely identifying (both demonstratively and non-demonstratively) particulars. However, the unique means of referential identification they have achieved might not have anything true to say about the character of reality (or the world) which underlies and makes possible the speaker/hearer interchange.

Thus, two chemists of the 1700s might have discussed the characteristics of phlogiston at some length in a way that allowed them to make unique referential identification to various aspects of their experience. Nonetheless, despite the descriptive context of mutually understood identifications, there was no phlogiston in the real world to which the identifications corresponded. Instead, the identifications were of a conceptual nature in which certain facets of experience were linked together in an incorrect manner.

Today, this conceptual framework might be referred to as a hypothetical construct. In any event, there is a potential difference between the 'world' of reality and the 'world' of our identifying descriptions.

Unfortunately, Strawson's original characterization of descriptive metaphysics (i.e., "to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world") is somewhat ambiguous in establishing a clear-cut distinction between the aforementioned potential differences. In other words, by characterizing descriptive metaphysics as being concerned with "the actual structure of our thought about the world", is Strawson describing merely the structure of our (i.e., human) thought as thought? Or, is he describing the structure of our thought in terms of the manner in which it goes about establishing, to some extent, the nature of the world as the latter really is?

Quite clearly, the scope and character of each of these metaphysical programs of description could be very different from one another. As a result, one will have to pay close attention to what Strawson says in *Individuals* in order to determine which of the foregoing possibilities is actually being advocated by Strawson. Furthermore, such scrutiny will be warranted because if Strawson's metaphysical program is preoccupied primarily with describing the structure of human thought qua thought, then we will want to make sure he does not illicitly slide over into the other sort of descriptive metaphysical program and, thereby, confuse or conflate issues of description with matters of reality that stand quite apart from such descriptions.

Alternatively, if Strawson's metaphysical program is an attempt to demonstrate how the structure of thought is capable of gaining access, in part or in whole, to the structure of reality or the world, then we will have to check for the presence of something entirely different. That is, we will have to determine if the character of the system of relations among particulars that is advanced by Strawson and which he believes is able, theoretically, to be identified demonstratively or non-demonstratively by two or more participants in a discussion can, in fact, uniquely and accurately capture the character of the system of relations among particulars in the real world on which such identifying references are said to focus.

Following his discussion of some of the conditions surrounding the identification of particulars, Strawson inquires whether there is:

"... any one distinguishable class or category of particulars which must be basic from the point of view of particular-identification? ... [Is there] a class or category of particulars such that, as things are, it would not be possible to make all the identifying references which we do make to particulars of other classes, unless we made identifying references to particulars of that class, whereas it would be possible to make all the identifying references we do make to particulars of that class without making identifying reference to particulars of other classes?" (pages 38-39)

Strawson answers the foregoing questions in the affirmative, and claims material bodies constitute fully satisfactory candidates for meeting the requirements of a basic particular alluded to in the foregoing quote. Strawson, then, proceeds to distinguish between two broad categories of particulars.

On the one hand, there are material bodies that, for him, are basic and on which, he believes, all other particulars are to be identifyingly dependent. These are described as three-dimensional - - enduring, relatively stable over time, capable of giving rise to a rich context of sensory experience through smell, touch, taste, sound, appearance and so on ... that is, they are publicly observable objects. On the other hand, there are states, processes, conditions and events that, according to Strawson, descriptively presuppose, and are dependent upon, material bodies for their identification.

In order to lend direction and support to his contentions at this point, Strawson sets out to construct an argument that, if successful, might demonstrate the tenability of his claim that material bodies are basic particulars. If successful, Strawson believes his argument also will demonstrate how all other categories of particulars (such as events, processes, etc.) are to be identified in terms of those basic particulars.

After entertaining, and then discarding, a variety of possibilities for the kind of argument he is seeking, Strawson eventually settles on one he feels is defensible. What Strawson has in mind is a perspective which, if correct, establishes an asymmetrical basis for determining the direction of identifiability-dependence with respect to, on the one hand, material bodies, and, on the other hand, such particular-

categories as processes, conditions, events, and so on. The example he uses to explicate his position concerns the relationship between "animals" and "births".

'Animals' are to be considered as subsumable under the category of particulars known as material bodies, whereas 'births' are to be considered as representative of one of the non-material body categories of particulars. However, Strawson never is very clear whether one is to consider births as events, processes, conditions or whatever. Moreover, he is not very clear (which he acknowledges on page 46 of *Individuals*) about what the distinctions are among these various categories of non-material body particulars. Apparently, Strawson is content to believe these latter categories of particulars are somehow non-material in character and that material bodies have a character that falls outside the nature of these other categories of particulars.

Given the considerable discussion in modern physics concerning: 1) the event and process nature of quantum phenomena; or 2) how macro phenomena are dependent on the states of the micro-physical world that are thought to underpin these phenomena; or 3) the mysterious relationship that is alleged to exist between states of consciousness and quantum states and events, one might seriously wonder if the broad distinction Strawson is making between material body and non-material body categories of particulars is as well conceived as Strawson seems to believe.

Do quantum events and processes give definitional/ontological character to material bodies? Or, do material bodies constitute the ontological framework that makes quantum events, processes, states and/or conditions possible? Even once we leave the subatomic world and journey up the scale in relative size from molecular processes to, say, cellular interaction, and from tissue differentiation to organ functioning, and from the inter-dependent, systematic harmony of integrated systems of organs to that of ecological balance among such systems, all along this journey, material bodies seem to be as much a function of events, processes, conditions and states as do the latter seem to be -- as Strawson would maintain -- a function of material bodies.

Strawson contends the relationship between animals and births is quite asymmetric. Thus, he argues:

"... there is no corresponding paraphrase of the entailment from 'this is a birth' to 'there is an animal of which this is the birth'. We can paraphrase one entailment so as to eliminate what logicians might call quantification over animals. In other words, the admission into our discourse of the range of particulars, births, conceived of as we conceive of them, does require the admission into our discourse of the range of particulars, animals; but the admission into our discourse of the range of particulars, animals, conceived of as we conceive of them, does not require the admission into our discourse of the range of particulars, births." (page 52)

While Strawson does believe the argument is a sound one and is fully generalizable to the asymmetric relationship holding between any given material body particular and any relevant nonmaterial body particular(s), he also acknowledges the following caveat with respect to the foregoing argument:

"The argument does not explain the existence of the general identifiability-dependence it establishes. It remains a question why particulars which figure in our conceptual scheme should exhibit the relation on which the argument draws, why we should conceive of the relevant particulars in these ways." (page 52)

One might venture to hypothesize that the reason why the stated argument is not able to account for the identifiability-dependence that Strawson claims the argument successfully establishes is because the argument is misleading and flawed in its presentation. Moreover, if this ventured hypothesis should turn out to be correct, then Strawson's argument constitutes an inadequate foundation for making accurate inferences concerning the actual character of identifiability-dependence relationships. The following remarks represent an attempt to indicate that the above mentioned hypothesis is warranted

and that, as a result, Strawson's would-be foundations for identifying reference are, at the very least, premature.

To begin with, Strawson is quite vague and somewhat arbitrary at the present juncture in his elaboration of descriptive metaphysics with regard to what he means by the admitting "into our discourse of the range of particulars, births, conceived of as we conceive of them" (previously cited). In fact, both the facet of the process of "admitting into discourse" a given particular as well as the issue of given particulars being "conceived of as we conceive of them" raise a variety of questions.

As a category of particulars, "births" are not tied just to animals. One can speak of the birth of a nation or the birth of an idea or the birth of a galaxy, or even the birth of a universe. All of these contexts share a common theme of referring to a 'coming into existence', but that which comes into existence is not necessarily a material body. For example, although an idea can be given a variety of material forms or expressions, one cannot necessarily be sure the idea itself is a material body or that it presupposes, and is dependent on, a material body (or bodies) for its existence.

Those who subscribe to some sort of mind/brain identity theory undoubtedly will hold that ideas are material bodies because ideas correspond -- or so these theorists might maintain -- to neurophysiological circuitry of a certain nature and complexity. Nevertheless, the definitive determination of the ultimate character and source of ideas or whether ideas can be generated through disembodied particulars has, yet, to be established. Consequently, on the basis of the available scientific evidence, one cannot be certain (or even fairly certain) that the coming into existence of an idea is, ultimately, either a material body of some sort or a function of an underlying material body.

One could pursue a similar kind of reasoning with respect to the birth of a nation. To be sure, the birth of a nation might entail the designation of specific geographic co-ordinates. Moreover, it also might involve the existence of written documents (e.g., a constitution) together with the establishing of sundry social, political and legal institutions that might be housed in material buildings or structures. Nonetheless, the moving force behind the birth of a nation might be a

function of ideas, values, beliefs, desires and so on that, as suggested above, might not be reducible to being functions of material bodies.

There is also considerable debate, controversy and mystery surrounding the origins of the universe. Whether the universe was born *ex nihilo* or came into existence through identifiable, determinate physical/material processes are questions that are no closer today to being resolved to everyone's satisfaction than they were several thousand years ago among the Greek philosophers who are often credited (rightly or wrongly) with having started Western man on the road to thinking about such possibilities.

When a child grows up in a given culture, that individual tends to encounter a variety of theories, beliefs, ideas, conventions and so on concerning how different aspects of reality -- from ideas, to animals to the universe -- come into being. How this notion of 'birth' or coming into existence is admitted into a culture's discourse and how the people in that culture conceive of birth depends on a complex set of interacting factors that are at work within the culture in question.

The nature of language is such that there is often no one way in which given concepts, ideas, notions, etc., are admitted into discourse, even if there might have been a specific historical instance or set of circumstances (for the culture or the individual or both) to which the origin of, or first encounter with, a certain word or phrase could be traced. As is the case with "births", there are a number of different contexts (often unrelated to one another in any direct fashion) in which a certain idea or concept holds descriptive value because of its capacity to identifyingly characterize a certain aspect or aspects of experience in a way that can be recognized, to a greater or lesser extent, by the people of that culture.

The circumstances within which a concept arises and through which an individual comes to grasp the concept might constitute the occasion for picking up a concept, but this does not necessarily mean one is required to make, say, births identifiably-dependent on material body particulars ... animal-particulars or otherwise. Once a concept is grasped, one is relatively free to apply it to any aspect of one's experiential field with respect to which the concept is capable of helping one to identifyingly characterize or describe such an aspect to other individuals. This freedom reflects an important dimension of the

flexibility of any living language: namely, the capacity to restructure the old mode of use and application of a given word(s) and, through a restructuring process, introduce alternative senses of the world.

Furthermore, although the birth of an animal presupposes a material body particular (namely, an animal) as locus for the process or event of birth to occur, Strawson is being somewhat misleading when he makes certain additional claims. For instance, Strawson attempts to maintain that because one can conceive of animals without knowing anything about, or admitting into discourse, the non-material body particular of birth, then according to Strawson, this demonstrates the asymmetric identifiability-dependence of the latter upon the former. However, in maintaining the foregoing, Strawson, quite arbitrarily, I believe, is restricting the scope and range of the manner in which particulars are both admitted into discourse as well as how they are conceived of by those into whose discourse such particulars have been admitted.

True, some people can refer identifyingly to animals without ever needing recourse to the process or event of birth. Usually, those people are very young children.

For the most part, however, the people into whose discourse the range of the given particulars – animals -- has been admitted are those people who conceive of births as part of what the very concept of 'animals' entails. If an adult were to give a detailed description of animals, without invoking the particular of births at any point in the description, this individual likely would be generating a concept of animals that is substantially different from the animal-particular that is understood by most adult human beings.

In view of the foregoing considerations, even assuming (which is questionable) one could come up with a determinate, identifiable and defensible distinction between material body and non-material body particulars, the range of the particulars admitted into any given discourse, or the manner of conceptualization of any particulars so admitted, might not be (although it might be on certain occasions and under specified conditions) a function of the linear, somewhat static model put forth by Strawson. In that model, there are clear-cut, invariable and universal asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships between material body and non-material body

particulars. Nevertheless, on the basis of the previous discussion of the use of 'births', there seems, instead, considerable room to develop a more dynamic, multi-faceted, complex and nonlinear conceptualization of how particulars are admitted into discourse and, once admitted, how they might be conceived of by those into whose discourse the particulars have been admitted.

Category Preference and Ontological Priority

At the very beginning of the second chapter in *Individuals* -- entitled "Sounds" -- Strawson acknowledges he is showing what he terms "category preference" to those particulars referred to as "material bodies" by considering them to be basic to any scheme of identification and subsequent program of metaphysical description. He further contends that although he considers material body particulars to be "ontologically prior" within the context of the descriptive metaphysical program he is mapping out, one should not read into the character of such preference or priority any implications concerning whether, or not, only material bodies exist or whether all other categories of particulars are reducible to being functions of material body particulars. Strawson maintains that the features of category preference and ontological priority associated with his use of material body particulars hold only within the framework of the issue of, and problems surrounding, a particular identification and its concomitant topic identifiability-dependence relationships.

Having stated the foregoing cautionary note, Strawson adds the following:

"On the other hand, I believe that the facts I have tried to indicate may underlie and explain, if not justify, some of the more striking formulations, which I disavow, of the category-preference which I acknowledge." (page 59)

Once again, Strawson seems to balance ambiguously along a line between two possibilities that must be kept distinct. On the one hand, he claims to disavow making any allusions to material bodies being, in reality, basic. Yet, on the other hand, he appears to be saying that the

arguments and data he has presented "might explain, if not justify" such a position in relation to the category of material body particulars.

Similarly, at times he appears to be speaking of a purely descriptive, self-contained conceptual system, with no reference point beyond itself as a conceptual system. At other times he seems to be speaking of the character of the interplay between reality and the structure of our thinking that helps generate the experiences out of which a given descriptive metaphysical program arises. Thus, when Strawson says:

"... it is the things themselves, and not the processes they undergo, which are the primary occupiers of space, the possessors not only of spatial position, but of spatial dimensions" (p.57)

one gets the impression he is referring to the ontological character of Reality.

Many modern philosophers of special and general relativity, as well as of quantum physics, might wish to quibble with the way Strawson describes things as occupying space -- as if space were an inert nothingness to be filled, as opposed to being an expression of a dynamic, space/time continuum event or process with far-reaching ramifications for the way in which 'things' could and could not express themselves. In fact, such events might even determine what 'thingness' is.

In any event, given the aforementioned dimension of ambiguity in Strawson's position, there seems to be a problematic shadow that is cast across his position at this point. In other words, there appears to be legitimate reason to question Strawson's use of the term "ontologically prior" in relation to his giving material body particulars category preference over other categories of particulars ... despite the fact Strawson believes this usage is unobjectionable.

The whole notion of ontology concerns: being, existence, or reality. There is, of course, a very real sense in which a descriptive system has a sort of being of its own simply by virtue of its existing as a descriptive system. In this sense, one could explore the system in

question strictly in terms of the character of the being of such a system qua system.

However, while material body particulars very well might have logical priority within a given conceptual system, this, in no way, necessitates that these sort of particulars will have priority in any broader, more fundamental sense of ontology dealing with the very nature of Being itself. That is, there is no guarantee that the particulars of a given conceptual system will accurately reflect any sort of ontological priority (i.e., the nature of Being) which makes possible the being of such a limited conceptual system of specified character.

Whether Strawson likes it or not, there is at least one very crucial sense in which one must consider his metaphysical project to be about the real world and not just a matter of a description of a conceptual scheme for identifying particulars and establishing a basis for setting up identifiability-dependence relations. More specifically, if one takes Strawson at his word in his introductory section of *Individuals* and accepts, for the sake of argument, his construal of descriptive metaphysics as a matter of describing "the actual structure of our thought about the world" (page 9), then this view assumes human thought has an "actual structure" that can be described.

Presumably, this "actual structure" is an expression of, minimally, one facet of the character of fundamental ontology. In other words, the "actual structure" of thought is a part of the world about which thought thinks, and, in thinking about itself, thought is thinking about the world or reality or Being. Or, at least, thought is thinking about that aspect of the world of reality or Being that involves thinking and the structure of this thinking. If Strawson's proposed metaphysical program is to be a realizable possibility, one must be able to have sufficient access to 'reality' in order to be able to ascertain and describe the "actual structure of our thought about the world".

One still could be faced, of course, with the possibility that what our thought is "about" might not be so much the actual nature of the structure of our thoughts about the world as it is an expression of our beliefs about the structure of such thought. If so, then one still might not be in any epistemic position to discover or gain access to the "actual structure" of the world 'out there' in order to determine whether there were such things as material body particulars or

whether they had ontological priority over other kinds of particular categories.

In view of the foregoing, one might wonder if category preference should be extended to material body particulars. One also might wonder whether these particulars should be awarded logical priority even within the limited framework of developing a conceptual scheme to identify particulars in order to proceed with a program of descriptive metaphysics in Strawson's sense of the term.

Yet, if Strawson's strategy to establish material body particulars as the basis for a system of identifying reference should fail, all is not lost. Although Strawson, undoubtedly, would reject the following perspective, nonetheless there seems to be a kind of particular, of sorts, that is even more basic than material bodies and that also establishes the basis for setting up the kind of framework of asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships in which Strawson is interested.

For example, without a dimension of reflexive consciousness that generates, or gives expression to, an experiential field in which, or through which, we can: be aware; discriminate within; recognize similarities among the field's various aspects, and gain insight into the nature of the particulars that appear in (through) it, then how could one propose anything at all -- descriptive or otherwise -- concerning material body particulars? One could suppose that material body particulars are pure constructs of the aforementioned sort of reflexive consciousness.

Alternatively, one might contend that reality writes its message upon the conceptual slate provided by consciousness, or one might believe some kind of interactionist relationship holds between reflexive consciousness and the reality underlying material body particulars. In all of these cases, the most fundamental aspect of any process of identifying particulars of whatever category would seem to involve placing those particulars in the context of the experiential field of reflexive consciousness that is mediating and underwriting, to some extent, the existence of such particulars within the realms of conscious experience.

The phrase "to some extent" is used above in order to leave open the possibility that the particulars to which one attends in the

experiential field might or might not have an existence independent of the field through which the individual becomes aware of such particulars. Even if these particulars do have an autonomous, independent existence, nevertheless, the reflexive qualities of the experiential field still help mediate and underwrite the perception of particulars according to the nature of that field and how, or to what extent, that field accurately transmits the character of the given particular being attended to.

One could subscribe to any number of different theories of mind and acknowledge the fact that the identification of particulars -- real or imagined -- is possible because such particulars are capable of gaining entry to, or being reflected in, the medium of consciousness. Through exploring the phenomenology of this medium, one seeks whatever clues one can that might indicate or suggest the character of the "actual structure" of the character of that medium as it encounters the "world" (whether conceived as self-generated or as other than self and somewhat independent of self).

Our ideas about or descriptions of material body particulars begins, first and foremost, with an examination of the contents of consciousness. Even if reflexive consciousness should turn out to be a function of some underlying material body (i.e., the brain), there is nothing to prevent one from using reflexive consciousness as the basic methodological starting point to which category preference should be assigned in seeking to establish a framework for identifying particulars through which one can proceed to other stages of a program of descriptive metaphysics.

Reference and the No-Space World

After outlining his ideas about how to construct what he considers to be defensible means of establishing a basis for identifying particulars, Strawson proposes to address the following question:

"Could there exist a conceptual scheme which was like ours in that it provided for a system of objective and identifiable particulars, but was unlike ours in that material bodies were not the basic particulars of the system?" (page 60)

Strawson, of course, believes the answer is no. As the previous few pages of discussion suggest, I believe an affirmative answer can, and should, be given to the foregoing question. The following pages will attempt to demonstrate why I believe Strawson's negative response is untenable and why an affirmative response to his question is defensible.

Toward the beginning of his attempt to put forth an argument in support of his rejection of any affirmative response to the above question, Strawson decides he must place a constraint on the scope of the question's generality and states his intention to restrict the question to being one:

"... about the conditions of the possibility of identifying thought about particulars distinguished by the thinker from himself and from his own experiences or states of mind, and regarded as actual or possible objects of those experiences. I shall henceforth use the phrase "objective particulars" as an abbreviation of the entire phrase, "particulars distinguished by the thinker." (page 61)

In many ways, the foregoing limitation that Strawson is imposing on the basic question he wants to investigate is somewhat illegitimate. This is because that limitation tends to allow conceptual baggage to be carried as ontological contraband since such baggage will not be subject to proper processing through the appropriate methodological check points.

Consequently, the imposed limitation helps Strawson evade a number of fundamental questions that could be asked. For example, while distinctions and differentiations need to be possible in order for identifications of particulars to be made, nevertheless, from a methodological perspective, the particulars that are identified during the process of differentiation need not be perceived or considered -- initially at least -- to be distinct from one's experiences or states of mind.

To assert such a distinction is to make an ontological presumption about the existential status of these particulars as being independent of the experiential field or state of mind that is focusing upon them.

Methodologically, this sort of presumption really falls beyond the realms of the question concerning the identification of particulars that first must be addressed.

In fact, this kind of presumption is entirely beside the point since the issue of the identification of particulars is primarily a matter of whether or not the experiential field lends itself to identifiable distinctions. Whatever else the distinctions might, or might not, encompass or entail, nevertheless, first and foremost these distinctions are rooted, at least in part, in the phenomenologies of the experiential fields that are being attended to in any speaker/hearer interchange.

The reason why the experiential field does lend itself to the identifiable distinctions that become the particularized reference points of speaker/hearer discussions could be, of course, because they are autonomous, 'real-world' particulars that are somehow 'picked up' by the perceptual/conceptual capacities of human beings and identifyingly experienced as distinct particulars. Nonetheless, the ontological leap from the particulars of the experiential field to particulars of an "objective" world is a separate issue.

One certainly can raise the question how could there be such a speaker/hearer interchange? That is, what would the character of reality have to be in order to make such an interchange possible? Still, this question is distinct from the problem of establishing a basis for the identification of particulars.

The latter issue is a methodological one that requires no ontological presuppositions concerning the existence or nonexistence of certain particulars within an "objective" world. The former question, on the other hand, is asking for some sort of commitment or explanation relating to the basic nature of at least one part of reality -- namely, the part that makes possible an intersubjective identification of a particular of given description.

The term "makes possible" in the last paragraph is to be construed in the following sense: inasmuch as there exists "an intersubjective identification of a particular of given description", then some aspect of metaphysical reality must have a nature such that it can give expression to, or be manifested in, the form of the intersubjective identification in question. In short, anything that can be described and

identified has 'somehow' become an experience to which identifying references can be made. In the present case, the commitment or explanation being sought would be, respectively, either to, or for, the specific character of this 'somehow'.

Epistemologically, the issue of identification has methodological priority to the problem of determining the ontological character of some aspect of reality. This is the case because, before one can try to explain something, one has to be able to determine or recognize or reference or point to the character of what one is trying to explain.

Conceivably, a hearer and speaker could reach complete agreement as to which particular within their respective experiential fields was being referred to by the speaker, but be in complete disagreement as to the nature of the underlying ontology that would make possible the identifying reference to such a particular. In failing to separate the methodological issue from the ontological one, Strawson prematurely has introduced ontological issues prior to the settling of methodological questions such that the smuggling of the former improperly prejudices or taints one's investigation of the latter.

In posing his question about whether one can come up with a conceptual scheme that is not rooted in a system of material body particulars as the asymmetric basis for identification of other particulars, Strawson recasts the question in a Kantian mold. He notes how Kant believed there was a very strong basis for contending there were only two forms of sensible intuition: Time and Space.

Strawson further stipulates that whereas Kant held that Time encompassed the kind of sensible intuition through which all representations expressed themselves, Space constituted the form of intuition that only entailed the outer senses. Thus, although sensible intuitions of Time were always present in any and all experiential encounters, sensible intuitions of Space would only be present when dealing with experiential encounters involving the outer senses.

In view of the foregoing, Strawson wants to rephrase his basic question (concerning the identification of particulars) as follows:

"I suggest that we inquire whether there could be a scheme which provided for objective particulars, while dispensing with outer sense

and all its representations. I suggest we explore the No-Space world. It will at least be a world without bodies." (page 63)

In rephrasing the question in this manner, Strawson believes, among other things, he will be able (see page 63 of *Individuals*) to introduce questions that are essentially unanswerable or indeterminate. He believes this to be the case since in examining the notion of a No-Space world one is, effectively, talking about a world populated by beings whose experience is, in numerous ways, quite different from human experience.

After all, by hypothesis, No-Space-world beings, unlike humans, have no form of sensible intuition concerning Space. In actuality, Strawson considers the questions raised about such beings to be merely a heuristically convenient exercise for raising questions about how human beings conceptually deal with experience in general and whether or not one would be able to reinterpret various aspects of the broad context of experience in terms of the characteristics of some restricted portion of that experience. However, I believe that Strawson's excursion into the world of No-Space beings is a misleading way of setting up the problem concerning the basis for establishing a framework for identifying particulars.

To be sure, the character of how other beings experience existence might provide valuable data to cross-reference with the character of how human beings seem to experience existence. Furthermore, this data could provide important clues (when cross-indexed to human experience) with respect to the nature of the ontological reality that made such different experiential frames of reference possible.

Nonetheless, the introduction of these beings into a discussion, together with the concomitant problems of trying to accurately translate their experiential framework into one we can understand, would appear to represent an unnecessary muddying of waters that are already murky with difficulties. Moreover, this sort of interjection also would appear to be beside the point as far as the issue of identifying particulars within the structure of human thinking about the world is concerned.

This would be so unless Strawson was attempting to claim that the category of material body particulars necessarily constituted the asymmetric basis for identifiability-dependence relationships in all beings capable of hearer/speaker interchanges. Yet, this does not seem to be the case, since, as already noted in the previous quote, Strawson has referred to No-Space world as "a world without bodies".

In addition, even if he were trying to establish a more general basis for identifiability relationships, then he would have to restructure not only his characterization of descriptive metaphysics as the "actual structure of our thinking about the world." His reformulated version of descriptive metaphysics also would have make allowances for the "actual structure of our thinking about the world" with respect to both human beings and No-Space-world beings. Under such circumstances, descriptive metaphysics no longer could be restricted to merely "the actual structure of our thinking about the world".

In any event, I see absolutely no reason for having to entertain such potentially complex translation equivalencies between beings of the No-Space world and human beings of a world of sensible intuitions rooted in Space and Time. One only has to ask the original question: could one conceive of a conceptual framework in which material body particulars did not constitute the basis for determining asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships among particulars in general?

Whether one is talking about a No-Space world or a world of Time and Space or some other kind of world, the same question is relevant. More importantly, while one might not be able to speak with any conviction about what is, and is not, possible for the beings of other worlds to conceive of, one can ask whether, or not, Strawson, in any of his hypothesized worlds (e.g., No-Space), has managed, successfully, to establish that material body particulars must play 'the' fundamental role in determining identifiability-dependence relationships among various categories of particulars.

In order to help one imagine what the character of a No-Space world might be like, Strawson delimits the number of senses one can have to work with in that kind of world. Rather than using the input of taste, smell, touch, sight and hearing as a means of developing an epistemic relationship with the world (or what we take to be the

world), Strawson singles out only hearing as a sense that could apply to a No-Space world and that is, therefore, to serve as the primary sensory means of gaining access to or generating a system of identifying particulars within the No-Space world.

In this regard, Strawson further specifies:

"The only objects of sense-experience would be sounds. Sounds of course have temporal relations to each other, and might vary in character in certain ways: in loudness, pitch and timbre. However, if they have no intrinsic spatial characteristics: such expressions as 'to the left of', 'spatially above', 'nearer', 'farther' have no intrinsically auditory significance." (page 65)

Although Strawson makes no mention of it, one presumes that the 'physics' of sound or the cognition process that makes audition possible are totally different in a No-Space world than in our so-called Time/Space world. If this were the case, then one would have to place the locus of sensory potential within the perceptual mechanism of the being -- whatever that mechanism might be and however it might operate -- and leave reality in an n-dimensional format, where the value of 'n' is uncertain.

If this is the case, then the idea of a No-Space world becomes a function, not necessarily of reality taken as a whole, but of a certain, restricted, perceptual/conceptual framework of the being's engagement of such reality. The only way in which this sort of No-Space world could be co-extensive with the whole of reality would be, on the basis of what Strawson has said, if reality were, in fact, a No-Space world.

In any event, one has difficulty knowing whether Strawson intends that, in his hypothetical example, we should construe ultimate reality as being synonymous with No-Space, or whether he only intends that the sensible intuitions of the beings in question are limited to that of Time. If the latter were the case, then the character of reality, if any, beyond the beings in question presumably would be left indeterminate as to the number of dimensions it might entail that extend beyond the restricted capacity of the No-Space being's sensible intuitions.

The uncertainty surrounding Strawson's intentions in these areas is not just an incidental matter. Depending on which route one pursues, one comes up with quite different experiential parameter characteristics with-in which one is trying to construct a metaphysical program. The differences in question can have considerable ramifications for how one construes the world and how one perceives the individual's epistemic hookup with the world.

For instance, consider the following. Let us assume, for the moment, that the notion of a no-Space world is to be restricted to the perceptual/conceptual character of the being's epistemological equipment. Let us further suppose that this restriction places no intrinsic limitations on the ontological character of the world that the being is thinking about on the basis of his or her limited mode of No-Space experience.

Given these assumptions, one is free to ask the following question: could a being with a No-Space-restricted sensible intuition capacity logically infer the possibility of a spatial dimension in the 'real world' on the basis of experience that lacks a spatial element? However, if the No-Space feature is not restricted to just the being's perceptual/conceptual equipment and is considered to be an integral feature of the character of the real world, independent of the being's epistemological relation to the world, then any inferences about the spatial character of reality as a result of the experiences of a being with No-Space capacity would, given the foregoing, constitute an untenable inference.

Obviously, what one supposes the No-Space component applies to (i.e., just the being's sensory/conceptual equipment or the world as a whole) will have a substantial effect on the sort of metaphysical program one is envisioning. While Strawson does not clearly spell out exactly where he stands in relation to such choices, his previously quoted disavowal of any sort of implicit ontological reductionism with respect to his giving category-preference to material body particulars (although he does leave the metaphysical door open to such a possibility) would seem to indicate that the more prudently flexible course to pursue is as follows.

We should leave unaddressed, for the present, the issue of the actual character of reality in the No-Space hypothesis and assume the

No-Space world notion refers to the restricted sensible, intuitional capacity of a given kind of being. In other words, we should assume the No-Space world hypothesized by Strawson refers to the world of experience and not necessarily to the world of reality that might exist independently of such experience. This presumptive provision allows one to make a distinction between two separate issues.

On the one hand, there is the problem of how a No-Space world being goes about attempting to assign a metaphysical value to the actual character of reality. On the other hand, there is the problem of whether such a being could come up with a conceptual means of establishing a basis for determining asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships among various categories of particulars that does not include or require fundamental reference to material-body particulars.

Eventually, Strawson might or might not want to provide some sort of answer to the former problem, but the problem of identification of particulars does not require one to have to resolve the former question immediately as a prerequisite to being able to address the latter issue involving the development of a basis for the identification of particulars. In fact, the reverse is likely to be the case.

That is, this latter project concerning identification undoubtedly will affect how one proceeds to approach the more difficult problem of assigning metaphysical character to the world. For it is through being able to identify particulars within experience that one has something on which one can reflect and through which one attempts to grasp the character of reality or the world.

For present purposes, there is a further advantage to construing the No-Space world as a function of individual sensible intuition limitations rather than as a reflection of an aspect of reality taken as a whole. At one point in his discussion, Strawson states:

"I shall take it as not needing further argument that in supposing experience to be purely auditory, we are supposing a No-Space world. I am not, of course, contending that the idea of a purely auditory world is the only possible model for a No-Space world. There are other and more complex possibilities."(page 66)

Strawson does not specify or even hint at what the nature of these models might be. In any event, by retaining audition as the only one of the traditional five senses to function, to some degree, in a No-Space world, Strawson provides an experiential reference point that bears some degree of resemblance to an aspect of the character of human experience (i.e., audition).

Consequently, whatever conclusions one might come to concerning the issue of identifiability-dependence relationships for being in a no-Space world, there should be a certain amount of conceptual spillover with respect to considerations concerning the character of the "actual structure of our thought about the world". Since Strawson's stated goal of descriptive metaphysics is in relation to determining the structure of human thought (as opposed to generalized -- or specific -- statements about the structure of thinking across the spectrum of beings capable of something called 'thinking' (whatever that might be), then the retention of an experiential theme to which human beings can relate with some degree of insight and familiarity (despite the obvious differences) is a consideration of not inconsequential importance.

Solipsistic and Non-Solipsistic Consciousness

Having discussed a number of conditions, limitations and potential objections, Strawson arrives at the following version of the question he wishes to ask:

"So I shall provisionally interpret the question, "Can the conditions of knowledge of objective particulars be fulfilled for a purely auditory experience?" as meaning: "Could a being whose experience was purely auditory, make use of the distinction between himself and his states on the one hand, and something not himself, or a state of himself, of which he had experience on the other?" This question, for the sake of a convenient phrase, I shall re-express as follows:

"Can the conditions of a non-solipsistic consciousness be fulfilled for a purely auditory experience?" That is to say, I shall mean by a non-solipsistic consciousness, the consciousness of a being who has a use for the distinction between himself and his states on the one hand, and

something not himself or a state of himself, of which he has experience, on the other; and by a solipsistic consciousness, the consciousness of a being who has no use for this distinction.

"This question, however, is not the only one we have to answer. There is another which turns out to be closely connected with it, viz.: Can we, in purely auditory terms, find room for the concept of identifiable particulars at all? Would there, in the purely auditory world, be a distinction between qualitative and numerical identity?" (page 69)

The latter question is the type of problem with which Strawson actually began when first proposing his No-Space model. The former question concerning non-solipsistic consciousness seems to be some sort of variant of Strawson's initial characterizing of descriptive metaphysics as concerned with the "actual structure of our thought about the world".

Conscious beings who make a distinction between, on the one hand, their 'internal' states and their sense of identity rooted in such states, and, on the other hand, things considered to be independent of those internal states (and a concomitant sense of identity) would be beings who could distinguish between: a) the actual structure of their thought and b) the nature of the world. Therefore, they would be beings able to establish an epistemological bridge of determinate character from a) to b). In short, beings with non-solipsistic consciousness (and the distinctions Strawson believes such consciousness entails) would be beings capable of undertaking and completing the kind of metaphysical program that Strawson has designated as descriptive metaphysics.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a potential fly in the metaphysical ointment that, if not removed properly, will tend to undermine any heuristic properties Strawson's ointment might be thought to possess. More specifically, the fact a being has use for the distinction between self and non-self in no way necessitates that the uses to which that distinction is put will reflect, accurately, the metaphysical character of reality.

Conceivably, the distinction in question could be based on an untenable hermeneutic of experience such that, although differentiations are made between self and non-self, what one considers to be self and what one considers to be non-self are not accurately understood or delineated. For example, depending on the way one characterizes the 'unconscious' or 'self', one might consider the unconscious dimension as part of self or as non-self. However, the way one characterizes these entities might not be accurately reflective of what role, if any, the unconscious might actually have with respect to self.

Alternatively, mystics might argue along the following lines. Although many individuals can make distinctions between self and non-self, these distinctions might be untenable inasmuch as the actual character of reality is believed to be such that no distinction should be made on the basis of self and other-than-self, and any such distinctions that are made are, in one way or another, erroneous.

Thus, the fact a being with non-solipsistic consciousness has use for the sort of distinctions Strawson outlines might say nothing about what the actual state of the world is toward which the being's thinking is oriented or about what the relationship of the individual and the world must be. In effect, what Strawson is describing when he talks of non-solipsistic consciousness is a being who has a certain belief system orientation concerning the metaphysical place of such a being in the world and the manner in which such a being epistemologically goes about describing the character of that being/world relationship. Whether, or not, that belief system orientation describes the actual structure of thought or the actual structure of the world or the actual structure of the interaction of thought and the world are all questions that could be addressed without one's having to make the solipsistic/non-solipsistic consciousness distinction that Strawson makes.

One could imagine that a being with solipsistic consciousness (i.e., a being who has no use for the distinction between self and 'other than self') could undertake a program of descriptive metaphysics that would focus on the 'actual structure of thought about the world' since "the world" would, in such a solipsistic context, be reduced to being a function, simple or complex, of the being's thought structure that was

projected as, or onto, the world. On this view, anything experienced as non-self or other than self would be the result of some sort of illusion, self-deception or logical/empirical error.

Therefore, when Strawson asks:

"Can the conditions of knowledge of objective particulars be fulfilled for a purely auditory experience?"

or:

"Could a being whose experience was purely auditory, make use of the distinction between himself and his states, on the one hand, and something not himself (or a state of himself) of which he had experience on the other?",

Strawson is asking misleading, if not irrelevant, questions as far as descriptive metaphysics is concerned. The self/other-than-self distinction is not a necessary prerequisite to tackling the problem of the character of thought in relation to the world ... a problem that, supposedly, is the task of descriptive metaphysics.

This is not to say the issue of solipsism will not be an important problem to investigate at some point in a program of descriptive metaphysics. Nonetheless, one could travel a fair conceptual distance in such a program without having to know whether the self/other-than-self distinction was an accurate reflection of one's relationship with existence or reality.

If the focus of descriptive metaphysics concerns the "actual structure of our thought about the world", what is of primary methodological importance is the attempt to determine the character of that structure in relation to what we take the character of the world to be on the basis of such thought. Whether the world about which we think is something separate and distinct from us as conscious beings who experience that 'separate' world in various ways, or whether the world about which we think is purely a projected function of such thinking, is – initially -- of far less importance to a program of

descriptive metaphysics than is an accurate determination of what constitutes the "actual structure of our thought about" whatever we experience as the object or focus of this thought.

If, for example, there exists consciousness of redness followed by consciousness of blueness, then as long as the medium of such consciousness is able to identify, differentially, these particular features of consciousness, one doesn't initially need to ask, or know, whether the cause or locus of the object or focus of these experiences is other than the medium undergoing the experiences. The redness and blueness might, or might not, be a function, in part, of objective particulars that are other-than-self, but one doesn't have to know that is true in order to be able to distinguish the two experiences or to identifyingly categorize them according to the differential character of the two experiences involved.

As far as descriptive metaphysics is concerned, determination of the ultimate source of the object or focus of thought and whether or not the world is distinct from our consciousness are questions that, to the extent they can be answered at all, follow upon, and are subsequent to, an accurate characterization of the nature or structure of thought concerning its various foci of experiential input, from sensation to reflection.

Re-identifiable Particulars

One of the reasons why Strawson introduces the material on solipsistic and non-solipsistic consciousness is because he is concerned about the problem that he believes the issue of re-identification of particulars poses for someone who did not adopt the distinctions made by a being with non-solipsistic consciousness. Strawson phrases the question he believes is raised here in the following way:

"... does the entailment hold in the other direction too? That is, does the existence of the idea of a re-identifiable particular, and hence the idea of a particular which continues to exist while not being observed, entail the existence of the distinction between oneself and states of

oneself on the one hand and what is not oneself or a state of oneself on the other?"(page 73)

There is a logical inference Strawson is making in the foregoing that does not necessarily hold. When, on the one hand, Strawson speaks of the notion of a "re-identifiable particular" but, on the other hand, states in relation to this notion -- "and hence the idea of a particular that continues to exist while not being observed" -- Strawson is making an inferential jump that might not be a tenable one.

He is equating "re-identifiable particulars" with particulars that continue to exist independently of their being experienced. Nevertheless, one could conceive of circumstances where given particulars could be re-identified without having to suppose re-identification entailed, or presupposed, the continued, autonomous existence of the particulars so re-identified. Consequently, the equivalency Strawson is setting up is potentially faulty.

For instance, suppose an individual underwent an experience in which he or she saw a face with the following features -- this could be the function of a dream or an hallucination, or it could be a reflection of some 'actual' particular with autonomous, though not necessarily continuous, existence that manifests itself at regular or irregular intervals. More specifically, the experience runs as follows: there was long reddish-orange hair on top and down the sides of the face; the right eye was covered with a black circular patch of cloth, held on by a thin black string running to each side of the face and disappearing in the hair on each side of the face; the uncovered eye was green; the nose was somewhat flattened and crooked; the mouth was open and smiling, exposing two missing upper front teeth; the jaw was square and without a beard; the cheek-bones were high and the cheeks somewhat sunken; the complexion was ruddy; there was a small scar on his left cheek shaped like an inverted "v".

Irrespective of whether the individual has labels for these various facets of the description akin to those outlined above, all of the features described would be part of the individual's experience of the face. If the same features (structured in the same relationship to one another as were the features of the given face) were to be

experientially encountered again by the same consciousness at a subsequent time -- somewhat removed from the first instance of encounter -- such that it was considered a distinct experience, then not implausibly, the experiential particulars of the latter encounter might be re-identified as being similar to, if not identical with (this, of course, assumes that the consciousness in question is, in fact, in some undefined sense, the "same" on the later occasion as it was on the previous occasion), the various particulars of the previous, or initial, encounter (Whether the individual recognized it as a 'face' doesn't matter for present purposes.).

All that is required for such a supposition to be justifiable is for there to be an accurate memory of the character of the first experience that is re-identified as being the same as, or similar to, what is being currently experienced. However, this supposition of re-identification does not necessarily mean the dream existed as a particular object between the two occasions of the dream experience. It might only mean that on two separate occasions circumstances were such as to result in the same dream being manifested.

Thus, for example, given our current ignorance of the mechanisms of dream production, there is little reason for assuming that dreams lie ready-made and waiting to be dreamt somewhere in the brain, much as a movie is in a canister waiting to be put in a projector to be shown. Indeed, in view of our ignorance, one might suppose just as easily that dreams could be produced like a stage play is produced -- by putting together bits and pieces of scenery, props, lighting, actors, etc. to create an end product that is called the dream that is, then, run as a particular performance for the audience of the mind, using the stage of consciousness. However, unlike the movie that could be re-run intact on numerous occasions, the stage-production theory of dreams would hold that each time a dream runs, it would have to be recreated anew and re-staged ... just as a stage play has to be put together again for each performance.

One might argue in a similar way in relation to hallucinations, mystical experiences, and even so-called "real" objects since the latter possibility might be a function of a process of alternating creations and extinctions on some subatomic or even on some, as yet unknown, sub-quantum level that renders the existence of these objects

discontinuous. As a result, such objects might not exist in the interval between the individual's separate experiences of the given object.

Conceivably, like the aforementioned stage-production theory of dreams, one might have a stage-production theory of 'real' objects which are created anew from time to time for each new observational audience. Such a possibility raises questions: about what is meant by the notion of an "object"; about whether or not one could account for the means or mechanism or process by which an object could blink on and off ontologically; and about whether an object that existentially blinked on was identical to the object that blinked off.

If the idea of a discontinuous 'object' world that is constantly in flux and that is continuously appearing and disappearing should strike the reader as rather preposterous, then I suggest that he or she consult with a few quantum physicists. The latter's views of reality are readily populated by such notions as "virtual particles" that both exist and do not exist at the same time, or "quantum states" whose character is determined by whether or not someone observes them. Moreover, right up to the instant of observation, these states could be any of several simultaneous possibilities, only one of which is fixed, somehow mysteriously, by the act of observation.

These sorts of issues notwithstanding, re-identification of particulars within a series of experiential settings is a function of the recognition of the requisite number of points of congruency between, or among, experiences involving a certain category of particular. What will constitute the "requisite number of points of congruency" will depend on what contingencies are at play in a given instance of re-identification.

Thus, suppose one experiences 'redness' on one occasion, and then later, one has another experience of what one re-identifies as 'redness'. In these circumstances, if the sole purpose of the re-identification were to note that the focus of the second experience does not involve blue, yellow, green or black particulars (e.g., one might be asked: was that a red card you saw or a green one?), then one does not need to assume the same precise red is involved in each case, consisting of the exact same hue, intensity, nuances and so on.

An artist, on the other hand, might notice subtle differences of color character between one experience and another, and although he

or she might identify both instances as variations on, say, a redness-theme, he or she would not necessarily re-identify the latter experience as an exactly congruent expression of the former experience, despite their similarities. Yet, this kind of differentiation might be extremely important if the artist were, say, trying to determine if a given painting were a forgery or if the person who had contracted for a painting wanted a specific value of red to dominate the commissioned picture, and so on.

Naturally, in any given instance, one could be mistaken concerning a given re-identification. For example, the criteria of congruency on which such a re-identification is based might not have been sufficiently rigorous and exacting.

Thus, if one only said 'blue' was the criterion for determining congruency, the hearer might not be able to know if the speaker meant 'navy blue', 'sky blue' or 'swimming pool blue'. As a result, the hearer could make mistakes in re-identifying various kinds of particulars.

Consequently, one might not be able to screen out certain particulars that are, in some way, similar to, but ultimately, substantially different from, the original experience that is to be re-identified in the present circumstances. At the same time, in cases where a re-identification tentatively has been established on the basis of the experiences in question having met certain conditions or criteria of congruency said to be sufficient for determining re-identification under the given circumstances, then if one wishes to bring such a re-identification into question, one would have to provide defensible arguments as to why one believed a mistake had been made in the issue of re-identification under consideration.

As the foregoing suggests, there might be degrees of re-identification of greater and lesser congruency among experiences. Whether greater congruency -- rather than lesser congruency -- must be established in order for re-identification to be determined in any given instance will depend on the circumstances surrounding such re-identifications. Different circumstances will have different criteria of exactitude that the congruency relationship between two or more experiences must attain before re-identification can be said to have occurred.

Irrespective of whatever controversies might arise with respect to whether the criteria for re-identification have been established in any given instance, at no point in these deliberations does one have to assume re-identification necessarily entails the idea that the particulars in question had to exist continuously while not being observed, in order for the re-identification of the particular to be possible. In fact, to make this sort of supposition is to invest particulars with a lot of ontological baggage that is somewhat premature as far as the methodological issues surrounding the re-identification of particulars within experience are concerned.

The question regarding re-identification that first needs to be asked is this: are the given particulars that are experienced at separate intervals "sufficiently" congruent to be considered as identifiable instances of one another? If so, then from a methodological perspective those instances experienced as being subsequent to some initial encounter constitute re-identifications of the original experiential engagement with the particular of given character. Once this has been established, one could go on, if one liked, to explore whether or not the only way for such a re-identification to be possible would be if some particular had continuous existence between these two experiential encounters.

One must keep in mind that what is, initially, being particularized here is experience and not some independent real world. To be sure, the differential particularizations of experience might correspond, in some manner, with differential features of the world. In addition, these 'real-world' particulars might have continuous existence while not being observed.

However, such possibilities are not presently what is directly at issue. The question is whether the way we particularize experience into various conceptual categories (preferential or otherwise) represents an adequate basis for accurately re-identifying prior particularized experience in terms of current particularized experience and whether or not any given speaker/hearer dyad could use this basis for entering into an intelligible discussion about the "actual structure of [their] thought about the world".

If I correctly understand what particular you are referring to within a discussion about experience -- and, I might demonstrate the

correctness of my understanding by answering to the speaker's satisfaction any number of questions about the character of the particular being referred to in the discussion about experience -- and if I agree the particular at issue represents an instance of the sort (precisely or nearly so) previously experienced and referred to, then in terms of the context of that discussion, the issue of re-identification has been settled independently of ever raising the question about the ontological status of the various particulars in the intervals between the experiences in which the particulars are involved. Seemingly, contrary to what Strawson maintains, the "idea of a re-identifiable particular" does not necessarily entail or mean the same thing as the "idea of a particular that continues to exist while not being observed".

To re-identify a particular, is to establish a congruency between experiences separated from one another temporally or by other experiences. This establishment of congruency neither presupposes anything about what the ontological status of such a particular is prior to, or in the intervals between, or subsequent to, such experiences. Furthermore, in the event a congruent link of re-identification might have been made between two separate experiential contexts on one or more given occasions, one need not be committed, ontologically, to anything with respect to what the character of the status of particulars independent of the context of experience must be.

In a sense, this issue of the ontological status of particulars in the intervals between experiential episodes is a second order metaphysical question. This is so because, methodologically, this issue is subsequent to the problems surrounding identification and re-identification.

As such, the secondary issue cannot be properly addressed until these latter topics have been settled in some minimal fashion or until enough ground rules have been established (in relation to handling issues of identification and re-identification). The purpose of these ground rules would be to permit one to have an intelligible referential framework concerning individuated or particularized experiences through which to explore the problem of the ontological status of objects that have been so identified or re-identified.

Strawson's Argument for a Spatial System of Objects

Following his discussion of the problems surrounding the re-identification of particulars, Strawson asks, and then answers, a question concerning what he believes are some implications of the re-identification issue:

"... with what feature or complex of features of our familiar world is the idea of re-identifiable particulars, existing continuously while unobserved, most intimately, naturally and generally connected? I think the answer is simple and obvious Roughly speaking, the crucial idea for us is that of a spatial system of objects, through which oneself, another object, moves, or which extends beyond the limits of one's observation at any moment, or, more generally, is never fully revealed to the observation at any moment. This idea obviously supplies the necessary non-temporal dimension for, so to speak, the housing of the objects which are held to exist continuously, though unobserved; it supplies this dimension for objects which are not themselves intrinsically spatial, such as sounds, as well as for aspects that are."(pages 73- 74)

A number of problems arise in relations to the foregoing quote. This is especially the case in the context of the issue with which Strawson initially was dealing in the earlier stages of the chapter in which the previous quote appears -- namely, whether one could develop a basis for determining identifiability-dependence relationships among particulars of different category-character that did not extend any sort of category-preference to the notion of material body particulars. However, as was previously indicated, while the idea of objects as continuously existing (i.e., independently of the experiences in which they were the subject of a re-identification process) might form an integral part of a spatial system that served as a means of housing such objects, this "truth" is irrelevant to the question of whether a non-material body particular based system of identification and re-identification is possible.

In the foregoing quotation, Strawson maintains that "objects" or "particulars" like sound (which, according to Strawson, "are not

themselves intrinsically spatial") are dependent for their identification on an underlying set of category-preference primitives -- i.e., material body particulars. Earlier in the present essay, Strawson was quoted as maintaining that sound has "no intrinsic spatial characteristics.

According to Strawson expressions such as: 'to the left of', 'spatially above', 'nearer', 'farther', have no intrinsically auditory significance." In one respect at least, Strawson is quite right in contending that expressions like "above", "below", "near", "in front of", and so on, when used in relation to discussions of sound, do not constitute intrinsic features of the character of sound when the latter is taken, in and of itself, as a particularized manifestation of some sort that is independent of a specified context of consciousness or experiential framework.

"Above", "below", "near", etc. are relational terms. In the case of human beings, such terms link together sound and a being capable of not merely experiencing -- to some extent -- the particulars to which the word "sound" collectively refers but a being also capable of localizing that sound-particular in relation to a given framework of conscious orientation to lived existence (i.e., experience).

On the other hand, sound itself (i.e., the category particular to which the term "sound" refers) seems to have, at least as far as Strawson is concerned, a somewhat nebulous spatial status since even though one can locate it in space (which is posited as that which is necessary to house continuously existing material body particulars), nevertheless, by determining its relationship to some given material body particular, one need not have exhausted the spatial characteristics of sound qua sound merely by limiting oneself to its relational properties (with respect to a given material body particular). In fact, quite apart from its relational characteristics, there seem to be spatial dimensions to sound that suggest it does not have to be dependent on material body particulars for its spatial status.

Yet, Strawson appears reluctant to explore these possibilities and determine whether or not sound could have spatial properties that are not, strictly speaking, entirely a function of positional relationships (i.e., "above", "below", "near", etc.) with respect to material body particulars. For example, current investigations in the physics of sound

treat sound as a wave phenomenon that requires a medium of transmission in order to be carried over a distance.

The character of this wave phenomenon is said to be a function of a variety of 'input' factors that hold in a specifiable context. Thus, the type of medium (i.e., whether gaseous, liquid or solid substances) will affect the properties of a sound wave, as will the temperature of the medium in which sound is to be transmitted. In addition, the source of the sound wave (i.e., that which generates it) will have a major shaping effect upon the wave character emanating from that source, in terms of frequency, pitch and so on.

"Sound", understood in terms of such an interpretive theory of physics, does possess an intrinsic spatial dimension in the sense that in order for sound to be possible such an interpretation presupposes a notion of space in which wave phenomena can transpire. When considered from the foregoing perspective, space is not described in terms of "above", "below", "near" or "far", nor does this notion of physical space necessarily entail this sort of relational terminology.

"Space" becomes a matter of that which is necessary to house a medium capable of transmitting wave phenomena appropriate to the character of sound as understood by contemporary physicists. So, although one could say, as Strawson does, that sound, considered qua sound, has "no intrinsic spatial characteristics" in the sense of "above", "below" and so on (which clearly presuppose a relational framework of some kind), nevertheless sound does have intrinsic spatial characteristics in the context of certain theories of physics. Furthermore, if these theories turn out to be accurate representations of certain aspects of the character of reality, then there is a determinate sense in which what Strawson is saying about sound (i.e., that it has "no intrinsic spatial characteristics") will have to be qualified in order not to be misleading.

Moreover, when Strawson says:

"... the most familiar and easily understood sense in which there exist sounds that I do not now hear is this: that there are places at which those sounds are audible, but these are places at which I am not now stationed." (page 74)

One might postulate, equally well, that the idea of sounds existing independently of a particular referential framework of consciousness might not imply the existence of places other than the one at which the given locus of consciousness currently is stationed. Instead, one might maintain that the idea of sounds existing independently of a particular referential framework simply might suggest there was some sort of a limitation in the capacity of the given locus of consciousness to perceive, or sensibly intuit, a sound that exists at one and the "same place" (whatever this means) as the given locus of consciousness.

In other words, just because a being does not hear something, one cannot conclude, automatically, that what is not heard must be someplace else. For, due to a faulty or limited hearing apparatus or due to inattention, sounds that are present might go unheard by the individual.

The foregoing considerations notwithstanding, the main issue seems to be as follows. If one could show that a being in the No-Space world could develop a basis for identification and differentiation of category-particulars encountered, then one would have put forth a case that seriously would undermine Strawson's claims vis-à-vis material body particulars and asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships.

Alternatively, given that Strawson already has defined the No-Space world as being without material body particulars because, allegedly, there is no spatial system in such a world that could house material particulars or objects. If so, then Strawson needs to show that the beings inhabiting a No-Space world couldn't come up with any workable basis for a system of identification and re-identification that could be used as a step in generating a program of descriptive metaphysics. If he could not demonstrate the foregoing idea, then his failure would leave open the issue of whether, or not, in developing a program of descriptive metaphysics, one necessarily, at some point, had to root (as Strawson claims to be the case) this program in asymmetric identifiability-dependent relationships that were functions of material-body particulars.

At one point in his discussion (see pages 74-86 of *Individuals*), Strawson appears to be trying to argue against precisely what has been alluded to in the last paragraph. More precisely, he seems to be

attempting to show that beings inhabiting a No-Space world could not generate, successfully, any procedural means for constructing a basis for identifying and re-identifying category particulars encountered by such beings during the course of experience.

Believing there is no direct way in which one could use purely auditory sensible intuitions in a No-Space world to generate spatial concepts, Strawson begins to hunt around for some dimension of auditory experience within the No-Space world that might provide something of an analogy for the idea of Space. According to Strawson:

"We want an analogy of distance -- or nearer to and further away from -- for only, at least, under this condition would we have anything like the idea of a dimension other than the temporal in which unperceived particulars could be thought of as simultaneously existing in some kind of systematic relation to each other, and to perceived particulars."
(p. 75)

Unfortunately, this way of stating the issue is misleading.

The immediate task is not to show how "unperceived particulars could be thought of as simultaneously existing in some kind of systematic relation" to other particulars -- both perceived and unperceived. One is not, yet, in a metaphysical position, as far as the current stage of 'progress' of Strawson's descriptive metaphysics is concerned, to begin asking about the logical character of unperceived particulars or about whether or not these particulars exist "in some kind of systematic relation" to one another as well as to perceived particulars.

If anything, the postulation of, or hypothesizing about, the character of unperceived particulars must be based upon, and presuppose, the identification of perceived particulars. One is getting ahead of the game to go looking for dimensions "other than the temporal in which unperceived particulars could be thought of as simultaneously existing in some kind of systematic" relationship to one another and to perceived particulars.

In a No-Space world in which sensible intuitions were restricted to purely auditory particulars and in which -- given Strawson's

orientation -- one was left with only the temporal dimension with which to work in establishing a basis for identification of particulars, there is not any need initially to even bring up the idea of unperceived particulars. Of course, one could do this if one wished to, once one's program of identification of perceived particulars had been completed.

Nonetheless, the immediate (or first) task is to see if, by working within the described parameters of the logical character of the No-Space world, one can find a means of identifying auditory particulars. In any event, the whole idea of looking for a dimension of the No-Space world that is analogous to that of Space in our world is misconceived.

Apparently, Strawson believes the foregoing kind of an analogy is necessary in order to leave open metaphysical room for the notion of unperceived particulars in the conceptual framework of the No-Space-world beings. However, since Strawson holds that the only sense that he can make of the idea of "unperceived particulars" is through the notion of "place", construed as a spatial system within which objects (i.e., material body particulars) can be housed, one would seem to hope in vain for a suitable analogy within the No-Space world that could correspond to the Space of human experience.

In other words, by trying to keep alive the idea of material-body particulars as presupposing "place" and, therefore, requiring either the sensible intuition of Space or the sensible intuition of an adequate analogous category, one gets trapped into investing unperceived particulars with the ontology characteristic of Strawson's metaphysical program at this point in his presentation. Yet, beings of the No-Space world have no initial reason to assume anything at all about the character of "material body particulars" or about the character of "place" or about the character of "unperceived particulars". This is so because, initially, the No-Space-world beings are only trying to develop a procedure for identification of particulars from which they can launch a metaphysical investigation into accounting for the existence of those particulars within experience.

Consequently, Strawson's attempt to seek spatial analysis in the No-Space world is methodologically irrelevant at this juncture in the program of descriptive metaphysics. Nevertheless, although Strawson continues to pursue his discussion in this portion of *Individuals* along the lines of seeking some sort of spatial analogy in the No-Space world,

let us proceed to look at the examples Strawson puts forth -- not with the purpose of seeking spatial analogies but solely with the aim of trying to determine whether beings in a No-Space world could generate a basis for identification of particulars within the context of the examples Strawson advances. For, as previously pointed out, if the above aim could be given some traction, then Strawson's argument at this point tends to become suspect.

At one point, Strawson asks us to imagine:

"... that the purely auditory experience we are considering has the following characteristics. A sound of a certain distinctive timbre is heard continuously, at a constant loudness, though with varying pitch. This sound is unique in its continuity. We might call it the master-sound. ... In addition to the master-sound, other sounds or sequences of sound of various degrees of complexity are heard. Some of these sequences may be supposed to have the kind of unity which pieces of music have. They recur and are recognized. They are highly complex universals with particular instances. ... One may imagine, finally, that variations in the pitch of the master-sound are correlated with variations in the other sounds that are heard, in a way very similar to that in which variations in the position of the turning-knob of a wireless set are correlated with variations in the sounds that one hears in the wireless. ... A gradual change in the pitch of the master-sound is accompanied by a gradual decrease, or a gradual increase followed by a gradual decrease, in the loudness of the unitary sound-sequence in question until it is no longer heard. If the gradual change in pitch of the master-sound continues in the same direction, a different unitary sound-sequence is heard with gradually increasing loudness." (pages 75-76)

Strawson contends the foregoing framework provides an insight into the sort of example someone might come up with to illustrate how one could construct a means of not only identifying and re-identifying particulars, but also of conceptualizing the notion of unperceived particulars within the setting of a No-Space world.

Apparently, the portions of the master-sound to which one was not currently attuned would constitute the basis for the possibility of subsequent unitary sound experiences. Also, because by definition (i.e., the manner in which Strawson has arbitrarily determined the character of the example) the master-sound is continuous, then one must suppose, according to Strawson, that there are unheard sound particulars simultaneously existing with the sound particulars that are being heard by a given being at a given time.

Therefore, Strawson maintains unperceived particulars exist such that while they do not seem to require the notion of a "spatial system" in Strawson's sense (i.e., a means of housing material-body particulars) as an underpinning to their existence, they do seem to convey the idea of an auditory particular that is "audible at other positions than the one occupied at that moment". Although Strawson considers such a possible argument to be both attractive and persuasive, he does not think it is compelling.

Before examining why Strawson holds this to be the case, one might do well to look at the logical character of the example a little more closely. The first thing to note is that the example outlined by Strawson presupposes what needs to be investigated.

He speaks of there being an array of sounds that are heard and that are related functionally to the master-sound in some way. They are said to be related functionally since the changing of the pitch of the master-sound is correlated with an ensuing change in the quality of "unitary sound-sequence" heard by the appropriately positioned No-Space-world being.

Strawson stipulates these sounds "recur and are recognized". In other words, the No-Space-world being is conceded the capability of being able to identify the various sounds he or she encounters as ones that have been heard before (when this is, in fact, the case). Presumably, different sounds or sound-sequences would be differentially recognized as being distinct in some way from one another by such a being.

Unfortunately, Strawson gives no account of how this differential recognition and identification operates. Furthermore, he does not provide any account of: a) what makes the master-sound possible, or b) whether the character of the particularized unitary sound-

sequences heard by the No-Space-world beings are a function, to some extent, of the character of the sensible intuition and conceptual capabilities of these beings, or c) if they are entirely a function of the nature of the master-sound ... with the perceptual equipment of the No-Space-world beings serving as passive receptors that in no way distort the character of the master-sound in any given instance. Yet, all of these issues have a bearing on the shape of the descriptive metaphysics one will come up with in relation to the character of the 'actual structure of thought' of these beings about their No-Space world.

The reason, of course, why Strawson presupposed all of these identification and re-identification aspects of the example is because he is pre-occupied with the question of unperceived particulars and whether or not the notion of "place" (which he believes is entailed by the idea of "unperceived particulars") requires one to posit a spatial system capable of housing material-body particulars of the kind he holds to be at the foundation of any asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationship within the context of a program of descriptive metaphysics. Nevertheless, given the nature of the example outlined by Strawson, a being of the No-Space world could proceed in the following way without having to pre-suppose the kinds of things that Strawson seems to feel are necessary.

Starting with 'his' or 'her' (assuming that such gender differences exist) immediate experience of a sound with a given character, the No-Space-world being begins to experiment with and explore those experiences over a period of time, keeping careful mental records of what is observed under different experiential conditions at different times. The No-Space-world being observes that the character of sound experiences does change with time.

After some time, the being hypothesizes (let us assume) that part of the reason why the character of the sound experience changes with time has to do with the qualitative differences in one's concentration across time. On this view, differences in perception of sound experiences would not necessarily be a function of "place", but of the quality of the character of one's attunement to the ongoing master-sound. The notion of "place" would, then, become tied to the qualitative intensity of the being's efforts of concentration such that

those beings who concentrated with the same degree of intensity would occupy the same auditory 'place' (although the term "place" might be somewhat misleading in this context).

As a result, the being might maintain there was a spatially dimensionless "place" consisting of: the master-sound and all the beings of the No-Space world, and the relationship of the beings to this 'place' would be defined not in terms of spatial reference points, but in terms of auditory reference points that were judged as being perceptually "closer" or "farther away" from the actual character of the master-sound. Those beings whose consciousness exhibited greater concentration would be, say, 'closer to' the true value of the master-sound, while those beings exhibiting less concentration would be 'further away' from the true value of the master sound ... where 'closer to' and 'further away' are functions of accuracy of perception and not spatial relationships.

Perhaps No-Space-world beings even might be able to differentiate among themselves in terms of who were the "slackers" and who were the 'virtuosos' in concentrating upon the master-sound. If this were so, then presumably, there would have to be some independent means of checking the actual structure of thought or understanding or awareness in such beings with respect to their experience of the master-sound in order to ensure that a being claiming to be a master-sound virtuoso was 'authentic'.

In none of the foregoing suppositions has one needed to construe "place" as involving some sort of spatial system, nor has one needed to consider "unperceived particulars" as entailing the notion of material body particulars that are, supposedly, the natural heirs of the would-be spatial system. Identification and re-identification of sounds would be a function of the quality of the intensity of concentration exhibited in relation to the master-sound.

Two perceived sounds in the No-Space world that are marked by equivalent efforts of concentration are identified by the perceivers during such an effort. Moreover, the quality of sound perceived would be compared to some kind of innate understanding, or mental chart, or complex equation, or series of tests, or council of experts, in order to determine its logical, structural, perceptual, or spiritual distance from the true character of the master-sound.

While the foregoing kinds of identifiability relationships show evidence of dependence features, they do not appear to be asymmetric -- at least not in Strawson's sense. Rather, there seems to be a mutual interdependence between the perceptual experience of the No-Space-world being and the continuous character of the master-sound posited by Strawson.

To be identified and recognized, the master-sound must be experienced as congruent with some standard of clarity or intensity of concentration. In addition, the clarity with which the master-sound is perceived is dependent on the quality of the effort of concentration put forth by any given No-Space-world being.

At the same time, without the existence of the master-sound of a given audible character, then there is nothing of a sensible nature to be identified or recognized by the No-Space-world beings. Without the determinate nature of the master-sound's continuous presence, there is nothing against which to measure the degree of clarity or intensity of auditory experience.

Naturally, No-Space-world beings will be confronted with the problem of trying to discover the extent and character of the contributions that are made, respectively, by the master-sound and the No-Space-world being's perceptual/conceptual equipment in any given auditory experience. However, even if determination of the relative contributions of these two inputs to auditory experience reveals a certain amount of asymmetry under various conditions, the asymmetry is not necessarily a function of identifiability-dependence relationships rooted in material body particulars. This is because the previously noted possibility concerning the issue of identifiability is that it might be dependent on both the character of consciousness of auditory experience as well as on the character of the reality of the master-sound's existence.

The question of asymmetry here -- if any asymmetry is present at all -- is a matter of inquiring about which, if either, of the two inputs has a greater effect upon shaping the character of the perceived experience in any given instance. The more perceptually distant a No-Space-world being is from the true character of the master-sound, the more the asymmetrical character of the identifiability-dependence relationship would be a function of the being's perceptual/conceptual

contribution of shaping the character of the perceived auditory experience. On the other hand, the more perceptually proximate a No-Space-world being is to the true character of the master-sound, then the more the character of the identifiability relationship would be a function either: a) of the symmetrical contributions of the two inputs, or b) of an asymmetrical relationship dominated by the actual character of the master-sound being allowed by the perceptual/conceptual capabilities of the being to come through in as undistorted a manner as the being's perceptual/conceptual capabilities will permit.

Apparently, the reason why Strawson feels the conceptual scheme he has outlined for the re-identification of particulars in the No-Space world is, ultimately, not very satisfying is because:

"We could adopt a different scheme of description that allowed for re-identifiable universals but not for re-identifiable particulars." (page 77)

But, given that the No-Space world example -- as outlined by Strawson himself -- seems to revolve around the possibility of re-identifiable particulars, yet does not necessarily allow for re-identifiable universals, there appears to be some question as to just what exactly is being re-identified within the No-Space framework specified by Strawson.

Therefore, there is a potential for confusion concerning the identity of sound particulars and their actual relation to the 'world' -- however that might be characterized. Thus, Strawson's treatment seems to leave one with these questions: is that which the No-Space-world being is re-identifying an instance of a universal manifestation of the sound-world independent of, though not unrelated to, his/her/its experience, or is that which such a being is re-identifying an instance of a sound particular that is a function of that being's specific experience, and not necessarily a reflection of a universal expression of some aspect of the actual, real character of the 'world'?

I say these "seem" to be the questions we are left with and this "apparently" is the reason behind Strawson's not finding the No-Space

world example he developed very "compelling" (although he did find the example somewhat "attractive") because, quite frankly, Strawson's presentation at this point in his program leaves a lot to be desired as far as its clarity is concerned, and it does not readily permit one to grasp precisely, if at all, what he finds problematic and not compelling about the stated example. Indeed, one might contend that if the example in question is not compelling, then perhaps this is because Strawson did not develop it and construct it as rigorously as he might have.

In other words, had he taken more care in formulating the master-sound example, he might have been able to raise issues that would have constituted far more of a richly textured conceptual challenge for him to deal with in trying to defend the material-body particular based system of asymmetric identifiability-dependent relationships than is presently the case. By and large, the possibility that -- with respect to the No-Space world example -- someone "could adopt a different scheme of description that allowed for re-identifiable universals but not for re-identifiable particulars" seems to be neither here nor there.

In other words, this seems to be an irrelevant issue as far as the critical problem of the differential identification and re-identification of various aspects of experience is concerned. Whether, or not, a given feature being referred to and that one is attempting to descriptively identify is considered to be a universal or a particular makes little difference to one's capacity to identifyingly refer to the feature in question.

The question of universals is a separate metaphysical issue altogether that involves a lengthy process of hermeneutical investigation in relation to the "text" of experience. Ultimately, the text of experience might, or might not, be a function of universals of some sort expressing themselves in particularized instances, but one perfectly well could go about a differential identification of various facets of the text of experience without ever raising this sort of question.

On the level of identification and re-identification, the particularization of experience is not a matter of presupposing any kind of ontological relationship between universals and particulars. It is a matter of pointing out the different facets of the character of a

specified focus of a given experiential context and attempting to determine if some subsequent or previous experience has a requisite degree of congruency to quality as an example or instance of the specific category particular being referred to in a speaker/hearer interchange.

As intimated previously, there might be times when determining whether a given particular, currently being referred to, is identical to a particular previously encountered might be of crucial importance (e.g., as in the case of determining whether something is a forgery). At other times, if the two experiential particulars share certain values or qualities in common within the specifiable parameters of acceptability, this might be enough to satisfy the conditions of re-identification. Thus, in identifying a given object as a car, one might be satisfied that the object has a character that conforms to, or is congruent with, a certain minimal number of features that were manifested in prior, encountered instances of cars without supposing the present object has to agree in every detail with all previously experienced cars.

Still, one should keep in mind that even in cases where identity of a precise kind is important [i.e., where what is now referred to must be the same (in some sense) as what had been previously experienced or referred to], one need not feel compelled to argue that the idea of universals is the only way one could link the particulars across time within the experiential context of identifiability relationships. At the same time, the aforementioned sense of identity might not be that easy to pin down.

Even if one were to assume that a given object existed continuously from time: 't' to time: 't+10', there might be changes of wear and tear, so to speak, in which that object's appearance is altered from one temporal point to another. Or, there might be changes of a chemical or atomic nature that might subtly alter certain aspects of the character of the object. How one determines identity amidst these changes and transitions, and how one determines whether one has a totally new object or an altered old object are not always easy questions to answer.

Re-identification of particulars is an epistemological issue requiring the establishment of congruencies between experiential frameworks, irrespective of how, or whether, continuous existence of

such particulars is possible. The notion of universals, on the other hand, is an attempt to metaphysically account for how particulars come by their specific character and/or how particulars could exist continuously across time and maintain identity despite undergoing numerous changes.]

Persons, Non-Solipsistic Consciousness and Re-identifiable
Particulars

Toward the end of his chapter "Sounds" in *Individuals*, Strawson states:

"The question, whether we could find room in the purely auditory world for the concept of a re-identifiable particular, was not, however, the only question we set ourselves. There was also the question, whether the conditions of a non-solipsistic consciousness could be satisfied in such a world. An affirmative answer to the first question appeared as at least a necessary condition of an affirmative answer to the second. Whether it was also a sufficient condition, was a point I left undecided. It might appear obvious that it was a sufficient condition. For the concept of a re-identifiable particular was held to entail that of a particular's existing while unobserved and hence, in general, the distinction between being observed and being unobserved, or at least some closely analogous distinction. But how can this distinction exist without the idea of an observer? How, therefore, can the being with the auditory experience make use of any such distinction without the idea of himself as an observer? Moreover, when we were preparing to construct our auditory analogue of space, we spoke of ordinary observers as thinking of themselves as being at different places at different times. Must not the being with the purely auditory experience similarly think of himself as "at" different places in auditory space? ... The question essentially is whether a distinction parallel in other respects to the ordinary "observed-unobserved" distinction can be drawn without the need for any idea such as we ordinarily express by the first person singular pronoun and associated forms." (pages 81-82)

Believing he has satisfactorily answered "whether we could find room in the purely auditory world for the concept of a re-identifiable particular" (which he has answered in the negative), Strawson begins to address some questions he feels will help set the stage for an investigation of the idea of "personhood" which he intends to develop in the chapter of *Individuals* entitled "Persons". The question that he now wishes to raise is whether or not a being of the No-Space world needs to have some sense of the notion of selfhood in order to sustain the idea of a re-identifiable particular. According to Strawson, the idea of a re-identifiable particular entails a spatial system that can act as a place holder for the objects that exist continuously. This system permits particulars to be re-identified as something encountered previously at some ontological juncture other than the "place" with which one currently is engaged. Strawson also believes the notion of a re-identifiable particular implies the following.

A being is the conscious locus for the re-identification is making or that is capable of making a distinction between "observed" and "unobserved" that will coincide with the metaphysics of re-identifiable particulars. This is so because Strawson is presuming that a being who re-identifies a particular will conceive of such a particular as having been continuously existent but unobserved (at least by the being in question) in the interim between initial identification and subsequent re-identification.

Strawson, then, concludes that any being who makes the observed/unobserved distinction in relation to re-identifiable particulars also must acknowledge, either implicitly or explicitly, that such a distinction entails the idea of an "observer". In other words, Strawson is maintaining that there exists some locus of consciousness capable of appreciating the metaphysics of re-identifiable particulars in both their observed and unobserved states. In this regard, Strawson asks: could a No-Space-world being make the observed/unobserved distinction that seems to be a part of the process of re-identifying particulars without, at the same time, being compelled to make use of the notion of personhood that appears to underlie the notion of "observer" that Strawson claims is inherent in the observed/unobserved distinction associated with re-identifiable particulars?

To use the terminology employed by Strawson, he wishes to argue for the idea that beings with non-solipsistic consciousness are the kind of beings that humans are -- that is, beings who, thereby, generate a descriptive metaphysics of a sort that is rooted in asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships that are functions of the notion of material body particulars. As a result, according to Strawson, the form of descriptive metaphysics that these beings with non-solipsistic consciousness develop accurately construes "the actual structure of our thought about the world".

By examining what he takes to be the problems in the model of the beings of a No-Space world, he apparently feels he can show that descriptive metaphysics demands the sort of delineation that he is giving to it in *Individuals*. If one is not forced to believe the re-identification of particulars entails their continuous existence while not being observed, then beings of the No-Space world need not have to conclude that unobserved particulars must exist in some "place" where they are not now at. However, without the requirement of this notion of "place" (with its concomitant implications of a spatial system capable of housing unobserved objects), the beings of the No-Space world are free, to some extent, to construe the notion of re-identifiable particulars in ways that do not have to entail the kind of ontological baggage Strawson wants to place on board during the metaphysical journey he is advocating.

Of course, after considerable investigation, the beings of the No-Space world might come to the conclusion there are things such as spatial objects ... although the existence of these objects might have to be inferred and not sensibly intuited by No-Space beings. They also might conclude that there are objects that exist continuously while not being observed.

Nevertheless, neither of these acknowledgments needs to be tied to, and dependent upon, a Strawsonian conception of re-identifiable particulars. As pointed out earlier, the beings of the No-Space world might make a clear distinction between the epistemological demands surrounding the problem of re-identifying particulars and the quite separate metaphysical issue of whether or not those particulars exist continuously in the interim prior to re-identification but subsequent to the initial identification of the particular in question.

Strawson believes an affirmative answer to "whether we could find room in the purely auditory world for the concept of a re-identifiable particular" (page 81) is a necessary prerequisite for affirmatively answering "whether the conditions of a non-solipsistic consciousness could be satisfied" (page 81) in a No-Space world. The reasoning here seems quite straightforward.

First, Strawson holds that a being with non-solipsistic consciousness is defined as a being that has a use for the distinction between self and other-than-self. In addition, Strawson believes re-identifiable particulars entail the ideas of, respectively: "unobserved particulars", "place", "spatial system", and "material body particulars".

Given the foregoing, the conditions for non-solipsistic consciousness would seem to be satisfied in a world where re-identifiable particulars in Strawson's sense were possible, because these particulars would provide a basis for the self/other-than-self differentiation in terms of the observed/unobserved distinction concerning particulars. In other words, if a particular is thought to be capable of existing continuously while unobserved, then this appears to imply there is something other than self responsible for the ontological maintenance of such a particular while it remains unobserved. Furthermore, if one could find room in one's "world" for "the concept of re-identifiable particulars", then according to Strawson, one would have supplied a necessary (and perhaps sufficient) condition that logically allows for beings of non-solipsistic consciousness to exist in that "world".

The foregoing line of argument, however, involves a number of problems. First of all, the reasoning that appears implicit in Strawson's attempt to make the conditions for non-solipsistic consciousness at least necessarily (if not sufficiently) dependent on the idea of re-identifiable particulars is suspect. For instance, just because a particular might be considered to exist continuously while unobserved does not mean, in and of itself, that something other than self is responsible for the ontological sustenance of the unobserved particular. Thus, a memory not presently in consciousness is a particular of sorts that is presumed to exist continuously (let us assume, for now, this is so) while unobserved.

Yet, one cannot conclude, as a result, that something other than self is responsible for the ontological sustenance of this particular. The complexities of the self's structure might be such that memories are maintained by the self through unconscious mechanisms.

Obviously, where one places the boundaries designating the outer limits, so to speak, of the character of "self" will affect the different kinds of theories one might come up with concerning what the precise nature of non-solipsistic consciousness is in any given case. For example, there might be some point to the discussion of whether the unconscious realm constitutes an aspect of self given that it often seems to lie beyond one's capacity to control and understand. Some people only might want to consider as "self" that which pertains to consciousness or to the rational faculties or to the soul or to the Divine spark within us ... depending on one's point of view on these matters.

Even in the case of "material body particulars", one just cannot assume the postulated continued existence of unobserved particulars of this sort necessarily means that something other than self is responsible for the ontological maintenance of a particular while that particular continues to exist unobserved. Something other than self might be so responsible, but this has to be determined. It cannot merely be presupposed.

Among other things, one would have to contend with the challenge of mysticism. More specifically, many mystics approach "selfhood" in terms of its being but one expression of an underlying Self that is believed by them to be the true Self and the Source of all reality. Mystics also often contend that the notion of 'other than Self' (including continuously existing, unobserved material body particulars) is purely an illusion.

Whether mystics are right or wrong is not the point. The point is that one cannot presuppose one's conclusions. The link, if any, between "other than self" and the continuous existence of unobserved particulars does not appear to be an a priori truth. Consequently, the tenability of any proposed link would have to be considered on a case by case basis before any conclusions could be drawn.

According to Strawson's view of the matter, a being with non-solipsistic consciousness is not stipulating that philosophical solipsism

is a false doctrine (although it might be). Rather, Strawson maintains that this kind of being is saying something quite different.

For Strawson, a being with non-solipsistic consciousness is saying that regardless of the ultimate character of reality there is heuristic value in believing there are particulars that are not functions of, and are independent from, the self and the states that the self encompasses. Therefore, the only condition that needs to be satisfied in order for non-solipsistic consciousness to be realizable is for there to be a consciousness that, rightly or wrongly, believes, for whatever reason, that making a distinction among particulars, in terms of whether they are considered to be expressions of self or not-self, is a worthwhile distinction to make. Thus, the issue of non-solipsistic consciousness can be considered quite independently of the issue of "re-identifiable particulars" construed in Strawson's sense of the term.

Having said the foregoing, a question still remains. Could No-Space-world beings develop a method of re-identification of particulars "without the need for any idea such as we ordinarily express by the first person singular pronoun and associated forms" (*Individuals*, page 82, quoted earlier)?

In a way, the foregoing question is like asking if one must maintain that a computer is conscious of itself simply because it has a means of determining (i.e., the logic of its micro-circuitry) that the particular which is called for now is the same or similar to the particular existing at address XY in its storage banks. Correspondingly, one might wonder if one must be cognizant of the fact that what is now being re-identified in consciousness as a previously encountered or stored particular is an act of re-identification which one -- a self-- is doing?

Must one be consciously aware that it is oneself who is making a re-identification? If one were not aware that one were making the re-identification, would this lack of awareness somehow invalidate the re-identification if this re-identification were rooted in a correct analysis of the congruency or identity of two particulars?

Imagine a No-Space-world being who learned, as a 'child', that any particular of experience manifesting seven specified auditory features 'a' through 'g' represents an instance of a "grock". Could there subsequently arise within this being's consciousness an awareness of a particular exhibiting auditory features 'a' through 'g', such that the

being might think: "grock" without necessarily having to think grock is something other than self? Must a No-Space being suppose there is a self now thinking 'grock' and identifying the latter particular as something other than the self that is doing the identifying or re-identifying as the case might be?

There seems little reason to assume that a No-Space-world being need believe that the particular now encountered in experience must be thought of as "something I've experienced before". Such a being conceivably might consider such an experience to be merely the recognition that the present particular being encountered in phenomenology is the same as or similar to a given memory of determinate character that is now recalled and compared with current experience for the purposes of determining the extent of the congruency between the two with respect to the criterial features 'a' through 'g'.

Strawson appears to want to say that understanding necessarily requires awareness that "I" am the one who is doing the understanding. The foregoing paragraph, however, is suggesting that what is crucial to correct understanding is its accuracy and not necessarily an awareness of who or what is responsible for the accuracy of that experience.

The idea of understanding does imply there is a consciousness in which, or through which, this understanding is present or manifested. Nonetheless, such understanding doesn't seem to imply there must be some element of self-awareness presently associated with the given consciousness in order for this kind of understanding to exist. In short, there appears to be nothing inherently contradictory in simultaneously maintaining that: 1) a being of the No-Space world could re-identify particulars without: 2) having to believe a non-solipsistic consciousness must be present in order to accomplish a re-identification.

One could raise questions about the correctness of the No-Space-world being's re-identification of particulars and whether a currently experienced particular was really identical with a previously encountered particular. One could also raise the same questions in relation to the re-identification of particulars of a being with non-solipsistic consciousness.

Regardless of whether or not a being has a use for making a distinction between self and not-self, answering the issue of solipsistic versus non-solipsistic consciousness will not settle the extent of truth or error in a given instance of supposed re-identification. The issue of correctness is entirely independent of the kind of consciousness (i.e., solipsistic or non-solipsistic) one believes to be present.

Moreover, as indicated a short while ago in the above discussion, an accurate re-identification of a particular could, conceivably, be made within the context of a solipsistic consciousness. Thus, there seems to be little reason or evidence contained in the arguments that Strawson has put forth that would force one to reject the possibility that a being of the No-Space world might come up with a scheme of re-identifying particulars that neither presupposed nor entailed the notion of non-solipsistic consciousness. Alternatively, there appears to be little, if anything, so far in the discussion of Strawson's arguments in the first several chapters of *Individuals* that would prevent a being of the No-Space world from opting for a non-solipsistic consciousness.

Structure of Our Thought About the World

The point of the foregoing analysis (or at least one of its points) has not been so much a matter of trying to eliminate either kind of consciousness (i.e., solipsistic and non-solipsistic) as a legitimate possibility. The aim has been to demonstrate the character of the boundaries of various ideas that are central to the program of descriptive metaphysics Strawson is attempting to establish.

Strawson has argued, roughly speaking, that our way of describing is a function of a system of asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships that is rooted in the idea of material body particulars that have been given category preference over other category particulars. Strawson also has argued that these material body particulars entail the notion of 'unobserved particulars', 'place', 'spatial system' and so on. Consequently, for Strawson, when these notions are juxtaposed properly in the context of non-solipsistic consciousness, all encountered particulars can be re-identified at a later time in terms of that context of non-solipsistic consciousness.

Arguments have been offered in the present essay indicating that there is no compelling reason for one to give category preference to material body particulars. Moreover, there also appears to be no compelling reason for one to make other category particulars functionally dependent on material body particulars for their (i.e., the other categories of particulars) identification and placement in a system of descriptive metaphysics. In addition, there appears to be little evidence in Strawson's presentation to warrant binding: a) the notion of "particulars" to the idea of "spatial objects", or b) the concept of "unobserved particulars" to the notion of "place", construed as some kind of spatial system, or c) the idea of "re-identifiable particulars" to a given theory of "non-solipsistic consciousness".

Certainly, one might consider Strawson's perspective as representing one possible way to pursue descriptive metaphysics in relation to such a program's preoccupation with the "actual structure of our thought about the world". However, the very fact of being able, in the present essay, to advance plausible counterproposals to Strawson's various arguments would suggest that his position really might be only an exercise in the delineation of a belief system rather than an accurate description of the "actual structure" itself. As such, Strawson's position might be more reflective of the structure of Strawson's thought about the world, rather than reflective of the structure of human thought, in general, about the world.

One might even question whether or not there really is some unitary framework that does accurately describe the "actual structure of our thought about the world". In any event, in view of the numerous theoretical proposals that have been advanced over the last several thousand years, a distinction could be made that might help clarify exactly what a program in descriptive metaphysics is trying to get at.

The aforementioned distinction is this. There might be a difference between attempting to describe what the "actual structure of our thought about the world" is and attempting to describe what the "actual structure of our thought about the world" actually is.

If one wishes to know what the true nature of reality or Being or the world is, then in order to entertain any hope of discovering what this nature is, one might have to acknowledge that the structure of thought should have certain characteristics that will enable one, or

provide one, with the best opportunity to grasp accurately what the actual character of the world or reality or Being is. This is not to say, however, there is only one way to know the nature of reality or the world or Being, or even that one will necessarily be able to come to know the nature of reality in some definitive, exhaustive sense. Rather, to whatever extent human beings are capable of knowing the nature of reality or the world, human beings will have to discover and pursue those methods, techniques, systems, and so on which will permit individuals an opportunity to gain epistemological access to those aspects of reality that he or she is capable actually of engaging, through the potential inherent in, for example, the structure of human thought.

There might be, and likely are, elements in the structure of our thought about the world that are problematic or flawed or misleading or illusory or error prone. The mere fact that we might describe, accurately, the "actual structure of our thought about the world" does not guarantee we, thereby, will come to grips with the actual character of the world to which our thoughts refer. What is necessary is to identify, if possible, those aspects of the "actual structure of our thought" that will permit us to inferentially determine, to whatever extent we can, the specific character of the world on which our thoughts are focusing.

Up to this point, Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics might describe, quite accurately, the actual structure of the thought of some people about the world. However, if there are other people whose actual structure of thought about the world is different from that described by Strawson -- as there most certainly are -- then how does one decide between, or among, the various programs of descriptive metaphysics?

Must descriptive metaphysics be reduced to so many exercises in relativism, where the "actual structure of our thought about the world" becomes functionally dependent on, and varies with, the philosophical outlook of the individual or group with whom one is speaking? Under these sorts of circumstance, one has no means of determining that, if any, of the views concerning the investigation of the structure of thought about the world are capable of withstanding an examination by a program of critical analysis.

Such a program would not be restricted to any one view. Instead, it would attempt to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a given metaphysical program in terms of the considerations, questions, data, models, theories, and problems arising in the realms of human experience (taken collectively) and against that any metaphysical program must be able to defend itself.

Furthermore, a metaphysical program's ability to defend itself does not necessarily mean the program is correct in its depiction of reality. Such defensibility merely renders the program more or less plausible -- depending on the strength, depth and breadth of that defensive capability.

Is there not a potential difference between looking at the structure of a given belief system about the world, qua belief system, and looking at the structure of a given thought system that actually tries to epistemologically engage the world qua world as something independent of the thought/belief system and to which the thought/belief system is descriptively referring? At the very least, there seems to be a potential difference in the character of the commitment in each case. Both investigations, in effect, involve beliefs, to one extent or another, but in the former case, all that matters is delineating the character of the belief system taken in and of itself, whereas in the latter case there seems to be an interest in trying to determine the extent to which what one believes actually accurately reflects some aspect of reality beyond the horizons of the belief/thought system in question.

Strawson's stipulation that descriptive metaphysics concerns the "actual structure of our thought about the world" (emphasis mine) tends to suggest his program is attempting to get at something more essential than relative theories about the proposed character of the aforementioned "actual structure". The underlying intent seems to be a matter of identifying those aspects of the actual structure of human thought that will allow us to epistemologically engage the world in an accurate and revealing manner with respect to the actual character of that world.

If descriptive metaphysics is reduced to relativized theories about how different groups of people think about the world, then Strawson's designation of the nature of descriptive metaphysics certainly is

misleading. After all, the structure of our thought doesn't necessarily have any one kind of reflective structure concerning the nature of the world ... not even that part of the world which concerns the structure of our thinking about the world. There are a multiplicity of such structures that are possible. On the other hand, if descriptive metaphysics refers to all of these possible structures taken collectively, then Strawson has not at all succeeded in describing what the "actual structure of our thought about the world" is, because he has, so far, restricted himself to but one kind of theoretical account -- namely, his own version.

In order to avoid these problems, Strawson seems to be maintaining more than just that making the distinction between the structure of thought and the structure of the world is a useful one to make (i.e., adopting the stance of non-solipsistic consciousness as an heuristic device). He appears to be holding that the "actual structure of our thought about the world", when construed in terms of a proper program of metaphysics (i.e., as he conceives it should be) correctly reflects the character of the relationship of metaphysical/ontological realities that exist independently of our individual thought and beliefs about the world.

To make a distinction between, on the one hand, the character of the structure of thought, and, on the other hand, the character of the world, does not compel one, as Strawson apparently believes to be the case, to adopt a perspective of non-solipsistic consciousness and, thereby, to reject solipsistic consciousness. The aforementioned distinction only might mean that, at a minimum, the total experiential field of an individual can be differentiated -- and frequently is -- according to the character of those particularizations of experience (of which thought itself can be one) about which thought thinks. No presumptions need be made as to whether the "world" that is being particularized (according to the character of the experience in which the particularization arises) is an ontological entity that is metaphysically distinct from, and independent of, the metaphysical character of that which makes thinking and experiencing possible.

If the foregoing contention is correct, then the problem with which one is faced is that of trying to determine what the nature of the relationship is between two dimensions of the experiential field that

have been differentially particularized into entities that are respectively referred to as 'thought' and 'the world'. Once having determined, as best one is able, what the characters are of 'thought' and 'the world', along with the relationship of these two, one can go on to ask whether: a) 'the world' and "thought" are metaphysically autonomous unto themselves (i.e., each distinct and separate from the other), or b) 'thought' is but one special kind of manifestation of 'the world', or c) 'the world' is just one special kind of 'thought', or d) 'thought' and 'the world' are both expressions of 'something' more fundamental in metaphysical character?

Whatever the correct answer (or answers) might be, developing a program of descriptive metaphysics that attempts to provide an account of the "actual structure of our thought about the world" appears to be intended to lead beyond the level of just describing our thinking about the world. Such a program appears to lead into a journey of understanding where we must try, fully, to encounter and resolve the question: what makes the "actual structure of our thought about the world" possible at all. We also are confronted by the problem of trying to determine to what extent our thinking about the "structure of our thought about the world" provides a viable or defensible means of coming to understand the nature of that which makes this thinking possible to begin with.

Considered from this perspective, Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics seems to be plagued by a number of fundamental difficulties and unanswered questions as outlined earlier in this essay. The issues I have raised with respect to Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics seems to threaten, if not undermine, the tenability of his contentions about the character of the "actual structure of our thought about the world". And, this appears to be the case both in terms of the methodological approach that is reflected in his various contentions, as well as in terms of what those contentions seem to imply with respect to the substantive character of "the structure of our thought", "the world", and the relationship between the two of them.

Toward the beginning of the chapter entitled "Persons", Strawson says in reference to the previous chapter "Sounds":

"We drew a picture of a purely auditory experience, and elaborated it to a point at which it seemed that the being whose experience it was -- if any such being were possible at all -- might recognize sound-universals and re-identify sound-particulars and in general form for himself an idea of his auditory world; but still, it seemed he would have no place for the idea of himself as the subject of this experience, would make no distinction between a special item in his world, namely himself, and the other items in it. Would it not seem utterly strange to suggest that he might distinguish himself as one item among others in his auditory world, that is, as a sound or sequence of sounds? For how could such a thing -- a sound -- be also what had all those experiences?" (page 88)

In actuality, Strawson neither has demonstrated, nor stipulated, that the No-Space world must be restricted only to sounds. Strawson merely said that the No-Space-world beings had no capacity for a sensible intuition of Space in the Kantian sense and that, therefore apparently, all sources of sensation except audition effectively were denied to such a being. Yet, unless one were to assume that consciousness, as a locus of experience, must necessarily be a function of something that requires a "place" in Strawson's sense of spatial system capable of housing objects (i.e., material body particulars), there is no reason to believe a No-Space-world being couldn't be capable of conscious reflection upon his or her auditory experiences.

Strawson seems to be assuming that consciousness (and whatever rational capabilities that are expressible in, or through, consciousness) is precluded from being a part of the No-Space world being's epistemological repertoire because that being's capabilities supposedly are restricted (by Strawson himself) to sensible intuitions of Time alone. But, Strawson has done nothing to demonstrate that all aspects of consciousness, including the dimension of rational reflection, are necessarily a function of the sensible intuitions that have been ruled out, according to Strawson, from being part of the No-Space world model.

Moreover, in contradistinction to Strawson's point of view in the quote cited above, there is no need for a No-Space-world being to think of himself or herself (if he or she does have a notion of self – or even a

notion of: he or she) as being a "sound or sequence of sounds" (although the individual could if he, she, or it wished). As noted earlier, one must make a distinction between a being without a sensible intuition of Space and the character of the world in which such a being lives.

A No-Space world does not necessarily mean such a world consists only of sounds. A No-Space world means that at least one of the ways in which beings who inhabit that world are linked to their world is through their capacity to intuit Time sensibly by means of audition. This says nothing about whether the conceptual abilities of these beings would be capable of positing or grasping a multidimensional world that extended beyond the limitations of their sensible intuitive capacities.

Furthermore, this characterization of such a No-Space-world being does not say anything about what the actual metaphysical character of the world inhabited by those beings must be. Therefore, even though the sensible experience of a No-Space world being might be limited entirely to sounds, one is uncertain as to what sort of a concept of self, if any, these beings will come up with and what sort of a concept of "the world" they will develop on the basis of their auditory experiences and their reflection upon those experiences, because, as of yet, one knows nothing about their capacities for thinking, knowing, understanding, reflecting, and awareness.

In addition, Strawson did not show or prove a No-Space-world being "would have no place for the idea of himself as the subject of [his] experience". In point of fact and as previously discussed in this essay, Strawson attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to argue that No-Space-world beings would be unlikely to develop or possess a non-solipsistic consciousness. He tied his argument to his own individualized hermeneutic of such notions as "unobserved particulars", "re-identifiable particulars" or "place", together with what he believed these notions entailed or implied or presupposed with respect to the emergence or existence of non-solipsistic consciousness.

When his hermeneutic was shown to be faulty and indications were given of how the whole idea of non-solipsistic consciousness was not a necessary prerequisite for generating concepts like, for example,

"re-identifiable particulars, "unobserved particulars" (and vice versa), then whether, or not, a No-Space-world being actually would. or would not, have some means of developing an "idea of himself as the subject of experience" was left indeterminate. Conceptual room existed for both possibilities.

More specifically, a No-Space-world being might be capable of opting for either a solipsistic or non-solipsistic consciousness or even for some other form of philosophical solipsism (or rejection thereof). Whatever the No-Space-world being chose or was capable of choosing in this respect involved issues that could be considered independently of the problem of finding ways to generate a systematic means of identifying and re-identifying particulars during the course of experience.

This systematic means of identifying and re-identifying particulars might serve as a basis for proceeding further with a program of descriptive metaphysics. However, this system issue could be addressed prior to, and apart from, subsequent issues such as solipsistic versus non-solipsistic consciousness.

States of Consciousness, Corporeal Characteristics and
Personhood

Strawson begins approaching the issue of personhood by describing how some of the characteristics we ascribe to ourselves as individuals we also ascribe to certain other kinds of particulars. For example, features such as color, location, shape, weight and size are attributed to those particulars that appear to be similar to ourselves as well as to other kinds of particulars.

Strawson also notes there are some characteristics that we ascribe to ourselves that many of us would not extend ascriptively to various sorts of particulars encountered in experience. For example, according to Strawson, we ascribe awareness, intentionality, motivation, rationality, understanding, perception and emotion to ourselves, but many of us do not tend to characterize other non-human particulars in the same way. Of, if we do characterize these other particulars in this way, then we often are judged to be 'psychotic', 'retarded' or caught up in some sort of 'occult' or 'mystical' philosophy, all of which are further

criteria ascriptions that generally are not extended to nonhuman particulars.

In the context of these considerations, Strawson maintains:

"... there seems nothing needing explanation in the fact that the particular height, coloring, physical position that we ascribe to ourselves should be ascribed to something or other: for that which one calls one's body ... can be picked out from others, identified by ordinary physical criteria and described in ordinary physical terms. But ... it can and must seem to need explanation that one's states of consciousness, one's thoughts and sensations, are ascribed to the very same thing to which these physical characteristics, this physical situation, is ascribed. That is, we have not only the question: why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all? We have also the question: why are they ascribed to the very same thing as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation ... ?" (pages 89-90)

After running through a brief overview of a variety of facts that draw attention to the way in which the body seems to play a key role in determining, shaping and coloring the character of experience, Strawson attempts to point out, in relation to these facts, that:

"They explain ... why I feel peculiarly attached to what in fact I call my own body; they even might be said to explain why, granted that I am going to speak of one body as mine, I should speak of this body as mine. But they do not explain why I should have the concept of myself at all, why I should ascribe my thoughts and experiences to anything. Moreover ... the facts in question still do not explain why we should, as we do, ascribe certain corporeal characteristics not simply to the body standing in this special relation to the thing to which we ascribe thoughts and feelings, etc., but to the thing itself to which we ascribe those thoughts and feelings ... the facts in question do not explain the use that we make of the word "I", or how any word has the use that word has. They do not explain the concept we have of a person." (pages 93-94)

One could agree with Strawson when he points out that the notion or concept of person does not necessarily follow from the fact a body is said to exist that is described as the locus or focal point for a variety of perceptual experiences. However, one is less clear how use of the term

"I", or the ascribing of physical states to "my" body, or the projecting of "my" thoughts and feelings into, or through, the body that seems to be "mine" necessarily indicates, suggests or presupposes the concept of a person, as Strawson appears to believe is the case.

Just as people seem to ascribe physical states to "themselves" or ascribe conscious states to "their" physical bodies, people can ascribe personhood to an ongoing demarcated field of experience. This is the case not because what is being ascribed really is a part of what it is being ascribed to, or because there necessarily really is an ontological, substantial counterpart to the linguistic label "person" (although this might be the case). Rather, this is so because individuals have a tendency to develop beliefs about what the nature of reality is and proceed to ascribe various characteristics accordingly -- even if this ascribing process involves improper inferential conclusions.

Sometimes individuals ascribe physical features to conscious states, not because conscious states are necessarily physical in nature, but because the character of beliefs of these individuals about the nature of reality holds that conscious states are, in part or in whole, physical phenomena. Similarly, sometimes people ascribe conscious states to a given physical locus (i.e., a body), not because conscious states are actually a function of bodies, but because the belief systems of these individuals stipulate that conscious states are a part, usually, of what is meant by having a physical body of a certain kind (namely, of a human kind).

Although there is clear-cut evidence that shows a correlated association of various sorts between conscious states and physical bodies, one cannot be sure the character of any given ascription constitutes a correct assessment of the nature of the reality at issue. This applies as much to the ascribing of the terms: "my", "mine" or "personhood" to the field of experience, as it does to the ascribing of mental and physical characteristics to physical and conscious states respectively. Therefore, conceivably, the whole notion of a person might be an illusory one that arises when certain inferential errors are made with respect to one's reflection upon that which transpires in various experiential circumstances.

Strawson believes the ascribing of mental and physical characteristics to physical and conscious states, respectively, does not

at all explain why there should be the notion of "I", "my", "mine" or "self" in conjunction with these sorts of ascriptions. The implication here, perhaps, is that the concept of person, which Strawson apparently believes is implicitly or explicitly entailed or presupposed by these notions, must represent some different dimension of reality in order to make possessive ascriptions possible at all.

In other words, Strawson seems to be maintaining that neither the mere positing of corporeal and conscious states, nor the ascribing of physical and mental characteristics to such states, can explain the origin of the ideas underlying the use of "I", "my", "mine", "self" in relation to these states and ascriptions. As a result, "personhood", is seen as something apart from, although associated with, such states.

Whether Strawson's introduction of the concept of "person" is capable of really accounting for the emergence of "I", "my", "mine", and "self" in relation to experience remains to be seen. As noted several pages earlier, the concept of "person" might represent merely one more way of ascribing criterial features to experience such that this concept constitutes more of an ascriptive imposition upon the character of experience rather than an accurate reflection of what the actual structure of that experience is.

Human beings do all kinds of ascribing. The trick is to find a way, if one is available, of differentiating between the myths and realities of these ascriptive practices. That is, one needs to distinguish between that ascriptions are accurate with respect to that to which they refer, and that ascriptions are not reflectively accurate of that to which they make identifying reference.

The No-Ownership Thesis of Self

Strawson cites two different kinds of philosophical position that might be raised in objection to his concerns over the notion of "person". One position revolves around the ideas of Descartes' dualistic approach to a theory of mind. The other position is referred to by Strawson as the "no-ownership or no subject doctrine of the self" (page 95).

Strawson clearly rejects both types of position and argues, instead, for the metaphysical priority of the notion of "person" over that of:

"body", "consciousness" or both of these notions together. Let us briefly take a look at some of the arguments that Strawson puts forth in this regard.

At one point in his discussion, Strawson argues in the following way:

"... if we think, once more, of the requirements of identifying reference in speech to particular states of consciousness, or private experiences, we see that such particulars cannot be thus identifyingly referred to except as the states of experiences of some identified person. States, or experiences, one might say, owe their identity as particulars to the identity of the person whose states or experiences they are. From this it follows immediately that if they can be identified as particular states or experiences at all, they must be possessed or ascribable in just that way which the no-ownership theorist ridicules; in such a way that it is logically impossible that a particular state or experience in fact possessed by someone should have been possessed by anyone else. The requirements of identity rule out logical transferability of ownership. So the [no-ownership] theorist could maintain his position only by denying that we could even refer to particular states or experiences at all; and this position is ridiculous." (pages 47-48)

To begin with, there seems to be no readily apparent reason why one must believe that the identification of "particular states of consciousness, or private experiences" can only be accomplished by means of ascriptively linking these states and experiences to "some identified person". For instance, consider the following two positions.

1) A locus of consciousness, answering to identifying description "xyz", gives expression to an experience or state of consciousness of character "abc". 2) Only persons can "have" experiences or states of consciousness, and because the being answering to identifying description "xyz" reports an experience or state of consciousness, therefore, the being is a person since only persons can have experiences or states of consciousness.

This latter position – that is, 2) -- presupposes the truth of its conclusions by including the conclusions as part of its starting point

and treating this starting point as a matter of conventional truth (i.e., truth by convention) rather than arguing for, and demonstrating, its truth. On the other hand, the former position – that is, 1) -- suggests a quite different possibility.

1) indicates that while one needs to identify the character of a locus of experience or state of consciousness in order for one, or more, individuals to identifyingly be able to refer to such a locus in any speaker/hearer interchange, there is no need to presuppose that the being or entity that is said to have undergone an experience or state of consciousness must be a person. Certainly, one can raise this issue of personhood in relation to the being that is referred to identifyingly in terms of experiences or states of consciousness and ask whether such a being is a person (whatever that is) or a computerized automaton or a No-Space-world being, or non-human humanoid, or whatever. Nonetheless, there seems to be no inherent difficulty in making identifying references to a being that reports, or is reported to have, experiences or states of consciousness while keeping this issue of identification entirely separate from the question of personhood in relation to these beings.

Strawson contends that experiences and states of consciousness "owe their identity as particulars to the identity of the person whose states or experiences they are". He concludes from this contention that in order for these experiences and states of consciousness to be identifiable at all, they must be seen as being ascribable to persons. He also believes "it is logically impossible that a particular state or experience in fact possessed by someone should have been possessed by anyone else". Unfortunately, Strawson does not elaborate on what it means to "possess" an experience or state of consciousness, except by implication -- namely, if person x possesses experience y, then the very idea of "possession" would seem to denote, according to Strawson, that no one can lay a legitimate claim to possessing what x does (i.e., experience y).

Strawson appears to believe that "the requirements of identity rule out logical transferability of ownership" in the sense that part and parcel of the identity of a given person is the idea that what such a person possesses or owns in the way of states of consciousness or experiences constitutes an important facet of establishing the identity

of this person and differentiating him or her from other persons. In this respect, Strawson's argument seems to be that if the character of the requirements of metaphysical identity did not rule out the "logical transferability of ownership", then there would be considerable confusion with respect to whom or what one was attempting to identifyingly refer to in any given case.

Thus, Strawson's position seems to be the following. Unless a speaker and hearer can positively ascertain that the experiences or states of consciousness they are discussing are precisely those that have been undergone (i.e., possessed) by a specific individual, then this individual's phenomenological identity vis-à-vis the experiences and states of consciousness in question has not been established determinately as required by the logical character of identity (according to Strawson). As a result, one cannot be sure the experiences or states of consciousness in question are exactly those ones that are required to establish the identity of a person as the one and only being to have undergone the specified experiences or states of consciousness.

However, there is no obvious (or even not-so-obvious) reason why one couldn't differentiate between two beings according to some temporal, relational, logical conceptual, emotional, or spiritual criterial distinction. One, then, could proceed to inquire about whether or not the two beings could be said to be capable of undergoing the same state of consciousness or experience at the same time or at separate times.

Of course, the character of reality might be such that no two beings, simultaneously, can undergo the same state of consciousness or experience. If this is the case, then the requirements of identity would preclude the "transferability of ownership' of these states and experiences.

Nevertheless, none of these possible concessions does anything to demonstrate that experiences and states of consciousness must be differentiated with sufficient precision so as to permit any speaker/hearer dyad to be able to make identifying reference to a given person on the basis of knowing the exact nature of this individual's internal experience. One needs to make a distinction between: a) what might be termed the "absolute ontological fact" that

a given being has undergone a specific state of consciousness of character "mno", and b) the requirements of identifying reference.

The requirements of identifying reference only have to be pursued far enough to allow speaker and hearer to set up a framework of sufficiently numerous criterial attributes for them to know, or plausibly believe, that they are referring identifyingly to one and the same thing at any given time. Under these circumstances, there is no need to determine that person A, and only person A, had experience Q. There also is no need to demonstrate that the very phenomenological character of person A's Q-experience rules out the possibility of anyone else having this same experience with the same phenomenological qualities.

What is necessary is for the speaker and hearer to know that one of the identifying features of the 'object' being referred to is that this 'object' either reported having, or is reported as having, a given experience or state of consciousness. If this feature is not sufficient to identify whom or what is being referred to, then one adds as many features as are necessary, or as one can, in order to establish a common framework of identifying references.

One might be willing to acknowledge that specific experiences or states of consciousness "owe their identities as particulars to the identity of the person whose states or experiences they are" functions of, or generated through, or whose existence makes them possible at all. Nevertheless, none of these considerations needs to be known by a given speaker and hearer in order for this dyad to be in a position to be able to refer identifyingly to a being who is supposed to have undergone such experiences or states of consciousness.

The two issues are separate matters. One concerns metaphysical identity in an absolute sense. The other is a purely methodological issue concerning the problems surrounding the issue of how two individuals (a speaker and a hearer) go about ensuring their identifying references coincide so that they can continue on in their discussions of, arguments about, or explorations into the nature of descriptive metaphysics.

Although, under certain circumstances, the precise determination of absolute metaphysical identity might become a crucial issue in questions of identifying reference (e.g., determining the identity of an

heir to a fortune, or providing someone with top level security clearance, or ascertaining that a given experience was an authentic mystical opening, etc.), this need not always be the case, and one must be careful not to conflate or confuse the two matters. Whether or not such a precise determination is to play a crucial role depends on the purposes for which something is being referred to identifyingly.

For instance, a speaker merely might be trying to draw the hearer's attention to certain features of the experiential field as concrete examples around which to have a discussion. Thus, in identifyingly referring to Mr. P's reported dream about "falling off a cliff" -- in order to relate one's own experiences of a similar nature -- one does not have to establish that Mr. P's dream had any specific phenomenological character that identified it, in absolute metaphysical terms, as Mr. P's dream, and only his dream, or that such a dream is part of the identity of who Mr. P is.

One need not even have to believe that Mr. P is a person -- assuming one knew for sure what this term meant. The speaker might be referring to Mr. P merely because there is a feature -- namely, dreaming about falling off a cliff -- associated with Mr. P that is important to the character of the sort of conceptual framework the speaker is trying to describe, and, for better or worse, Mr. P might represent only a convenient focus of reference to help the speaker to identifyingly refer to the thrust of his or her (i.e., the speaker's) intention, meaning or hermeneutic so that the hearer is provided with enough criterial features to enable the hearer to be able to fix a context of identifiable/logical character that will help the hearer grasp the nature of what the speaker is getting at within this sort of context.

There can be many reasons for identifyingly referring to a human being, none of which necessarily forces one to get caught up in the kind of issues that Strawson seems to be implicitly, if not explicitly, insisting on in the previous quote from him that was given in this essay. Among other things, this means one is not compelled to accept the previously cited conclusion that Strawson arrives at, namely: "only by denying that we could ever refer to particular states or experiences at all" could no-ownership theorists maintain their position.

The absence of compulsion concerning acceptance of this conclusion is not because the no-ownership thesis is viable (at least

not in the very restricted form in which Strawson characterizes it). Instead, this is so due to the fairly elementary point that there is no methodological need for identifyingly referring to particular experiences or states of consciousness to give immediate rise to, or presuppose, the issue of personhood. One can proceed with beginning to explore the characteristics of identifying reference quite independently of such an issue.

Methodologically speaking, one does not proceed from the assumption of person in Strawson's sense (as that which has unique ownership of certain specified experiences and states of consciousness) and, then subsequently, treat identifying references to any experiences and states one encounters as functions of the underlying personhood that makes these experiences and states possible to begin with. One starts with identifying references to variously described experiences and states of consciousness in relation to certain beings. Then, one proceeds from reflection upon the character of those identifying references to a theory or hypotheses or ideas about whether there is such a thing as 'personhood' in the beings in question ... and, if so, what the character of said personhood is.

Strawson's Characterization of 'Person'

After briefly running through a few arguments against claiming metaphysical priority for either some kind of Cartesian ego or for a No-ownership thesis in relation to explanations concerning the underlying character of experiences and states of consciousness, and after outlining what he perceives to be some of the conceptual problems surrounding these two approaches to understanding the nature of experience and states of consciousness, Strawson states:

"What we have to acknowledge, in order to begin to free ourselves from these difficulties, is the primitiveness of the concept of a person. What I mean by the concept of a person is the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation etc. are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type. What I mean by saying that the concept is primitive can be put in a number of

ways ... a necessary condition of states of consciousness being ascribed at all is that they should be ascribed to the very same things as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation etc. This is to say, states of consciousness could not be ascribed at all unless they were ascribed to persons, in the sense I have claimed for this word. We are tempted to think of a person as a sort of compound of two kinds of subjects: a subject of experiences (a pure consciousness, an ego) on the one hand, and subject of corporeal attributes on the other. Many questions arise when we think in this way." (pages 101-102)

Many questions also arise when one thinks in the way that Strawson is suggesting. Strawson wants to make both states of consciousness – along with physical features associated with human bodies -- as functions of one subject. This is the person through whom states of consciousness and bodily characteristics are manifested and by whom they (the states of consciousness and the bodily features) are, in some way, made possible.

Strawson wants to make states of consciousness and bodily characteristics analyzable in terms of personhood, instead of making personhood analyzable in terms of either states of consciousness or bodily characteristics or features/dimensions of both taken together in compound form. Indeed, for Strawson:

"The concept of a person is logically prior to that of an individual consciousness. The concept of a person is not to be analyzed as that of an animated body or of an embodied anima." (page 103)

Nevertheless, to say that "a person is the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics ... are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type" doesn't actually say what a "person" is. Furthermore, if one can conceive of experiences and states of consciousness as being so many manifestations of the person-entity, what is to prevent one from conceiving of the person-entity as being a manifestation of some more fundamental metaphysical entity, process, principle, or whatever?

Finally, just as one certainly can ascribe furniture to a house as a feature of the latter but, nevertheless, one cannot claim the house is the causal agent responsible for furniture being in the house, so too, one can ascribe states of consciousness or corporeal characteristics to some entity called a "person" without feeling compelled to make the person-entity the well-spring for the generation of those features. Instead, the person-entity merely might be a locus to which such features are assigned, for whatever reason, to pass through, or be a part of, from time to time.

Is a person-entity something different from a material or corporeal brain substance capable of producing states of consciousness? If it isn't, then one wonders if Strawson tenably can demonstrate that "the concept of a person is not to be analyzed as that of an animated body". On the other hand, if the person-entity is different from what a mind/brain identity theorist would contend, then how is it different such that Strawson also could show that "the concept of a person is not to be analyzed as that of ... an embodied anima"?

By introducing the concept of person in the way he has, Strawson believes he is avoiding the difficulties that he maintains have arisen traditionally with respect to the Cartesian perspective concerning the relationship of mind and body. Yet, even if one were to concede there were some semblance of success in his efforts in this regard, this concession does nothing to conceal the difficulties that begin to emerge in his concept of person. This is especially the case when one is trying to grasp just what the character of a person-entity is and whether or not it has any ontological status beyond its use as an alleged means to get around certain philosophical problems concerning the relationship of mind and body.

Before one can hope to reach an understanding of the dimensions of reality that make states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics possible (assuming this kind of understanding can be reached), one must acknowledge that one starts and lives with the given of experience. One has experience irrespective of whether, or not, one knows how such experience is possible or what generated it -- for experience is an integral expression of part of the ontological territory in which one finds oneself.

Moreover, part of the character of this realm of experience is awareness that experience has a character of sometimes different, sometimes similar, quality from one point of awareness to the next. Whether the differences and similarities are a function of the character of awareness, taken in and of itself, or whether they are a reflection of the character of something independent of the awareness and that the awareness picks up on, or whether the truth lies somewhere in the middle, are questions that need to be answered.

However, the existence of these questions does not negate the fact that our immediate problem is a methodological one. In other words, we are faced with the task of trying to discern a means that will allow us to decipher, successfully, the character of experience and determine the relationship of this experience to the reality that makes it possible.

Descriptive metaphysics has methodological significance to the extent it really does provide us with the "actual structure of our thought about the world". For if we know or understand what the "actual structure of our thought about the world" is, we might be able to establish what aspects of experience are a function of that structure and what aspects, if any, are due to factors that lie outside of, or beyond, the influence of this structure. And, once we have some appreciation of the relative contributions of these two dimensions, we might be able to begin to build up a conceptual picture of the character of the facets of reality that makes experience possible at all and provides it (i.e., experience) with the character-parameters it has in any given case.

In view of the foregoing discussion, presuppositions about a vague notion of a person-entity, or arguments in favor of a notion of the sort that Strawson offers, are slightly premature, if not irrelevant to the aforementioned methodological task with which we are confronted. Assuming 'personhood' (even if the concept is allowed to be fairly imprecise) doesn't appear to offer much help in moving one along the path toward finding a satisfactory resolution to the problem of how to go about determining what the "actual structure of our thought about the world" is, nevertheless and as previously indicated, the presumption of personhood doesn't seem to be necessary to the making of identifying references to particulars within the experiential field. This is so because identifying references are a function of

establishing a conceptual framework of demarcated character that can serve as a reference point through which speaker/hearer interchanges can locate, or focus on, those aspects of experience to which attention is being drawn for the purposes of delineation, exploration, characterization, experimentation, questioning and so on. In this respect, and contrary to what Strawson maintains, the concept of person is not logically prior to consciousness.

The resolution of the existential puzzle presented by reality (to whatever extent it can be resolved) requires, first, a determination of an appropriate methodology that will provide a reliable, epistemological access road, so to speak, to an identification and understanding of those aspects of the character of the world that are not merely a function of the "structure of our thought about the world" -- qua thought. One also must have an understanding of those aspects of experience that can lead to insights concerning the actual character, at least in part, of the reality that makes possible both a world to think about as well as structures of thought to focus upon that world.

In this respect, consciousness is methodologically prior to the concept of person because consciousness represents the only available means we have of attempting hermeneutically to approach the question of whether, or not, there is such a thing as a person-entity, and, if there is, what its character is. Furthermore, this relationship of methodological priority holds, even if consciousness should turn out to be a function of, and made possible by, some fundamental underlying reality to which we refer by use of the term "person".

M-Predicates and P-Predicates

At one point in his exploration of the concept of person, Strawson concedes that he hasn't really made clear just what type of entity a "person" is or what the concept entails. For the most part, he has been attempting to show that whatever it is, it is not to be analyzed in terms of either an embodied anima or an animated body. Therefore, Strawson undertakes to make lucid the character of the person typology that heretofore had been, by his own admission, somewhat opaque. To this end, Strawson says:

"I must make a rough division, into two, of the kinds of predicates properly applied to individuals of this type [i.e., person]. The first kind of predicate consists of those which are also properly applied to material bodies to which we would not dream of applying predicates ascribing states of consciousness. I will call the first kind M-predicates: and they include things like "weighs 10 stone", "is in the drawing room" and so on. The second kind consists of all the other predicates we apply to persons. These I shall call P-predicates. P-predicates, of course, will be very various. They will include things like: "is smiling", "is going for a walk", as well as things like 'is in pain', 'is thinking hard', 'believes in God', and so on." (page 104)

A short while later, Strawson adds:

"Clearly, there is no sense in talking of identifiable individuals of a special type, a type, namely, such that they possess both M-predicates and P-predicates, unless there is in principle some way of telling, with regard to any individual of that type, and any P-predicates, whether the individual possesses that P-predicate. And, in the case of at least some P-predicates, the ways of telling must constitute in some sense logically adequate kinds of criteria for the ascription of the P-predicate." (page 105)

Before continuing on to consider other aspects of Strawson's position concerning P-predicates, there is a potential source of confusion in the foregoing quotes that should be, once again, kept in mind. As suggested earlier in the present discussion of Strawson's approach to descriptive metaphysics, simply because one ascribes P-predicates to a given entity, this does not mean that the entity to which the ascription is assigned automatically must become a person in Strawson's sense.

The ascribing of P-predicates is one thing. The determination of Strawsonian personhood is a separate issue.

The difficulty facing Strawson is not a matter of having to come up with a "way of telling, with regard to any individual of that type [i.e.,

person], and any P-predicate, whether the individual possesses that P predicate". The hurdle that Strawson must overcome is to be able to establish that only persons in his sense could manifest the identifying characteristics that would justify or warrant the ascription of P-predicates.

Quite possibly, this is what Strawson has in mind when he stipulates at the end of the previously cited quote: "the ways of telling must constitute in some sense logically adequate kinds of criteria for the ascription of the P-predicate". If this is so, then whatever the nature of the logically adequate criteria one comes up with, these criteria must clearly demonstrate: a) the reasons for ascribing P-predicates to the entity in question are because the entity is a person in Strawson's sense, and b) only persons in Strawson's sense represent the sort of entity to which P-predicates legitimately can be ascribed.

In further delineating the character of P-predicates, Strawson asserts:

"... it is essential to the character of these predicates that they have both first- and third-person ascriptive uses, that they are both self-ascribable otherwise than on the basis of observation of the behavior of the subject of them, and other-ascribable on the basis of behavior criteria. To learn their use is to learn both aspects of their use. In order to have this type of concept, one must be both a self-ascriber and other-ascriber of such predicates, and must see every other as a self-ascriber. In order to understand this type of concept, one must acknowledge that there is a kind of predicate which is unambiguously and adequately ascribable both on the basis of observation to the subject of the predicate and not on this basis, i.e., independently of observation of the subject: the second case is the case where the ascriber is also the subject." (page 108)

In order to share (both in the sense of "having" and "understanding") Strawson's concept of person, two conditions are required to be satisfied. First, the individual must ascribe P-predicates to others if he or she ascribes them to himself or herself. Secondly, an individual must base his ascriptions on the data and insight obtained

through: a) being aware of the character of his own states of consciousness and experiences, as well as on b) observing the behavior of others and noting the characteristics of that behavior that can be, inferentially, tied to various facets of the character of instances in which one ascribes P-predicates to oneself.

What is not clear, given the foregoing, is the following. If an individual adopts the principles inherent in both of the conditions set out above, would he or she necessarily be admitting to the existence of a person in Strawson's sense ... either with respect to himself/herself or with respect to others?

Implicit in the conditions stated above is the following idea of Strawson. In ascribing P-predicates to "my" frame of reference and in being willing, on the basis of observing the behavior of others, to acknowledge the legitimacy of assigning P-predicates to them in line with the P-predicates one assigns to oneself, Strawson believes this requires one to hold that the others also have a "my" frame of reference to which the P-predicates are being assigned.

According to Strawson (see *Individuals*, bottom of page 109), if others do not have a corresponding "my" frame of reference that serves as the locus for ascribing P-predicates, then one also could bring into question the "my-ness" of the frame of reference that experiences others as "other". Even if one were to concede this point about "my-ness" (i.e., the ownership of states of consciousness and experience) having to be extended to others if one extends it to "oneself", there seems to be no compelling reason why one should suppose that "my-ness" is an expression of personhood in Strawson's sense.

Let us suppose a Cartesian were to stroll by and remark that he or she would be willing to ascribe P-predicates to others and that he or she even would be willing to allow one of these P-predicates to concern a notion of "my-ness" or ownership that tends to permeate all the P-predicate assignments to any given phenomenological frame of reference. Let us further suppose the Cartesian says (as he, she, or they undoubtedly, would) that despite the initial concession, he or she still sees no evidence for supposing there is some entity, called a "person", that is the moving force behind the existence of both P-predicates and the M-predicates that are associated with contexts of P-predicate

ascription. Given the foregoing, what sort of recourse does Strawson have when responding to such a Cartesian?

Could Strawson say: "Well, obviously, you neither have nor understand the concept of a person that I'm advancing"? Surely the Cartesian easily could respond to this by maintaining that while, admittedly, he or she might neither have, nor understand, Strawson's concept of person, the fact is the Cartesian met the two conditions that Strawson said were required to both have and understand the concept of a person.

Yet, the Cartesian did not have or understand the concept. Instead, the individual persisted in holding onto his or her Cartesian dualism.

To be sure, the Cartesian might not be able to explain just how mind/body dualism works or how two different entities can interact with one another and have such profound effects on one another. However, acknowledgment of these problems does not constitute sufficient reason for abandoning the dualism in order to embrace a theory of persons that, at bottom, is as mysterious and problematic as is dualism.

Moreover, the Cartesian could go on the attack and demand that Strawson must provide an account of why someone could agree to the aforementioned principles or conditions but not feel compelled, subsequently, to take the further step of acknowledging the existence of individuals as persons in Strawson's sense. Is an individual who accepts the conditions outlined on page 107 of *Individuals* -- but who does not have or understand Strawson's notion of person -- making some sort of logical error? If so, what is the exact nature of this error? And, if no logical error is involved, then where does the problem lie?

Strawson's development of the concept of a person (as he understands it) began with the contention that neither the no-ownership thesis nor the Cartesian doctrine of dualism could account for the sense of "my-ness" that appeared to permeate an individual's experiences and states of consciousness. Strawson's solution was to argue that the aspect of "my-ness" associated with experience in general could only be explained and understood if one were to posit the existence of an entity called a "person" that was logically prior to (and, therefore, more primitive than) the notions of corporeal bodies or states of consciousness. In a sense, the very presence of this

dimension of "my-ness" constituted, for Strawson, evidence of the existence of a person-entity.

Strawson also believed there are "others" who fall within a range of certain corporeal characteristics and who exhibit behavior that strongly indicates an underlying nature to which P-predicates could be assigned and that one cannot deny the dimension of "my-ness" to these "others" without being forced to consider withdrawing the sense of my-ness from one's own experiences. This is the case since, for Strawson, the ability to ascribe P-predicates is what indicates that an entity is a person (i.e., the source of the subject in which "my-ness" is supposedly housed). In other words, according to Strawson, if, despite the presence of P-predicates being legitimately ascribed to "others", there were no person-entities in these "others", then how can one maintain that when P-predicates legitimately are ascribed to "oneself", there is a person-entity in oneself capable of providing a metaphysical source for the facet of experience characterized by the sense of "my-ness"?

Strawson quite clearly holds (e.g., see *Individuals*, p. 106) that the concept of a person does away with the skepticism that he feels haunts both the Cartesian and no-ownership doctrines with respect to identifying and determining the status of "others" vis-à-vis the issue of ascribing P-predicates to these "others". Strawson goes on to claim:

"The point is not that we must accept this conclusion in order to avoid skepticism, but that we must accept it in order to explain the existence of the conceptual scheme in terms of which the skeptical problem is stated." (page 106)

Apparently Strawson believes one cannot even raise, let alone solve, the issue of skepticism without being forced to acknowledge the need to adopt Strawson's conceptual scheme in order to introduce this issue. On the other hand, if one acknowledges this need, then according to Strawson, the problem of skepticism disappears in the light shed by the character of the conceptual scheme of personhood.

Nonetheless, Strawson might be mistaken about what is necessary in order for one to be able to raise the skeptical issue. In order to understand this possibility, consider the following.

An individual is aware of a variety of different states of consciousness over time. He describes these states in terms of P-predicates. He notes that correlated with the states to that P-predicates can be ascribed there is an associated corporeal entity that can be described in terms of M-predicates. Some of these M-predicates concern movement, gestures, stances, looks, action sequences of certain character and so on, of which the individual is aware, to varying degrees, from within his peculiarly phenomenological proximate position to such behavior.

The individual also perceives other corporeal bodies to which M-predicates can be ascribed. Among these M-predicates are a large number that appear very similar to certain behavioral M-predicates the individual has witnessed in relation to the corporeal body associated with the states of consciousness to which he or she has direct access. Given all of the foregoing, the skeptical question then becomes the following. Does the observance of M-predicates in other corporeal bodies that one experientially encounters in a restricted manner ("Restricted" in the sense one has direct access only to the dimension in which M-predicates are manifested, and one does not have direct access to what makes the manifestation of such M-predicates possible) constitute a reliable and defensible basis from which to infer that P-predicates might be ascribed to such bodies as being, correlated, approximately with observed M-predicates of a certain kind?

Three sorts of general conditions have shaped the foregoing question. 1) The first general condition involves an awareness that is capable of differentiating certain aspects of experience, including the distinction between M-predicates and P-predicates. 2) The next condition concerns an awareness that is capable of noting similarities between two seemingly different sets of M-predicate loci within the experiential field. 3) Finally, there is need for an awareness capable of asking whether the presence of a certain set of M-predicates associated with other corporeal bodies represented sufficient evidential basis to warrant positing the existence of a set of P-predicates that are to be correlated with those M-predicates, given that such an M/P-predicate relationship was understood to exist

within the context of the phenomenology of the awareness that was asking the question.

Irrespective of how an individual decides to respond to the skeptical challenge, one does not appear to need to adopt Strawson's conceptual scheme concerning persons in order to be able to ask the question in the last paragraph. At the very most, one might be forced to concede that the framework of awareness does have, in the case of humans, a dimension of "my-ness" that pervades it and constitutes part of the phenomenology of that awareness' reflection upon itself. This concession, however, need not mean one must presume that the source from which the idea of "my-ness" arises is a function of personhood.

A given framework of awareness might have no more right to claim possession of either the awareness occurring in such a framework, or the contents appearing in the awareness, than a television set has a right to claim ownership of the pictures that it displays. For instance, a television set has the capability to receive certain wavelengths of electro-magnetic radiation and to decode the information that those waves contain in the form of a picture of certain characteristics. The television thereby serves as a framework within which the picture manifests itself. However, the picture does not 'belong' to the television so much as the electronic structure of the television permits the picture to be given expression through the set.

Similarly, human beings might be considered capable of receiving something called awareness and decoding the information that such awareness contains in the form of a phenomenology of certain characteristics. As a result, human beings could be construed to serve as a framework within which the phenomenology manifests itself.

Nonetheless, like the case of the television set, such circumstances need not be thought of as belonging to the human being. They merely might indicate that the biological structure of the human being serves as a locus of manifestation through which consciousness can be given expression.

Whether, or not, a given framework of awareness considers such awareness or the contents of that awareness in possessive terms, the one thing that cannot be denied by that awareness is the facticity of the awareness' existence, qua awareness, as a reality. This remains

true even in the case of illusions, hallucinations, delusions, dreams, demonic possessions and mystical states.

Moreover, if a framework of awareness does not happen to think (even implicitly) that an experience is "mine", but simply 'witnesses' the experience as it (the experience) runs its course as an experience that has a certain character, the absence of the dimension of "my-ness" in relation to the experience in question does not alter the character of the experience except in the one respect of "my-ness". In all other respects, the experience is the same ... an awareness (irrespective of whose it is and what the nature of that 'who' is) of a certain character.

If the awareness being considered has adequate capabilities of understanding, insight, intelligence, etc., then the three previously stated conditions are enough of a conceptual scheme to permit the issue of skepticism to arise should, for whatever reason, a question of skepticism actually bubble to the surface of that locus of consciousness. Whether, or not, one must posit the existence of an underlying metaphysical entity comparable to Strawson's notion of person in order to account for this kind of awareness is another question altogether.

Furthermore, this latter question presupposes an acknowledgment of the existence of the experience of awareness before it can even be raised. Thus, the skeptical question about what inferential links can be established with regard to the relation of M- and P-predicates, given a certain range of experience, can be considered independently of the question of personhood.

Methodologically speaking, the skeptical question must be addressed first. If one denies the legitimacy (as the skeptic would) of presuming P-predicates, given appropriate M-predicates, then to inquire as to the source of these P-predicates in others, makes no sense because they (i.e., others) have been divested, by the skeptic, of any dimension to which P-predicates could be ascribed despite a skeptic's continued use of M-predicates with respect to those "others".

Under these circumstances, if one were to ask questions about the possible relationship of a person-entity -- with its P-predicates and M-predicates of an appropriate kind -- the questions would be purely self-directed. On the other hand, the skeptic would, then, have to deal with providing an account of why one could not legitimately extend

the M-predicate/P-predicate relationship (noted with respect to oneself) to "others" that manifested the appropriate sorts of M-predicate behavior.

Nevertheless, a skeptic hardly would be in the epistemic position attributed to him or her by Strawson. In other words, having denied P-predicates to others who manifest appropriate M-predicate behavior, there is no reason why a skeptic could not investigate whether the source of his or her own character to which P-predicates could be ascribed was that of a person-entity in Strawson's sense or a function or expression of some other metaphysical possibility.

The very acknowledgment of the existence of an awareness of experience provides the skeptic with the means to ask the given question on personhood in relation to the framework of awareness or consciousness out of which the skeptical orientation arises. At the same time, the skeptic's uncertainty about the legitimacy of the inference in relation to others -- that is, of going from the existence of M-predicates to, therefore, the presumed presence of P-predicates -- stops a skeptic from asking the question on personhood (or answering it) in relation to "others".

The skeptic's doubts in the latter respect might, or might not, be justified ultimately. In either event, the question about personhood in relation to oneself is not inextricably tied to one's having to grant P-predicate status to "others" who exhibit the appropriate M-predicate behavior.

The skeptic has information or data in relation to the issue of personhood with respect to the framework of consciousness in which a skeptic's skepticism appears that the skeptic does not have in relation to "others". The character of the inference for the skeptic in going from M-predicates to P-predicates in the context of his or her own framework of consciousness is different from the logical character of the inference for the skeptic in going from M-predicates to P-predicates in the context of "others".

A skeptic doesn't have access to the same sort of framework of consciousness in "others" (assuming the "others" do have such a framework) that the skeptic has in relation to himself or herself and through which the skeptic is able to tie M-predicates and P-predicates together in a manner that inferentially might support the notion of

personhood with regard to himself or herself. A skeptic's lack of access to the framework of consciousness of "others" means the skeptic must infer such a framework in relation to "others" on the basis of indirect evidence and analogy concerning the possible significance of M-predicate and P-predicate associations as seen from the perspective of a skeptic's own framework of consciousness to which he or she has direct experiential access.

One might note, in passing, that the form of skepticism being examined in the foregoing was of a rather restricted or selective variety, focusing only on the problem of whether or not to ascribe P-predicates to others who exhibited behavior appropriate for M-predicate ascription. More thoroughgoing or radical skepticisms are, of course, conceivable.

However, one should not suppose the above sort of restricted skeptic is advocating (nor would he or she feel compelled to advocate) some sort of solipsistic position. The fact that a skeptic might deny to others the P-predicate ascriptions applied to himself or herself need not mean such a skeptic believes (although he or she could) the bodies to which a skeptic ascribes M-predicates are functions of the skeptic's being or state of consciousness -- for example, a skeptic might believe that she or he was the only person in existence despite the similarities between the M/P-predicate correlations between the "others" that a skeptic observed and the skeptic's own set of M/P-predicate correlations.

Pure Consciousness and Identifying Reference

Early on in the chapter entitled "Monads", Strawson states:

"I have maintained, roughly, that no principle of individuation can be framed for consciousness as such, and hence that nothing can be a subject of predicates implying consciousness, unless it is, in that sense of the word which implies also the possession of corporeal attributes, a person, or at least a former person." (page 121)

The foregoing statement comes in the midst of Strawson's attempts to show how his conceptual scheme for descriptive metaphysics

contrasts with his version of a Leibnizian-like theory of monads. The term "Leibnizian-like" is used because, as Strawson himself acknowledges, he is not fundamentally concerned with whether the historical Leibniz would have accepted the monadic model that Strawson is constructing as a flawed counterpoint against which to bounce his own conceptual scheme in order to demonstrate the resiliency of the latter compared to the former. Essentially, Strawson uses the name "Leibniz" as a convenient code name for an imaginary philosopher with whom he is contesting various philosophical points and whose philosophy has a character that bears a certain similarity to some facets of the historical Leibniz' position.

In Strawson's presentation, there is a subset of monadic individuals in the Leibniz-like metaphysical perspective that are construed by Strawson as being constituted of consciousness that is characterized by features of apperception and perception. Although Strawson acknowledges that for Leibniz this kind of monadic consciousness was not necessarily the same thing as a mind, Strawson considers the notion of mind to be the closest approximation to the idea of a monad that is accessible to us. Therefore, he draws a sort of rough equivalency between "mind" and "monad", and he tends to use the two interchangeably during the course of his discussion.

In fact, this idea of a pure consciousness is what Strawson wishes to contrast his own position with. In doing this, Strawson wants to try to establish what the characteristics of a system of individuation would be through which one could make identifying and re-identifying references to the particulars that are experientially encountered. According to Strawson:

"... it seems to me necessarily true ... that no system which does not allow for spatial or temporal entities can be a system which allows for particulars at all, or at least can be understood by us as such. This point is the same as that made by Kant in saying that space and time are our only forms of intuition. If we take these two points together, it follows that, in general, identifying reference to particulars rests ultimately on the use of expressions which, directly or indirectly, embody a demonstrative force; or, to put it in terms of thought rather

than of language, that identifying thought about particulars necessarily incorporates a demonstrative element." (page 119)

For Strawson, the central role played by the demonstrative process is a function of its capacity to uniquely establish the identity of a reference to a particular of experience by placing that particular in a conceptual grid with spatial and temporal axes. By plotting the spatial/temporal character of the particular in relation to oneself, together with adding some brief, qualitative, secondary descriptions, one, according to Strawson, is able to fix the identity of the given particular of reference.

The term "secondary" is used in the foregoing paragraph because Strawson believes all descriptions are identifyingly tied, either directly or indirectly, to material body particulars that entail a spatial/temporal framework in which they are 'housed'. If these material body particulars are considered as primary, all other description becomes secondary and dependent on these particulars.

The sort of identifying reference with which Strawson is most concerned occurs in the context of speaker/hearer interchanges. That is, the demonstrative features he is emphasizing become crucial in linguistic usage.

However, whereas Strawson advocates a notion of demonstrative reference that is rooted in material category particulars and the concept of person, one can conceive of other approaches to the issue of demonstrative reference that are quite different from Strawson's position, and, perhaps, less problematic. For example, being demonstrative is inherent in the very character of identifying thought, awareness, consciousness, understanding, etc.

In fact, to be demonstrative, is in the very character of consciously "attending to" or "focusing on" (i.e., intentionality) various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field, irrespective of whether one recognizes -- or one can place or fix -- the identity of that which is being intentionally referred to or that which is doing the identifying. Even in the context of being passively aware, one is being demonstrative. In all these cases (attention, thought, ideation, conceptualization, awareness, reflection and so on), there is a

particularization going on which, at a minimum, has the feature of a focused (whether broad or tight) awareness of some aspect of the experiential or phenomenological field.

This sort of phenomenon seems to represent an instance of particularization at its most primitive level. After all, from the perspective of consciousness, what is a particular other than a facet of experience that has taken on, or given expression to, a character of sorts according to the nature of the experience?

At this level, the issue is not a matter of assigning causes in order to try to explain the emergence of such an experience or why it has the character it does. There is merely someone's or something's conscious acknowledgment that an experience is being undergone and that the experience seems to have certain characteristics ... all of which, taken together, constitutes the particularization of experience.

As previously cited (see the last quote), Strawson believes:

"no system which does not allow for spatial or temporal entities can be a system which allows for particulars at all, or at least can be understood by us as such".

Stated in another way, Strawson is claiming that individuation of experience is only possible within the context of a conceptual framework of scheme that allows for the existence of spatial/temporal entities that can be demonstratively identified by means of fixing their spatial/temporal co-ordinates according to the particular way in which such entities express their co-ordinates as a function of their being the spatial/temporal entities they are and not some other entity.

On the other hand, in terms of the alternative perspective of the previous paragraph: "individuation of experience" is a matter of being aware of the differential character of various aspects of the experiential field to which awareness, for whatever reason, becomes drawn. Whether the differential character is imposed on the given aspect of the field by some feature of consciousness or whether the differential character arises as an interactive function of a variety of influences, the differential character constitutes a particularization of experience and, therefore, an individuation of experience.

In view of the foregoing, what seems necessary, minimally speaking, for the individuation of experience is a (a) framework of consciousness capable of (b) attending to various aspects of that framework and (c) noticing whether or not the character of these various instances of attending are different from, or similar to, one another [One might also want to add (d) -- a dimension of memory that is capable of bringing (a), (b), and (c) together over time]. Where differences are noted, then regardless of the accuracy of the noting activity, the experience of the attending process constitutes an individuation of experience into particulars of some specified character according to the nature of the similarities and differences that are noted. As such, the character of the attending experience is, from the phenomenological side of things (and not necessarily in a causal sense) one of the main sources of the particularization or individuation of experience.

Experience might be particularized because metaphysical objects independent of experience exist that are waiting to be experienced as particulars of a certain sort. Experience also might be particularized because of the way the nature of consciousness particularizes itself. Experience might be particularized by some sort of interaction between independent metaphysical objects and one's phenomenology of experience.

Whatever the reality behind, or expressed through, the 'facticity' of the particularization, from the immediate point of view of the consciousness undergoing the experiences, experience is individuated because of the conscious awareness of differences among various instances of intentionality. Whether or not there is a 'real world out there', whether or not one is solipsistically responsible for all that one experiences (irrespective of questions concerning the identity and origin of consciousness), individuation of experience is tied to the possibility of being aware of differences in character among the shifts in focus and attention of the intentional quality of consciousness.

There might be many considerations, factors, principles, influences, forces or entities that lie behind the differences in character of various experiences and that make possible the individuation of experience into particularizations of identifiable and re-identifiable natures. Most assuredly, "spatial and temporal entities"

constitute one set of possibilities through which one could develop a descriptive metaphysics to account for why experience can have the individuated character it does.

Nonetheless, 'allowing for particulars' need not be restricted to such spatial/ temporal frameworks. Particularizations can be as varied as the character of one's intentional dimension and the ideas and understandings that arise in conjunction with such a dimension.

What is necessary is to have a way of placing (but not in the spatial sense) experience in some kind of conceptual grid. The problem of identifying reference among speakers and hearers then becomes a matter of being able to single out the facet of the co-ordinate system being used by, say, speakers that will permit hearers to locate the experience, or feature thereof, which is being referred to. Against the backdrop of the logic of this sort of coordinate system, epistemological beings (of whatever sensible or non-sensible intuitive capabilities) will proceed to make inferences, generate theories, posit hypotheses, establish programs of investigation and so on, concerning the nature of the reality that would make this sort of a co-ordinate scheme possible as a result of their intentional episodes having the character they do.

In any event, the processes of positing the hypothesis and confirming it are separate questions from the issue of the individuation of experience. In fact, methodologically, the former presuppose the latter, and the basic character of the former will be heavily influenced by the actual character of the individuation process.

What has been said in the foregoing about the character of the individuation process out of which particulars arise might or might not be compatible with a Leibnizian view. Which is the case doesn't matter, since I'm not really trying to defend Leibniz or his theory of monads.

Strawson, on the other hand, is attempting to zero in on and attack features of a view that bears a passing resemblance to at least some of the facets of a Leibnizian-like position. The question with which Strawson originally started is whether a framework of consciousness that makes no provisions for spatial/temporal entities can allow for particulars and can be understood by us as doing so. Strawson, then, proceeded to introduce his Leibniz-like philosophy as being a

paradigmatic example of the sort of system someone might devise who wished to advocate that particulars could be allowed for, without, simultaneously, committing oneself to allowing for, or presupposing, spatial/temporal entities.

While the Strawson/"Leibniz" debate is an interesting one, I have no wish to get swept up into it. In fact, there is no need to do so in order to be able to respond to Strawson's concerns about the capabilities of so-called pure consciousness (whatever this might be).

In other words, the main issue is whether or not one can conceive of a means to demonstratively refer to various aspects of experience without having to resort to a conceptual framework

is dependent, directly or indirectly, on the idea of spatial and/or temporal intuitions. This issue might be addressed without having to be tied to the boundaries of a Leibnizian-like position.

Strawson seems to assume that if one takes away the dimensions of space and time, then one will be left with something called "pure consciousness". Whether or not such consciousness would be "pure" (and what that would mean) is irrelevant to the point being made in the analysis of the last several pages. The point is that, phenomenologically or experientially, space and time represent but two ways of laying out a conceptual grid that permits an individuation of experience.

One could come up with any number of alternative or parallel conceptual grid or mapping systems dealing with, for example, emotions, mathematical abstract spaces, motivations, languages, logical frameworks of different character, spiritual dimensions, and so on. Any one of these systems could be used to generate a coordinate system for 'placing' or individuating or particularizing experience for the purpose of, among other things, identifying reference. Moreover, not one of these grid/mapping systems would need to be rooted in a system that presupposed or entailed spatial/temporal intuitions as indispensable parts of such a grid system.

Uniqueness of Reference

Contrary to Strawson's views, the main issue of the problem of identifying reference is not necessarily a matter of "securing uniqueness of reference to a particular" (page 117). The problem is one of trying to determine a means of fixing a point of reference that has enough particulars of identifiable character associated with it that permit two or more beings to lock in on those coordinates and focus upon the aspects of the field of consciousness to which attention is being drawn for purposes of further comment, investigation, description, analysis, and so on.

In fixing this point of reference, one is not necessarily maintaining there is no other particular in existence that could satisfy the description given and on which the identifying reference in question is based. Therefore, the particular to which attention is being drawn might not be unique when considered in the context of how individuals go about, or are capable of, individuating the particulars that appear in the phenomenology of the experiential fields of the individuals engaged in discussion.

This is so because phenomenologically speaking, there might be many particulars answering to a basic description or identifying reference made on any given occasion. This would be so even if, in terms of absolute metaphysics, all particulars that are capable of being referred to identifiably are actually unique ... despite phenomenological and hermeneutical judgments to the contrary.

Dropping the uniqueness condition as a ubiquitous feature of identifying reference does not automatically mean one is unavoidably and incessantly going to become entangled in mass speaker/hearer confusions. Rather, dropping the uniqueness condition merely leaves the door open to misunderstanding under certain circumstances.

Conceivably, one could have any number of separate speaker/hearer interchanges in contexts that are descriptively identical and in which identifying references are made to a particular aspect of the experiential framework in each instance that is characterized in the same way by the respective speakers. For example, numerous speakers named Mr. Escher might say, simultaneously, to numerous hearers named Mr. Gödel -- when in

rooms of identical description -- "Do you see that red ball over there by the television?"

And, all of the various Mr. Gödels involved might collectively say: "You mean that one with the hole in it that's laying on the brown coffee table and that is about to be picked up by the young girl with blond hair, blue eyes and a pink dress?"

To which all of the Mr. Eschers might reply: "Yes, the one that the young girl with the blond hair, blue eyes and pink dress has just picked up and thrown on a trajectory that should place it somewhere through the picture tube of the television in about .1265 seconds."

To which all of the Mr. Gödels might inquire,

"Well, what about it?"

To which all of the Mr. Eschers might remark:

"Well, the present situation reminded me that yesterday I was reading in the *National Enquirer* -- you know, the news magazine for inquiring minds -- about how scientists recently have discovered conclusive mathematical evidence for the existence of parallel worlds that are exact replicas of one another in all respects, even down to occupying the same space and time continuum. The article went on to point out that: a) the consciousnesses of the inhabitants of these parallel worlds were not aware of the other parallel worlds or their counterparts in those worlds, and b) the objects existing in the various parallel worlds -- although they all occupied the same time/space continuum -- were a function of quantum states that ranged across, and filled out, the probability distribution that was used to describe any given quantum condition of an atom(s) that made up a given parallel world. Thus, each world filled out part of the probability distribution used, say, to represent the location or momentum of a given electron in a given state in a given atom in a given parallel world.

"The article also indicated how sometimes the consciousness of one of the inhabitants of a given parallel world or one of the objects of one of the parallel worlds inexplicably would cross over into one of the

other parallel worlds. When this happened, a chain reaction automatically was set off.

"As a result, whatever particular underwent the crossover phenomenon would displace the corresponding particular in the given parallel world into which it crossed over. Moreover, the displaced particular of that parallel world would, subsequently, be forced to cross over into another parallel world, and so on. Apparently, this would all continue until the original crossover particular got back to its own world, and all of this took place, supposedly, within only a few seconds.

"The article ended by saying that none of these transformations or crossovers seemed to have any discernible effect on the various parallel universes as far as conserving different physical principles is concerned. The article did say, however, that entropy was considered to increase negligibly with each crossover.

"The article ended by stating that scientists were now trying to discover how a particular that underwent the crossover phenomenon was able to recognize its original world amidst all the other "identical" worlds into which they crossed over. In any case, I've been thinking about the idea a lot," the various Mr. Eschers might continue," and when I saw that red ball and began making identifying reference with respect to it for you, I suddenly realized there was no guarantee that, metaphysically speaking, the ball I saw was the same one you saw, or that 'I' am the one you actually heard identify it, or that 'you' are the one who heard me speak.

"After all, there was no way for one to tell for sure that consciousness or particular, if any, was or was not undergoing the crossover phenomenon at any given moment. Yet, despite all of this, even though we might not be talking at all about precisely the same metaphysical particulars from one second to the next, or even though you and I might not even now represent the same precise consciousness as when this conversation began, nonetheless, one would still be able to identifyingly refer to aspects of experience and have someone else be able to locate such a reference in the context of their own experience, just on the basis of the way the character of the experience was individuated or particularized during the course of the process of identifying reference."

The various Mr. Eschers might also add the following:

"I began to think the whole idea of parallel worlds is sort of like an old philosophical problem concerning a ship that had all of its planks replaced during a voyage across the ocean. The problem arises when someone (Hume I believe) asked whether, or not, the ship that arrived at the port of destination was the same ship that originally had embarked on the voyage.

"Perhaps one even could ask whether either the port of destination or the port of disembarkation would be the same ports after the ship in question had, respectively, arrived and departed ... due to any changes – even on a molecular or quantum level -- which might have taken place in both locations during the time interval covering the length of the 'ship's' voyage. Whatever the answer may be, people would seem to have no trouble making or understanding identifying references to various particulars sufficiently well to at least talk intelligibly about, or raise problems in relation to, those aspects of their experiential frameworks that are being referred to or seem to be referred to."

The foregoing example suggests there might be something that has methodological priority in instances of identifying reference over that of Strawson's concerns with resolving the problem of "securing uniqueness of reference". More specifically, irrespective of whether the speaker and hearer are certain that the identifying reference establishes a unique reference to a given particular, what is crucial is the following.

The two individuals involved must be satisfied, in the context of the description in which the identifying reference is made, that enough features of the particular being referred to have been mentioned to permit the hearer to eliminate from consideration everything in his or her experiential framework except the aspect, if any, that bears the sort of character that answers to, or reflects, the character of the features that have been included in the identifying reference of the speaker. Of course, the hearer might be mistaken in what he or she

believes the speaker is referring to -- due to either a poorly executed (e.g., ambiguous) identifying reference or due to a misinterpretation on the hearer's part of the character of the identifying reference that the speaker actually gives.

However, for many everyday speaker/hearer interchanges and under most day-to-day circumstances, a framework of identifying references can be established without ever having to determine if the reference to the particular is a unique one. For instance, in talking about freedom, consciousness, justice, democracy, love, life's purpose, truth, morality, religion, mysticism, duty, law and so many other possibilities, enough can be included in a speaker's identifying reference to permit the hearer to understand that aspects of his or her own experiential field might be involved, without necessarily supposing the hearer is fixing the identity of the particular being referred to in a way that uniquely matches the character of the particular that the speaker has in mind.

Instead, enough features of similar character are singled out and enough considerations are eliminated in the respective experiential frameworks to permit a minimally adequate identifying reference to be established between speaker and hearer concerning the nature of the particular being referred to. Thus, if a speaker mentioned the term "legal theory", a hearer might know that something of a legal nature, loosely construed, was to be discussed.

Yet, he or she might not know the specific logical character of the theory of law that shaped the perspective of the speaker who was going to speak on such a legal theme. Uniqueness of reference for the hearer and speaker would only exist in these circumstances if the hearer and speaker both agreed, in all (or most nearly all) respects, as to the full character of the particular being discussed ... in the present case, legal theory or some aspect thereof.

While one and the same "objective" particular (i.e., one which is supposedly independent of the experiential framework of the speaker and the hearer) might be identifyingly referred to, and recognized by, a speaker and hearer respectively, there is no guarantee the actual character of the two contexts of individuated or particularized experience will necessarily coincide, even though they both might be intentionally tuned to the same "objective" particular. From the

perspective of 'absolute reality', there might be a unique real object or particular that is the subject of an exercise in identifying reference. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of the speaker/hearer experiential frameworks attempting to establish an identifying reference, the character of the respective intentional focus might be sufficiently different that the nature of the referential process as described by the speaker and as understood by the hearer might not be secured uniquely.

This might be so even though there tends to be enough of an overlap of the actual character of the two experiential perspectives for the speaker and hearer to understand the phenomenological direction toward which intentional focus is turned in their respective experiential frameworks. One will have to wait to see which, if either, of the two experiential frameworks has constructed a more accurate and insightful descriptive representation or characterization of the "objective" particular within the conceptual grid or logical co-ordinate system that the respective experiential frameworks use for representing the character of, and relations among, individuated experience with respect to existential encounters with, or engagements of, these "objective" particulars.

As multiple, cross-indexed sets of co-ordinates are assigned to certain features of the experiential field, a conceptual map or understanding begins to develop concerning the perceived character of that facet of the experiential field and its relation, if any, with other facets of the experiential field that also have epistemological constructs of various character built up around them. In this way, one goes about trying to understand or trying to build up belief systems concerning the nature of the world that makes experiences of such character possible. Presumably, this process is part of what is meant when one speaks of the "actual structure of our thought about the world" that Strawson takes to be the central focus of any program of descriptive metaphysics.

Conclusion

A number of general points emerge from the previous critical discussion of Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics as he has outlined it in Part One of *Individuals*. To begin with, and in contrast to

Strawson's perspective, the process of identifying reference is, first and foremost, a matter of establishing how the particulars of experience manifest themselves through, or within, the phenomenology of an experiential field. This field constitutes one's primary, if not only, means of becoming aware of the possibility of particulars as 'objects'.

Important to note in this regard is that use of the term "objects" might signify, under some circumstances, just those particulars within consciousness to which attention might be drawn at any given time. Such particulars often are treated independently of any epistemic considerations about what makes particulars of this phenomenological character ontologically possible.

Under other circumstances, "objects" also might signify those particulars whose origins lie outside of an individual's consciousness. These particulars, to whatever extent and in whatever way they exist, would help generate, or make possible, experiences whose phenomenological characters manifest themselves as being particulars of consciousness of one sort rather than another.

Normally, we tend to use the former 'phenomenological' kind of "object" as our medium through which to methodologically approach (i.e., to inquire about, reflect on, make inferences about the actuality or possibility of) the latter "ontological" kind of objects. In any event, the process of identifying reference is rooted methodologically in asymmetric identifiability-dependence relationships that are a function, in part, of the character of the phenomenology of an experiential field.

Given that, depending on circumstances, "objects" might have either phenomenological and/or 'ontological' overtones, one of the main problems that constantly plagues the process of identifying reference is the way in which there is a potential for confusion between, or conflation of, two realms. These realms -- although they might be related, interact or overlap at certain points -- are somewhat different from one another. These two realms are, on the one hand, the phenomenology of the experiential field, and, on the other hand, the ontological/metaphysical principles, forces, factors, etc. which make such a phenomenology a reality.

This distinction between "phenomenological" and "ontological" objects is somewhat arbitrary since phenomenological objects are, by virtue of their existence, also ontological ones. However, the distinction is drawn to make allowances for the possibility that ontological objects might not be reducible to phenomenological objects in all, or many, instances.

In terms of the present essay, the suggestion has been made that one of the ways to try to overcome the aforementioned problem is to chart how the process of identifying reference operates within the phenomenology of the experiential field. In line with this charting procedure, the present essay has attempted to point out some of the methodological or procedural steps that are important to pursue or establish in order not to unduly prejudice inquiries concerning "the actual structure of our thought about the world".

For example, among other things, I have argued in the present essay that the issue of re-identifiable particulars does not require one to presuppose the continuous existence of an independent world rooted in the spatial/temporal framework of material body particulars. Instead, I have maintained that the notion of re-identifiable particulars can be treated methodologically as a function of the phenomenology of the experiential field.

The particulars that give this phenomenology its current character might stand in need of ontological explanation, but before one can undertake such an explanation (or the underlying search), one needs, first, to deal with the criteria that are to serve as a basis for establishing whether, say, a presently experienced particular is the same as a previously experienced particular ... and, if so, to what extent they are the same (e.g., similar, identical).

Until one has accomplished this, one really is not in any methodological position to ask, or to try to determine, whether, for example, the ontological particulars underlying, or giving expression to, such phenomenological particulars had to exist continuously in a spatial/temporal framework in order to make such re-identifications possible.

In fact, as has been argued in the present essay, issues of re-identification can be handled, to some extent, quite independently of ontological issues that are concerned with what makes particulars of a

given character possible or behave in a given way(s) over time. In this essay, the method of handling problems of re-identification was indicated to be a function of congruence relationships.

I also have argued here that, methodologically, one can handle the identifying or the re-identifying of particulars independently of deciding whether or not identifying reference presupposes or requires the concept of a person in order for such references to be made. Similarly, I have contended that the distinction between self and other than self, or between solipsistic and non-solipsistic consciousness, does not have to be made as a prerequisite to tackling the problem of trying to make identifying reference with respect to the "actual structure of our thought about the world". In addition to the foregoing methodological points, I have maintained that the process of identifying reference does not always demand or require that uniqueness of reference be established in order for the phenomenologies of two or more experiential fields (e.g., hearer/speaker) to be able to lock in on the experiential coordinates that are signified by any given instance of, or attempt at, identifying reference.

However, among other things, what is required in order for there to be communication concerning a given instance of identifying reference is the following. There must be enough points or facets of congruence established between two (or more) phenomenological frameworks to be able to isolate those phenomenological particulars from among the available phenomenological particulars that reflect characteristics that are in addition to those aspects that are being given expression through that to which identifying reference is being made.

Finally, I have argued during the course of the present essay that, in minimal methodological terms, the individuation of experience requires a framework of consciousness (such as is manifested in and/or through the phenomenology of the experiential field) that is capable of several things: a) this framework must be capable of attending to various aspects and dimensions of that framework (i.e., it must have a reflexive quality about it); b) the framework must be capable noting, and keeping track of, the similarities and differences from one experiential context to the next; and, c) the given framework

must be capable of juxtaposing and combining a) and b) in various ways in order to be able to generate different sets of conceptual grids and axial dimensions that are able to represent hermeneutical and/or epistemic structures that are a function of the above mentioned processes of juxtaposing and combining a) and b).

'Demonstrative reference', 'material body particulars', 're-identifiable particulars', 'persons', 'solipsistic versus non-solipsistic consciousness', 'uniqueness of reference', etc. are all structures that have been generated by Strawson's uses of the structuring process of identifying reference. The above concepts identify structures inasmuch as they organize, orient and determine relationships among various experiences and thoughts.

Moreover, the foregoing notions represent structures inasmuch as they represent demarcated (i.e., individuated or particularized) frame works with specific properties and characteristics. Such frameworks tend to persist over time and, as a result, persistently interact with reality in terms of the parameters that are given expression by such properties, etc.

Problems arise in Strawson's position, however, concerning the character of, and relationships among, the aforementioned structures because Strawson has not paid adequate attention (if any at all) to the character of the structuring processes out of which the above mentioned structures arose. If Strawson had paid adequate attention to the underlying structuring process, he might have seen that the very act of identifying reference that he uses to help produce, and draw attention to, such structures has a methodological character that is quite distinct from the structures that Strawson has presupposed while using that method. At bottom, identifying reference refers to a dimension of the character of the structuring process of understanding that establishes the phenomenological co-ordinates within which the search for a given kind of experiential particular is to take place.

Thus, identifying reference is both a phenomenological issue as well as a methodological issue. Indeed, the first task of methodology is to recognize its own rootedness in the phenomenology of the experiential field.

In this respect, many of Strawson's problems in the first part of *Individuals* are traceable -- I believe (and as I have argued) -- to the fact

that Strawson appears to want to ontologically/metaphysically run before he has learned even how to methodologically crawl. In any event, one of the purposes of the present essay has been to point out a few of the aspects of this methodology that pertain to the issue of identifying reference.

As I have endeavored to point out at various junctures in this essay, Strawson's program of descriptive metaphysics structures his conception of "the actual structure of our thought about the world" in accordance with the manner in which he has characterized the idea of identifying reference. By making the process of identifying reference asymmetrically dependent on the category of material body particulars, and by restricting this process of identifying reference to beings that exhibit non-solipsistic consciousness, Strawson has established the framework of understanding or pre-understandings that will horizontally structure, organize or orient the rest of his thought about the world.

In effect, the aforementioned methodological considerations and whether or not they are heeded have substantial impact upon how we view both the "actual structure of our thought" as well as the "actual structure of our thought about the world". In this sense, issues of identifying reference give expression to a fundamental dimension of the structures and structuring of understanding qua understanding. And, while the methodological points made in this essay do not begin to exhaust the points that could be made with respect to the issue of identifying reference, the various points that have been developed during the course of the foregoing discussion give something of the methodological flavor of the ways in which identifying reference represents an important dimension of the structures and structuring of understanding.

Chapter 6: Meaning

Introduction

Understanding is a way of organizing, arranging, ordering, and connecting experiences. In order to accomplish this processing of experience, one needs to establish a conceptual geometry within which, and with respect to which, experiences of various kinds can be plotted as so many co-ordinate points of identifiable character. By drawing up this kind of conceptual grid or network, one is in a potential position to proceed further and attempt to grasp some of the levels of significance of such experiential co-ordinate points.

From the perspective of the present essay, the theory of meaning is, essentially, an investigation into the aforementioned issue of significance. The search for significance concerns the hermeneutical probing of various aspects of: a) the phenomenology of the experiential field and/or b) that (i.e., reality) which makes possible a phenomenology of given character.

Such probing is, like identifying reference, a structuring process that generates organization, order, relationships, and so on. However, the structuring process of identifying reference primarily is concerned with establishing, or locating, points of reference for identification prior to other hermeneutical activities.

In the case of meaning, the hermeneutical probing is a function of the character of the process through which one assigns significance to -- and/or discovers significance in -- a) and b) above. The structures generated by this assigning/discovery process give expression to the character of the significance or meaning of various aspects of a) and b).

In other words, through language competency (which involves the proficient use of linguistic markers), an individual is able to try to make more than just an unelaborated identifying reference to experiential co-ordinate points within the phenomenology of the experiential field. The individual also can try to refer to the significance or meaning of the points partially characterized by the sort of broad process of identifying reference that often goes on when two, or more, people seek to establish a frame of discourse about which, and through which, to talk or write.

Although there have been a number of different theories of meaning that have emerged over the years within both philosophy and linguistics, I don't propose to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the various offerings that have been made in those areas. Consequently, the current essay should not be construed as an analysis of the philosophy of meaning as conceived from a variety of perspectives. Rather, this essay involves a hermeneutical exploration of the character of the structuring process through which meaning is generated and by means of which it plays a role as one of the dimensions in the structure and structuring of understanding.

In order to provide a concrete background against which to conduct my exploration into the character of meaning as a structural dimension of understanding, I have selected an article by Hilary Putnam entitled: "The Meaning of 'Meaning'". One of the main reasons for settling upon Putnam rather than upon so many others that could have been chosen is because Putnam is an advocate of what might be termed, generally speaking, a realist theory of meaning.

As such, Putnam's position is representative of an approach that offers a somewhat different perspective from that of, say, Strawson in the first part of *Individuals*. In the latter case, Strawson believed it is possible to 'say' how we conceive of "the actual structure of our thought concerning the world", even if this 'saying' didn't mean, necessarily, that one could know how the world really is, or even if determining the actual nature of the real world was not the task of descriptive metaphysics.

Putnam, on the other hand, tends to believe that not only can one 'say' how the world is, but one also can 'know', in some sense, how the world is. Furthermore, he believes that the meaning of terms can, and should, reflect the character of that reality.

One of the main themes of Putnam's article is that he wishes to argue in opposition to what he takes to be the position of many traditional theories of meaning. More specifically, he wants to try to demonstrate that extension is not determined by psychological states.

In other words, Putnam believes that two speakers could be in exactly the same psychological state, even though the extension of a term 'x' that is related somehow to that state in the idiolect of one speaker is different from the extension for the same term 'x' in the

idiolect of the other speaker. Although Putnam employs a number of arguments and examples in his article in order to support his position, the present essay will concentrate on only some of those issues that seem to be most central to his perspective.

Furthermore, the purpose behind pursuing such issues will not be in order to decide the tenability of Putnam's arguments concerning whether the extension of a term is, or is not, determined by psychological states. Rather, the underlying intention is to provide an opportunity for reflecting on the character of the role that meaning plays within the structures and structuring of understanding.

There are a number of concepts that play prominent roles in Putnam's theory of meaning. For instance, notions such as: 'Same_L relationships', 'indexical relationships' (or Kripke's comparable notion of 'rigid designator'), 'introducing events', as well as the distinction between 'epistemic' and 'metaphysical necessity' are all crucial and interrelated ideas in Putnam's article. Moreover, Putnam utilizes a number of contexts such as the Twin-Earth example and 'possible worlds' arguments in order to illustrate the character of, among other things, the concepts listed toward the beginning of this paragraph.

Essentially, the realism of Putnam's position is reflected in his contention that a natural kind term such as, say, "water" is indexical for, or acts as a rigid designator of, the actual or real nature of water in all possible worlds. For Putnam, the real nature of water concerns its atomic structure that is H₂O, just as the real nature of, for example, gold concerns its atomic structure. In emphasizing the actual or 'real' nature of a natural kind entity as it is in all possible worlds, Putnam feels he is providing a means of escaping from the problems of mentalism that he considers to have plagued many traditional theories of meaning.

In opposition to Putnam, the main thrust of this essay will be to argue that for the individual the activity of meaning-making is tied fundamentally (although this need not mean exclusively so) to hermeneutic activity within the phenomenology of the experiential field. In maintaining this, however, I do not intend to suggest that I am aligning myself with the traditional theories of meaning against which Putnam argues.

Whether, or not, I am aligning myself with any of those theories would depend on the specific character of the philosophy of meaning one wished to consider. In any event, by fundamentally tying the activity of meaning-making to hermeneutical activity within the phenomenology of the experiential field, I intend to draw attention to two things: 1) whatever else might be the case with respect to meaning, the activity of meaning is, first and foremost, a way of demarcating (i.e., particularizing, individuating) various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field. This demarcation is accomplished by assigning significance to, or discovering significance in, such aspects through a hermeneutical process. 2) By failing to give proper acknowledgment to 1), Putnam's theory of meaning cannot give an adequate indexical account of "meaning" qua meaning.

The Assumption of Methodological Solipsism

After some brief comments at the beginning of his article "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" on the inadequacy of the extension/intension distinction in so-called traditional approaches to the notion of meaning, Putnam goes on to outline what he believes are "two unchallenged assumptions" underlying the theories of meaning of many, if not most, traditional philosophers:

"1) That knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state (in the sense of 'psychological state', in which states of memory and psychological dispositions are 'psychological states'; no one thought that knowing the meaning of a word was a continuous state of consciousness, of course).

"2) That the meaning of a term (in the sense of 'intension') determines its extension (in the sense that sameness of intension entails sameness of extension)." (page 219)

Putnam, then, stipulates he intends to argue that "the traditional concept of meaning is a concept that rests on a false theory" (page 215). Apparently he intends to demonstrate that this is so by, among

other things, challenging both of the foregoing "unchallenged assumptions".

Putnam begins his program with an attempt to lend some sort of specificity to the idea of "psychological state". At one point, Putnam claims:

"In one sense, a psychological state is simply a state that is studied or described by psychology. In this sense it might be trivially true that, say knowing the meaning of the word "water" is a 'psychological state' (viewed from the standpoint of cognitive psychology). But this is not the sense of psychological state that is at issue in the above assumption 1).

"When traditional philosophers talked about psychological states (or "mental states"), they made an assumption of methodological solipsism. This assumption is the assumption that no psychological state, properly so called, presupposes the existence of any individual other than the subject to whom that state is ascribed. (In fact, the assumption was that no psychological state presupposed the existence of the subject's body even: if P is a psychological state, properly so called, then it must be logically possible for a "disembodied mind" to be in P)... Making this assumption is, of course, adopting a restrictive program ... "(page 220)

Whether, or not, Putnam is correct concerning his allegations in the above quote is an issue with which I don't intend to deal. One might note in passing, however, that a distinction can, and perhaps should, be drawn between, on the one hand, what Putnam is referring to as methodological solipsism, and, on the other hand, a methodological issue involving questions about the justifiability of the character of one's starting points.

More specifically, if one takes mental states as one's hermeneutical point of entry into the mysteries of the metaphysics of experience, then as a matter of methodological propriety one cannot presuppose either the existence of other individuals or the existence of a body as substrate for the mental states that mark the phenomenological doorway through which the journey of exploration

begins. If one were to make such presuppositions, one, potentially, could contaminate or prejudice the character of the hermeneutical investigation before it even gets started. The main issue here is not, first and foremost, a solipsistic one.

The primary given of the initial hermeneutical starting point is a function of awareness, attending to, intentionality, or consciousness. This is so because part and parcel of the character of that to which the label "mental" makes identifying reference is what, heretofore, has been called the 'phenomenology of the experiential field'.

As one sets about trying to describe such phenomenology, one might not be in any position to ascertain just what the significance of that phenomenology is. In other words, one might not be able to determine: a) whether the particulars that are individuated within the phenomenology of the experiential field are capable of being accounted for entirely in terms of the self-contained properties of that field (as a solipsist might advocate); or b) whether one is required to seek for some sort of answer to a) in that which is independent of (but not necessarily unrelated to) such a field (as some so-called "realists" might argue). Furthermore, one might not be in any position at the beginning of one's hermeneutical pursuits to establish whether the phenomenology of the experiential field is sustainable only through the agency of, say, material bodies.

Thus, from a methodological standpoint, one who begins with mental states as the basic experiential data (as seems to be unavoidable -- directly or indirectly -- for human beings to do) is neither denying nor affirming the existence of other individuals or of an underlying substrate body to house mental states. Rather, the task is to take the experiential givens of the phenomenology of the experiential field and attempt to work out answers, hypotheses, theories, beliefs or understandings concerning these features as they arise during the course of experience.

Whether one decides in favor of a solipsistic or non-solipsistic position is a problem to be subsequently resolved, as best one can, on the basis of one's hermeneutical analysis of ensuing experiences. However, both the phenomenology of the experiential field and one's hermeneutical investigation of that field's logical or structural character are issues and problems that, in general, are encountered

and reflected upon without recourse to the matter of solipsism -- presumptively or otherwise.

The assumption on which one should be working is not necessarily that of methodological solipsism but that of methodological objectivity. One is attempting to refrain from committing oneself to a particular conceptual position until one, at the very minimum, has had the opportunity to explore the phenomenology of the experiential field and tried to particularize or characterize various facets of that phenomenology in a way that is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the actual character of that which makes such a phenomenology possible.

Prior to the point at which an individual makes an inference in the direction of, or away from, methodological solipsism, one might entertain the possibility that a "disembodied mind" could be in some psychological state P. This would be the case not because of the assumption of methodological solipsism but because one's inquiries had not proceeded sufficiently far for one to be able to feel justified in either rejecting or accepting the character of such a possibility as being congruent or incongruent with the experiential data that one had compiled and analyzed to that point. In other words, in the beginning, "disembodied minds" might be a logical possibility because there is nothing within the context of one's current or past hermeneutic of the phenomenology of the experiential field that precludes such a possibility as being a legitimate manifestation of the character of one's experience.

If one were to come across evidence that seemed to indicate that the available evidence did not lend credence to the possibility of a disembodied mind, then this sort of possibility would be in conflict with the character of one's hermeneutic of experience. As a result, the logical possibility of disembodied minds would empirically be brought into question and subject to further critical examination.

In all of this supposition about the possibility of disembodied minds, one is, at no point, required to presuppose something like methodological solipsism in order to be able to entertain this sort of a possibility as being a logical candidate within one's present understanding. There is a difference between: a) methodologically keeping one's options open in accordance with what one's current

understanding of various aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field permits as possible avenues of fruitful hermeneutical investigation; and, b) the assumption of methodological solipsism that Putnam is attributing to traditional philosophical conceptions of mental states. The former theme of methodologically keeping one's options open as long as it is tenable to do so seems nothing more than sound and appropriate epistemological practice.

One should not suppose that the arguments in the foregoing several paragraphs seek to show that Putnam's contention concerning traditional philosophers and their assumption of methodological solipsism is wrong. Rather, the emphasis has been on clarifying a methodological point about the character of one's starting point, together with the considerable ramifications that, for example, assumptions can have in shaping the hermeneutical process that disembarks from one starting point rather than another.

In fact, if Putnam is right, then the adopting of the assumption of methodological solipsism by traditional philosophers would show how they had unnecessarily restricted their methodological options by allowing their assumptions to distort the hermeneutical process, inasmuch as subsequent inquiry might be skewed in directions that were biased in favor of their initial assumption(s). However, be this as it might, traditional philosophers still could have opted for the methodologically more flexible option had they recognized the effect that their assumptions have on the ramifications that ensue from starting points shaped by such assumptions.

According to Putnam, if one were to retain, or work on the assumption of, methodological solipsism, then one would have to rework the logical character of a wide variety of common psychological states. Putnam illustrates his point by examining the psychological state of "being jealous". He notes:

"... in its ordinary sense, x is jealous of y entails that y exists, and x is jealous of y's regard for z entails that both y and z exist (as well as x, of course). Thus being jealous and being jealous of someone's regard for someone else are not psychological states permitted by the assumption of methodological solipsism. (We shall call them "psychological states in the wide sense" and refer to the states that are

permitted by methodological solipsism as "psychological states in the narrow sense".) The reconstruction required by methodological solipsism would be to re-construct jealousy so that I can be jealous of my own hallucinations, or of figments of my imagination, etc. Only if we assume that psychological states in the narrow sense have a significant degree of causal closure (so that restricting our-selves to psychological states in the narrow sense will facilitate the statement of psychological laws) is there any point in engaging or in making the assumption of methodological solipsism. But the three centuries of failure of mentalistic psychology is tremendous evidence against this procedure ..." (pages 220-221)

Putnam's reference to "ordinary sense" with respect to the condition of jealousy in x with respect to y can be misleading. This is so since it tends to shift emphasis away from the psychological state of jealousy and, instead, focuses on the ontological entailment that the condition of being jealous supposedly holds with respect to the object (i.e., other person) toward whom the emotion is directed.

While in numerous, everyday, ordinary circumstances, the emergence of jealousy in an individual might be an indicator that someone, independent of the individual, is assumed to be the target for this emotion, jealousy, per se, need not entail the separate ontological character of the object toward whom jealousy is directed. Instead, the character of jealousy takes on concrete form in the context of the phenomenology of the experiential field through which the emotion manifests itself. This form of emotional expression is characterized by the individual in a way that generates a certain flavor of relative deprivation in certain aspects of the individual with respect to certain other aspects of the experiential field (or that which helps make such aspects possible -- e.g., some portion of reality).

The character of the flavor of this felt sense of relative deprivation can vary in any number of ways. It might range from acuteness, to a more chronic condition; from a fleeting twinge, to an intense obsession; from being ego-shattering, to being a source of hostility and antagonism that is directed at the aspect(s) of phenomenology to which one is attending.

In concert with the foregoing, one could conceive of a whole array of possibilities in which the phenomenological aspect(s) in question toward which jealousy might be directed does not necessarily entail the separate, ontological existence of that aspect of the phenomenology to which the individual is making identifying reference in any given experiential situation. Thus, an individual "x" dreams that "y" is loved by "z" -- whom "x" loves or desires -- and "x" feels jealousy toward "y". Or, "x" reads a fictional work and feels jealous toward one or more of the principal characters of the story being read. Or, "x" is hypnotized and given a posthypnotic suggestion to feel jealous toward the man sitting in the chair to the left of "x", and there is no one (in the actual, material, concrete sense) who is there. Or, "x" is deceived by "b" (a pen pal whom "x" has never met) into believing that the circumstances of "b's" life are far better than what really is the case, and, as a result, "x" feels jealous of "b", although the "b" of whom "x" is jealous doesn't really exist.

With the possible exception of the hypnosis example, all of the above situations are, potentially, commonplace. In addition, it does not appear to be out of order to maintain that the usage of the term "jealousy" in these circumstances might well fall within the framework of "ordinary usage" with respect to that term.

Of course, in all these uses, there certainly is an existential or ontological dimension to the aspect(s) of the phenomenology of experiential field toward which jealousy is felt or directed. Nonetheless, Putnam's belief that the philosopher who retains the assumption of methodological solipsism would have to reconstruct his or her position vis-à-vis jealousy is distortive of the actual character of the phenomenology of the experiential field of someone who was experiencing jealousy, but for whom there was no corresponding ontological object beyond the horizons of the aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which the individual experiencing jealousy was attending. More specifically, while a philosopher who consciously retained the assumption of methodological solipsism might concede that the object of one's jealousy was an hallucination or figment of one's imagination, this concession does not undermine the reality of the jealousy experience, nor does it alter the basic character of that experience.

Although an important theme of the character of that experience is relational, there is nothing in the character of jealousy as an experience that demands that the object-particular toward which jealousy is directed must be a real object whose ontological character is underwritten by something other than the phenomenology of the experiential field in which it arises. Therefore, contrary to what Putnam seems to allege, there is no inherent narrowing of the character of such psychological states as jealousy when considered from the point of view of someone who wishes to retain the assumption of methodological solipsism.

What is narrowed is the character of the ontological framework to which the individual is willing to commit himself or herself. This is so because the one who wishes to retain the assumption of methodological solipsism obviously would be unwilling to extend ontological character to anything that is not a function of the phenomenology of the experiential field that constitutes the 'world' within which the individual metaphysically operates.

However, as previously indicated, given that the character of the experience of jealousy is, first and foremost, phenomenologically relational [because the experience represents the interfacing of, on the one hand, awareness (i.e., the subject-locus of the focus of the phenomenology of an experiential field), and, on the other hand, a particular within the framework of that field (i.e., the object-locus toward which focal awareness is directed), and not necessarily ontologically relational (i.e., entities which are ontologically independent of, and distinct from, one another)], then the psychological state is not what is being narrowed in the context of methodological solipsism. What is narrowed is the scope of the ontological inferences one makes on the basis of having hermeneutically considered various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field.

Consequently, as far as an examination of the character of psychological states is concerned, one who adopts a perspective of methodological solipsism need not be locked into the kind of restrictive program that Putnam seems to envision is the case, nor is one necessarily required to reconstruct the nature of psychological states like jealousy. Furthermore, as pointed out in the foregoing

discussion, the relational theme that is an essential facet of jealousy is as logically and experientially permissible in a framework that retains an assumption of methodological solipsism as it would be in the non-solipsistic framework that Putnam appears to believe underlies the so-called "wider sense" of the notion of psychological state.

Finally, leaving aside the vagueness of precisely what Putnam has in mind when he alludes to "the three centuries of failure of mentalistic psychology", and without wishing in any way to imply I would want to defend the 'accomplishments' (whatever they might be) of mentalistic psychology during the three centuries in question, the last few pages of discussion in the present essay would appear to lay a solid foundation for inferring the following. One neither has to assume, as Putnam contends, "that psychological states in the narrow sense have a significant degree of causal closure", nor must one feel compelled to engage in any sort of reconstruction of the kind envisioned by Putnam if one starts from the assumption of methodological solipsism.

One does not have to assume the former -- and indeed should not -- since the notion of "causal closure" through which one establishes the character of the "laws" that govern psychological states is a goal to be sought and not something to be presumed from the outset. In other words, there is nothing in the arguments presented by Putnam in his article that tenably would indicate that a hermeneutical investigation into the phenomenology of the experiential field is any more doomed in the case of a methodological solipsist than it would be for a non-methodological solipsist.

Putnam believes he has shown, through his jealousy example, how the assumption of methodological solipsism forces one to restrict the scope of one's investigation into the nature of psychological states. According to Putnam, the foregoing situation remains in effect unless one reconstructs the character of states such as jealousy that, ordinarily, according to him, do not fit into the conceptual framework in which methodological solipsism permits one to work. In addition, as noted previously, in view of the supposedly restrictive nature of the conceptual framework that the assumption of methodological solipsism allegedly permits, Putnam considers the psychological states

that can be studied within this restricted framework to represent what he terms "psychological states in the narrow sense".

One might concede that the character of methodological solipsism has a different ontological sense about it from, say, the character of a 'non-methodological solipsistic position. Nonetheless, Putnam has not -- at least, to this point in his article -- demonstrated that in terms of the character of a psychological state qua state (i.e., this is independent of any inferential conclusions one might wish to draw about what makes a state of given character possible, and irrespective of whether that which makes that state possible, ontologically, extends beyond the horizons of the phenomenology of the experiential field in which the psychological state manifests itself) that the assumption of methodological solipsism naturally leads one to consider only "psychological states in the narrow sense".

Indeed, as far as psychological states qua states are concerned, the phenomenology of the experiential field of someone who is working from the assumption of methodological solipsism seems no more, or less, narrow than the phenomenology of the experiential field of someone who is working from outside the perspective of the assumption of methodological solipsism. This is the case since both perspectives require one to begin with the givens of the ontological context ... that is, the phenomenology of the experiential field through which psychological states make their entrances and exits.

Thus, one looks in vain for some clue in the jealousy example that would show one how an individual who has adopted the assumption of methodological solipsism would experience the psychological state of jealousy any differently than would someone who had not adopted the foregoing assumption. Their respective interpretations of that experience might entail quite different ontological ramifications, but the phenomenology of the psychological state, itself, would remain the same in both cases.

Extension, Psychological States and Twin Earth

According to Putnam, traditional theories of meaning are committed to maintaining that:

"... two speakers cannot be in the same psychological state in all respects and understand the term A differently; the psychological state of the speaker determines the intension (and hence, by assumption 2), the extension) of A." (page 222)

With respect to the foregoing, Putnam goes on to assert:

"It is this last consequence of the joint assumptions 1), 2) that we claim to be false. We claim that it is possible for two speakers to be in exactly the same psychological state (in the narrow sense), even though the extension of the term A in the idiolect of the one is different from the extension of the term A in the idiolect of the other. Extension is not determined by psychological state." (page 222)

In order to demonstrate the correctness of his claim concerning the short-comings of the assumption on which traditional theories of meaning supposedly rest, Putnam makes use of a possible world setting called "Twin Earth". In this setting, one is to imagine that, with a few exceptions, everything about Twin Earth is, as its name would suggest, exactly like its counterpart Earth.

One of the differences that is said to distinguish Twin Earth from Earth is that on the former planet: "... the liquid called 'water' is not H₂O but a different liquid whose chemical formula is very long and complicated." (p. 223)

Putnam provides an abbreviated symbol, "XYZ", to represent the complex chemical formula that expresses, presumably, the atomic/molecular structure of the substance called 'water' on Twin Earth. Putnam also goes on to note that despite the difference in chemical formulae between Earth's "water" (H₂O) and Twin Earth's "water" (XYZ), nonetheless, we are to suppose that, under normal conditions of pressure and temperature, both Earth's H₂O and Twin

Earth's XYZ are indistinguishable from one another as far as the way they each look, taste, and quench thirst.

The indistinguishable character of their respective appearances and properties notwithstanding, Putnam contends that "water" has a different meaning and extension on Twin Earth than it has on Earth. What is called "water" on Twin Earth is XYZ and not H₂O. Yet, what is called "water" on Earth is H₂O and not XYZ.

Stated in an alternative way, on Twin Earth the term "water" serves as a linguistic marker that can be used to make an identifying reference to a substance-particular whose chemical formula is XYZ. On Earth, however, the term "water" serves as a linguistic marker that can be used to make an identifying reference to a substance-particular whose chemical formula is H₂O. Furthermore, according to Putnam, although there might be some initial confusion concerning the meaning and use of the term "water" if someone from Twin Earth were to visit Earth, or if someone from Earth were to visit Twin Earth, nevertheless, eventually the intensional/extensional character of that to which "water" referred would come to be seen to be different for the inhabitants of each planet.

Having argued in the foregoing manner, Putnam alters the character of the previous story line somewhat and asks his readers to suppose that the time-frame in Earth and Twin Earth is no longer the modern era but has been changed to the mid-1700s. This is prior to the time when Earthlings and Twin Earthlings had discovered that "water" referred, respectively, to substances whose chemical formulae are H₂O and XYZ. Putnam's argument proceeds in the following manner:

"Let Oscar₁ be such a typical Earthian English speaker, and let Oscar₂ be his counterpart on Twin Earth. You might suppose that there is no belief that Oscar₁ had about water that Oscar₂ did not have about "water". If you like, you might even suppose that Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ were exact duplicates in appearance, feelings, thoughts, interior monologue, etc. Yet, the extension of the term "water" was just as much H₂O on Earth in 1750 as in 1950; and the extension of the term "water" was just as much XYZ on Twin Earth in 1750 as in 1950. Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ understand the term "water" differently in 1750

although they were in the same psychological state, and although given the state of science at the time, it would have taken their scientific communities about fifty years to discover that they understood the term "water" differently. Thus, the extension of the term "water" (and, in fact, its "meaning" in the intuitive pre-analytical usage of that term) is not a function of psychological state of the speaker by itself." (page 224)

Putnam's belief that the extension of the term "water" would be different for the two Oscars, despite the alleged sameness of psychological states, seems to rest on the scientific evidence that, eventually, is uncovered. Putnam seems to be arguing, implicitly, that although the discoveries concerning such structures are not made until around 1800 on both Earth and Twin Earth, the time of discovery has no bearing on what the actual character of a substance's atomic/molecular structure is.

That which the term "water" referred to on Twin Earth in 1750 was still "XYZ" irrespective of whether the beings on Twin Earth knew this or not. Similarly, that to which "water" made identifying reference on Earth in 1750 was still H_2O , whether Earthlings knew this to be the case or not.

Consequently, considered from the perspective of what Putnam sees as the absolute characters of water on Earth and Twin Earth, the proper extension of "water" on Twin Earth would entail only instances of XYZ. As a result, any samples of H_2O that were encountered by a Twin Earth being would not be treated as part of "water's" extension.

At the same time, the proper extension of "water" for an Earthling would include only exemplars whose atomic/molecular structure was H_2O . Therefore, if an Earthling were to run across water-like substances whose structure was 'XYZ', then that substance would not be identified as part of the extension of "water" on Earth.

As far as Putnam is concerned, even if one were to assume that the psychological states of Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ were precisely the same in all respects, the character of the extensional sets entailed by their respective uses of the linguistic marker "water" would be mutually exclusive or disjoint. Therefore, Putnam feels one is compelled to

conclude that psychological states do not determine extension in the way he claims traditional theories of meaning would be required to maintain.

The essential features of Putnam's foregoing position is untenable ... although there is an element of his argument that, when placed in proper perspective, is capable of being defended. Among other things, Putnam appears to confuse and conflate a number of issues.

For example, he appears to ignore, entirely, the following, fundamental distinction. On the one hand, there is the character of the intensional/extensional dimension of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field that constitutes the individual's own hermeneutical understanding of either various aspects of that phenomenology or of that which makes a phenomenology of such demarcated character possible. On the other hand, there is the character of the intensional/extensional dimension of the aspect of experience or reality to which the individual is attempting to make identifying reference through his or her hermeneutic.

Even if one were to acknowledge Putnam's point that, say, "water" on Twin Earth is still 'XYZ' before the discovery of its atomic/molecular structure, this acknowledgment is irrelevant to what the being of Twin Earth (circa 1750) would identify as exemplars of "water" -- whether on Twin Earth or Earth. As far as the 1750 Twin Earth being's sense of understanding is concerned, with respect to the linguistic marker "water", the extension of "water" (as well as its intension) is a function of the character of all of the features, peculiarities, properties, uses, dangers, appearances, and so on, which, experientially, have been encountered by the Twin Earth being.

Let us imagine that some bright young scientist from the Twin Earth of 2018 (let us call him Oscar Chronos) were to invent a time-travel device. Let us further imagine that Dr. Chronos is an anthropologist and historian whose specialty is the life and times of Twin Earth in the mid-1700s.

Given the foregoing, then in the event Dr. Chronos traveled back to the year 1750, there are certain distinctions that he would be capable of making that non-time-traveling inhabitants of Twin Earth in 1750 would not be capable of making. For instance, imagine that Dr.

Chronos undertook his time journey in order to perform various experiments.

Therefore, among the experimental paraphernalia that he stuffed into his deluxe model time-travel kit we might find some sensitized strips of specially processed fabric designed to indicate whether a substance contained H_2O (let us assume the fabric turned orange on exposure to H_2O) or XYZ (let us assume the fabric turned purple when exposed to XYZ). By using the specially processed fabric, the scientist would be able to determine whether any given instance of water-like substance he encountered in the Twin Earth of 1750 should be assigned to the extension of "water" as beings on Twin Earth of 2018 understood the term, or whether those substances should be included in the extensional set encompassing what beings on Earth of 2018 would refer to as "water".

For Dr. Chronos, anything that turned his fabric indicator purple would be an instance of Twin Earth "water". Alternatively, anything that induced the fabric indicator to turn orange would be considered to be an instance of Earth "water".

Being an expert anthropologist and historian of the Twin Earth of the mid-1700s, Dr. Chronos would understand, presumably, that the inhabitants of Twin Earth in 1750 would not differentiate between two substances that he knew, after testing, to be XYZ and H_2O , respectively. As far as the inhabitants of Twin Earth, 1750, are concerned, all substances, regardless of whether their atomic/molecular structure is H_2O or XYZ, are identifyingly referred to by the linguistic marker "water", as long as those substances manifest properties that conform to the range of possibilities that fall within the character of what the inhabitants have come to understand about those substances on the basis of a wide variety of previous experiential encounters with them.

Dr. Chronos, of course, would restrict the scope of the linguistic marker "water" to only substances having an atomic/molecular structure of XYZ. However, as an anthropological and historical expert on life in the mid-1700s, he also would understand that the dwellers of the mid-1700s would not place such a restriction on the scope of their use of the linguistic market "water".

Consequently, there would be differences between Dr. Chronos and the dwellers of the mid-1700s in relation to the character of their respective extensional treatment of the term "water". These differences also would correspond to, and be a function of, differences in the character of hermeneutical approaches that they respectively employed as a means of ordering or structuring various experiential co-ordinate points of reference that arose in the phenomenology of their respective experiential fields (i.e., experiences involving 'water').

Putnam would be correct to say that the extension of "water", as Chronos understood the term (i.e., the substance that has atomic/molecular structure XYZ and which is native to Twin Earth), would exclude any instances of substances whose atomic/molecular structure was H₂O. Furthermore, Putnam also would be correct to maintain that whenever a Twin Earth being of 2018 encountered a substance whose atomic/molecular structure was XYZ, then this being would refer identifyingly to that substance as "water".

Nonetheless, Putnam would be wrong to argue that what a Twin Earth being of the mid-1700s would identify as an extensional instance of "water" would exclude all substances whose atomic/molecular structure turned out to be H₂O. Putnam also would be wrong to maintain that whenever a Twin Earth being of the mid-1700s encountered a substance whose atomic/molecular structure turned out to be H₂O, then this being would not refer identifyingly to that substance by the linguistic marker "water".

Putnam has failed to take cognizance of the fact that for the dwellers of Twin Earth in the mid-1700s, the character of their basis for demarcating those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that are identifyingly referred to as "water" involves a variety of experiential encounters that are independent of atomic/molecular considerations. Stated in a slightly different way, what the dwellers of Twin Earth are really referring to is that substance whose character is such that it is capable of interacting with the character of the phenomenology of the experiential field in a way that would result in aspect(s) of that field having a character that could be identified as indicating the presence of "water" ... and, in the mid-1700s, there are two substances capable of doing this: H₂O and 'XYZ'.

These experiential encounters are particularized and characterized according to how the relevant particulars look, behave, smell, feel, and taste, as well as in terms of what can be done with, or to, such particulars. In other words, the hermeneutical basis for the use of "water" by Twin Earth dwellers of the mid-1700s is characterized along different lines than the hermeneutical basis for the use of "water" by Twin Earth dwellers of 2018.

The latter is rooted in what is believed or understood to be the character of the atomic/molecular structures of that which is being referred to. On the other hand, the hermeneutical basis for the use of "water" by mid-1700s Twin Earth dwellers is rooted in what is believed or understood to be the character of the phenomenology of everyday experiences involving liquids of a determinate description or characterization.

Unfortunately, Putnam, apparently, fails to see there are two entirely different ways of individuating the phenomenology of the experiential field for Twin Earth beings of the different time periods. These differences do not necessarily mean the character of that which is being differentially individuated or particularized in the two time frames is unrelated.

Nevertheless, the differences in character between the individuation of the respective hermeneutical frameworks do mean that if one is not careful -- as Putnam appears not to have been in his argument quoted earlier in this essay -- then one easily might confuse or conflate two separate dimensions. On the one hand, there is the intensional/extensional nature of one's understanding of the character of that to which a term is making identifying references in the phenomenology of one's experiential field (or that which makes such a field possible). On the other hand, there is the intensional/extensional nature of: either someone else's understanding of the character of that to which a term is making identifying reference, or what turns out to be the actual character of that to which identifying references are being made. And, if such conflation does occur, one comes to impose one's meaning framework onto others or onto reality, irrespective of the actual character of either of the latter contexts.

The Character of Meaning

Somehow, Putnam seems to feel the atomic/molecular structure of a substance (in the present case, either H₂O or XYZ) is a more reliable and fundamental indicator of what must be meant by a term than is the character of the focal/horizontal orientation of the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field. To be sure, an individual's intention might be to try to provide an explication of why certain aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field had the character they did.

As a result, one might begin to search, rigorously and methodically, for the underlying metaphysical or ontological nature of that which made those characteristic aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field possible. Moreover, conceivably, one might discover that the most readily experiential properties of the character of that to which the term "water" made identifying reference (e.g., its liquidity, taste, smell, appearance under different conditions, feel and so on) were, in fact, a function of the way the atomic/molecular structure of "water" expressed itself when shaped and played off against the character of the contextual circumstances in which that to which "water" referred was phenomenologically and metaphysically immersed.

Nonetheless, one could acknowledge this sort of possibility without, in any way, being compelled to reject the following position. What one intensionally/extensionally meant to identifyingly refer to when one employed the linguistic marker "water" were those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field whose character manifested some minimum number of features (e.g., characteristic taste, feel, smell, liquidity and clear appearance).

An individual even could say something like the following: "The scientists on my planet use the term 'water' to refer only to those substances whose atomic/molecular structure is XYZ (or H₂O). Regardless of how similar the character of some other substance might be to XYZ (or H₂O), as long as this other substance does not have the requisite XYZ (or H₂O) atomic/molecular structure, then the scientists will not label it 'water'".

Yet, although I understand the nature of the scientists' convention in this regard and appreciate the capacity of that convention to specify

subtle differences in substances that, in most cases, appear to be identical, nevertheless, when I or my friends use the term 'water', we are making identifying references to any substance that has a certain taste, feel, appearance, and that can be used for cooking, washing, swimming, growing fruits and so on. Now, since substances with the atomic/molecular structures of XYZ and H₂O both express, over time, all the requisite features of physical characteristics and uses that the character of that to which we use 'water' to refer entails, then XYZ-substances as well as H₂O-substances constitute extension instances of 'water'."

The fact that a substance's atomic/molecular structure might be XYZ or H₂O need not make this facet of the character of that substance the basis for determining the intensional/extensional scope of a term or linguistic marker. This is the case even when the intensional/extensional scope of a term might be used to make identifying references to aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field whose character might, at some point, touch upon, but need not be restricted to, the given features of atomic/molecular structure.

In other words, the intensional/extensional scope of a term is not necessarily a function of the ultimate nature of that to which the term, in reality, makes identifying references. One must also take into consideration the character of the focal/horizontal context out of which an identifying reference arises in relation to certain aspects of the phenomenology of a given individual's (or group of individuals') experiential field(s).

What an individual refers to might have -- from the perspective of a physical expression of actual reality -- a given atomic/molecular structure. Nevertheless, from the intentional focal/horizontal perspective of the individual who is making the identifying reference, the dimension of the character of reality involving atomic/molecular structure might be irrelevant to the facet(s) of the character of phenomenological reality (which is also a dimension of the character of reality) to which the individual is attempting to draw one's attention by using a given linguistic marker.

One cannot assume that identifying references need to be considered only in terms of essential or ultimate metaphysical

properties, principles or characteristics that extend beyond an individual's (or individuals') phenomenological horizons. Instead, one should remember that all identifying references emerge in the context of the phenomenology of a given experiential field. Consequently, the nature of many identifying references (and this is especially true in day-to-day, run-of-the-mill situations) is geared toward the character of the phenomenology of the aspect of that field being attended to and not necessarily toward the metaphysics or ontology of that which makes such a demarcated phenomenology possible.

Having said the foregoing, however, one still must concede that even if an individual is not interested in the metaphysics or ultimate ontology of what makes everyday experience possible, nonetheless, there is an ultimate reality of which the everyday experiences are an expression. This is so in the sense that the former makes the latter possible by virtue of what the former permits (i.e., parameters of permissibility) in the way of such experiences.

When some term or linguistic marker "x" (in the present case, "water") is linked to a predicate qualifier(s) by the copula "is," then one who wishes to grasp the character of the focal/horizontal perspective that is attempting to link "x" to a qualifying or delineating framework through the linguistic marker "is" will have to discern whether the character of the speaker's employment of "is" is primarily phenomenologically oriented or whether it is primarily extra-phenomenologically oriented, or a combination of the two. For instance, in saying: "The water is cool, clear and inviting", a speaker is making identifying references to certain aspects of the character of the phenomenology of the speaker's experiential field concerning various experiential co-ordinate points of reference (i.e., clarity, coolness and invitingness). These points of reference have been particularized or characterized in relation to the aspects (i.e., water) to which one is attending and for which the term "water" has been learned as an appropriate means of making identifying references to those aspect-particulars.

The speaker is not necessarily saying the ultimate, metaphysical, defining properties of that to which he or she refers to as "water" is that it is "cool, clear and inviting". Rather, the individual is specifying those facets of the character of the aspects of the phenomenology of

the experiential field to which he or she wishes, for whatever reason, to make identifying reference.

On the other hand, if the speaker were to say: "Water is H₂O (or XYZ)", then the speaker is making identifying references to what is believed or understood to be an underlying metaphysical or ontological dimension of the character of certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field. Moreover, these aspects are related to a dimension that the speaker believes or understands is responsible, in part, for the phenomenology of water having the character it does in the context of the individual's experiential field.

When the Twin Earth beings of the mid-1700s use the linguistic marker "water" to make identifying references to certain aspects of the phenomenology of their experiential fields, they need not be attempting to draw attention to the underlying metaphysical or ontological character of that to which "water" refers. In fact, if they were trying to direct attention to an underlying metaphysical or ontological dimension, one might suppose they would have had in mind a quite different framework whose character reflected, perhaps, alchemical, magical or spiritual dimensions of that to which the term "water" was used to make identifying reference ... instead of a framework that reflected atomic/molecular properties of that to which they were attending. In any event, one suspects the character of the scope of the identifying reference to be covered in the use of "water" by the Twin Earthlings of the mid-1700s was more a conjunction of surface phenomenological considerations, than underlying metaphysical ones.

Consequently, whatever the character of the atomic/molecular structure is of that to which the Twin Earthlings of the mid-1700s identifyingly refer to as "water" is largely a function of phenomenological properties and not metaphysical or ultimate ontological properties. However, having said this, one should note that there need not be any contradiction involved if one were to juxtapose, and be committed to, the following assertions: 1) The character of that which gives the phenomenology of the experiential field concerning water its demarcated features is a function of metaphysical or ontological properties (principles) of some kind; 2) The character of the phenomenology of the experiential field is an expression or

manifestation of such metaphysical or ontological properties (principles) in action as they are experienced and understood through the phenomenologies of various individuals.

Natural Kind Terms in the Context of Logically Possible Worlds

Putnam maintains:

"There are two obvious ways of telling someone what one means by a natural-kind term such as "water" or "tiger" or "lemon". One can give a so-called ostensive definition -- "this (liquid) is water"; "this (animal) is a tiger"; "this (fruit) is a lemon"; where the parentheses are meant to indicate that the markers "liquid", "animal", "fruit" may be either explicit or implicit. Or one can give a description. In the latter case the description one gives typically consists of one or more markers together with a stereotype -- a standardized description of features of the kind that are typical, or "normal", or at any rate stereotypical. The central features of the stereotype generally are criteria -- features which in normal situations constitute ways of recognizing if a thing belongs to the kind or, at least, necessary conditions (or probabilistic necessary conditions) for membership in the kind." (pages 229-230)

A page later, Putnam states:

"When I say "this (liquid) is water", the "this" is, so to speak, a de re "this" -- i.e., the force of my explanation is that "water" is whatever bears a certain equivalence relation (the relation we called "same-L above) to the piece of liquid referred to as "this" in the actual world." (page 231)

The phrase "the actual world" is used in the above quote because Putnam is approaching his analysis of meaning from the perspective of a 'possible worlds' framework. Thus, shortly before the above quote, Putnam stipulates the following:

"Let W_1 and W_2 be two possible worlds in which I exist and in which this glass exists and in which I am giving a meaning explanation

by pointing to this glass and saying "this is water" (we do not assume that the liquid in the glass is the same in both worlds). Let us suppose that in W_1 the glass is full of H_2O and in W_2 the glass is full of XYZ. We shall also suppose that W_1 is the actual world and the XYZ is the stuff typically called "water" in the world W_2 ." (page 230)

Putnam further notes how Saul Kripke uses the term "rigid" to refer to those linguistic markers (Kripke calls them "designators") which refer "to the same individual in every possible world in which the designator designates" (page 231). Putnam goes on to suggest that "water" (in Putnam's sense of H_2O) is an instance of what Kripke has in mind when the latter speaks of rigid designators or rigid designation.

Putnam believes this is correct since, apparently, the meaning of "water" is to be determined by the character of the liquid in the glass on $World_1$ -- given that $World_1$ is the actual world and given, presumably, that meaning is a function of what the character of the actual world entails with respect to that aspect of the actual world to which attention is being directed at a specified time and place. Furthermore, in the example described by Putnam, this aspect toward which attention is directed consists of the glass of liquid that is before one now and that, by stipulation, is said to contain H_2O .

The foregoing really does not account for why either Putnam or Kripke feels one must invoke the notion of logically possible worlds in relation to the analysis of the notion of meaning. In fact, the reasons for the introduction of logically possible worlds into the discussion of meaning don't begin to become apparent until one explores the theory of meaning that is rooted in the character of the perspective that is expressed through the term "rigid designator".

Especially important in this context are the ramifications of that theory of meaning for the idea of necessity. More specifically, Kripke distinguishes between "epistemically necessary" and "metaphysically necessary" truths.

The former kind of truth refers to those statements or terms whose meanings reflect the actual nature of things (e.g., that water is H_2O) such that no world can be considered a possible world unless that world includes linguistic markers whose meanings are accurately

reflective of the actual nature of those ontological/metaphysical 'things' which make up such a world. "Metaphysically necessary" truths, on the other hand, refer to "statements which are true in all possible worlds." (page 233)

In Putnam's words the alleged upshot of this distinction is:

"Since Kant there has been a big split between philosophers who thought that all necessary truths were analytic and philosophers who thought that some necessary truths were synthetic a priori. But none of these philosophers thought that a (metaphysically) necessary truth could fail to be a priori; the Kantian tradition was as guilty as the empiricist tradition of equating metaphysical and epistemic necessity." (page 233)

Apparently, through means of the 'possible worlds' mode of analysis, one is able to gain connecting insight into, or true understanding of, the character of the supposed differences between metaphysical and epistemic necessity in the context of human understanding.

However, there appear to be a number of fundamental problems. For instance, problems arise in relation to the presumed heuristic value or pay-off of the 'possible worlds' mode of analysis. Moreover, problems also arise with respect to the notion of "rigid designation" and whether or not that notion really clarifies the logical character of the meanings in the way Putnam (and Kripke) seems to believe is the case.

Putnam has claimed that when one ostensibly refers to a glass that contains a liquid and says, either explicitly: "The liquid in this glass is water", or implicitly: "This [meaning that substance which is in the glass] is water", the effect of the reference is *de re in nature*. As a result, whatever bears a certain equivalence relation (the relation we called 'same-L' above) to the piece of liquid referred to as 'this' in relation to the given glass, then that substance will be the very same sort of thing to which we, presently, are making identifying reference by using the linguistic marker "water".

Given that Putnam has specified (see the quote taken from page 230 of Putnam) we are to suppose the glass of liquid in World₁ is to be

composed of H_2O , and given that $World_1$ is to be considered as the actual world, then as far as Putnam is concerned, the precise nature of the de re identifying reference that is being made (by saying, for example: "This [the liquid] is water") is a matter of the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid in question. In other words, for Putnam, there is an equivalency relation ('same_L') between two things. On the one hand, there is the ostensibly designated liquid in the glass. On the other hand, there is that to which the designator "water" makes identifying reference. The character of this equivalency relation is, according to Putnam, a function of the atomic/molecular structure of both the liquid in the glass and that to which the linguistic marker "water" is used to designate.

Putnam, seemingly, is being very arbitrary by contending that the character of the equivalency relation that he claims ties together the liquid in a given glass (to which ostensive identifying reference is being made) and the linguistic marker "water" must be a function of atomic/molecular structure. He is being arbitrary in that he seems to want to require everyone to restrict their sense of meaning with respect to that to which "water" makes identifying reference to the dimension of atomic/molecular structure.

If the context in which the sentence: "This (liquid) is water" is uttered were a science laboratory, then there might be some legitimacy to one's surmising that in pointing to the liquid and identifying it as "water" the speaker was not referring to just the phenomenological character of an individual's sensory interaction with such a liquid. In these sorts of circumstance, the speaker might have been referring primarily to the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid.

On the other hand, if the speaker simply wanted the others in the lab to know where the liquid was that could help wash away certain caustic substances from the skin or eyes should there be an accident with such substances, or if the speaker merely wanted to identify the container that contained the liquid that could be used to make tea or coffee, or if the speaker wanted to alert students about the locality of the container that contained a liquid that could put out certain kinds of fires, then even in the context of a laboratory, one should not assume the focus of a speaker's ostensive designation (concerning the liquid in

a given glass or container) was intended to refer to the atomic/molecular structure of that liquid.

Under these circumstances, the character of the equivalency relation between the liquid and "water" might be along various functional lines that do not require that, say, a unique atomic/molecular structure be identified as the link between designated particular and the linguistic designator. Instead, the link might be rooted in certain functional properties that are held in common by any of the members of a set of particulars (in the present case, containers of H₂O and XYZ) that are collectively referred to by the linguistic marker "water".

In addition, as discussed previously, the character of the basis for the equivalency relation between ostensibly identified liquid and linguistic designator "water" might be a product of purely phenomenological considerations. These considerations would concern matters such as: how the liquid tastes, smells, feels, looks; its effect upon one when consumed; whether it could be used for cooking, surgery, generating power, growing plants, and so on -- as determined by one's understanding of the character of the various aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field that one learned to link (on one's own or through the ostensive designations of others) with that to which the term "water" made identifying reference during the course of one's conceptual/ linguistic development.

The "actual world" can be approached hermeneutically from many different directions. Because this is the case, the character of a speaker's focus with respect to that to which ostensive identifying references are being made, on any given occasion, could be as varied as the nature of the hermeneutical framework out of which such identifying references arise. The atomic/molecular structure of particulars constitutes only one hermeneutical possibility.

Consequently, there seems to be no good reason why one should feel compelled to be confined to the character of the parameters defined by an unnecessarily restricted scope of such a hermeneutic. The foregoing is the case irrespective of whether one is attempting to grasp the character of either a) what someone means by a linguistic marker, or b) what, in ultimate metaphysical or ontological terms, is

entailed by that to which someone is making an identifying reference by employing a given linguistic marker.

With regard to this latter metaphysical aspect [i.e., b) above], Putnam appears to be assuming that the atomic/molecular structure of, say, water (i.e., H₂O) constitutes the most essential and definitive dimension of such a substance. However, if one were concerned with the religious dimension of that substance and its use in, for example, baptismal rites or ritual ablutions for the performance of prayer or in the performance of an exorcism, then the aspect of atomic/molecular structure might only be an incidental consideration when juxtaposed next to the canonical rules that govern that liquids of all those that consist of H₂O will be permitted to be used for spiritual purposes. A liquid that was determined to consist of H₂O might not qualify as an instance of "water" in the religious/spiritual sense, as a result of some feature of contamination that did not alter the atomic/molecular character of the liquid but that did, or was believed to, affect the spiritual character of that for which the term "water" was used as an identifying reference or designation. Similarly, a container of liquid might consist of just H₂O and, yet, be useless -- in fact dangerous -- for the purpose of human consumption.

For example, that for which "water" is used to make identifying reference in most everyday sorts of circumstances is not distilled water but potable water. Potable water contains, among other things, trace amounts of various metals that provide a specific electrolytic character to the liquid, thereby making it usable or non-injurious, and so on.

To the extent one is trying to understand what others mean by their use of a linguistic marker, then one should note how the character of a speaker's identifying reference to the "actual world" is a function of the speaker's focal/horizontal orientation with respect to certain aspects of the phenomenology of the speaker's experiential field. In order to grasp someone else's meaning, the character of one's understanding must be accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of the speaker's focal/horizontal orientation. The greater the degree of this reflection or congruency, the more closely does one's understanding come to merging horizons with certain facets of a speaker's conceptual geometry or demarcated framework of meaning.

On the other hand, to the extent one is trying to understand the character of certain aspects of the ultimate metaphysical properties and/or principles that make various demarcated phenomenologies of the experiential field possible and for which purposes certain linguistic markers or designators are used to make identifying references, then one should keep the following in mind. The character of the "actual world" is a function of metaphysical/ontological properties and principles. These properties and principles are responsible for differentially demarcated phenomenological frameworks having the character they do. Consequently, in order to grasp the intensional/extensional character of such metaphysical and/or ontological properties and principles, the character of one's understanding must be accurately reflective of, or be congruent with, the character of the intensional/extensional parameters expressed through, or manifested by, such metaphysical properties and principles.

Furthermore, the character of one's understanding with respect to the latter metaphysical or ontological dimension will be mediated by the inferences and connecting insights one makes in relation to, and by means of, the conceptual geometry one has constructed. The geometry has been structured through organizing the various experiential coordinate points of reference that have been made possible by the underlying metaphysical dimension.

In both of the above senses of "actual world", introducing the idea of 'logically possible worlds' seems entirely unnecessary as a way of clarifying what a term, designator or linguistic marker is making, or attempting to make, identifying references to in any given set of phenomenological and/or metaphysical circumstances. In fact, one has considerable difficulty understanding just why Putnam believes the idea of a logically possible world helps clarify the problem of meaning in a way that is not encompassed already by one's attempted hermeneutic of the "actual world" as expressed in terms of: either a) the character of a certain aspect(s) of the phenomenology of a given individual's (e.g., a speaker's) experiential field to which one is attending; or, b) the character of that which makes a certain demarcated aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field

(whether mine or one that is described or reported by someone else) possible.

To be sure, in one sense, one's hermeneutical inferences concerning the character of a given phenomenological and/or metaphysical/ontological context constitute a kind of logically possible world that is rooted in, and a function of, the way one individuates, particularizes or characterizes the focal/horizontal interfacing that is generated through one's intentional encountering of some aspect of the phenomenology of one's experiential field. One's manner or mode of individuating experience produces experiential co-ordinate points of reference that manifest a certain character according to the nature of the individuation process one employs.

This process might involve conscious structures (e.g., in line with some belief system), or the individuation process might transpire as a function of the structuring properties of those facets of one's hermeneutical capabilities (e.g., connecting insight, interrogative imperative, congruence relationships, etc.) that are not currently being mediated or oriented by some specific belief or belief system. By means of these experiential co-ordinate points of reference, together with some inferential ordering and linking of such points, one constructs a conceptual geometry or demarcated intentional framework that expresses something like a logically possible world as viewed through the current epistemic shape of one's hermeneutic of experience.

Thus, one can reflect upon that hermeneutic, as well as analyze it, pursue the interrogative imperative in relation to it. One also can experiment with it and check the results against subsequent experiential co-ordinate points of reference, or one can check the results against past experiential co-ordinate points of reference (mine or those of others) which have not been investigated previously or have not been integrated with one's current conceptual geometry.

In doing these sorts of activities, an individual has a phenomenological basis that one can use to explore the extent or degree of congruency that might exist: a) between the character of various aspects of one's conceptual geometry and the character of those aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field to which one is attending; or, b) between the character of various aspects

of one's conceptual geometry and the character of those metaphysical or ontological principles and properties that would seem necessary (given the character of one's current range of experiences) to make such a demarcated phenomenology possible.

In terms of the foregoing perspective, one might say that one is comparing the character of the 'possible world' of one's hermeneutical framework with the character of the "actual world" of either the phenomenology of the experiential field or the metaphysics/ontology of that which makes such a phenomenology possible. However, in this latter metaphysical/ontological sense of "actual world", reality is mediated through phenomenology, whereas in the former phenomenological sense of "actual world", reality is (in one's own case, at least) directly experienced.

This is so because in those circumstances, the phenomenology qua phenomenology constitutes the real nature of the "actual world" of phenomenology. Nonetheless, even where the 'actual world' is a matter of the character of the underlying metaphysical/ontological principles and properties that make a given demarcated phenomenology possible, if such an "actual world" is to be understood or known, it needs to be mediated through the logical or structural character of the hermeneutical framework that orients or shapes the focal/horizontal nature of the phenomenology of one's experiential field with respect to those principles and properties.

In either case, one can explore the issue of congruency between the possible world character of one's conceptual geometry and the character of the "actual world" metaphysics. One can do this by noting the sort of problems and questions that are left as a result of having pursued the interrogative imperative when playing off the character of one's conceptual geometry against, for example, the character of subsequent experiences (mine or others) that can be characterized and, then, juxtaposed next to the geometry for purposes of determining congruency.

In time, one builds up -- or attempts to -- an experientially cross-referenced (through inferential linkages) conceptual geometry. This geometry is capable, to a greater or lesser extent, of providing a basis for resolving previously encountered problems of congruency that have been generated by the unanswered questions and difficulties that

arose due to the congruency lacunae entailed by the character of the earlier conceptual geometry when pitted against the data of the phenomenology of the experiential field (both mine and that of others).

The above senses of "logically possible world" and "actual world" do not fit, in any readily evident way, with Putnam's consideration of a (supposedly) logically possible world Twin Earth where "water" serves as a linguistic marker for XYZ and not H₂O. In the Twin Earth context in which "water" refers to the liquid with an atomic/molecular structure of XYZ (not H₂O, as is the case on Earth), the character of that to which "logical possibility" makes identifying reference becomes a function of the conceptual parameters that one builds into one's suppositional/hypothetical 'world parameters'. Such parameters are limited only by one's creative imagination and by the restrictions that the requirements of, say, non-contradiction impose on what is to be considered to be "logically possible".

Thus, 'sounds that smell' or 'water (i.e., H₂O)-like liquids that are made of XYZ' might make up a logically possible world since there appears to be nothing contradictory in supposing that, on some possible world, sounds smell, or that, on some other possible world, water (i.e., H₂O)-like liquids have XYZ for their atomic/molecular structure and not H₂O. On the other hand, a world in which there were 'round squares' or 'seven-sided triangles' or 'bachelors who were married' or 'red circles that were colorless and shapeless' or 'A's that were not A's' would not, one might surmise, be considered as instances of logically possible worlds.

The foregoing is so because, if the various words in the foregoing expression were to have the same meaning on such worlds as those words have on Earth, then there would seem to be logical contradictions involved in those worlds. Yet, if this is the case, then apparently, Twin Earth should not be considered to be a logically possible world. After all, according to Putnam, on Earth "water" is a linguistic marker for liquids whose nature is expressed through the atomic/molecular structure of H₂O. If the character of an "actual world" designation, (i.e., 'something' to which a linguistic marker on Earth makes identifying reference) is to establish the criteria by which one judges whether or not something is logically possible (as in the

cases of 'round squares', 'seven-sided triangles', 'married bachelors' and so on), then obviously, Twin Earth cannot be a logically possible world.

On Twin-Earth, "water" designates liquids whose atomic/molecular structure is XYZ. However, according to Putnam, "water" only can refer identifyingly to liquids whose atomic/molecular structure is H₂O ... as is the case on Earth that is an "actual world" (at least, Earth is an "actual world" as far as the way in which Putnam has set up the situation is concerned).

Putnam himself seems to say as much when he argues:

"Once we have discovered the nature of water, nothing counts as a possible world in which water doesn't have that nature. Once we have discovered that water (in the actual world) is H₂O, nothing counts as a possible world in which water isn't H₂O. In particular, if a "logically possible" statement is one that holds in some "logically possible world" it isn't logically possible that water isn't H₂O." (page 233)

Since Putnam has stipulated that the nature of water resides in its atomic/molecular structure of H₂O, then ipso facto, Twin Earth cannot count as a possible world because in it water isn't H₂O. It is XYZ.

Evidently, to say that the nature of water is XYZ is like saying 'bachelors are married', or 'circles are squares', and so on. This is seemingly a contradiction in terms.

If Twin Earth, as described by Putnam, is not a logically possible world, then one wonders how it can be accepted as part of an alleged demonstration of the untenable nature of various implications that reportedly ensue when the assumptions underlying so-called traditional theories of meaning are linked together in certain ways. Seemingly, Putnam's attempted demonstration that psychological states do not determine extension rests on one's having to accept the possibility of a world (i.e., Twin Earth) that, by Putnam's own criteria, is not a logically possible one.

In reflecting upon Putnam's position, "logically possible worlds" appear to be a function of what is the case in the "actual world". As Putnam says (quoted earlier):

"Once we have discovered that water (in the actual world) is H₂O, nothing counts as a possible world in which water isn't H₂O." (page 233).

Yet, if logically possible worlds are really only a function of, and restricted by, the character of various aspects of "actual worlds", then one wonders what purpose is served by speaking of the idea of "logically possible worlds" or by introducing this idea into the discussion of meaning.

Putnam does specify that:

"Once [emphasis mine] we have discovered the nature of water, nothing counts as a possible world in which water doesn't have that nature" (p. 233).

This leaves room open for entertaining the following. Until the actual nature of something is discovered, then logically possible worlds could be constructed, imagined or hypothesized. This construction process would permit the positing of various structures as the proposed nature of that 'something' to which one is attending in the "actual world".

Presumably, this would mean that in the mid-1700s, before the discovery of the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid substances for which "water" is used to making identifying references on Earth and Twin Earth, Twin Earth would be a logically possible world. On the other hand, after the discovery that the liquid substances on Earth, for which "water" serves as linguistic marker, had an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O, then apparently, Twin Earth could no longer be considered a logically possible world since the nature of water on that planet is not H₂O but XYZ. This conclusion seems a rather relativistic one.

Let us imagine that Twin Earth did exist. Let us further suppose the discovery was made on Twin Earth that the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid substance in question was XYZ prior to the time when scientists on Earth discovered that the atomic/molecular structure of the respective liquid substance on Earth was H₂O.

Does this mean Earth would not be a logically possible world as far as the people of Twin Earth were concerned? After all, using Putnam's criteria, nothing would count as a logically possible world in which water was not XYZ. Surely such an argument places Putnam and all other inhabitants of Earth in a rather strange position of having to suppose there might be some circumstances in which the actual world, from our point of view, is not a logically possible one.

The character of reality, or of the "actual world", is independent of the way one assigns linguistic markers as a means of making identifying references -- either to certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field or to certain aspects of the underlying metaphysics that makes such a field possible. Therefore, when Putnam says: "Once we have discovered the nature of water, nothing counts as a possible world in which water doesn't hold that nature", the issue of meaning in these circumstances isn't a matter of linguistic markers or rigid designators. Instead, Putnam is concerned with the actual character of that to which one makes identifying reference through the use of terms or linguistic markers.

If a given liquid substance has an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O, then any world in which H₂O is not H₂O is not a logically possible world. This is the case, just as worlds in which 'squares are round' or 'A is not A' or 'triangles are seven-sided' are not to be construed as logically possible worlds because squares (i.e., that to which the linguistic marker "squares" makes identifying reference) have a character of being four-sided, closed, plane figures that are incongruent with entities that are, among other things, 'round in character. Moreover, A (i.e., that to which the linguistic marker "A" makes identifying reference) is what it is by virtue of its character, and anything that does not have that character cannot be A, and A cannot be that thing that does not have the character that A has. Similarly, triangles (i.e., that to which the linguistic marker "triangle" makes identifying reference) are three-sided, closed, plane figures, and, consequently give expression to a character that is incongruent with entities that have seven sides as part of their character.

Nevertheless, all of this appears to have relatively little, if anything, to do with the 'fact' that on Twin Earth the linguistic marker "water" is used to identifyingly refer to a liquid substance whose

atomic/molecular structure is XYZ. If on Earth part of the character of a given liquid substance is that it has an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O, and if on Twin Earth part of the character of a given liquid substance is that it has an atomic/ molecular structure of XYZ, then, from Putnam's perspective, one would not be describing a logically possible world if one tried to maintain that H₂O was XYZ or that XYZ was H₂O.

Yet, the foregoing is not what is happening in the hypothetical circumstances that Putnam has outlined in his article. The inhabitants of Earth and Twin Earth, circa 1750, both use the linguistic marker "water" to make identifying references to liquid substances that, from a purely surface-phenomenological point of view, are identical in all respects (i.e., in terms of taste, smell, feel, appearance, and functional properties ... such as whether one can cook in it, swim in it, grow fruits in it, and so on).

Oscar₁ is not saying that H₂O is XYZ, and Oscar₂ is not saying that XYZ is H₂O. They each are saying that the character of the hermeneutical means by which they identify whether or not any liquid substance they experientially encounter will be the sort of thing for which they will use the term "water" to make identifying reference is a function of the extent of the congruency that can be established. This proposed congruency is between the character of their understanding of that for which "water" is used as a linguistic marker and the character of the liquid substance that they are now encountering.

Neither the Oscar₁ nor the Oscar₂ of the mid-1700s includes considerations of atomic/molecular structure as part of the character of the hermeneutical framework through which they are epistemically linked to those aspects of the phenomenology of their respective experiential fields to which the linguistic marker "water" makes identifying reference. Consequently, for Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ of the mid-1700s, the atomic/molecular structure of a given liquid does not form part of what they mean by "water" (in the sense of the character of the hermeneutical framework for which the given linguistic marker makes identifying reference).

Moreover, this atomic/molecular structure does not form part of what they would identify as being required by exemplars in order for "water" to be used as an appropriate linguistic marker in relation to

such exemplars. "Identify" here is to be construed in the sense that a collection of experiential instances manifesting enough of the features of the character of an intensional framework would be accepted as extensional expressions of that to which the intensional framework was making identifying reference.

Thus, even though, in terms of the character of the intensional/extensional nature of certain aspects of metaphysical reality, some liquid substances on Earth have an atomic/molecular structure of H_2O , and even though some liquid substances on Twin Earth have an atomic/molecular structure of XYZ, as far as Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ of the mid-1700s are concerned, the intensional/extensional nature of the hermeneutical framework underlying and governing the use of the linguistic marker "water" is not making identifying references to atomic/molecular structure when that term (i.e., water) is being employed. As scientists later will discover, it so happens that, in point of fact, the liquid substances to which Oscar₁ is making identifying reference in the mid-1700s has an atomic/molecular structure of H_2O , while the liquid substances to which Oscar₂ is making identifying reference has an atomic/molecular structure of XYZ.

Metaphysical and Epistemic Necessity

When Putnam differentiates between "metaphysical necessity" and "epistemic necessity" (previously quoted), just what is the character of the hermeneutical foundations upon which the distinction rests? On the basis of the foregoing 10-12 pages of analysis, the idea of a "logically possible world" seems to be horizontally bounded by at least two features:

1) whatever else it might be, this sort of world cannot entail anything that would contradict the determined character of a given thing's (object's, phenomenon's, or event's) nature in the actual world; and, 2) such a "possible world" can entail, and give expression to, whatever considerations of character are not incongruent with the character of the determinate restrictions encompassed by 1).

Given these two features, how is one to differentially conceive of the notions of epistemic and metaphysical necessity in relation to the

idea of logically possible world that is bounded by the conditions set out in 1) and 2) above? Once the nature of something (e.g., a given liquid substance) has been determined, does this determination establish epistemic necessity or metaphysical necessity?

Presumably, the source of a hermeneutical framework's epistemic necessity lies in the manner in which the character of that framework's demarcated understanding reflects, or is congruent with, the character of that to which the framework is making identifying reference in the context of the focal/horizontal nature of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field at a given experiential juncture. In addition, when that to which one is attending concerns the character of the metaphysical and/or ontological principles and properties that actually make certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field possible, then epistemic necessity is a function of the way the character of one's hermeneutical framework accurately reflects, is congruent with, or merges horizons with certain aspects or dimensions of actual character of such reality.

Furthermore, in any given instance in which an actual determination of nature has been established (e.g., a liquid substance whose atomic/molecular structure is H_2O), the character of the nature of that 'something' that has been so determined is an expression of what constitutes metaphysical/ontological necessity in the given case (i.e., the 'thing's' being what it is). Consequently, under these circumstances, epistemic necessity is not equivalent to metaphysical or ontological necessity.

The former (i.e., epistemic necessity) has a character that accurately reflects, or is congruent with, the character of the latter (i.e., metaphysical necessity). However, because the latter (i.e., metaphysical necessity) is an expression, we are assuming, of the way a certain aspect or dimension of reality is, then the necessity of the epistemic framework is derived from the relationship of understanding's accurate reflectivity with respect to the manner in which reality manifests itself in the experiential circumstances being attended to.

To ask whether reality could have expressed itself differently, and thereby not have constituted an instance of metaphysical necessity, is like supposing one could imagine a logically possible world in which,

say, H₂O was not H₂O. Reality is, by virtue of what it is and by what such being includes, as well as by what it is not and what the nature of reality precludes in such cases.

The necessity of reality's being what it is on any given occasion rests with the ontological facticity of its having expressed or manifested itself in a given manner on such an occasion. Irrespective of whatever might transpire on some other occasion of reality manifesting itself, necessity is tied to what did happen in the way of the expression of certain facets of the character of reality on a given occasion ... and not to what could have happened on such an occasion.

Even if it could have been the case for a given aspect of manifested reality to, in some sense, have been other than what the character of its transpired ontological expression encompassed or entailed, the necessity that hermeneutically one must keep in mind in order for one's understanding to be described or characterized as expressing epistemic necessity is the following. In relation to the experiential juncture in question, reality expressed itself in the way it did and not in some other way.

Even if the way a given aspect of reality manifested itself was not metaphysically necessary (in the sense that, somehow, it could have manifested itself in other than the way it did, and, as a result, the given manifestation of that aspect of reality was not necessitated, rendering it as a sort of non-necessary expression of reality), nevertheless, this does not at all affect the following principle. In order for an understanding to be epistemically necessary, the character of the understanding in question must accurately reflect the character of that which it purports to epistemically represent.

One also might want to distinguish different senses of metaphysical necessity. For example, what transpired ontologically is a function of metaphysical principles or properties. This is so, regardless of whether one wishes to maintain: a) there is nothing operative beyond the manifested plane of Being, and, therefore, metaphysics consists in nothing more than an account of the principles (e.g., physical, material, ideational) which comprise the ontological domain of manifest reality; or, b) there are principles (e.g., mystical, religious, spiritual, occult) which are operative beyond the manifest ontological realm, and, therefore, metaphysics entails explanations of

that which stands outside of, or beyond, physics, temporality, materiality and physicality.

Now, assuming that what transpires ontologically is, according to both a) and b) above, a function of metaphysical principles, the question arises as to whether one could develop a sense of necessity that might not be operable at all levels of reality and, yet, which still would represent an expression of metaphysical necessity in some still-to-be-determined sense of the word. Conceivably, under option b), one has room to maintain that what ontologically takes place constitutes a necessary expression of metaphysical principles and is, thus, an instance of metaphysical necessity. Nevertheless, one could still suppose that, on a deeper metaphysical plane (i.e., that which is beyond the ontology of physical/material events, objects, etc.), 'principles' could have been expressed that were other than what led to the specific ontological manifestation that has occurred.

From the foregoing perspective, there might be a dimension of metaphysical non-necessity standing behind a given ontological manifestation ... that is, a manifestation that is necessary in as much as it has been manifested at a given ontological juncture and in as much as the given juncture could not be what it is if it were not manifested in the way that it was manifested. Yet, such a manifestation is a function of higher metaphysical principles that might have expressed themselves in ways other than what happened in the given case.

The event that actually occurs is what is necessary, not necessarily the underlying metaphysical principle's manner of expression that in a given set of circumstances manifested itself as one kind of event rather than another. Of course, problems arise when one tries to determine exactly what might be entailed by the idea of a level of metaphysics that is free to express itself in different ways and, in so expressing itself, generates, say, physical/material processes or objects such that, once the latter have been ontologically expressed, then the former are necessary and, therefore, cannot be denied without entangling oneself in contradiction.

With respect to the possibilities inherent in condition 2) outlined earlier, the issue of differentiating epistemic and metaphysical necessity becomes more elusive. If one is entertaining, as logically possible, a given world of determinate character, then from the

perspective of its logical possibility, there are only two contexts in which one can raise the issues of epistemic and metaphysical necessity in relation to the world that is being entertained. The first context merely is a rehashing of conceptual ground already covered in the last several pages. In other words, once the nature of something has been determined, then that nature must be accurately reflected in the character of an individual's understanding if there is to be any epistemic necessity entailed by such an understanding.

As previously argued, the above context doesn't really concern logically possible worlds. It concerns the metaphysical character that the 'world' manifests through its ontological actuality.

In one sense, an actual world does entail certain possibilities: a) because it has the metaphysical character it does, and b) because not every facet of that metaphysical character might be actively being expressed or manifested at any given experiential juncture. Still, these possibilities really only represent different dimensions of that which is being identifyingly referred to when one uses the linguistic marker "character" in relation to some given aspect of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field or in relation to some aspect of the reality that makes this kind of phenomenology possible. In effect, these possibilities are metaphysical actualities that will be manifested when circumstances occur that are conducive to, or receptive toward, the expression or manifestation of the underlying metaphysical possibilities/actualities.

If one is going to restrict the character of "logically possible worlds" to what, in fact, is a matter of the metaphysical character of actual worlds, then there is no reason for distinguishing between "actual worlds" and "logically possible worlds" as Putnam does. This is the case since -- from the foregoing perspective -- "logically possible worlds" would just be an alternative linguistic marker that could be used to make identifying reference to the character of the metaphysics of the actual world. In this context, epistemic necessity becomes, as previously argued, a function of metaphysical necessity.

The only other context in which one can raise the issue of epistemic and metaphysical necessity in relation to a world that is being entertained from the perspective of logical possibility is one that is both interesting and problematic. More specifically, let us imagine,

for the moment, there were some things, objects, events, phenomena and so on, of the actual world, whose natures have been determined. Let us also assume there were many other things, objects, events, phenomena and so on of the actual world whose natures have not been determined.

Although, by Putnam's criteria, those aspects of the actual world whose natures have been determined would establish some determinate horizontal boundaries in relation to the character of the metaphysics of the actual world, one would still be free to speculate, hypothesize or theorize about the character of those aspects of the actual world that had not, yet, been determined. The one restriction on this process would be that the character of this speculating, hypothesizing and theorizing did not contain elements that were incongruent with the character of what already had been determined with respect to the metaphysical nature of certain aspects of the actual world.

The foregoing state of affairs would be congruent with Putnam's dictum that: "Once we have discovered the nature of water, nothing counts as a possible world in which water doesn't have that nature" (page 233). Nevertheless, having accepted this provision, one still is left with considerable conceptual latitude or maneuvering room within which one could theorize about how the nature of water might express itself under various experiential conditions.

These would be conditions that had not been explored yet, and, as a result, had not yielded any determinate results that would further restrict what one could entertain in the way of a logically possible world. In this context, the idea of a logically possible world is rooted in, and bounded by, the already determined features of the actual world. At the same time, it would be somewhat open-ended in the sense that one has various degrees of freedom within which to theorize or speculate. These degrees of freedom would represent the epistemic lacunae in one's current hermeneutical framework concerning the metaphysical character of reality or the actual world. The foregoing idea of a logically possible world is an interesting one because it alludes to, and gives intuitive intimation of, many facets of the creative side of epistemological pursuits in which one searches for ways to gain

connecting insight into the nature of more and more features of the actual world in order to expand the horizons of one's understanding.

However, the above idea of a logically possible world also represents something of a problem. For instance, in such a logically possible world, one wonders how one is to differentiate between epistemic and metaphysical necessity.

By its very nature, the interesting side of the previous approach to logically possible worlds is immersed in the unknown. As a result, one has no pre-established grounds for identifying the character of those aspects of the metaphysical nature of the actual world that have not been determined yet. Indeed, one is searching for precisely the kind of conceptual ground on which one can establish a tenable, if not accurate, epistemic position concerning some aspect(s) of reality.

All one has are a few guidelines embodied in the way the character of what has so far been determined places boundary restrictions on, or parameters of permissibility in relation to, the character of the logically possible worlds one is epistemically permitted to play around with, or in, during one's theoretical investigations. As far as the unknown dimensions of these logically possible worlds are concerned, an individual has difficulty trying to establish to what -- in specific terms -- the notions of "epistemic necessity" and "metaphysical necessity" are making identifying references in such a context of ignorance.

In outlining Kripke's position on this point, Putnam states:

"Kripke refers to statements which are rationally un-revisable (assuming there are such) as epistemically necessary. Statements which are true in all possible worlds he refers to simply as necessary (or sometimes as "metaphysically necessary"). In this terminology, the point just made can be restated as: a statement can be (metaphysically) necessary and epistemically contingent. Human intuition has no privileged access to metaphysical necessity." (page 233)

To the extent that understanding requires experience in order to be able to explore the character of the phenomenology of these

experiences or in order to be able to grasp the character of those aspects of reality that make possible, and give expression to, experiences of such determinate character, then understanding is contingent, irrespective of whether one arrives at that epistemic state in a 'synthetic' or in an 'a priori' manner. Understanding's contingency is, to a certain extent, rooted in its functional dependency on having experiences of one sort rather than another as the focus for one's understanding. However, what is meant by the idea of "having experiences of one sort rather than another" requires some explanation.

In order to grasp the character of the sort of experiences one is undergoing at a given juncture, one must attend to the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field through which the experience in question expresses or manifests itself. By attending to these aspects, an individual has a focal/horizontal basis from which to begin trying to grasp, or gain connecting insight into: a) the character of the experience being attended to, and/or b) the character of that dimension of reality that makes such an experience possible.

Consequently, understanding requires (that is, is contingent upon) a focus. This focus is something to which the individual can attend, be aware of, explore, be conscious of, investigate, analyze, question, push against, work with, or concentrate on.

Having said the foregoing, one must go on to note that having something to attend to does not guarantee – in, and of, itself—that one will understand what one is attending to. Understanding is also contingent upon one's being able to generate, arrive at, or recognize a hermeneutical framework whose character is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of that which is to be understood and that is being attended to.

This concession concerning the contingent facets of an epistemic state notwithstanding, one still can maintain that an epistemic framework entails necessity to the extent this framework accurately reflects, or is congruent with, the character of that to which the framework is attempting to make identifying reference. As indicated earlier, an epistemic framework derives its necessity from the ontological 'fact' that: 1) what is being hermeneutically represented is what it is and has the character it does, and 2) the character of one's

epistemic framework is capable of accurately reflecting, or being congruent with, the character of the given aspect of ontological facticity being identifyingly referred to through the aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which one is attending.

In other words, even though the means by which one arrives at a given understanding might be contingent in a number of different respects, this feature of contingency cannot preclude the possibility that one's understanding might be expressing what is epistemically necessary. Epistemic necessity exists to the extent an individual's condition of understanding is an accurately reflective hermeneutical representation of some given facet of phenomenological or metaphysical reality.

One might even maintain the following. A contingent statement whose epistemic character does not reflect, accurately, some aspect of the phenomenological/metaphysical necessity (in terms of the former's being congruent with the character of the ontological expression of some facet of phenomenological or metaphysical facticity) is not likely to be a very informative or heuristically valuable epistemic statement. The foregoing would be the case unless one knows of, or realizes, such inaccuracy, and through this realization, one is able to eliminate various possibilities that create, or could create, epistemic/hermeneutical problems for the development and accuracy of one's conceptual geometry.

If the character of a contingent statement does not reflect some facet of the necessity of reality having expressed itself (i.e., reality) in a given ontological fashion on a specified occasion, then the contingent statement hardly can be said to qualify as being epistemic to any significant degree since it does not entail any knowledge. In other words, that statement does not entail an understanding whose character accurately reflects, or is congruent with, the character of that to which the understanding is attending in a given case.

Putnam seems to be trying to suggest something like the following. Because epistemic statements are contingent, then one cannot possibly hold, with any tenability, that epistemically one could have access to metaphysical necessity through such statements. Or, as he phrases it: "human intuition has no privileged access to metaphysical necessity" (page 233).

Nevertheless, whether or not human intuition could be said to have a means of "privileged access to metaphysical necessity" is an entirely separate problem from the issues surrounding the possibility of linking epistemic contingency with metaphysical necessity. This is so because, as outlined above, the element of contingency in one's epistemic framework need not constitute an absolute hindrance to gaining, or having, connecting insight into metaphysical necessity. That is, contingency cannot, in and of itself, preclude the possibility of having privileged access to metaphysical necessity ... certainly, Putnam's arguments, thus far, have not shown one is forced to accept such a position.

Before one can determine if human intuition does, or does not, have privileged access to metaphysical necessity, one would have to acquire some understanding concerning the well-springs from which human intuition arises. Moreover, given an understanding of the nature of such an epistemological wellspring, one would have to determine if the character of human intuition (or its source) could be said to constitute a means of privileged access to metaphysical necessity. This, of course, assumes one understood what was meant by the notion of "privileged access", and assumes, as well, one actually had determined what was metaphysically necessary in any given case.

To the extent human beings are capable of understanding anything at all about various aspects of metaphysical necessity, then at some point, this capability appears likely to be rooted in, or shaped by, intuitions that provide what might be termed "connecting insight". These connecting insights allow one to tie together one's particularization or individuation of different aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field into a demarcated hermeneutical framework of specified character.

Hopefully, such a framework would be congruent with, or accurately reflective of, the character of the aspects of reality that makes possible the facets of the phenomenology of one's experiential field to which one is attending at a given experiential juncture (or during a series of given experiential junctures). Without this connecting dimension of intuition or intelligence, one becomes hard pressed to account for even the possibility of the emergence of those insights that are to permit one to bridge epistemically the gap between

what transpires within the boundaries of the phenomenology of the experiential field and what, if anything, metaphysically transpires at, beyond and/or beneath the horizons of that field, thereby making a field of such demarcated character possible.

If there is no way to bridge the epistemic gap that stands between our phenomenology and that (i.e., reality) which makes this sort of phenomenology possible, then the character of reality remains unknowable. Reality would remain unknowable under such circumstances because there would be no connecting insight of the sort required to establish an epistemic link between the two sides of the hermeneutical equation (one side being phenomenological, the other side being metaphysical/ontological) that we could be aware was justified or true.

On the other hand, if there were an intuitive means of bridging the aforementioned epistemic gap, then in some sense of the term, a "privileged access" would be enjoyed by human understanding concerning insight into at least a certain aspect of the character of reality. This aspect would involve that dimension of reality that is expressed in the way reality ontologically has manifested itself at the experiential/epistemological juncture in question.

Because Putnam has not demonstrated, yet, that such an access route does not, or cannot, exist, his contention that "human intuition has no privileged access to metaphysical necessity" is slightly premature. If "statements that are true in all possible worlds" (page 233) are to be referred to "simply as necessary (or sometimes as 'metaphysically necessary')" (page 233), then seemingly, there can be no epistemically necessary statement that does not reflect what is metaphysically necessary.

After all, surely the reason why some statement would be "rationally un-revisable" (and, therefore, epistemically necessary) is because "in all possible worlds" the statement is true. This would eliminate any need for subsequent revision, rational or otherwise. By being rationally un-revisable or true in all possible worlds, what is epistemically necessary gives expression to what, supposedly, is required, according to Kripke, in order for the statement to be considered metaphysically necessary.

From Putnam's perspective, all "possible worlds" seem to reduce down to being functions of actual worlds. This seems to be the case because, according to him, that which is to count as a possible world must reflect the character of whatever has been determined with respect to the nature of some aspect of the actual world.

Under these circumstances, an epistemic statement must accurately reflect some aspect of the character of reality that is being ontologically manifested in the form of the actual world if this statement is to be considered necessary. However, in the context discussed previously -- in which possibility was considered in terms of a theorizing about those aspects of reality that were still unknown (while, simultaneously, taking into account what, so far, has been determined epistemically about the character of such reality) -- one cannot speak with any degree of specific hermeneutical authority concerning the relationship, if any, between epistemic and metaphysical necessity. This is so because one doesn't know what might be rationally un-revisable in these cases (i.e., epistemically necessary).

Furthermore, one doesn't know what would be true in all possible worlds (i.e., metaphysically necessary) with respect to any given theoretical possibility one might wish to maintain within the context of the character of the horizontal degrees of freedom permitted by what is known or by what has been determined about the nature of the actual world. On the other hand, as far as the hermeneutical process is concerned, one has no reason to reject the following.

A theoretical statement that one is entertaining as being 'possible' [that is, possibly epistemically necessary] does not acquire its necessity in any way except by displaying a character that is understood to be accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of those aspects of reality that currently are being expressed. In addition, such aspects are being expressed in a manner that makes possible the facets of the phenomenology of one's experiential field to which identifying references are being made through the theoretical statement being entertained.

In the light of the discussion during the last 25 pages, or so, of this essay, there are several points to note. First of all, irrespective of whether the "Kantian tradition was as guilty as the empiricist tradition

of equating metaphysical and epistemic necessity", the foregoing pages of analysis suggest an alternative position.

While metaphysical and epistemic necessity might be closely tied together, the character of that connection is not in terms of equating the two. Instead, the character of the connection is in terms of whether or not the character of one's epistemic framework is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of those aspects of the ontologically necessary (inasmuch as they happened) manifestations of reality to which one is making identifying reference by means of one's epistemic framework. If the reflection is accurate, then it represents epistemic necessity insofar as it is accurate.

Secondly, metaphysically necessary truths are not a function of epistemology. Epistemic necessity is a function of what is metaphysically true according to how this truth is manifested through its ontologically necessary expression. The character of this expression must be accurately reflected by the character of one's hermeneutical framework in order to tenably contend that the framework has a dimension of epistemic necessity.

Therefore, epistemic necessity is not a matter of how one arrives at an understanding (e.g., whether synthetically, analytically or a priori). Rather, it is a matter only of whether, or not, a given understanding accurately reflects the character of that to which it is making identifying reference in a specific instance. On this view, anything is epistemically necessary if it is rooted in a hermeneutic framework whose character constitutes a true (i.e., is accurately reflective of, or congruent with) understanding of the character of an actual instance of some manifestation of reality.

If, as Putnam contends is the case, both the Kantian tradition and the empiricist tradition maintained that necessary truths were necessarily a priori, then the tenability of the so-called 'Kantian/empiricist' position does not rest on one's have equated metaphysical and epistemic necessity. Instead, the aforementioned traditions rest on being able to show that: a) the relationship between epistemology and metaphysical principles that will be required to produce a necessary truth is achieved when the character of the former accurately reflects, or is congruent with, the character of the

latter; and, b) the route by which a) is established is a priori in character.

Given the foregoing, the Kantian and empiricist traditions are guilty, if they are guilty of anything, of supposing that necessary truth is a function of how one knows and not a matter of the character of what one knows. Epistemic necessity is rooted in understanding that 'things' (i.e., reality as ontologically expressed on some given occasion) are the way they are.

Therefore, such necessity is not a function of how one comes to recognize, grasp or gain insight into the way things are in any given instance of reality. Rather, whatever our mode of understanding, if it is to entail epistemic necessity, then it must accurately reflect, or be congruent with, the truth or what is the case in relation to some aspect of reality.

Exploring the Horizons of Natural Kind Words

Putnam has been concentrating on "natural kind" words such as "water", "tree", "gold", etc. Underlying this focus has been the assumption (sometimes explicitly stated, sometimes implicitly present) that natural kind words refer to 'things', 'objects' or 'material/concrete entities' of one sort or another in the so-called "natural world" (i.e., they aren't man-made artifacts) and, consequently, have a definite nature. When one determines this nature, then according to Putnam, the relevant linguistic markers (which are used to make identifying reference to the collective phenomenon encompassed by the character of the given object's nature) mean or designate or index the character to which such markers make identifying reference. Consequently, for Putnam, meaning is determined by the character of the natural kind entity in question, and not by the concepts and mental entities of intentionality.

However, what about the linguistic marker "meaning"? Is this a natural kind word? If so, what is the character of that to which it makes identifying reference? What is it that "meaning" stands as a rigid designator for, or what is it that "meaning" is indexical for?

One might be willing to accept the position that part of what "meaning" is indexical for concerns the actual nature of character of

that to which natural kind words make identifying reference. However, one cannot assume this is all that 'meaning' is indexical for, without running the risk of totally distorting the phenomenological context out of which issues of meaning arise in the first place.

For example, seemingly, "brain" is a natural kind word, as are -- when viewed from the perspective of a mind/brain identity theory -- "thought", "consciousness", "insight" and "understanding". All of these terms would be, we shall assume for the moment, functional expressions of brain activity.

Thus, let us suppose a thought were to arise in consciousness. Let us further suppose that this thought should constitute an insight concerning the determination of the nature of something (say, water as H₂O). Under these circumstances, the meaning context in which "water" is immersed would involve the 'fact' that the nature of the liquid (to which we identifyingly refer when we use the linguistic marker "water") is H₂O. The meaning context surrounding "water" also would involve the 'fact' that such a liquid is being attended to, characterized, understood and so on by a conscious brain.

Meaning, in the sense of the actual nature of some natural kind entity (in this case, water), is spoken about through the use of certain linguistic markers that, according to Putnam, are indexical for the character of that natural kind entity being identifyingly referred to when the requisite marker is applied. A word cannot be indexical for, or a rigid designator of, some aspect of reality (e.g., the liquid whose atomic/molecular structure is H₂O) unless that symbol is understood by someone as expressing a character that entails the quality of a rigid designation relationship for which the marker serves as a rigid or indexical means of making identifying reference.

Therefore, the meaning (in Putnam's sense) of a word as a rigid designator -- or as indexical -- cannot be restricted only to the natural kind entity in question. Such meaning also must encompass the phenomenological dimension that provides the hermeneutical medium in which, and/or through which, the connecting insight exists that understands the indexical character of the relationship between a given linguistic marker and the natural kind entity being designated by the marker.

If one considers "meaning" as a natural kind word, then the actual nature of the natural kind entity for which "meaning" is indexical, or for which it serves as a rigid designator, has something to do with brain functioning (at least, for the time being, such an assumption is being made) and all that allegedly is entailed by such functioning (e.g., phenomenology, understanding, thought, consciousness, and language). In somewhat more precise terms, the nature of this 'brain-functioning-something' with which "meaning" is connected concerns both of the following.

On the one hand, the 'brain-functioning-something' concerns the character of the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which the individual is making identifying reference when employing certain linguistic markers. On the other hand, the 'brain-functioning-something' concerns reality (in this case, say, biochemistry and physiology, together with certain natural kind entities like material/physical objects) that make such a demarcated phenomenology possible.

The individual is trying to make identifying reference to these latter aspects by means of the focal/horizontal orientation of his or her hermeneutical framework through which the individual is attending to some given aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field. Consequently, part of the character of that to which "meaning" makes identifying reference is irrevocably tied up with the sorts of natural kind 'things' for which Putnam, presumably, would use the linguistic marker "mental entities" to make a collective identifying reference. This remains true even in instances where one is referring to natural kind words of the sort Putnam has in mind, such as "water", "gold", "tree" and so on.

When one speaks of the "meaning of water", to say that the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid being identifyingly referred to is H₂O is not enough ... even if accurate, to some extent. One also must place that atomic/molecular structure within the phenomenological/hermeneutical context that makes possible an identifying reference of given focal/horizontal character for which a specific linguistic marker can be indexical or can serve as a rigid designator. In fact, without such a phenomenological/hermeneutical

context, the "meaning of 'water'" is empty, even if it should be the case that a liquid whose atomic/molecular structure is H₂O does exist.

This phenomenological/hermeneutical context plays such an essential role in the meaning of "meaning" one must leave room for the following possibility. What is being identifyingly referred to when a given linguistic framework is being employed by an individual who is working out of a hermeneutical framework of a given focal/horizontal character might not concern the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid being attended to by means of what shows up in the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field.

Rather, the term "water" might be used as a means of identifyingly referring to any number of the facets of the character of particular liquids (whether Twin Earth or Earth water) which are encountered, experientially, by the individual during the course of linguistic, biological, conceptual, and spiritual development. In this respect, liquidity, smell, feel, taste, appearance, behavior under different conditions (say, freezing versus heating), functional uses, etc. are all as much an expression of what "water" can identifyingly refer to as is the dimension of atomic/molecular structure.

Furthermore, if the character of what someone is identifyingly referring to when employing "water" does not entail a specific atomic/molecular structure (e.g., H₂O rather than XYZ), then "water" need not identifyingly refer to only those liquids that have an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O. Indeed, this is the case for Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ of Earth and Twin Earth, respectively, during the mid-1700s.

There is another aspect of Putnam's preoccupation with a certain limited range of words -- namely, natural kind words -- which poses considerable difficulties for the sort of theory of meaning that Putnam appears to be proposing. For example, what if one begins to use words like "justice", "morality", "religion", "God", "soul", "love", "intellect", "creativity", "mysticism", "beauty", "evil", "good", "virtue", "miracle" and so on?

How, if at all, do these linguistic markers fit into Putnam's theory of meaning? Are they natural kind words? Or, are they man-made concepts?

Even if one were to suppose they were natural kind words, what happens if there are disagreements (which there are) over what the nature is of the aspect(s) of reality to which such linguistic markers supposedly make identifying reference? How does one know when one is dealing with the actual (in Putnam's sense) meaning of a linguistic marker and when one is dealing with some pseudo-meaning (i.e., a linguistic marker that makes identifying reference to something other than the actual nature of a given aspect of the actual world)?

In fact, one can ask this same question in relation to clear-cut natural kind words like "water". More specifically, Putnam might feel he has a straightforward position in cases like "water" in which the meaning of "water" concerns a liquid whose atomic/molecular structure is H_2O . Nonetheless, one might consider the atomic/molecular structure of H_2O as a rather arbitrary point at which to commit oneself as to the nature of water.

What if, for instance, someone were to argue that the nature of water is not H_2O since the atomic/molecular structure of the liquid in question constitutes but a corruptible and imperfect copy of the Idea or Form of water? Stated in another way, let us suppose for the moment that the character of 'corrupted' water (i.e., its atomic/molecular structure) were a function of a Transcendental/Universal Form of Water.

Under this supposition, we are assuming that while the character of water's corruptible nature is expressed in terms of atomic/molecular structure, the character of the Idea of Water is not a function of atomic/molecular structure. Instead, this latter character is assumed to be a matter of a metaphysical property or principle for which atomic/molecular structure acted as an imperfect, corruptible copy.

Under these circumstances, one, conceivably, might argue that the nature of water is not really H_2O . Rather, one might argue that the nature of water resides in the metaphysical principles, properties or whatever that make possible the ontological, though imperfect and corrupted, liquid whose atomic/molecular structure is H_2O .

If one feels uneasy with the idea of Ideas, let us alter our suppositions somewhat. Let us assume that someone were to argue that the nature of water was not H_2O , but was a function of some sort

of complex quantum field. This quantum field is characterized by a certain statistical distribution of gluons, quarks (of the 'proper' colors and flavors -- that is, with the 'right' distribution of strangeness, charm, etc.) and other denizens of the quantum deep.

From this perspective, the atomic/molecular structure is to such a field, as the taste, smell, appearance and feel of a given liquid is to its atomic/molecular structure. In other words, what is to prevent someone from considering atomic/molecular structure as merely an expression of the 'surface' properties of more fundamental principles, just as, from Putnam's perspective, the conception of water on Earth and Twin Earth in the mid-1700s would constitute merely the expression of the 'surface' properties of more fundamental principles concerning atomic/molecular structure?

How could one ever be sure one had, at any given point, finally arrived at the ultimate determination of the nature of some particular natural kind entity? And, if one could not be positive one had arrived at the determination of an entity's nature, what ramifications would this have for Putnam's theory concerning the "meaning of meaning"?

Putnam still might claim the general form of meaning remained the same inasmuch as meaning still referred to the nature of the given natural kind term in question (in the present case, "water"). In this event, the only thing that would have changed, or so it might be argued, concerns the identity of the character of that nature. In other words, the nature of the 'thing' in question would have been pushed back from that of atomic/ molecular structure to either Transcendental/Universal Forms or to quantum fields or to 'strings' (or further, if some other discovery were forthcoming).

Nonetheless, in either case, this single alteration is enough to place one, potentially, in the position of the beings of Earth and Twin Earth during the mid-1700s, prior to the discovery of the atomic/molecular structure of water. After all, the change in question opens up the possibility that what we now take to be the nature of water (which, according to Putnam, is H₂O) might no more be the essential nature of water than was the case with the beings of Earth and Twin Earth in the mid-1700s who considered water to be a clear liquid of certain taste, feel, smell and behavioral properties. Some new discovery could be forthcoming that might reveal there is something more fundamental

underlying the character of water than atomic/ molecular structure, just as the discovery of water's atomic/molecular properties revealed to the inhabitants of Earth and Twin Earth in the mid-1700s that there was something more fundamental than the character of water's appearance and behavior on the gross/macro level of sensory encounters.

Under these circumstances, one has two options: 1) one can leave open the possibility that "water" might not, ultimately, mean (in Putnam's sense) the atomic/molecular structure of H₂O; or; 2) one can acknowledge that the meaning of "water" (again, in Putnam's determinate sense of the actual nature of water) can be considered from a variety of perspectives of identifying reference, as long as the character of a given perspective is congruent with, or accurately reflective of (within the limits of that perspective's capability of being so), the character of what the nature of water turns out to be.

With respect to the first option, one is constantly confronted with the possibility that "water" doesn't mean what we claim it does (i.e., that which has an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O). Therefore, from Putnam's perspective, we might no more know what "water" really (in terms of the nature of water) means than the two Oscars did in the mid-1700s.

However, if the foregoing situation is so, then the following question surfaces. If one's employment of the linguistic marker "water" does not constitute, in Putnam's sense, a proper meaning usage of the term because we actually might not have finally determined the nature of water, just what is it one is engaged in doing by employing the given linguistic marker in the way we do?

One possibility is as follows. What an individual is engaged in doing is making identifying references that, at a minimum, concern certain aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field and, at a maximum, concern an epistemic, theoretical or ideational (e.g., an understanding, insight, or belief) link between certain aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field and certain aspects of the reality that makes, or is believed to make, a phenomenological field of such character possible.

If the above is what an individual is doing, then the second option outlined earlier -- four paragraphs ago -- follows from, or is congruent

with, the character of such an activity. In other words, the meaning of a natural kind term can be considered from a variety of perspectives of identifying reference, as long as the characters of these perspectives are, to some extent, accurately reflective of the character of that to which identifying reference is being made.

If the clear liquid of characteristic smell, feel, taste, and behavioral properties turns out to have an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O and also turns out to have a certain quantum field structure and/or a Transcendent/Universal Form, then the linguistic marker "water" could be considered appropriate to use as a means of identifyingly referring to a number of 'contexts'.

For example, the linguistic marker "water" might refer to certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field (e.g., the character of one's sensory/perceptual experiential encounter with the given liquid). The linguistic marker "water" also might refer to certain aspects of the reality that makes such a field possible (e.g., the atomic/molecular structure H₂O or a quantum field of certain quark/gluon properties or a given Transcendental/Universal Form or Idea). In addition, although we might not presently know what the ultimate nature is of the liquid to which identifying references are being made through use of the linguistic marker "water", certainly part of the meaning entailed by such an ultimate nature involves the way this nature expresses itself in a manner that metaphysically underwrites the character of that to which identifying references are now being made, either with respect to its phenomenological properties or with respect to certain levels of its ontological properties.

Pursuing the second option – noted several pages ago – would have the potential effect of preserving epistemic necessity. Thus, should it turn out that the character of one's present understanding concerning the nature of that to which identifying references are being made (through use of a given linguistic marker) is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the ultimate character of the nature of that to which identifying reference currently is being made, then one would have satisfied the conditions of epistemic necessity outlined earlier in this essay.

Yet, the issue of metaphysical necessity need not be circumscribed determinately by the foregoing condition of epistemic necessity (assuming this condition actually did exist). This is the case because what we understand -- accurate though it might be as far as it goes -- might reflect only a very limited portion of the total character of the ultimate reality to which identifying reference is being made through the character of the focal/horizontal orientation of one's hermeneutical framework and for which the given linguistic marker is being used as a symbol of identifying reference.

The understanding of beings on both Earth and Twin Earth in the mid-1700s concerning the nature of water would be epistemically necessary in as much as the character of their understanding, as far as it went, was accurately reflective of at least part of the character of that to which they were making identifying references by means of the focal/horizontal orientation of that understanding and by use of the linguistic marker "water". Nevertheless, the character of metaphysical necessity in relation to the nature of that to which identifying references were being made through these beings' understanding need not be completely reflected in the character of what had been established to be epistemically necessary in terms of the accuracy of such understanding.

In short, as discussed earlier, if one holds (as I do) that epistemic necessity derives its necessity from a hermeneutical framework's capacity to accurately reflecting part or all of the character of some aspect of reality, then one cannot assume, automatically, that any given instance of epistemic necessity exhaustively represents, in part or wholly, the character of reality. As a result, potential room is left open for a reality whose character extends beyond the hermeneutical horizons that set the parameters on a given instance of epistemic necessity.

Therefore, beings in the mid-1700s on both Earth and Twin Earth might maintain that the linguistic marker "water" makes epistemically necessary identifying reference to a liquid substance that has a characteristic taste, smell, feel, appearance and behavior. Alternatively, beings in the 1800s (or later) on both Earth and Twin Earth might maintain that the linguistic marker "water" makes epistemically necessary identifying reference to a liquid substance that

has a characteristic taste, smell, feel, appearance, behavior and atomic/molecular structure.

In neither of the foregoing cases, however, must the beings involved be compelled to maintain that the ultimate nature of water is a function of what they claim is epistemically necessary concerning the use of the linguistic marker "water". This is so because in both instances the liquids being referred to might be a function of metaphysical principles or properties that extend beyond the considerations of, respectively, surface features (such as taste, feel, appearance, etc.) and atomic/molecular structure.

In addition, the necessity involved here does not mean one must choose the term "water" to make identifying reference to the given liquid substance. One can choose any term or linguistic marker one likes for this purpose. The necessity involved is a function of the epistemic relationship that must exist between the character of one's understanding and the character of that to which identifying reference is being made by use of whatever linguistic marker is selected to signify or represent that epistemic relationship.

In both cases, the only facet of metaphysical necessity that has been fixed will be a matter of the extent or degree to which the character of one's understanding accurately reflects, or is congruent with, the character of the aspect(s) of reality to which identifying reference is being made. However, this facet is not fixed, established or determined by epistemic necessity. Epistemic necessity is determined by the given metaphysical foundation of 'things'.

In other words, one must discover the latter (or parts thereof) to establish the former since the character of reality imposes horizontal limits on what can be said to be epistemically necessary. This is because the given aspect of reality has the character it does, and, thereby, gives expression to the 'standard' to which one's understanding must conform in order for that understanding to acquire a dimension of necessity. The feature of necessity is acquired through the extent to which a person's understanding is accurately reflective of the aspect of reality to which identifying reference is being made.

Reality does give expression to the ultimate nature of natural kind entities, and, in this respect, establishes the parameters of structure or

character concerning the nature of those entities that constitute their meaning in Putnam's sense. Nevertheless, there also is an epistemic dimension to such meaning that involves the manner in which, and extent to which, the character of one's hermeneutical framework is capable of grasping or gaining insight into the character of various aspects of the reality underlying, and giving expression to, different natural kind entities to which identifying reference is being made.

Consequently, even if one were to accept a qualified version of Putnam's position and assume that, under some circumstances, phenomenological intensions do not determine metaphysical extensions (i.e., ontological realizations), the meaning of 'meaning' still need not become simply a function of ultimate reality. Meaning must be considered in the context of the character of an individual's hermeneutical engagement of the aspect of reality at issue.

Without a context that involves the degree of epistemic engagement, one would be left with a position of questionable tenability and heuristic value. This would be the case since an individual would have to assume that unless one had determined the nature of a given natural kind entity, one had not established a proper basis for speaking of meaning in relation to such an entity.

If one allows the feature of hermeneutical engagement into the discussion of meaning, one provides a basis for speaking of meaning in a way that does not require, or presuppose, meaning is always a matter of determining what the ultimate nature of a natural kind entity is. Instead, one has a means of working toward such a determination. Yet, this does not preclude the possibility of having established a certain amount of meaning that is epistemically necessary in that (and to the extent that) it accurately reflects, or is congruent with, some aspect of reality.

As suggested earlier, even the foregoing way of attempting to salvage something from Putnam's position on meaning appears to have very limited value. This is due to the manner in which it tends to operate on the assumption that one's understanding actually does accurately reflect something of the character of some metaphysical level of that to which identifying reference is being made when a given linguistic marker is being employed. Yet, when dealing with words like "morality", "religion", "God", "concept", "idea", "love", "justice" and

even "meaning", one might not be able to determine, in any given case, if these are natural kind words that make accurate identifying reference to: a) certain aspects of reality, or b) man-made myths/beliefs/ideas/theories that refer to nothing more than the character of a given individual's understanding for which the various linguistic markers, listed previously, serve as a means of making identifying reference.

If these words are natural kind words, how will one determine whether, and to what extent, the character of one's hermeneutical framework is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of the aspect of reality to which one is supposedly making identifying reference? Without such a determination, what meaning can "meaning" (in Putnam's sense) have in such contexts?

An interesting expansion of Putnam's science fiction thought experiment might be the following. Let us suppose that in the year Star Date: 2357.6, some scientist (a Vulcan, perhaps) were to discover that although the atomic/molecular structures of water on Earth and Twin Earth were quite different (being H₂O and XYZ respectively), nevertheless, the underlying quantum fields that give expression to the two atomic/molecular structures consisted of the same distribution of gluons and quarks.

Let us further suppose that these gluon/quark distributions yielded a difference in atomic/molecular structure depending on whether or not the field had been passed through certain kinds of cosmic radiation fields (known as Z-fields) that were often generated within one light-year of quasars of a given magnitude. This possible extension of Putnam's science fiction idea raises some interesting questions with respect to, for example, whether the water on Earth is really, essentially, different from the water on Twin Earth, despite the noted differences in atomic/molecular structure of the two liquids.

Whether water is hot or cold does not interfere with one's willingness to identify the liquids in question as instances of water. Similarly, whether water is fresh or salty does not prevent one from identifying both as instances of water. Moreover, even if a clear liquid does not freeze at 0°C or boil at 100°C, these 'failures' do not cause one, automatically, to rule out the possibility that the liquid in question is water. This is so because conditions such as pressure and

differential solute/contaminate concentrations might affect freezing and boiling points.

Therefore, conceivably, two liquids (such as 'water' on Earth and Twin Earth) that are precisely alike in all other respects except for atomic/molecular structure, could both be identified as instances of the same natural kind entity (considered, say, from the perspective of quantum field distribution of characteristics) that had been subjected to different metaphysical shaping pressures (e.g., a Z-field within a certain distance of a particular class of quasars). This resulted in liquid substances whose only difference was that of atomic/molecular structure.

Would the foregoing case be akin to instances in which the given liquids were subjected to different metaphysical shaping pressures which resulted in liquid substances whose only difference was that of being: hot rather than cold; salty rather than fresh; freezing at -7°C rather than 0°C ; distilled rather than potable; pH 7.3 rather than pH 7.1? Putnam appears to be working on the assumption that atomic/molecular differences constitute a fundamental criterion in distinguishing between natural kind entities of supposedly different types.

Ultimately, however, atomic/molecular differences in cases like that of water on Earth and Twin Earth might be more akin to the differences between, say, hot and cold water than between, say, apples and potatoes. That is, the atomic/molecular structure of XYZ really might just be what one gets when H_2O is passed through Z-fields within a certain distance from a particular class of quasars.

Human beings can manifest a wide variety of differences in height, weight, physiognomy, facial characteristics, hair coloring, presence or absence of speech, behavior patterns, personality, intellectual capabilities, moral characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, talents and so on. Yet, none of these differences prevents one from identifying each individual as a human being. Similarly, perhaps in some instances -- for example, that of water on Earth and Twin Earth -- the differences might not be sufficient to prevent one from identifyingly referring to the liquids in question as both instances of water.

If U_{235} and U_{238} both can be identified as instances of Uranium, and if levo- and dextro-isomeric forms of an organic compound both can be

referred to, collectively, as, say, a given kind of protein or lipid or nucleic acid, are there not some grounds for arguing that the liquids in question (Earth water and Twin Earth water) are both exemplars of water despite their specified differences of atomic/molecular structure, and that the reason for these differences is a function of whether H₂O has passed through the appropriate kind of Z-field under the right conditions (distance from a particular class of quasars)? If nothing else, all of these possibilities raise questions about the process of how one goes about demarcating differences in various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field or in various aspects of the reality that makes possible the sort of demarcated field through which one can establish hermeneutical frameworks of varying focal/horizontal character as a means of making identifying references.

Realism, Operationalism and Same-L Relationships

In differentiating between, on the one hand, his perspective of realism concerning the theory of meaning, and, on the other hand, an operationalistic framework that he seems to consider as the only alternative approach to his theory of meaning, Putnam states:

"... we maintain: "gold" has not changed its extension or not changed it significantly in two thousand years. Our methods of identifying gold have grown incredibly sophisticated. But the extension of 'khronos' in Archimedes' dialect of Greek is the same as the extension of gold in my dialect of English.

"It is possible (and let us suppose it to be the case) ... there were or are pieces of metal which could not have been determined not to be gold in Archimedes' day, but which we can distinguish from gold quite easily with modern techniques. Let X be such a piece of metal. Clearly X does not lie in the extension of "gold" in standard English; my view is that it did not lie in the extension of 'khronos' in Attic Greek, either, although any ancient Greek would have mistaken X for gold (or, rather, 'khronos').

"The alternative view is that "gold" means whatever satisfies the contemporary "operational definition" of gold. "Gold" a hundred years ago meant whatever satisfied the "operational definition" of gold in

use a hundred years ago; "gold" now means whatever satisfies the operational definition of gold in use in 1973; and 'khronos' meant whatever satisfied the operational definition of 'khronos' in use then.

"In the view I am advocating, when Archimedes asserted that something was gold ('khronos') he was not just saying that it had the superficial characteristics of gold ...; he was saying that it had the same general hidden structure (the same "essence", so to speak) as any normal piece of local gold. Archimedes would have said that our hypothetical piece of metal X was gold, but he would have been wrong." (pages 235-236)

When considered from the modern perspective, one could agree that Archimedes would have been wrong if he called something "gold" which was actually metal X and not what would be identified as gold today. Nonetheless, even if one were to accept Putnam's contention that when Archimedes said something was "gold" Archimedes meant the given substance's hidden essence or structure was that of gold (which leaves aside the issue of what, if anything, Archimedes felt about the relationship between essential and accidental properties, universals and particulars), one cannot dismiss the fact that the intensional/extensional character of Archimedes' hermeneutical framework concerning gold substances was also making identifying references concerning certain aspects of the phenomenology of his experiential field. This is the field that Archimedes (if he thought about it at all), presumably, would consider to be perceptually related to substances (namely, allegedly gold things) that help give the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which he was attending at least some of its characteristic features.

Let us suppose that Archimedes had an assistant helping him in his various experiments. Let us further suppose that, while engaged in setting up some such experiment, Archimedes would nod (i.e., point with his head) to a table with three objects on it -- a piece of wood, a ceramic dish and a sample of metal X -- instructing his assistant at the same time to bring the piece of "gold".

If one were to further suppose that the assistant picked up the indicated object from the table and dutifully delivered the sample of what we now know to be metal X to Archimedes, one would not expect

to hear Archimedes say (I'm translating from Attic Greek): "You dunce!! What are you doing handing me this object whose hidden essence obviously is not that of gold?" Nor would one expect to hear Archimedes' assistant claiming, when asked to bring the 'gold': "Sire, I heartily regret that I cannot comply with thy most judicious request. With much distress, I must confess that I do not know that object on the table thou art referring to since their essences are all hidden from me, and I fear mightily that I might hand thou that which is not truly gold in its most inward reaches." Instead, given the character of the understanding vis-à-vis so-called "gold" things in Archimedes' times, we would anticipate that the assistant would simply pick up the sample of metal X in order to give it to Archimedes and that Archimedes, when he received metal X, would proceed to do whatever it was he planned to do with the 'gold' he had requested.

While the 'reality' of gold might not-have changed from the beginning of its formation on Earth, the character of the intensional/extensional nature of the way the linguistic marker "gold" (or its Greek equivalent) has been applied, from Archimedes' time down to the present, has changed. To say, as Putnam does, that "our methods of identifying gold have grown incredibly sophisticated" implies there has been a corresponding sophistication in the manner in which we conceptualize that to which "gold" makes identifying reference. If this were not so, then there would be no reason for Archimedes to include metal X among the extensional instances he would identify as gold. Moreover, there would be no reason for Archimedes' modern-day counterparts to exclude metal X from the extensional instances that they would identify as substances to which the linguistic marker "gold" could be applied legitimately.

There is a constant dialectic between, on the one hand, our individual and collective projections onto reality by means of hermeneutical frameworks of varying intensional/extensional character, and, on the other hand, the manner in which those projections are rebuffed by (or found to be congruent with) the intensional/extensional character of various aspects of reality. As a result of this dialectic, human beings (both individually and intersubjectively) are able to travel toward establishing more and more accurately reflective congruency relationships between the

characters of various hermeneutical perspectives and the characters of that to which these perspectives attempt to make identifying reference. As the character of this congruency relationship changes over time, so too does the usage of the linguistic markers that are used to communicate identifying reference in such contexts.

Let us imagine that the people of Archimedes' time had means (however primitive and limited) of determining that metal X (which they called "khronos") manifested a structural character that could be shown to be different [in some way(s)] from the structural character of another sample of metal. This other sample of metal was also called "khronos" by them and was, in fact, gold -- if by "gold" one means those metals that exhibit physical/chemical characteristics that today would be discussed in terms of an atomic/molecular structure of a particular kind, occupying a specific place in the Periodic Table of Elements.

Under these circumstances, the people of Archimedes' time would be confronted with the problem of whether to treat the two substances as being: a) essentially different; b) basically the same but, occasionally, manifesting marginally different properties internal or external factors; or, c) closely related, but showing significant variation in manifested properties. Where one draws -- for purposes of establishing the criteria for 'correct' -- a given linguistic marker (in this case, "gold") will depend on whether, or not, the individuals involved in such an enterprise decide, for whatever reason, to treat two substances as falling into categories a), b) or c).

If they decide in favor of a), then one of the two substances will be called "khronos". The other substance will be called something else, and each term will be understood to be identifyingly referring to substances of manifestly different character, despite a certain overlap or similarity of some aspects of their respective characters.

If, on the other hand, they opt for possibility b), then they are likely to use the same linguistic marker (i.e., "khronos") to identifyingly refer to both samples, as well as to all other samples subsequently encountered, whose observed structural characters are congruent with the character of either (or both) samples that serve as the standards for determining whether a Same-L relationship exists in any given case. Option b) allows for the possibility that not all

instances of those substances that one would identifyingly refer to as extensional expressions of the character of a Same-L relationship must necessarily manifest exact congruence, one with another. If this were the case, however, one would, then, be faced with the problem of accounting for how substances of natural kind entities that were supposedly the same could give expression to features of differential character.

Finally, if the given group of individuals chose to follow the orientation of category c), mentioned above, one might be undecided as to whether the two substances were: 1) basically the same with differences; or, 2) similar but basically different. Consequently, one might hold in abeyance any decision to identifyingly refer to them both with the same linguistic marker.

Instead, one might establish a convention in which one, arbitrarily, would refer to one or the other as, say, "khronos" and await further evidential developments before deciding to include (or exclude) the other substance among the extensional instances that are believed to give expression to the character entailed by the "introducing event" sample that has been selected to be called "khronos". At the same time, while one might suspend judgment concerning a given substance with respect to whether or not that substance actually does bear the Same-L relationship to the substances that presently are being identifyingly referred to as "khronos", one probably would entertain those substances as 'possible-khronos' candidates and might investigate or interact with them in a manner somewhat parallel (with certain reservations) to the way one investigated or interacted with those substances called "khronos". Over time, data would arise in relation to their interactional experience with both substances, and this data would provide a further evidential basis on which to decide whether, a), b) or c) was the most tenable approach to pursue under the existing epistemological convention.

Unfortunately, matters might be complicated for the new learner of the language in Archimedes' time. This is because there is not likely to be just one "introducing event" through which the individual is to become acquainted with the actual character of the basis of the Same-L relationship. This factor is quite crucial since introducing events serve as the means through which an individual is to recognize or identify

subsequent instances of various encountered substances as expressing or not expressing the appropriate Same_L relationship that would permit one to identifyingly refer to the newly encountered substance as an extensional instance of "khronos".

For example, let us suppose that, on one occasion, an individual of Archimedes' time is introduced to a substance as an instance of "khronos" (and let us assume that on this occasion the substance is an instance of "gold" as we understand the term today). Let us also suppose that on a second occasion the individual is introduced to a substance of certain manifest properties and told the substance is an instance of "khronos". However, let us assume that on this occasion the substance is an instance of what Putnam calls metal X and not an instance of gold.

Given the foregoing circumstances, the individual's understanding of the character of those sorts of things for which "khronos" is used as a means of identifying reference by the people in his or her community will be shaped by both of the "introducing event" experiences. As a result, what the learner will consider to constitute the nature of a Same_L relationship will be a function of some sort of epistemological combination of the two experiences.

As the young learner participates in further experiences that involve substances called "khronos", the individual's understanding of "khronos" character will come to be an expression of the sort of conceptual geometry that the individual draws up on the basis of his collective experiences concerning "khronos". If the character of the young learner's connecting insights in relation to that which he or she understands or believes is the character of "khronos" is congruent with the character of the manner in which the surrounding community actually does employ "khronos", then the individual has grasped the concept that stands behind a given word usage. In this respect, there has been a partial or full merging (depending on the degree of the congruence of the connecting insight with current usage) of the hermeneutical horizons of the learner with his or her linguistic community.

Putnam believes the only alternative to his theory of meaning/realism is, as the previous quote demonstrates, some sort of operational perspective. Yet, the foregoing considerations do not so

much constitute an operational approach to the theory of meaning as much as they reflect the character of certain aspects of the way in which language is learned and the manner in which human beings tend to hermeneutically engage experience in general.

More specifically, a basic distinction needs to be drawn between two things. On the one hand, there are instances in which when one asks, "What do you mean by 'gold'?", the thrust of the question is to seek an understanding of the character of the identifying reference that a given speaker has in mind when he or she uses a specific linguistic marker. On the other hand, there are times in which when one asks, "What do you mean by 'gold'?" the question is directed, not just at seeking to establish what the speaker has in mind by way of identifying reference, but also at discovering the actual character of the 'thing', 'object', 'entity', 'process', 'event', 'phenomena' and so on, to which identifying reference is being made.

The first case encompasses a sense of "meaning" that concerns the character of certain aspects of some individual's (or group's) mode of hermeneutically engaging experience in terms of how that individual (or group) understands the character of those aspects, and what significance, meaning or value those aspects have for him or her (or them). In the second case mentioned above, the focus of the question is not primarily oriented toward understanding the character of various aspects of the individual's hermeneutical framework as an end in itself. The focus is on determining the character of certain identifyingly referential aspects of the individual's hermeneutical framework as a means of establishing a point of reference from which to launch a further investigation into the character of that object (or whatever) to which identifying reference is being made by the speaker(s).

On those occasions when the character of the identifying referential aspect of an individual's hermeneutical framework is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of the object (etc.) to which identifying reference is being made by the speaker, then regardless of which of the aforementioned senses governs the asking of the question (which, in the present case, is: What do you mean by "gold"?), the character of the speaker's answer will provide a basis from which insight might emerge concerning both senses of dimensions of the issue of "meaning". This, of course, assumes that the

speaker is able to articulate the character of those facets of his or her hermeneutical framework that constitute the individual's understanding of the character of the identifying reference for which the linguistic market in question is used as a communicational designation or index.

In criticizing what he refers to as an anti-realist perspective concerning theory of meaning, Putnam says:

"... for a strong anti-realist, truth makes no sense except as an intra-theoretic notion ... the anti-realist can use truth intra-theoretically in the sense of a redundancy theory, but he does not have the notion of truth and reference available extra-theoretically. But, extension is tied to the notion of truth. The extension of a term is just what the term is true of. Rather than try to retain the notion of extension via an awkward operationalism, the anti-realist should reject the notion of extension as he does the notion of truth (in any extra-theoretic sense)." (page 236)

One of Putnam's mistakes in the above quote is to suppose the meaning of "extension" can only be made sense of in a realist setting of the sort that he seems to be advocating. In that sort of setting, natural kind terms make identifying reference to allegedly real 'objects' that have determinate characters according to the nature of the given natural kind entity at issue. Thus, from that perspective, the extension of "water" involves those liquid substances that have an atomic/molecular structure of H_2O , and the extension of "gold" involves those substances that have the atomic/molecular structure characteristic of a certain kind of metal, and so on.

What is to stop a so-called anti-realist, however, from saying the following? The extension of "gold" concerns all those 'objects' that manifest themselves in the phenomenology of the experiential field and that display a character that is congruent with the character of those facets of one's hermeneutical framework that constitute one's understanding of, or beliefs about, what the linguistic marker "gold" was making identifying reference to in the context of the "introducing event".

After all, the character of the understanding of the 'antirealist' gives expression to a congruency relationship concerning the nature of a Same-L relationship between, on the one hand, a certain aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field currently being attended to, and, on the other hand, the character of that which was the focus of a given introducing event (or series of such events) for which the linguistic marker "gold" served as a means of making identifying reference. If this is so, then does not the recognition [that the character of the currently experientially encountered aspect of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field to which one is attending, accurately reflects the character of the focus of the introducing event for which "gold" served as a means of making identifying reference] constitute an extensional exemplar as far as the hermeneutical framework of the individual is concerned [Inasmuch as it represents an instance of "just what the term (in this case, 'gold') is true of".]?

Putnam charges the 'anti-realist' with advancing a redundancy theory of meaning in which the meaning of terms such as "extension", "truth", "natural kind entities" and "meaning" are tied to the character of the theoretical context in which they are developed. As a result, such a position, according to Putnam, "does not have the notion of truth and reference available extra-theoretically" in relation to any of the terms that are being, or are to be, considered.

From the perspective of the so-called anti-realist, however, Putnam's criticism is irrelevant as far as a theory of meaning is concerned. An 'anti-realist' knows what he or she means by use of a linguistic marker.

In other words, such an individual can recognize those experiential instances (i.e., instances appearing in the phenomenology of the experiential field) which manifest a character that is congruent with (in Putnam's terms, exhibits a Same_L relationship with) the character of the introducing-event experience(s) that, at some point in time, appeared in the phenomenology of the experiential field of the individual. Through these introducing events, the individual came to grasp the character of that to which a given linguistic marker was making identifying reference.

Therefore, an 'anti-realist' understands the extension of such a linguistic marker, and, consequently, understands what the term or linguistic marker is believed to be true of. The fact that truth for the anti-realist does not extend into, or encompass, a reality of autonomous character that is independent of, for example, the individual's mental states, or that might not entail a reality in which objects are substantial, materialistic and made out of various sorts of natural kind "stuff" (i.e., molecules, atoms, electrons, quarks, gluons, etc.) is beside the point as far as a theory of meaning is concerned. Such cases also are incidental as far as being able to understand what the character of that theory is and how terms such as "extension", "truth" and "meaning" fit into it.

If an 'anti-realist' is wrong, his or her error is not a function of the general properties of that individual's theory of meaning. The problem resides in the fact that the linguistic marker "reality", which a so-called anti-realist uses as a means of identifyingly referring to the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field taken as a whole, forms part of a hermeneutical framework whose character will, in certain respects, be incongruent with various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field or will be incongruent with that (i.e., metaphysical reality) which makes a field of such determinate character possible (including the aspects of incongruence).

Stated in another way, if an 'anti-realist' is wrong, that individual will understand that aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which he or she is making identifying reference when the linguistic markers "truth", "extension" and "meaning" are used in relation to certain natural kind terms. However, the character of his or her understanding might not be accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of reality to which reference is made.

Putnam might or might not be correct in his assumption of realism concerning the ontological character of natural kind entities. Nevertheless, as far as his theory of meaning is concerned, his position is vulnerable due to its dependency on having to determine the nature of a natural kind entity to which natural kind terms are supposed to make identifying reference.

As argued earlier, Putnam, arbitrarily, has selected the atomic/molecular structure of, for example, the substances to which "water" and "gold" make identifying reference as constituting the nature of those substances. Consequently and as pointed out earlier, Putnam has not entertained the possibility that the nature of those substances might be rooted in some more subtle dimension of reality.

However, even if one were to assume, for the sake of argument, that the nature of, say, water is H_2O , nonetheless, such a concession in no way compels one to commit oneself to the view that a theory of meaning in relation to the liquid substances to which the linguistic marker "water" is used to make identifying reference must concern itself with atomic/molecular structure. Given the foregoing concession, the meaning of "water" still might concern itself with investigating any aspect of the process of making identifying reference in those aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field that the atomic/molecular structure of the substance in question (i.e., H_2O) helps give expression to ... including its appearance, taste, feel, smell, uses and behavioral properties.

On the basis of the above assumption -- namely, that the nature of a given liquid substance is H_2O (this represents the metaphysical intensional character of that substance according to the assumption) -- the reality of the extension of such a substance involves all ontological instances of liquid substances whose atomic/molecular structure is H_2O . Consequently, any linguistic marker that is used to make identifying reference to the intensional/extensional metaphysical character of such a substance will have an extension associated with that term or linguistic marker, and this extension will express "just what the term is true of". Nonetheless, what a term means in this sense still might not constitute what is being identifyingly referred to when an individual uses the same linguistic marker (as was the case in the two-Oscars example) to draw attention to certain aspects of the hermeneutical framework through which the individual orients him, or her, within the phenomenology of his or her experiential field.

In addition, the intensional/extensional character of a hermeneutical framework concerning the usage of a given term or linguistic marker might not coincide with the intensional/extensional character of those aspects of reality that involve substances whose

atomic/molecular structure is H_2O . For example, one could concede that the hermeneutical character of an individual's intensional/extensional meaning framework might, at certain junctures (e.g., Twin Earth prior to the early 1800s) be incongruent with the metaphysical character of a natural kind entity's intensional/extensional meaning framework.

However, the epistemic pathway by means of which one, eventually, is able to determine the metaphysical nature of, say, a liquid substance -- in this case, water or H_2O -- is accomplished by means of the establishing a hermeneutical framework of meaning. Through the establishing of such a framework, one, gradually, becomes able to understand the character of the process of making identifying references when linguistic markers or terms are used to designate or index the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which one is attending and to which one wants to draw the attention of others.

Moreover, by seeking to understand (i.e., through setting up a hermeneutical framework) what sort of reality could make an experiential field of such character possible, one attempts to discover one, or more, connecting insights. These insights allow one to determine if a congruency relationship exists between the structural or logical character of one's hermeneutical framework (or parts thereof) and the structural character of those aspects of reality that help make certain aspects (e.g., those to which one is attending) of the phenomenology of the experiential field possible.

From Putnam's perspective, Oscar₂ of Twin Earth is wrong in identifyingly referring to Twin Earth liquid substances of a certain phenomenological description as "water". At the same time, no serious difficulties ensue from the fact that Oscar₂ of Twin Earth refers to certain liquid substances -- whose atomic/molecular structure is later found to be XYZ -- as "water".

In time, the differences between the liquid substances in question on Twin Earth and Earth will sort themselves out on the basis of, among other things, atomic/molecular structure. In the meantime, most people on Earth and Twin Earth who have language competency will have little or no difficulty in understanding the sort of thing that is

being identifyingly referred to when the linguistic marker "water" is used.

If this difference in atomic/molecular structure turned out to be the only characteristic feature that distinguished the two liquid substances, and if in all other respects they were the same, then one might begin to wonder if the atomic/molecular differences in structure (H_2O versus XYZ) really represented all that much of a difference. In fact, under all but a very limited and technical set of circumstances (i.e., those dealing with the form of atomic/molecular structure of the two substances), Earth-water and Twin Earth-water would be able to pass every test one cared to administer as far as determining whether a Same-L relationship existed between Earth-water and Twin Earth-water.

Moreover, the one difference that did exist (i.e., atomic/molecular structure) might not be a sufficient basis (at least not in the science fiction format developed by Putnam) on which to establish two separate metaphysical categories concerning Earth-water and Twin Earth-water. As suggested earlier, the foregoing difference has important similarities to maintaining that the existence of hot water and cold water would not be enough of a differential foundation to contend that, due to their differential characters, hot and cold water cannot both be water. In other words, one need not have to choose one or the other of the two substances as the basis for determining whether a Same_L relationship exists with respect to liquid substances subsequently encountered.

In both of the above cases, Same_L relationships are a function of establishing congruency relationships between (or among) the characters of two (or more) entities (events, processes, principles, etc.). The nature of these relationships are such that whatever differences do exist between (or among) the entities (or whatever) being compared, one is willing to treat differences as variations on a theme (or set of themes) rather than as constituting separate and distinct categories.

The focal/horizontal character of these "themes" will be a function of the character of an individual's conceptual geometry or hermeneutical framework that has built up over time in relation to the way certain aspects of the phenomenology of the individual's

experiential field have been introduced, characterized, particularized, or individuated by the individual on the basis of a limited number, or wide variety, of experiential encounters manifesting certain features. In time, these features might come to be considered -- rightly or wrongly -- as expressions of one fundamental phenomenological and/or metaphysical theme.

For instance, phenomenologically, "water" can -- within certain parameters of permissibility -- be used to identifyingly refer to various liquid substances despite variations in appearance, taste, feel, smell and the behavioral properties of such liquids. This will be the case as long as the character of those liquids is capable of reflecting sufficient congruency with the character of the conceptual geometry that has arisen in relation to a set of experiences involving liquid substances of certain properties.

The aforementioned experiences are ones that have been characterized in specific ways according to various features and properties of those experiences. Such characterized or individuated experiences collectively come to constitute the conceptual standard against that subsequent experiences with liquid substances are measured in order to determine whether a Same-L relationship is thought to exist.

The ability of a group of people to mutually grasp the character of the phenomenology of Same_L relationships with respect to the use of various linguistic markers plays a fundamental role in the defining and acquiring of the linguistic competency (both individually and collectively) which is necessary to the formation of a linguistic community and that is necessary to enable an individual to participate in, and be a member of, that community. The beings of Earth/Twin Earth in the mid-1700s, as well as the people of Archimedes' time, are linguistically/conceptually doing what they have to do (and really only what they can do) in order to generate the requisite experiential data out of which an understanding of some kind concerning meaning will emerge.

This data acts as a starting point through which, from day to day, they can go on to make mutually understandable, identifying references. Such data also serve as a starting point that (given time, interest and ability) will provide an opportunity for someone,

eventually, to epistemologically arrive at the metaphysical points concerning extensional truths -- such as, "water" is an index for H₂O (in contrast to phenomenological points concerning extensional truths) -- which is what Putnam feels ought to be the proper basis of extensional/intensional meaning.

Whether Putnam would consider someone who works from the assumption of methodological solipsism as being anti-realist is not clear. If Putnam does hold this to be the case, his contention might be untenable.

The experience of the solipsist is quite real inasmuch as it occurs as a phenomenon in the phenomenology of the experiential field. Hallucinations have reality, as do illusions, dreams, beliefs and fantasies.

The problem is not in determining whether or not such experiences are 'real'. The problem is in determining the character of their kind of reality in terms of how they differ from one another and in terms of how they differ from those sorts of objects that seem to have a more 'substantial' character (in some 'materialistic' sense).

If a solipsist were to maintain that nothing existed independently of his or her mental states, and if this individual were to further maintain that the reality of whatever did exist as a function of the individual's mental states was of a non-substantial or non-materialistic nature, then such a solipsist is saying reality has a character that is non-substantial or non-materialistic. This solipsist is not casting doubt upon reality per se. Instead, such an individual is attempting to draw attention to what he or she believes the character of that reality is.

On the other hand, there is nothing inconsistent about a solipsist who believes the 'objects' that appear in the phenomenology of his or her experiential field have substantial, concrete, materialistic characteristics. What makes someone a solipsist is that individual's contention that such 'objects' exist, compliments of his or her mental states, irrespective of whether the individual understands how this is possible.

Consequently, neither sort of solipsist is anti-realist. Their positions are statements about the character of the ontological source from which 'objects' (whether conceived of as being substantial or

insubstantial) are derived -- namely, the individual and his or her mental states under these circumstances.

The solipsistic perspective is not a matter of saying there is no reality. That perspective is a matter of saying reality does not have the character that Putnam claims it does -- e.g., that 'objects' have a reality independent of an individual's mental states.

Putnam has offered no account, as far as the theory of meaning is concerned, of what the beings of Earth/Twin Earth in the pre-1800s are doing when they call liquids "water" whose atomic/molecular structure (although the beings do not know this) are H₂O and XYZ on, respectively, Earth and Twin Earth. Furthermore, he does not have any satisfactory explanation for what the people of Archimedes' time are doing when they use the Greek linguistic marker equivalent of "gold" to identifyingly refer to certain aspects of the phenomenologies of their experiential fields and/or to that which helps make aspects of such specific character possible.

Putnam's theory breaks down when, among other places, one is considering the meaning, in Putnam's sense, of the natural kind word "meaning". "Meaning", as employed in the pre-1800s (and this is presumably true also of the equivalent Greek term in Archimedes' time), identifyingly refers to just the sort of activities that are expressed in the manner in which Earth/Twin Earth beings (or the people of Archimedes' time) hermeneutically engaged various facets of the phenomenology of their experiential fields and by which these beings are able to identifyingly refer to different aspects of those fields. In other words, what these people of Earth/Twin Earth and Archimedes' time are doing linguistically and conceptually constitutes the heart of the character of the hermeneutical enterprise to which "meaning" (and its Greek equivalent) is giving identifying reference.

Putnam must reject the manner in which the people of Archimedes' time are hermeneutically approaching the linguistic term "khronos" as he must reject the manner in which the beings of Earth/Twin Earth in the pre-1800s are hermeneutically approaching the linguistic marker "water". He must reject their hermeneutical approaches because, as far as Putnam is concerned, "water" must be a rigid designator or indexical for H₂O, while "gold" ("khronos") must be

a rigid designator or indexical for a certain metal of specific atomic/molecular structure.

Yet, the beings of Earth/Twin Earth in the pre-1800s are liable to identifyingly refer to liquids whose atomic/molecular structure is XYZ by using the linguistic marker "water", just as the people of Archimedes' time are inclined to identifyingly refer to metal X by using the linguistic marker "khronos". Having rejected such hermeneutic approaches, Putnam effectively has cut the conceptual ground from beneath his own feet as far as the meaning of "meaning" is concerned, since he wishes to eliminate from the extensional matrix of "meaning" the very sorts of hermeneutical activities to which this term appears to give expression.

Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, one were to accept Putnam's assumption that, metaphysically (i.e., in terms of the nature of ultimate reality), H₂O was the essential nature of certain liquids on Earth. As such, these liquids would have phenomenological counterparts on Twin Earth, but not metaphysical counterparts with congruent atomic/molecular structure.

Furthermore, let us suppose that Au₇₉ was the ultimate nature of certain metals on Earth. As a result, these metals were metaphysically distinct from metal X in relation to atomic structure despite the phenomenological similarities of the latter to the former. Moreover, let us suppose that we were to agree that "water" was to be a rigid designator for H₂O, but not for XYZ, and that "gold" was to be indexical for Au₇₉ but not for metal X.

None of the foregoing suppositions, even if granted, would alter the following fact. Using Putnam's criterion for the meaning of meaning, the hermeneutical activities that the beings of Earth/Twin Earth display in relation to the usage of "water" or that the people of Archimedes' time manifest in relation to the usage of "gold" (that is, its Attic equivalent) constitute instances of the extensional character of the nature of "meaning". Therefore, such hermeneutical activities are an integral part of the conceptual geometry for which "meaning" would be indexical or a rigid designator.

Unless Putnam wishes to make the atomic/molecular structure of natural kind entities such as water and gold a matter of innate, a priori understanding -- which, presumably, he does not wish to do -- then

whether Putnam likes it or not, he is going to have to make allowances for the fact that the only way one can discover the nature of a given natural kind entity is to establish a hermeneutical/phenomenological starting point. Once established, the character of this starting point can conceptually be bounced off a wide variety of experiential co-ordinate points of reference that ensue from ontological encounters of different kinds.

The 'bouncing off' process is another way of referring to the hermeneutical search for, or acknowledgment of, experiential coordinate points of reference. The focal/horizontal characters of the experiential co-ordinate points are perceived -- rightly or wrongly - - as being congruent or incongruent with the character of one's hermeneutical/phenomenological starting point concerning that aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field for which a given linguistic marker serves as a means of making identifying reference.

The aforementioned incongruencies can arise in a number of ways. For example, differences might arise between the character of one's understanding of a term's usage and the character of a given linguistic community's usage of the linguistic marker in question. In addition, incongruencies might emerge between the character of one's understanding concerning that to which a given term is making identifying reference and the actual character of that (whether phenomenological or metaphysical) to which reference is being made.

Moreover, incongruencies could emerge between, on the one hand, the character of one's previous manner of particularizing or characterizing a given experiential co-ordinate point of reference arising out of an ontological encounter, and, on the other hand, the character of a subsequent, but similar, ontological encounter with an aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field or the aspect(s) of reality that helps make such a field possible. Finally, incongruencies might arise among: a) the character of an individual's hermeneutical treatment of certain aspects of phenomenology or concomitant underlying reality; b) the character of a linguistic community's (or subsection thereof) intersubjective hermeneutical treatment of the same certain aspects of phenomenology or concomitant underlying reality; and, c) the actual character of that

(whether phenomenological or metaphysical in character) to which the individual and linguistic community are attempting to make identifying reference in their respective ways. Whatever the character of the context out of which incongruencies emerge, only by discovering the character of the source or sources that are generating the incongruencies can one hope to make progress toward developing a hermeneutical framework (individual or intersubjective) whose character is accurately reflective of, or congruent with, the character of that (whether phenomenological or metaphysical in character) to which a hermeneutical framework or conceptual geometry is attempting to make identifying reference.

If one starts with a series of introducing events concerning the character of that to which the linguistic marker "gold" (or its Greek equivalent) makes identifying reference, and if among these introducing events are instances of both 'actual' gold (i.e., Au₇₉) and metal X, then in time, there will arise experiential co-ordinate points of reference whose character will manifest, or give expression to, differential features with respect to certain sub-populations of the set of entities that, heretofore, had been identifyingly referred to collectively as "gold". After an accumulation of some amount of experiential data related to this issue, one might decide to treat the aforementioned sub-populations as variations on one underlying theme or as instances of two distinct themes.

In either case, differences have been noted that affect the interaction (and perhaps tenability) of the character of the inferential mapping relationships of one's hermeneutical framework/conceptual geometry in relation to various experiential co-ordinate points of reference from which the framework/geometry is constructed. As a result, noticing of these differences also will affect the character of one's understanding of that to which identifying reference is being made on those occasions.

In the case of metal X and Au₇₉ -- which in Archimedes' time were both considered to be extensional instances to which "khronos" makes correct identifying reference -- evidence will accumulate that, eventually, would culminate in a discovery that there are two natural kind entities (i.e., metals) involved. These metals display a certain surface similarity of character, but have atomic structures that are

quite different. Moreover, these entities also manifest other properties (e.g., boiling points, density, malleability, tensile strength, etc.) which differ, one from the other, and that might or might not be shown to be direct functions of differences in the atomic/molecular structures of the two metals.

Nevertheless, the fact one started out including instances of both metals in the extensional matrix to which the linguistic marker "gold" ("khronos") made identifying reference did not prevent human beings from – eventually -- generating an epistemic context in which one (or a linguistic/epistemic community) hermeneutically could distinguish between metal X and Au₇₉. Consequently, the differential characters of the respective aspects of the hermeneutical framework served as a basis for establishing congruency relations between the character of these hermeneutical aspects and the character of certain aspects (i.e., co-ordinate points of experiential reference) of the phenomenology of the experiential field for which the linguistic markers "gold" ("khronos") and "metal X" (or its Greek equivalent) would come to serve as the means for making differential identifying references.

In some ways, the presumed confusion in Archimedes' time that involved treating both metal X and Au₇₉ as instances to which "gold" ("khronos") allegedly would make identifying reference could, in time, actually prove to be advantageous. This is the case since it was through lumping the two natural kind entities together and attending to them on that basis that various people would have ontological encounters with those natural kind entities that, over time, generated incongruous co-ordinate points of experiential reference that, in turn, help led, eventually, to the sort of metaphysical determination in which Putnam is interested.

Therefore, the sort of metaphysical meaning that lies at the heart of Putnam's theory of meaning can only be discovered through, and in the context of, a whole series of other kinds of hermeneutical activity. These activities establish an initial framework or conceptual geometry out of which various connecting insights arise that, in time, are used to bridge any inferential gaps that currently might exist in the character of one's understanding (as represented by the focal/horizontal character of different facets of the hermeneutical framework) concerning the character of that (whether phenomenological or

metaphysical) for which a given linguistic marker is presently used to make identifying reference. Due to these hermeneutical activities, then in time, more than one linguistic marker might be used (e.g., "gold" and "metal X"; "H₂O" and "XYZ") in order to draw attention to the differentials in character that are involved phenomenologically and/or metaphysically in that to which one is attending.

The foregoing hermeneutical/phenomenological approach to meaning is not, strictly speaking, a form of operationalism (the only other kind of meaning theory that Putnam appears to allude to in the last quote cited previously in the present essay. This is because the character of the hermeneutics of identifying reference (which form the focal/horizontal core of the phenomenology of a linguistic marker's meaning) imposes certain parameters on the process of meaning generation.

Consequently, one is not free to adopt, and then drop, any framework of meaning one chooses. Moreover, one is not free to revise arbitrarily and continuously one's meaning framework with respect to a given linguistic marker.

Identifying references are directed toward aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field and/or toward those aspects of reality that make such aspects (and the surrounding field) possible. These phenomenological aspects have a character. Similarly, the reality underlying, or expressed through, the phenomenological aspects also have a determinate character.

In using a given linguistic marker to serve as a means of signifying that an identifying reference is being made to some aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field or to some facet of the underlying reality, one is rooting both the linguistic marker and its usage(s) in a phenomenological/hermeneutical and/or metaphysical context that has a determinate character. If either an individual or a linguistic community is to maintain any sense of clarity about what the character is of the context to which a given linguistic marker makes identifying reference, then irrespective of the alterations that subsequently might be made in the phenomenological, hermeneutical or metaphysical character of the identifying reference context in question, such changes will have to be done in relation to, and in acknowledgment of, the character of the existing context.

Initially one could employ any one of a wide variety of linguistic markers to use as a means of identifyingly referring to, say, certain kinds of liquids or metals. However, once a marker has been selected, then that marker becomes rooted in the character of the identifying reference for which it is used as an indicator or signal.

For example, instead of "water", one initially might have used some other term for purposes of establishing a means of identifyingly referring to certain kinds of liquid. Yet, once the term "water" is selected, that marker becomes immersed in the hermeneutical characterization of the natural kind entity to which it identifyingly refers.

In the beginning, the characterization of such an entity concerns themes of taste, smell, feel, appearance, behavioral properties, uses and so on. When, later on, the liquid in question is discovered to have an atomic/molecular structure of H₂O, this discovery doesn't negate any of the features that previously made up the liquid's character. Rather, a further dimension of the character of the given liquid has been revealed.

One hasn't suddenly generated a new set of operational parameters by which to identifyingly refer to the character of the aspects of the phenomenological/metaphysical context through which the given liquid manifests or expresses itself. One merely has refined and expanded the character of those aspects of the existing hermeneutical context to which the linguistic marker "water" makes identifying reference.

Furthermore, as noted earlier, if the water of Twin Earth and the water of Earth are alike in all respects except that of atomic/molecular structure, then it becomes very debatable whether or not an Earthling, for instance, could no longer identifyingly refer to Twin Earth liquids with atomic/molecular structure of XYZ as "water", or whether or not a Twin Earthling could no longer identifyingly refer to Earth liquids with atomic/molecular structure H₂O as "water".

If the decision were made to differentiate between the character of that to which "water" made identifying reference on Earth from that to which "water" made identifying reference on Twin Earth (i.e., to treat them as different natural kind entities), the decision would not be an operational one per se. Instead, it would be a function of

acknowledging recognizable differences in the character of the hermeneutical/metaphysical contexts to which the linguistic marker "water" made identifying reference in the respective worlds.

Similarly, whatever subsequent discoveries might be made about the character of Earth-water and/or Twin Earth-water would not result in arbitrary operational adjustments to the hermeneutical/metaphysical context being identifyingly referred to. These discoveries would serve only to make the character of one's existing hermeneutical framework concerning the focus of the identifying reference signified by a given linguistic marker more congruent with the character of the metaphysical nature of the natural kind entities in question. In the present case, these are liquids whose atomic/molecular structure is H₂O on Earth and XYZ on Twin Earth and that manifest a variety of other properties: a, b, c, d ... , that are held in common by the two natural kind entities.

Conclusion

As indicated at numerous points in the preceding pages, and in contradistinction to the perspective advocated by Putnam in his article, meaning need not be indexical or a rigid designator for the ultimate nature of a natural kind entity. Meaning can, and often does, involve hermeneutical activity through which one works toward the assigning of significance to, or the discovery of significance in, various aspects of the experiential field or that (i.e., reality) which makes a phenomenology of such character possible.

Moreover, this dimension of significance might or might not be reflective of, or even concerned with, the actual nature (in Putnam's sense) of that to which one is making identifying reference. Therefore, by construing meaning as being an indexical process, Putnam has introduced elements of arbitrariness and restrictiveness into the discussion of meaning that do little but establish a potential basis for, in any given instance, the distortion of the character of meaning as either a structure or a structuring process. Furthermore, even if one were to concede Putnam's point and make the meaning of a term indexical for the actual nature of that aspect of reality for which the

term was to serve as a natural kind rigid designator, nonetheless, what we believe or understand to be the actual nature of a natural kind entity in any given case might reflect only a very limited portion of the 'actual, ultimate reality of the natural kind entity at issue.

In line with the foregoing, I have argued during the course of this essay in the following way. One cannot assume, automatically, that any given meaning that is a function of 'indexical' treatments of a natural kind word will represent, exhaustively, the character of that for which the word is used, among other things, to make identifying reference. Enough flexibility must be extended to the process of meaning-making such that potential room is left open for those dimensions of natural kind entities that, conceivably, might be found, in time, to extend beyond the horizons of the parameters of permissibility that currently characterize our indexical treatment of such entities.

In conjunction with the above point, I have argued that the meaning of 'epistemic necessity' (in the context of indexical relationships between a natural kind word and that aspect of reality for which it is to serve as a rigid designator) derives its sense of necessity from the extent to which such an indexical relationship is capable of manifesting congruency between the different rules of that relationship. Consequently, epistemic necessity is not a matter of how one arrives at an understanding (e.g., synthetically, analytically, a priori, etc.). Rather, epistemic necessity is a function of whether or not a given understanding accurately reflects the character of that to which it is making identifying reference in a specific instance.

Unlike Putnam, however, I have not arrived at the foregoing hermeneutical position concerning the meaning of epistemic necessity by relying on the format of a 'logically-possible-worlds analysis'. Instead, emphasis has been given to indicating the importance of the conceptual structuring process through which one attempts to establish that epistemic necessity is a function of the relationship between the character of a given understanding and the character of that to which such understanding makes identifying reference. As such, I have treated the problem of the meaning of 'epistemic necessity' as an exercise through which to explore two approaches (namely Putnam's and mine) concerning the character of the structuring process of meaning as that process relates to

understanding the character of the structure of epistemic necessity to which "epistemic necessity" makes identifying reference.

In addition to the foregoing, this essay also suggests that there can be more than one "introducing event" through which an individual comes to be acquainted with the character of the basis of a Same-L relationship. These relationships serve as the means by which an individual recognizes or identifies whether, or not, a given instance of a natural kind entity actually displayed or expressed the sort of features that would allow one to claim the following -- namely, if a given exemplar was sufficiently like the prototype that had been part of the introducing event one might consider the exemplar to be the same as, or the same kind of thing as, the original prototype of the introducing event. However, if the learning of a natural kind word is rooted in a set of introducing events, not all of which are the same, then, the problem of determining Same-L relationships becomes much more complex.

As a result, even if one were to adopt Putnam's indexical model of meaning, one encounters considerable difficulty trying to establish clearly what the actual nature of a given natural kind entity is. Moreover, one needs to entertain the possibility that using, say, atomic structure (as Putnam seems to) as the main criterion of what constituted a Same_L relationship for natural kind entities is somewhat arbitrary.

After all, one might use any number of dimensions of the introducing event(s) as a criterial basis for determining Same-L relationships in the future. In this sense, one need not show any inherent preference toward using the atomic structure of a natural kind entity as the basis for determining Same-L relationships, rather than toward using, for example, various 'surface' features such as size, taste, feel, appearance, color and/or behavior as bases for determining Same-L relationships. Consequently, meaning of natural kind words need not be tied to Putnam's indexical mode of treatment.

Ironically, by structuring the character of natural kind words in accordance with his indexical theory of meaning, Putnam has created conditions that are capable of illustrating a fatal weakness in his own position. In essence, although Putnam has inquired about the meaning of "meaning" in relation to such natural kind words as "water" and

"gold", he has not provided the meaning of "meaning" as a process or state or event or condition in and of itself.

In other words, he does not seem to have reflected very much on the phenomenology of the hermeneutical process through which the structure of natural kind words emerged. As a result, he has distorted the character of his understanding of the meaning process by failure to take note of, or sufficiently appreciate, the crucial role played by the individual's hermeneutical interaction with the phenomenology of one's own experiential field.

In this essay I have mentioned that the starting point for seeking significance for, or in, various experiential co-ordinate points of an individual's conceptual geometry is in the phenomenology of the experiential field. That is, the central locus for initiating processes of meaning-making in human beings resides in the individual's hermeneutical exploration of his/her own phenomenology of the experiential field.

This exploration can be directed toward assigning significance for, or discovering significance in, various aspects of that field. Such exploration also can be oriented toward assigning significance for, or discovering significance in, those underlying aspects of reality that make that kind of field possible.

In the latter case, the hermeneutical exploration still is mediated through the phenomenology of the experiential field of an individual. However, in either case, Putnam's indexical account of meaning is missing the fundamental phenomenological dimension that bears upon how the structuring process of meaning operates, as well as how structures of meaning are generated through that process.

By illustrating the importance of how an individual's hermeneutic of the phenomenology of the experiential field gives expression to a central theme in the structuring process of meaning, I believe the present essay has been able to suggest a more flexible, fruitful, adequate, and tenable way of approaching the problems of meaning than has been provided by Putnam approach to this same issue.

Chapter 7: Belief and Knowledge

Introduction

In a general mathematical sense, congruency constitutes a particular kind of relationship between two expressions. The nature of this relationship is such that it involves a means of mapping the features of one expression onto the features of the other expression. This mapping procedure is accomplished through a transformational function(s) that permits one to determine points of coincidence between expressions despite the existence of overt or superficial differences in the structure of the character of the expressions being considered.

By indicating that congruency is to be construed in its general mathematical sense, a reference point, of sorts, has been provided for the reader. However, the character of the transformation function(s) that allows one to determine points of coincidence between expressions -- especially in a hermeneutical context -- is somewhat vague, because although the idea of 'congruency' in the mathematical sense does provide a valuable starting point, the character of the transformation(s) involved in non-mathematical senses of congruency needs to be developed.

In the ensuing discussion, an attempt will be made to delineate a few of the characteristics of the aforementioned transformation function(s) when considered in a concrete context. This aspect of a determinate context is an important consideration when examining the character of transformation functions.

It is through the specificity of context that a transformation function gives expression to its particular character. This character indicates: a) what is meant by a congruency mapping operation in that context; and, b) how the relevant expressions in that context are to be mapped coincidentally one onto the other. Thus, although -- within certain limits -- all congruency relationships share certain general features in common, nonetheless, the character of any given transformation function will be shaped and structured by the character of the specific context being considered. Therefore -- at least potentially -- there are an indefinite number of transformation functions that might establish a basis for conducting mapping operations in various kinds of specific contexts.

Given the foregoing, then trying to treat, exhaustively, the notion of a transformation function is neither feasible nor practical. However, by undertaking a relatively detailed exploration into one kind of transformation function, a certain amount of insight might be gained concerning the character, in general, of congruency relationships and their underlying transformation functions. For these reasons, I have decided to concentrate on a specific problem within which the issue of congruency arises.

The problem I have selected concerns questions about the nature of the distinction between belief and knowledge. Although intuitively we frequently have a sense of this distinction, it tends to be difficult to pin down in a way that would be defensible in all instances in which the distinction is made.

In any event, I don't propose to discuss this distinction in general terms. Rather, I intend to examine a particular instance of this distinction.

This instance involves an exploration into the sort of structures and structuring processes that are encountered when one tries to establish differences between the phenomenology of belief and the phenomenology of knowledge. More specifically, I intend to examine this problem in the context of some arguments that have been put forth by Norman Malcolm that attempt to cast doubt upon an individual's ability to distinguish, within himself or herself, the difference between knowledge and belief. In contradistinction to Malcolm's position in his article "Knowledge and Belief", I will try to show there is good reason to believe that one -- in at least some circumstances -- can distinguish within oneself between belief and knowledge.

Distinguishing Between Belief and Knowledge

In his article "Knowledge and Belief", Norman Malcolm is critically responding to a contention of H. A. Prichard that 'phenomenologically' (although neither Prichard nor Malcolm use this term) one cannot confuse belief with knowledge. In other words, according to Prichard, the two are distinct experiences. Malcolm wishes to question whether,

in fact, an individual actually can differentiate within himself or herself between knowing something or only believing it.

In order to attack this issue, he poses, for consideration, a number of hard cases that are all variations on a central theme concerning claims about water being in a particular gorge. Malcolm suggests:

"Let us begin by studying the ordinary usage of 'know' and 'believe'. Suppose, for example, that several of us intend to go for a walk and that you propose that we walk in Cascadilla Gorge. I protest that I should like to walk beside a flowing stream and that at this season the gorge is probably dry. Consider the following cases.

"(1) You say 'I believe that it won't be dry although I have no particular reason for thinking so'. If we went to the gorge and found a flowing stream we should not say that you knew that there would be water but that you thought so and were right.

"(2) You say 'I believe that it won't be dry because it rained only three days ago and usually water flows in the gorge for at least that long after a rain.' If we found water we should be inclined to say that you knew that there would be water. It would be quite natural for you to say 'I knew it wouldn't be dry'; and we should tolerate your remark. This case differs from the previous one in that here you had a reason.

"(3) You say 'I know that it won't be dry' and give the same reason as in (2). If we found water we should have very little hesitation in saying that you knew. Not only had you a reason, but you said 'I know' instead of 'I believe'. It might seem to us that the latter should not make a difference - but it does.

"(4) You say 'I know that it won't be dry' and give a stronger reason, e.g., 'I saw a lot of water flowing in the gorge when I passed it this morning'. If we went and found water, there would be no hesitation at all in saying that you know. ...

"(5) Everything happens as in (4), except that upon going to the gorge we find it to be dry. We should not say that you knew, but that you believed that there would be water." (pages 58-59)

Malcolm goes on to say:

"Whether we should say you knew, depends in part on whether you had grounds for your assertion and on the strength of those grounds. [and] Whether we should say that you knew, depends in part on how confident you were." (pages 59-60)

According to Malcolm, if a person does not feel absolutely sure something is the case, then we -- as onlookers or witnesses -- are likely to refrain from saying the individual actually knew even if the individual turns out to be correct. However, this position seems somewhat problematic.

The reason a person might be somewhat conservative or cautious in putting forth a claim about, for example, water being in the gorge could be because the individual knows of extenuating factors that might prevent water from flowing in the gorge. As a result, the individual might be marginally unsure whether those factors will come into play in the existing circumstances.

Therefore, on the one hand, -- on grounds that he or she considers to be very strong -- an individual might have little reason to suppose water will not be in the gorge if the individual and his or her companions were to walk by the gorge at the present time. On the other hand, the individual also realizes that, on occasion in the past, there have been situations in which water was expected to run through the gorge but did not.

Let us suppose the individual making the claim about water being in the gorge was a geologist or long-time resident of the area who had considerable understanding of groundwater behavior in the environment containing the gorge. Let us suppose further that the understanding contained data that not only established how long water stays in the gorge under a variety of circumstances but that also established that there were certain possibilities that might prevent water from being in the gorge.

Under these circumstances, the individual's claim -- although couched in a degree of reservation -- seems much more akin to a knowledge of water being in the gorge than it does to a mere belief that water is in the gorge. However, if an individual is willing to acknowledge the possibility that things could be other than what he or

she claims them to be, one hesitates to label the claim as an instance of knowledge.

In the former instance, an individual's understanding is rooted in more than just true belief (one might even say the understanding indicates an expertise of sorts). In the latter instance, by acknowledging that things could be other than they are claimed to be, an individual's understanding seems to represent something less than actual knowledge.

The deciding factor in whether the understanding in question constitutes belief or knowledge and whether an individual can recognize that is the case might be a matter of the extent to which an individual's understanding of the water-in-the-gorge issue allows a context of "connecting" insight to emerge or exist amidst all the principle conditions that are "known" to bear upon whether or not water will be in the gorge. For example, let us suppose there is only one known possibility that could prevent water from being in the gorge -- namely, if Mr. Thoreau, who lives by the pond that feeds the gorge, closes the water gates of the dam he has built. If we are not present at the dam site, then we can't know directly about the one factor that would determine whether or not water would be flowing in the gorge.

Without this sort of direct knowledge, one is forced to rely on other considerations. For instance, I might have seen Mr. Thoreau this morning, and he gave no indication, when asked, that he would close the dam's water gates this afternoon. Another such consideration might be that I saw Mr. Thoreau yesterday, and he was just going away at that time for a two-week fishing trip and had left the water gates open, and so on.

Let us assume someone is actually at the dam site. If someone were to ask: "Do you know if there is water in the gorge?" then the individual who is asked the foregoing could say, quite appropriately: "Yes, I know there is water in the gorge."

This is so because we are assuming for the moment that there is only one possibility that could prevent water from being in the gorge. Since we are at the dam and have direct knowledge of the current status of that possibility, then seemingly, we could argue tenably that we know water is in the gorge.

Let us suppose another case in which one is neither at the dam nor at the gorge sites. Yet, let us also suppose one has information about Mr. Thoreau's behavior vis-à-vis the water gates at the dam.

Under such circumstances, if someone were to ask the same question as above, one also might appear to be able to say one knew water was in the gorge. However, there might be a few problems that one might encounter in attempting to do so.

One obvious problem with the foregoing concerns the problem of answering the skeptic who asks: "How do you know something didn't happen, accidentally or intentionally, between the dam site and the gorge that prevented the water from reaching the gorge, even though you can now see that water is flowing past the dam and toward the gorge? Or, how do you know Mr. Thoreau is telling the truth or whether he might have changed his mind between the time that you spoke with him and now such that he actually did close the water gates unbeknown to you? Or, how do you know someone else didn't close the water gates when Mr. Thoreau was away?" The skeptical possibilities virtually are endless with respect to the hypothetical situations that could be imagined that might occur outside one's sphere of understanding and experience, and, thereby, cast doubt on any claim of knowledge one might make with respect to water being in the gorge.

Moreover, problems surrounding claims to knowledge are multiplied considerably when one allows more than a single factor (e.g., the water gates of the dam) to affect whether or not water is in the gorge. To begin with, an individual cannot be everywhere at once in order to examine directly the factors that bear on whether or not water will be in the gorge.

As a result, the indirect indices one must rely on in assessing whether water is in the gorge are all vulnerable to skeptical ambush. Thus, even if one personally checked, within a short period of time, on every known factor that could affect the outcome, one could be asked: "How do you know the conditions that exist now at each site are the same as when you checked them ten minutes or five or two minutes ago?"

Ultimately, one could be asked: "How can one know for certain whether or not the reality of something might change its nature as

soon as one turns away from it?" Alternatively, one might be challenged as to whether or not reality might be totally different from what one experiences it to be. Similarly, what if one's understanding and sensory input were immersed in error and deception, but one is deluded into thinking one can understand and sense, with some degree of accuracy, the reality that one is encountering?

The skeptical game, however, is a two-edged sword. One side of that sword cuts away the basis of epistemology, and this is the side that many philosophical discussions focus upon and are worried about. The other side of the sword actually cuts away the basis of at least radical skepticism.

When the skeptic asks, for example: "How do you know: Mr. Thoreau didn't change his mind about the dam's water gates, or whether he is telling the truth, etc.?" an obvious reply is: "What reason do I have for maintaining otherwise?" The thrust of this reply has the potential to carry one past a mere philosophical standoff in which one side says: "How do you know such and such isn't the case?" and the other side says: "How do you know it is the case?"

Unless a skeptic can provide a substantial argument as to why some given claim should not be maintained, there is no obvious reason necessitating the abandonment of the position one is maintaining. Of course, unless the latter position is itself supported by a well-documented and well-reasoned case, there might be no good reason for maintaining it either.

Yet, to raise doubts -- of whatever hypothetical nature -- in order to force an individual to reconsider his or her position is not enough in and of itself to undermine claims of knowledge. The doubts that are generated must be capable of being considered as real challenges.

Mr. Thoreau might be known, far and wide, for the telling of lies. Or, perhaps, he is known as one who changes his mind frequently about decisions he has announced.

In either event, the skeptic's reminding one of these factors represents much more of a challenge to one's being able to tenably maintain one's position vis-à-vis knowledge claims concerning the gorge than if the skeptic were to say something like the following: "How do you know that little purple men from Pluto didn't secretly set

down on Mr. Thoreau's dam and shut off the water while Mr. Thoreau was away fishing?"

Even though it seems logically possible that little purple men from Pluto could have done what the skeptic suggests, the mere logical possibility of something might not be enough to sustain a plausible challenge to one's epistemic claim (even if based on indirect evidence, to some extent) about water being in the gorge. In other words, the challenge need not be true or even something one could say is probably true or very likely true. Nonetheless, the challenge must have a certain believability about it such that it would be entertained for consideration as a factor that actually could be conceived, on the basis of past experience, as something that, on occasion affects whether or not water was in the gorge at any given instance.

The notion of "logical possibility" being used here means only that our existing understanding of "reality" or of our experience does not contain anything that automatically would preclude the possibility of, say, little purple men from Pluto closing the water gates of Mr. Thoreau's dam being true. Yet, as indicated previously, absolute necessity is entirely a function of what is empirically true with respect to reality, not just logically possible.

This functional necessity is independent of -- because it is more fundamental and encompassing than, although not entirely unrelated to -- what we think we know. More importantly, this function is independent of our ignorance about what the nature of reality actually is. Therefore, 'logical possibility' can be construed either in terms of: a) what actual reality permits as being possible, given that reality has the character it does; or, b) what our understanding believes reality permits as possible, although this sort of 'possibility' might not be possible in ontological actuality (i.e., aside from its reality as a belief).

One needs to draw a distinction between, at the very least, rooted and un-rooted assumptions. For example, the skeptic's mentioning of the possibility concerning purple men from Pluto is essentially an un-rooted assumption. This is so since outside of some entirely arbitrary mathematical estimates on the possibility of the existence of life on other planets, or planetoids, in the universe, there really is no evidence to indicate life exists on other planets (although subsequent evidence to the contrary might be uncovered). Moreover, there is even less

evidence that is capable of indicating that there are beings from Pluto who are purple and have the technological capability to put a space craft on Mr. Thoreau's dam site, as well as who would take the trouble, for whatever reason, to close or open the water gates at the dam site.

On the other hand, a geologist who had lived in the vicinity of the gorge and was thoroughly familiar with both the behavior of groundwater near the gorge and with the behavior of Mr. Thoreau and who made the "assumption" -- on the basis of what he or she knew from past experience -- that water was in the gorge or that Mr. Thoreau had done what he said he had done would be basing his or her judgment on a set of rooted assumptions or assumptions. Such assumptions are capable of being logically tied, to some degree, to a certain amount of data that could be, or had been, substantiated somewhat.

There is a second dimension of the reply to the skeptic (i.e., what reason do I have for maintaining other than what I claim) which has the potential for carrying one beyond a philosophical stand-off with the skeptic. This second dimension is, in some ways, much more fundamental in its scope than the demand, discussed above, that skeptical objections must convey more than mere logical possibility in order to be seriously entertained as challenges to what one maintains in any given epistemic claim.

In absolute terms, and irrespective of whether or not we actually know the epistemological status of a skeptic's postulating of a possibility (i.e., whether it is true or false, accurate or inaccurate), what the skeptic postulates as a possibility is either true or it is not. Consequently, if the skeptic should ask: "How do you know that, say something else -- a factor(s) not yet taken into consideration -- is not preventing water from reaching the gorge even though you can see that the dam's water gates are allowing water to pass through at the present time?", the answer is likely to be: "I don't."

At the same time, if one were to continue to claim that water is in the gorge by assuming there is nothing blocking the flow of water to the gorge (based on one's understanding of the data currently available to one), and if there is not any obstacle of an unknown nature that is impeding the flow of water into the gorge, then one's claim about water being in the gorge is correct. Although one does not know

one knows, what one understands to be true of a particular aspect of reality is actually a correct understanding.

Essentially, the issue is this. If what one understands to be correct in relation to some given situation is found to be a correct understanding, is such an understanding a matter of belief or of knowledge? The problematic aspect in the foregoing appears to revolve about a missing dimension of certainty in relation to an individual's understanding that something is the case when the something in question is in fact the case, but with respect to which an individual has in his or her possession no definite proof that such is the case. Yet, without this dimension of certainty, how is an individual to distinguish between what one believes and what one knows -- a distinction that is at the focal point of the problem that Malcolm is posing and with which he is attempting to come to grips in his previously noted article.

One possible solution to Malcolm's problem might involve a distinction between "knowing one knows" and "believing one knows". Let us leave aside for the moment instances in which one not only claims one knows, but one also claims to know that one knows. Let us turn, instead, to the notion of "believing one knows".

This latter notion simulates most aspects of "knowing one knows". This is especially so if what one believes to be the case (i.e., that one knows) is true.

To be sure, the sense of 'know' being used here is not that of knowing that one knows. Rather, it is the sense of know in which what one understands to be the case is, in fact, the case.

In these instances (i.e., when what one understands to be the case is the case), what one understands is not a matter of belief, but of correct understanding. Even though one might not know that what one understands is correct, one's beliefs in this context are really about the truth of one's understanding. Thus, belief in this context is not a central aspect of the main focus of understanding. Instead, it plays a horizontal role.

"Believing one knows" has two main components: 1) the fact that expresses what one understands to be the case about some given issue(s); and, 2) the facet that expresses what one believes about the

truth or correctness or accuracy of what one understands. Under these circumstances, one has no doubt about knowing what one's understanding is. There also might be no doubt in one's mind about one's believing that what one understands is true or correct.

Consequently, on at least one level, one can distinguish between what one knows and what one believes about something. In the present case, this distinction involves: a) the character of one's understanding; and, b) the character of one's beliefs about the truth or correctness of such understanding.

In a certain sense, the foregoing distinction is the prototype for all subsequent differentiations between belief and knowing within oneself. Belief in this phenomenological context is a matter of committing oneself to an idea (i.e., accepting the idea to be true) during the process of entertainment with respect to various aspects of the experiential field. On the other hand, knowing, in the restricted sense outlined above, is a matter of correctly understanding what is true without necessarily knowing one's understanding is correct.

Presumably, Malcolm has something more in mind when he inquires whether or not one can distinguish within oneself between belief and knowledge. He is not interested in instances in which an individual knows what he or she believes or believes what he or she understands. Malcolm wants to establish whether or not an individual can distinguish between belief and knowledge in relation to some phenomenon other than in the case of belief and understanding in and of themselves as phenomenologically entertained or considered by an individual.

For instance, if we return to the gorge example, can an individual who is not presently at the gorge epistemologically differentiate between claiming he or she knows water is in the gorge, and claiming he or she believes water is in the gorge? Malcolm argues:

"Prichard says that if we reflect we cannot mistake belief for knowledge. In case (4) you knew there would be water and in case (5) [cases (4) and (5) refer to the ones that were given in the first quote in the present essay] you merely believed it. Was there any way that you could have discovered by reflection, in case (5), that you did not know?

It would have been useless to have reconsidered your grounds for saying that there would be water, because in case (4), where you did know, your grounds were identical. They could be at fault in (5) only if they were at fault in (4), and they were not at fault in (4). Cases (4) and (5) differ only in one respect -- namely, that in one case you did subsequently find water and in the other you did not. Prichard says that we can determine by reflection whether we know something or merely believe it. But where, in these cases, is the material that reflection would strike upon? There is none."(page 60)

One possible response to Malcolm's rhetorical question: "Where, in these cases, is the material that reflection would strike upon?' ', is the following. The material to be reflected upon depends on an individual who is making the claims in (4) and (5) quoted previously.

For example, the person in question might be a newcomer to the area. As a result, he or she might be making his or her claim on the basis, say, of earlier having seen water in the gorge, but without any concomitant awareness or understanding of all the factors that could cause the water to disappear in the meantime (i.e., between the time of seeing the gorge and the time of making a claim about water being in the gorge).

Given these conditions, one might be inclined to say that not only didn't this individual know in case (5), but he or she didn't know in case (4) either. This would be so even though an individual had a certain amount of grounds to support his or her claim and even though an individual was right about water being in the gorge.

The nature of the evidence and the nature of the understanding of that evidence do not really allow for this individual to have the sort of connecting insight into the situation that would enable an individual to know -- even in the aforementioned minimal sense of know -- that there is water in the gorge. This is so simply because his or her understanding is limited by an individual's status of being a newcomer to the gorge area.

Even if an individual had extensive geological knowledge of a theoretical sort, he or she likely still would lack an appreciation of the specific characteristics of the gorge region at issue to be able to have a

sufficiently extensive data base from that an individual could draw together the proper themes in a hermeneutical package that accurately reflected the realities of the water-in-the-gorge situation. In fact, quite conceivably, some of the potential reasons why water might not be in the gorge could have nothing to do with geological considerations -- e.g., if the water were dammed or diverted by a human being or beaver.

At best, one might contend -- on the basis of an individual's earlier experience (i.e., having seen water in the gorge when an individual walked by it in the morning) -- an individual's inference about water being in the gorge was warranted (i.e., a reasonable one without necessarily being correct), regardless of whether water actually turned up in the gorge or not. Moreover, if such a newcomer to the gorge region were honest with himself or herself, that person would recognize the given claim was not a matter of actual knowledge.

One would be more accurate to say that an individual had a belief supported by a certain amount of limited knowledge and surrounded by a great deal of horizontal ignorance concerning details of the behavior of either water in the gorge region, or, for example, Mr. Thoreau behavior with respect to the dam's water gates.

Let us suppose, however, that an individual making the epistemic claims concerning the presence of water in the gorge had many years of experience with the gorge and knew the circumstances when water would and would not be in the gorge. Let us further suppose that he or she was not aware of any existing conditions that would justify giving credence to the possibility that water was not in the gorge. If water should turn out to be, actually, in the gorge, then one might be inclined to say this person could reflect upon the known factors in memory and determine that he or she actually knew water was in the gorge and not just that he or she believed water was in the gorge.

With regard to the neophyte, the material that would allow this kind of individual to recognize whether he or she knew -- or merely believed -- would be, as suggested previously, the honest admission that he or she knew relatively little about the gorge region in question. Therefore, having seen water in the gorge earlier in the day really would not constitute sufficient data to allow a neophyte the kind of insight necessary to establish whether or not water was in the gorge.

In the case of the more experienced individual, this individual could determine whether he or she believed or knew water was in the gorge. First, an individual would examine the array of possibilities that might prevent water from being in the gorge.

By noting that possibilities he or she currently was apprised of, to some extent, and of which possibilities he or she was presently ignorant, an individual could proceed to try to figure out if what he or she presently knew was enough to construct a conceptual geometry from which a connecting insight could arise that indicated water was in the gorge. On the other hand, an individual could try to figure out if what he or she presently knew was merely enough to generate a belief about the possible presence of water in the gorge. If the latter is the case, then such a belief was missing crucial pieces (whether in the form of data or understanding or both) that would prevent the kind of conceptual geometry forming from which an individual could discern (through connecting insight) the presence of those logical/experiential themes in the conceptual geometry that were reflective of whether water was or was not in the gorge.

If the experienced individual knew countervailing conditions did not exist in the gorge region, or if this individual had good reason to suppose those conditions did not exist, then provided water was actually in the gorge, one might argue an individual did know water was in the gorge. This would be so in the sense that his or her understanding was correct and rooted in an informed insight into the actual conditions of the gorge region, even though an individual might not be certain the understanding was correct. In this case, an individual would treat his or her understanding as knowledge and not merely belief.

Consider the issue from a still further perspective. Let us suppose an individual knew of evidence or reasons to suggest that some of the conditions capable of preventing water from being in the gorge actually might be the case.

However, let us also suppose an individual discounted those possibilities on the basis of a variety of experiential/evidential considerations. If water, subsequently, actually was found to be in the gorge, and if the considerations that caused an individual to discount the possibility that water was not in the gorge actually were reflective

of what was the case, then one still might maintain an individual knew water was in the gorge even though proof that this understanding was correct might not come until later.

On the other hand, in the situation where an experienced person says he or she knows something is the case, yet, the person (or others) subsequently discovers the claim to be erroneous due to the intervention of unforeseen or overlooked factors, then seemingly, an individual would not be able to distinguish between belief and knowledge in those circumstances. Yet, this sort of instance can be seen as only a limiting case of the general point that is being established.

As such, the limiting case need not undermine the feasibility of an individual in many (if not most) circumstances being able to distinguish between belief and knowledge. At the same time, the greater the latitude that exists for the possibility of the unexpected or unanticipated taking place, the more room there is for committing errors in attempting to differentiate between belief and knowledge in any given case. Nevertheless, the possibility of error need not automatically undermine a claim to knowledge.

Knowledge isn't just a function of: a) being right, or b) being confident, or c) being confident and being right. Knowledge is a function of the kind of understanding that allows one to tie together enough features of an experiential/evidential context to provide a demarcated framework out of which, or through which, one might gain some degree of accurate insight into the nature of the context being focused upon.

While one's understanding must be true in order to be considered knowledge, one need not have any accompanying sense of confidence or belief that what one understands is correct. The necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge is this: true understanding must exist within an individual with respect to the character of the context being considered by that individual.

Therefore, although a neophyte's claim that water is in the gorge on a given occasion might be correct, the claim is not rooted in any real understanding of the character of the behavior of water in the gorge region. It is rooted in but one observation -- that of having seen water in the gorge when one passed by the gorge earlier in the day.

Such a claim has not taken into consideration any data that might bear upon whether water will continue to be in the gorge later on in the day. Furthermore, knowledge in the foregoing sense does not require one to be an immediate witness to all of the factors that affect one's epistemic claim. The basic requirement for this sense of knowledge would be satisfied if one had a relatively recent familiarity with some minimal number of the fundamental factors surrounding and structuring the given context or issue. These factors would allow one to work at establishing or generating a connecting insight that is true.

The time frame for what constitutes the meaning of "recently" obviously will vary with the nature of the phenomenon being discussed. In any given instance, however, there will be a certain amount of arbitrariness associated with the choice of allowable parameters for a time frame of reference. The maximum lead-way permitted will be a function of the time range 'normally' required for various features of the situation being studied to change and, thereby, alter or affect the situation significantly enough to have ramifications for the accuracy of epistemological claims that might be made about the situation in question.

Truth, Tautology and Connecting Insight

Some people might object to the foregoing analysis and argue that the position being put forth in this essay is somewhat tautological. If one must assume that a person's understanding is true in order for something to be considered knowledge, then one appears to be assuming one's conclusions by building them into one's premises. However, this objection, if it were to occur, tends to misconstrue the nature of the philosophical point being made.

The truth of a given understanding is not assumed. It is either true or false (in whole or in part) as it stands – although this might require empirical proof to establish that such an understanding is, indeed, true.

If an understanding is true, then regardless of whether one knows, with certainty that it is true and irrespective of one's degree of confidence about what one understands, and quite independently of

whether one can justify or prove one's understanding, nevertheless, this understanding represents knowledge precisely because it is true and because it expresses a substantial kind of epistemic link that an individual has with the phenomenon, object, issue, experience, process, condition or idea being considered. Use of the term 'substantial' in the previous sentence is intended to indicate that the epistemic state of the individual is rooted in a context of having actually interacted with the phenomenon, etc. ... interaction that serves as a basis for providing an opportunity for the development or generation of a connecting insight into the actual character of the phenomenon (or whatever) that one is investigating.

In one sense, one cannot escape the fact that all knowledge is tautological. After all, the premises that one strings together to describe or characterize a given phenomenon all contain -- singly or together (and to the extent they are accurate descriptions or characterizations, at least as far as they go) -- the truth of the phenomenon being considered.

An individual might describe, represent, characterize, interpret or individuate experience [and that (i.e., reality) which makes such experience possible] according to an individual's own values, beliefs, assumptions and so on. Nonetheless, one has difficulty avoiding the realization that some part of what one experiences as the "reality" of a given thing or phenomenon is a function -- to some extent and encompassing, potentially, varying possibilities as to the degree to which such experience accurately reflects some aspect of 'reality' -- with respect to the thing or phenomenon being experienced. In other words, the character of the 'thing' (or phenomenon or whatever) being experienced forms the themes that are the "text" with which one hermeneutically works and that sets the context against which one's understanding pushes in order to generate congruent conceptualizations or conceptual geometries.

Although there might be problems in attempting to sort out which aspects of an experience are subjectively superimposed on the experience and which aspects of an experience are structured by, or reflections of, the thing or phenomenon being experienced, none of these difficulties should obscure a basic philosophical point. To whatever extent an understanding is correct or true, this correctness

or truth is, inevitably, a function of what the nature of the character of the aspect of reality being experienced is at a particular time. Indeed, in order for a given understanding to be true, that understanding must entail an accurate expression of the congruency relationship between, on the one hand, the character of the epistemic claim being made by an individual together with, on the other hand, the character of that (whether phenomenological or metaphysical) to which an individual's epistemic claims are making identifying reference.

Understanding does not supply the truth. Understanding, at best, merely recognizes or reflects the presence of some aspect of truth. "Connecting insight" consists of a mental recognition, within the context of a given set of data or experiences, in relation to the character of the themes in that context that tie together a set of evidential premises in a way that is accurately reflective of some aspect of a given set of experiential circumstances. In addition, evidential premises express truth only to the extent that the character of the premises is congruent with the character of the situation under consideration (i.e., the reality, whether phenomenological or metaphysical, to which one is making identifying references in the form of one's characterizations or descriptions).

Therefore, unless the premises one used were accurate in that they actually entailed some reflective properties of the character of the aspect of reality under investigation, one's understanding would not be a case of knowledge. This is so because there is no basis for establishing a link between the structural character of one's understanding and the structural character of that which makes possible the aspect of the experiential field to which one is attending.

In order to further develop the above line of thinking, consider the following. If one is given a series of numbers and one is asked to give the next number in the series, then in order to discover the unknown number, one has to try to determine the character of the function that generates each member of the known number sequence.

Once the nature of this function is discerned, one then knows how to provide the next number in the series. Although the term "mathematical induction" is used to refer to such a discovery process, this process appears to bear many similarities to a deductive context.

The underlying mathematical function in question in any given sequence of numbers produces certain numbers and not others. The number we seek is a determinate the necessary one ... a number that seems to be implicit in the overall sequence of numbers that are given initially. In other words, there appears to be something inherent in the relationships of the numbers, one to another, that gives expression to a theme that ties the numbers together in a co-ordinate framework of determinate character. The number series entails the mathematical function that gives rise to such numbers, just as the mathematical function entails the numbers to which it gives rise.

Mathematicians do not say they believe that the next number in the series is 'x'. If they have discovered the nature of the function generating the series, they will correctly produce each succeeding number of the series because they know something ... something that is not present in mere belief.

In many ways, the nature of the issues surrounding problems in mathematical induction are reflected in a variety of other problems in science, history, philosophy and so on. In all of these cases, one often is given a set of particularizations that represent data, information and facts drawn from different dimensions of experience. One, then, attempts to determine the character of the principle(s) that tie(s) the various particularizations together in the form in which they are experientially engaged. One who gains insight into, or sees how, the given data fits together is able to deduce further particularizations from the character of the pattern discerned, just as one who discovers the character of the mathematical function that underlies a series of numbers is able to deduce further particulars in the number sequence.

In each context of deduction, the data embodied in the form of particularizations (either as premises or conclusions) entails the character of the principles or aspects of reality that give rise to them. These particularizations are abstractions or characterizations or symbolic representations or descriptions of such principles or aspects.

In other words, when an understanding is correct, then the character of the particularizations being expressed through that understanding is a function of, or shaped by, the character of the reality that gives rise to such particularizations. Indeed, because this is so, one has some hope of using the character of the particularizations

being manifested in one's phenomenological field of experience to form a conceptual context through which one might be able to detect the nature of the character of that which makes phenomenological particularizations of such character possible.

Thus, this is similar to the case in which one uses the character of the particular numbers of a series to form a conceptual context through which one might be able to detect the character of the function that generates the various numbers of the sequence and, therefore, makes them possible in the form in which they are manifested in the series with which one has started one's investigation of discovery. In both cases, true understanding (i.e., knowledge) is not a matter of jumping to conclusions across an inferential chasm for which no logical or evidential bridge exists.

To whatever extent one can achieve a true understanding, this is because one has been able to entertain ideas or concepts whose combined character provided enough of a demarcated framework or conceptual geometry to permit one to establish congruencies between various aspects of one's experiential field and various aspects of that which helps shape or structure the field's character. These congruencies give expression to, among other things, the character of the conceptual geometry that forms the links of understanding between certain focal facets of the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field and a variety of horizontal considerations that not only evidentially bear upon these focal facets but that form a context upon which one can reflect critically in order to seek to establish a hermeneutical account of why those focal facets have the character they do.

As a result, a true understanding is not simply a matter of linking one's understanding with certain aspects of the phenomenology of one's experiential field. One's understanding also must be able to meet the demands of the interrogative imperative that arises: a) out of the horizontal considerations that surround the focal themes to which one is attending; and, b) in relation to various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which an individual is attempting to make identifying reference through the individuation or characterization of those aspects.

Furthermore, this interrogative imperative is itself an expression of a certain dimension of the phenomenology of the experiential field. This dimension seeks to determine why any given focal or horizontal facet of the phenomenology of the experiential field has the character it does or what such a structure means or how it can be of value, and so on.

To the extent an aspect of reality is actually knowable, then some manner of epistemic bridge exists that could link the character of certain facets of the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field with the character of certain facets of that (presumably, some facet of ontology) which makes such a phenomenology of determinate character possible. The epistemic task then becomes one of trying to identify the structure of this bridge amidst the experiential entries that appear over time in one's phenomenology or in our collective phenomenologies.

Without a proper identification or recognition of the character of this bridge, there will be a logical/experiential gap. This gap exists in the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field with respect to the focal/horizontal dialectic of any hermeneutical framework that arises in such phenomenology concerning the character of the reality underlying that phenomenology and to which an individual is attempting to make an identifying reference through attending to such phenomenology. This logical and/or experiential gap prevents an individual from claiming that she or he knows the character or structure or nature of the facet of phenomenology (or underlying reality) in which the gap is present, and this remains the case even if an individual's claims concerning the facet in question should turn out to be correct.

The above sense of tautology, that is an unavoidable feature of what true understanding or knowledge entails in no way implies one must assume one's conclusions in order for one's understanding to be true. The emphasis in the foregoing discussion has been to indicate that whenever knowledge exists, it is functionally dependent on someone's having recognized or realized the character of the aspect of reality that is contained in, or expressed by, the character of the premises, ideas or concepts one is entertaining as one works toward establishing a "connecting insight" in the proper sense of this term ...

i.e., that which accurately reflects the character of the link(s) among various aspects of reality within the structural character of one's phenomenological field.

Differentiating Between Understanding and True Understanding

On the basis of the foregoing considerations, one now can return to Malcolm's analysis and understand, to some extent, how Malcolm might have created some unnecessary difficulties for himself through his characterization of the issue concerning whether or not an individual actually can distinguish between belief and knowledge within himself. More specifically, Malcolm focuses on cases (4) and (5) (see the fourth or fifth page of this essay) in order to try to establish that an individual has no grounds for being able to claim he or she can differentiate between belief and knowledge.

Thus, in case (4), Malcolm stipulates that an individual: a) claims there is water in the gorge; b) gives a reason for the claim; and, Malcolm also indicates that: c) water is actually found in the gorge. In case (5), Malcolm says conditions a) and b) of case (4) remain the same, but condition c) is changed such that no water is found in the gorge.

Malcolm's argument appears to run as follows: because the only difference between case (4) and case (5) is the water's presence or absence in the gorge, there is no material on which an individual can reflect that would allow an individual to determine whether his or her claim was a matter of belief or knowledge. Unfortunately, Malcolm has left out all of the important data that would generate the details of an actual three-dimensional (or n-dimensional) epistemological setting.

In this latter kind of setting, individuals who are making claims would have some ongoing or past facets of the phenomenologies of their respective experiential fields to which they could attend and in relation to which they could make claims, and on the basis of which they might be able to differentiate between whether or not a given claim was a matter of belief or knowledge. Malcolm has taken the limiting case [i.e., case (5)] in which an individual makes a "knowledge" claim that turns out to be incorrect, and, then, treats this limiting case as being the paradigm that defines the basic

characteristics determining the status of all knowledge claims made under all circumstances.

Given the way Malcolm has restricted the context of the gorge example, an individual caught up in a situation like case (5) would not be able to distinguish between belief and knowledge once someone had demonstrated to him or her that no water existed in the gorge. On the other hand, an individual's inability to distinguish between belief and knowledge is not tied just to the limiting case as Malcolm describes it.

More specifically, in the instance of case (4), if one's claim is correct and if the understanding on which the claim is based is also correct in the sense of being rooted in an appropriate sort of connecting insight, then one would have a basis for distinguishing between belief and knowledge. This basis would be according to the nature of one's present understanding and how that understanding (even if it had not been confirmed, yet, as correct) differed from other contexts of understanding in which the dimension of connecting insight was absent.

The fact one might have been wrong before when one believed one's understanding had been correct is largely independent of what one believes now about one's current understanding -- providing one's understanding is correct. The only way in which previous errors might affect the current situation is in the level of confidence one had toward one's present understanding.

That is, one might tend to distrust one's current understanding if one had a habit of making mistakes with sufficient frequency, and, subsequently one developed a certain degree of indecision or uncertainty concerning the accuracy of one's subsequent understandings. But, what one believes about one's understanding must be kept distinct from the understanding itself that is true or false independently of what one believes about it.

In fact, one well might contend that the realization of the foregoing distinction -- and the accompanying recognition that one's understanding is correct, or not, independently of beliefs about, and attitudes towards, such understanding -- is what allows one, to some degree, to come to appreciate the potential difference between a true understanding and a mere "understanding". Over the course of time,

one develops a phenomenological sense of the differences between: a) "understandings" that turn out to be incorrect but that one originally thought to be correct; and b) understandings that are true irrespective of what one believed about them originally. Even though this phenomenological sense might not be definitive and clear-cut in all situations, it does provide a background against which differentiations concerning belief and knowledge can be determined in many more cases than Malcolm's analysis would lead one to believe.

According to Malcolm:

"There is only one way that Prichard could defend his position. He would have to say that in case (4) you did not know that there would be water. And it is obvious that he would have said this. But this is false. It is an enormously common usage of language to say, in commenting upon just such an incident as (4), "He knew that the gorge would be dry because he had seen water flowing there that morning." It is a usage that all of us are familiar with. We so employ "know" and "knew" every day of our lives.' We do not think of our usage as being loose or incorrect -- and it is not. As philosophers we may be surprised to observe that it can be that the knowledge that 'p' is true should differ from the belief that 'p' is true only in the respect that in one case 'p' is true and in the other false. But that is the fact."(page 60)

Leaving aside the issue of whether Malcolm has correctly assessed what Prichard could and would reply in response to Malcolm's criticisms, when Malcolm's above quote is juxtaposed next to the discussion of the previous 20 pages, Malcolm appears to be wrong in claiming "the knowledge that 'p' is true should differ from the belief that 'p' is true only in the respect that in one case 'p' is true and in the other false."

One can agree that a claim must be true in order to be considered as a candidate that has the status of knowledge. What is also equally necessary is a certain kind of understanding that stands behind or surrounds the epistemic claim.

The understanding associated with mere belief lacks the connecting insight that characterizes the understanding of knowledge.

Thus, contrary to what Malcolm seems to maintain, belief can be true and still not be knowledge because it lacks the kind of understanding that provides the necessary connecting insight into the nature of the truth at issue.

Although Malcolm contends that use of the terms "know" and "knew", as described in his quote, is an "enormously common usage of language" and "we do not think of [such] usage as being loose or incorrect", he makes a fundamental mistake in taking the common practice of linguistic usage as the standard or criterion against which truth or correctness might be measured. Whether, or not, this kind of usage is common or not is beside the point.

This is so because as it stands (i.e., as Malcolm has described it) this kind of usage can be tremendously elliptical. In other words, it tends to leave out important epistemological dimensions of the concrete or existential situations in which this sort of linguistic usage occurs.

As a result, and in contradistinction to Malcolm's position, such usage can be both loose and incorrect if an individual making those claims lacked the necessary connecting insight that could back up his or her claims. Moreover, as stated previously, even if an individual's claim turned out to be correct, he or she would not be entitled, legitimately, to claim knowledge unless an individual understood, in some minimal fashion, the epistemic relationship that necessarily tied the given claim to the object, issue, phenomenon or process about which the claim was made.

Malcolm's Two Senses of Know

Malcolm's errors appear to cause him to adopt a somewhat peculiar and, ultimately, untenable distinction between two senses of "know". Malcolm refers to these two as the "strong" and "weak" senses of "know".

While developing the foregoing distinction, Malcolm continues to play off against some ideas of H. A. Prichard. For instance, Prichard had used the idea of proving that the sum of the interior angles of any given triangle is equal to two right angles as an example of how one

can differentiate between knowledge and belief, and, therefore, how one cannot mistake what one knows from what one believes.

According to Prichard, one does not believe one knows that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is equal to the sum of the two right angles. Instead, one 'knows' this is the case, and part of what is meant by saying one knows this is the case is an accompanying knowledge that precludes the possibility of there being anything that could be inconsistent with the idea that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is equal to the sum of two right angles.

Malcolm responds to Prichard's position at this point by maintaining:

"When Prichard says that "nothing can exist which is incompatible with" the truth of that proposition, is he prophesizing that no one will ever have the ingenuity to construct a flawless-looking argument against it? I believe not. When Prichard says that "we know (and implies that he knows) that the proposition is true and know that nothing can exist that is incompatible with its being true, he is not making any predictions to what the future will bring in the way of arguments or measurements. On the contrary, he is asserting that nothing that the future might bring could ever count as evidence against the proposition. He is implying that he would not call anything "evidence" against it. He is using "know" in what I shall call its "strong" sense. "Know" is used in this sense when a person's statement "I know that p is true" implies that the person who makes the statement would look upon nothing whatever as evidence that p is false."(page 62)

Malcolm goes on to develop the "weak" sense of "know" by describing a hypothetical situation in which a school boy who experienced a certain amount of doubt about the truth of the Pythagorean Theorem would ask an adult if the latter were sure the theorem in question was actually true. Malcolm elaborates further in the following way.

If the adult replies in the affirmative to the boy's query and claims that the former knows the theorem is true -- even though the adult might not be capable of furnishing the proof that would be required to

substantiate his or her claim -- then this claim is an expression of "know" in the "weak" sense. In using "know" in this sense, an individual, Malcolm argues, is not committing himself or herself irrevocably to the truth of an epistemic claim irrespective of whatever evidence or demonstrations or proofs come to an individual's attention subsequent to the claim. An individual is open to the possibility there might exist some data, either in the present or that might be discovered in the future that effectively might undermine his or her current claim of knowledge.

There appears to be an implicit charge of blind dogmatism in Malcolm's argument that is being leveled against Prichard. Malcolm is, in effect, saying that a person who uses "know" in Prichard's sense -- or, more accurately, what Malcolm alleges to be Prichard's sense of 'know' -- would be impervious to all data, evidence, proofs, and demonstrations that might have a bearing on a given issue as long as that data were contrary to an individual's claim of knowledge. Such an individual, according to Malcolm, would not be disposed to count any data whatever as evidence as long as the data were perceived to be in opposition to one's stated claim. Apparently this kind of data would simply be dismissed preemptively as inapplicable, improper, unrelated, or simply wrong.

Undoubtedly, individuals do exist who equate the idea of knowledge with a dogmatic unwillingness to call or treat anything as legitimate evidence that might tend to undermine or contradict what one claims to know. Yet, this kind of conceptualization really might not do justice to at least part of what Prichard might be getting at.

To be sure, if one actually knew -- let us assume -- something, then he or she very likely will reject interpretations of evidence that are antagonistic to what the individual claims to know. Nonetheless, if a person really knows what he or she claims to, then an individual should be able to account, satisfactorily, for the evidence in question in terms of his or her own knowledge claim. Moreover, if an individual cannot do this, there would be some grounds for arguing that, perhaps, that individual really didn't know what he or she claimed to know after all.

However, under the foregoing circumstances, one could not conclude, automatically, that an individual didn't know what he or she

claimed to. This is so since the person's inability to deal with the evidence in question only might mean that an individual didn't know or understand the complete nature of the relationship between his or her claim and the given, seemingly contrary evidence. In other words, some – but not all – of a given set of circumstances might fall outside of, or beyond, the realms of the connecting insight that formed the core of an individual's knowledge claim ... in other words, the individual knew some things but not other things concerning the situation in question.

Another possibility is that a person might not be so much incapable of answering or responding to the evidence in question as much as he or she was unwilling, for whatever reason, to provide an answer or response. For example, a mystic who claims – legitimately let us assume -- to know certain things and, yet, refrains from disclosing to others what he or she knows might very well know what he or she claims is the case although that individual might never offer - - for reasons of his or her own -- any demonstration concerning the legitimacy of the knowledge at issue.

One cannot assume a knowledge claim is an inherently all-encompassing phenomenon. It is defined by the limits of the parameters of understanding from which such a claim is generated.

In any event, knowledge is not a function of what one calls evidence. It is a function of what, in fact, is evidence correctly understood or interpreted.

One who claims to know need not be pledging eternal and unwavering commitment to a given understanding as being true, regardless of what evidence, proofs or reasons are brought forth. Conceivably, this individual might be claiming, minimally speaking, something along the following lines.

In view of the available data, facts, demonstrations and so on, there appears to be nothing existing within this body of evidence that can controvert the basic understanding that frames and stands behind the knowledge claim. More specifically, in the case of Prichard's triangle example, one is saying apparently, that given what we mean by triangle (namely, a three-sided, two dimensional, straight lined, enclosed figure), there is no logically possible way to demonstrate at the present time that a triangle could exhibit properties other than

what is currently understood to be true. Moreover, among these properties is the "fact" that the sum of the interior angles of the triangle necessarily equals the sum of two right angles.

However, if one defined "straight" as the shortest distance between two points, one might run into problems with some of the newer geometries of curved space that present the possibility of a triangle-like figure having interior angles whose sum is greater than the sum of two right angles. Therefore, in the present circumstances, one might want to define "straight" as "being without curvature", although such a characterization of "straight" could still raise questions about how one determined whether some line did or did not have curvature.

In any event, if a proof were to be forthcoming that placed in doubt "knowledge" about the nature of Euclidian triangles, then one obviously would have to acknowledge this evidence and either revise or retract the previous claims. On the other hand, as long as no contradictory proof or evidence has been produced, there seems to be nothing to legitimately prevent one from continuing to claim one "knows".

The foregoing would be the case as long as the requisite connecting insight or understanding were present to enable an individual making the claims to demonstrate, to some degree, that the claim of knowledge was backed up with something of conceptual substance. To the extent epistemic claims can effectively withstand challenges, then, an individual making these claims retains the right to maintain the claim to knowledge.

Obviously, there might be considerable controversy about whether or not a given challenge had been withstood successfully. Yet, this possibility does not alter the basic philosophical point being made.

In other words, irrespective of whatever problems there might be about deciding what constitutes an effective or adequate defense against a conceptual or evidential challenge, we would expect truth to prevail over what is false. Nonetheless, this intuitive expectation can be muddled considerably by the numerous extraneous factors that could affect the politics of epistemology and that have often manifested themselves historically. Consequently, the sense of

"prevail" intended here is an ideal of sorts toward which "objective" hermeneutics, in the long run, strives.

Where knowledge truly exists for an individual, then to be other than committed to that understanding that is accurately reflective of the truth would seem to be pointless. In this sense, there is an unavoidable dimension of dogmatism, so to speak, in the case of instances of true understanding, for, in purely formal terms, one might wonder what reason or evidence possibly could be given that would cause one to forsake the truth and embrace its opposite. This sort of dogmatism, however, which is a natural concomitant of any instance in which some given truth, or aspect thereof, is recognized or reflected within one's understanding, is a much different sort of dogmatism than the kind that Malcolm seems to be talking about.

Malcolm is concerned with those kinds of epistemic claims which - though wrong or unsubstantiated or questionable -- nonetheless are unwaveringly held despite being confronted by a wide variety of conflicting or contradictory data. Unfortunately, Malcolm does not appear to consider the possibility that a somewhat "dogmatic" commitment to a true (we are assuming for the sake of argument) understanding is quite defensible.

After all is said and done, there really are only two broad possibilities that bear upon the foregoing issue. First, instances in which one claims to know what is true and, via connecting insight, understands the character of that truth. In this case, one's understanding is correct and cannot be overthrown, although this understanding, subsequently, might be modified and/or expanded. Second, instances in which one currently claims to know something that while warranted for the time being (i.e., it represents a tenable, though not necessarily a true, interpretation of the available data), will, in time, be over-thrown by arguments and data that cannot be handled successfully within the framework of the character of the understanding currently underlying one's epistemic claim.

Until the occasion or means of demonstrating the untenable nature of this latter kind of understanding actually arises, there will be no acknowledged mode of public consensus through which one could differentiate between true knowledge and simulated knowledge. Be this as it might, the absence (or, for that matter, the presence) of

publicly agreed upon standards or criteria of epistemic judgment really does not affect what an individual actually knows.

On the other hand, if an individual does know, then there is no legitimate reason for this person to accept an interpretation of evidence that runs counter to his or her position. As indicated earlier, one might suppose that an individual who really "knew" would, in principle, be able to effectively refute any given contraindicative interpretation by showing the error or problems of such an interpretation.

Of course, pointing out the errors or difficulties of a given conceptual challenge does not prove that someone who claims to know something does, in fact, know that something. However, from the point of view of an epistemological outsider (i.e., someone who is not privy to the character of the phenomenology of some knowledge claim), the observed capacity of an individual to meet challenges -- at least apparently -- is certainly consistent with what would appear to be a legitimate knowledge claim.

Malcolm's distinction between the "weak" and "strong" senses of "know" tends to collapse upon examination. To begin with, the willingness of someone to acknowledge the possibility of error with respect to a given knowledge claim -- which constitutes Malcolm's "weak" sense of "knowing" -- need not be a matter of knowing at all.

The only instance in which such a case of understanding would give expression to a case of knowing would be if one actually did understand something correctly but was uncertain of the veracity of one's understanding, and therefore, was willing to accept the possibility of error in relation to one's claim of knowledge. In these instances, the problem would not be a matter of an absence of knowledge in such a person. The problem would be a matter of that individual's attitude toward his or her understanding ... an attitude of tentativeness and lack of confidence.

However, in all those cases in which one actually did not know, then claims of knowledge notwithstanding, one is not dealing with knowledge per se but with the belief one has knowledge. Moreover, this belief subsequently might be shown to be unwarranted.

Consequently, Malcolm's notion of the "weak" sense of "know" is, at best, really only a specialized subset of the epistemic states that, legitimately, can be classed as knowledge inasmuch as they entail or give expression to true understanding. At worst, the "weak" sense of "know" actually has nothing to do with knowledge since it encompasses mistakes, errors, logical lacunae, and so on. Where these sorts of problems exist, one undermines the possibility of having a true understanding.

Previously, Malcolm's "strong" sense of "know" was shown to be a somewhat shallow, if not distorted, analysis of the character of what "know" means. Naturally, one always must be ready to admit that one illegitimately has conflated or confused simulated knowledge claims with actual knowledge.

As a result, where errors or mistakes are uncovered in the fabric of one's understanding concerning a given knowledge claim, then one must be prepared to admit one didn't know after all. Nevertheless, in the case of 'real' knowledge, there is no need to admit the possibility of error. This is so since the very idea of knowledge precludes the possibility of error ... at least as far as that knowledge extends.

On the other hand, when one believes one's understanding is correct, but one is not certain this is so, there is nothing wrong with maintaining a degree of caution in stating one's claims. There also is nothing wrong with being prepared to admit one's understanding could be mistaken.

Nevertheless, this kind of caution or preparedness is not sufficient reason to differentiate between two senses of "know" in the way Malcolm is attempting to do. There is only one species of knowing, and that is in the sense of the sort of true understanding that has been outlined previously in this essay.

The problem in instances where one has some degree of uncertainty concerning an understanding is not a matter of what constitutes the character of knowledge. The problem is in trying to determine whether or not one's understanding is an instance of true understanding.

Difficulties might arise when one tries to decide (assuming one is very honest with oneself) whether one actually knew (i.e., understood

correctly) about a given object or phenomenon or whether one was only making an informed judgment. Unlike the former case, an informed judgment lacks the crucial dimension of connecting insight that ties together the various facets of an epistemic situation in an accurate manner.

In other words, sometimes one is not able to easily distinguish between, on the one hand, a true connecting insight and, on the other hand, a belief or set of beliefs that give expression to an understanding whose character simulates knowing without actually entailing true understanding. This is the case because one of the problems in making these distinctions is that most beliefs encompass dimensions of "knowing about".

For example, someone who was not very familiar with the gorge region still might know certain data about the gorge without actually possessing an understanding of all the factors that might affect whether or not water would be in the gorge at an indicated time. Thus, an individual might know he or she saw water in the gorge when going past it in the morning. An individual also might know about the water gates in Mr. Thoreau's dam and whether or not they were open at a certain time of day. However, an individual might now know of a variety of other factors that could be of significance in determining whether or not water was in the gorge at any given time.

Therefore, because an individual did not know about these other factors, an individual's understanding would not exhibit the properties of what is meant by the notion of connecting insight. In other words, an individual did not have sufficient understanding of the character of the context being considered to be able to draw together all the pertinent factors, influences, and forces inherent in that context such that this 'drawing together' accurately reflected the character (or parts thereof) of the situation to which he or she was attending.

As a result, the person in question might not have taken into account Mr. Thoreau's behavior pattern. Or, the individual might have failed to consider that some beavers were about finished in constructing their dam that would have the effect, when completed, of diverting water away from the gorge. Or, an individual might have failed to realize rain fell very infrequently at this time of year. Consequently, water levels were generally low, and, therefore, water

tended to disappear fairly quickly into various subterranean caverns. Or, if an individual neglected to consider anything else that in the course of normal events reasonably might be supposed to influence or affect whether water would, or would not, be in the gorge, then one seems justified in contending that this individual really did not have a true understanding of the character of the water-in-the-gorge situation.

Rather, in the foregoing set of circumstances, an individual had a certain "knowledge about" the gorge region. This knowledge 'about' the gorge permitted him or her to develop or generate a belief whose character was rooted in a limited amount of correct information.

Simply because one saw water in the gorge during a morning walk might not provide one with enough information from which one defensibly could infer water will be in the gorge later in the day. This would be defensible only if it were the case that, in the course of normal affairs, if water is in the gorge in the morning, then water will be in the gorge in the evening.

Similarly, the fact one saw the water gates of Mr. Thoreau's dam open in the morning might not provide sufficient information to permit an individual tenably to infer that water will be in the gorge in the afternoon or evening. One can infer this tenably only if, in the course of normal affairs, the water gates are never closed during the day, and there are no other factors that bear upon whether or not water will be in the gorge at any given time.

As a result, in instances where one's understanding does not encompass a minimally sufficient range of experiential possibilities that tend to frame what constitutes the course of normal events in the gorge system, then the ideas and/or data one entertains (in relation to the question of whether water will be in the gorge at a specified time of the day) and the concomitant beliefs emerging from this entertainment process will both lack the dimension of connecting insight. This is the kind of insight that makes the understanding underlying a belief an instance of actual knowledge instead of just a belief containing some correct information or accurate data (i.e., the dimension of "knowing about").

In the Course of 'Normal' Events

During the last several pages, the terms "normal events" and "normal affairs" have been used on a number of occasions. These terms have been employed in order to avoid requiring a person to have to consider all kinds of highly unlikely or improbably situations before being able to say one knew something to be the case.

This precaution is taken because, as previously discussed, a skeptic could argue that all sorts of things might have happened unbeknown to the person making a claim about water being in the gorge. The skeptic could argue further that an individual failed to take into consideration these possibilities, and, thus, the person could not claim legitimately that she or he knew water was in the gorge.

For instance, a skeptic might raise the following 'possibilities'. Purple (color of your choice) men (gender of your choice) from Pluto (planet-like object of your choice) could have landed near the gorge and sucked up all the water through a nozzle on the ship's underside. Or, perhaps a demon might have deceived one into thinking there was water in the gorge when no water actually was present.

Alternatively, an undetected earthquake could have altered the geology of the region and somehow prevented water from going through the gorge. On the other hand, somebody might have had a picnic and dumped so many pop cans into the gorge mouth that water couldn't pass through to the gorge. The possibilities are virtually endless.

Any context has about it a variety of usual features that constitute the nature of this sort of context. This is not to say that variations or the unanticipated might never occur.

Nevertheless, one can develop, over time, certain parameters of possibility that characterize the nature of the phenomenon, process, condition or object under consideration. In using the notion of "know" (in the sense of true understanding comprised of the right kind of connecting insight(s)), one should keep the following considerations in mind. Part of what is encompassed by the idea of connecting insight is that the issue, phenomenon, object, context or process in question is being entertained in terms of the possibilities that, in the vast majority of cases, appear to have a bearing upon that to which one is attending

and with which one is attempting to establish an epistemological relationship.

Recognition of the parameters concerning the character of those possibilities takes place over a period of time and is drawn from a variety of experiential contexts that are demarcated according to one's characterization or individuation of those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that give expression to the possibilities that one comes to recognize in time. At least, one will come to recognize such possibilities if one's manner of characterization is congruent with, or accurately reflective of, the character of the possibilities being considered.

In effect, one's particularization and individuation of various aspects of the phenomenology become experiential co-ordinate points. These points are tied together into a conceptual geometry of somewhat determinate character according to the nature of the belief or the nature of the connecting insight that structures and orients that conceptual geometry's character.

The greater the degree of congruency [between: a) the character of one's manner of individuating any given experiential set of co-ordinate points to which one is making identifying reference within the context of the phenomenology of one's current experiential field; and, b) the character of that aspect of the field that one is trying to characterize] then, the more closely does one's understanding approach an accurate reflection of the aspect being considered. Similarly, the greater the degree of congruence [in the hermeneutical sense that bears a 'family resemblance' (cf., Wittgenstein) to mathematical congruence but is different] between b) (the character of a given aspect of the experiential field) and c) (the character of that which makes such structural character possible), then the more accurately does a given aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field express or reflect the character of that (i.e., reality or some part thereof) to which the given aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field being attended to is making identifying reference.

By means of one's accurate characterization of various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field, one lays a foundation for coming to recognize and understand the character of the parameters of the range of "events" and "affairs" that are to be construed as

"normal". This 'normality' will be construed in terms of the manner in which a given object, process, phenomenon and so on, manifests itself during the phenomenological instances that mark an individual's encounters with such aspects of reality.

On the basis of the foregoing, one might envision the possibility of there being more than one sense of characterization associated with the idea of "normal events" or "normal affairs" that could arise in relation to some aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field, or underlying reality, to which one or more individuals are attending over time. The different senses would be tied functionally to the nature of various experiential encounters and to the manner in which such encounters were characterized by the different individuals being considered.

In other words, different people -- or one and the same individual at different times -- experientially might intersect various facets of the range of possibilities capable of being manifested by an aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field or the underlying aspect of reality that makes such a field possible. Consequently, different individuals (or one individual at different times) might develop alternative senses of the character of that to which they are (or one is) making identifying references. The sense of the character that emerges will reflect, in part, the portion or portions of the range of possibilities they (one) happened to encounter experientially on a given occasion or over a series of occasions.

At the same time, the more extensive one's experiential framework, the more likely one will have encountered a fuller range of possibilities that are capable of being manifested by a given aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field or underlying reality on which one is focusing. Therefore, the more extensive the range of experiential encounters for two or more people in relation to some aspect of reality -- whether phenomenological or metaphysical -- the more likely there will be a congruence between two states of affairs and the respective character of the understandings of the people involved in such a situation.

On the one hand, based on a set of experiential encounters of a certain nature, there is the character of what one person considers the range of "normal events" or "normal affairs" with respect to the aspect

of reality to which identifying reference is being made. On the other hand, based on another set of experiential encounters, there is the character of what others consider to be the range of "normal events" or "normal affairs" in relation to the aspect of reality to which identifying reference is being made.

Through the collective or intersubjective recognition of the congruence of structural character among an array of experiential contexts, a plausible foundation can be established from which one might posit the possibility that a variety of people each encountered similar aspects of reality covering a mutually recognized or agreed upon range of "normal events" or "normal affairs". Alternatively, where there exists a juxtaposition of: a) a certain amount of congruence of structural character among various perspectives concerning the range of "normal events" in relation to some aspect of reality (phenomenological or metaphysical); as well as, b) a certain amount of disparity with respect to the character of the range of "normal events" associated with the same aspect of reality, then one could consider drawing up a new sense of, or insight into, the character of the aspect of reality being considered. This would lead to a new sense of the character of the range covered by "normal events" in relation to the aspect of reality being attended to.

As suggested previously, the broader one's experiential horizons in a particular context, the more likely it is that one's epistemological approach to the issue under consideration will encompass a wider and deeper appreciation of what constitutes the character of the normal course of events with respect to the context in question than will be case with respect to the approach of one who is less familiar with, less experienced in, and less knowledgeable about the context . With such an enhanced sensitivity to the peculiarities, as well as regular features, of the context being attended to, there develops a growing sense of, or insight into, what seems to "normally" belong with, or be an expression of, the character of the given phenomenological/metaphysical context being identifyingly referred to across a wide variety of experiential circumstances.

In developing this kind of sensitivity, one might commit errors with respect to the assigning of properties, factors, phenomena, and so on, to the character of the context being investigated. In other words,

one might assign properties and so on which really do not belong to a given context because they are artificial artifacts or coincidental circumstances that somehow ontologically touched upon, or were contiguous with, the context being considered. As such, these properties had no essential, lasting, regular or inherent relationship with the context in question.

For example, suppose one were at the gorge site and began to eat, but as one began to eat, the water stopped flowing. Conceivably, one could believe that perhaps eating had something to do with the water stoppage that occurred. If one continued to observe the behavior and characteristics of the gorge system over time and across a wide variety of circumstances, one well might come to the conclusion that eating was an artificial artifact that only coincidentally touched upon the issue of whether or not water would be found in the gorge.

As a result, eating would come to be seen as having no essential, regular, lasting or inherent effect upon what was the actual character of the gorge system and the factors that affected the gorge in the course of "normal events". Indeed, part of what generating an appropriate connecting insight is about goes hand in hand with developing the sort of demarcation framework that will allow one to correctly distinguish between essential and incidental -- or significant and peripheral -- features of experience in relation to some given phenomenon, etc..

By establishing the above sort of framework, one has an opportunity to entertain different experiential possibilities within an epistemological context whose horizons are defined to some extent by the very properties and features whose character one must discern if one is actually to understand the nature of that to which one is attending. On the other hand, if one chooses a demarcation framework whose character is either too narrow or too broad, the choices one makes with respect to such demarcation issues might prevent one from considering the features that are necessary to generate or come up with the kind of connecting insight that represents a true understanding of the character of the context to which identifying reference is being made.

In the former instance (i.e., too narrow a criterion of selection), one unnecessarily might have excluded from one's demarcation

framework essential or significant features of experience that must be taken into consideration if one is to be able to generate the appropriate sort of connecting insight. In other words, such features must be taken into consideration if one is to construct a conceptual geometry consisting of the "right" sort of experiential co-ordinate points out of which -- given the requisite connecting insight concerning the character of the conceptual geometry's various experiential foci -- might emerge an understanding whose character is congruent with the character of that to which one's conceptual geometry is making identifying reference. What will constitute the "right" sort of experiential points from which a true understanding can emerge will differ, to a certain extent, from individual to individual, due to the differential penetrating power of varying levels of intelligence with respect to such experiential points of reference.

The other possibility mentioned previously (i.e., too broad a criterion of selection) would occur if one were to become lost amidst an overabundance of experiential co-ordinate points contained within one's conceptual geometry. This would happen if one were to make the criteria for one's method of selection of data for consideration too loose or inclusive.

Under these circumstances, one might camouflage, to some degree, the true identity of the character of that to which one's conceptual geometry is making identifying references. Thus, distortions might seep into the conceptual geometry one uses to structure, regulate and/or generate the character of many of the experiential features one is focusing upon in the phenomenology of one's experiential field.

In the case of the gorge issue, one might leave out from consideration, in one's framework of demarcation, factors (e.g., what bearing Mr. Thoreau's dam has on whether water is in the gorge) which legitimately can be seen as affecting whether or not water will be in the gorge. In this case, one automatically cuts oneself off from those aspects of experiential encounters and/or reality that must be taken into consideration if one is to acquire a proper epistemic foundation. Such a foundation is capable of providing the sort of conceptual geometry out of which a true understanding potentially might arise.

On the other hand, in the gorge issue, one might expand the horizontal parameters of one's framework of demarcation in an arbitrary manner without any plausible or defensible reasoning to substantiate one's expansion. For example, one might begin entertaining whether men from Pluto had visited the gorge region recently or whether perhaps demons had cast spells upon people that delude such people into believing water is in the gorge when it is not.

Under these circumstances, one would be creating conditions that make the emergence of a connecting insight very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. This is so because one is admitting into one's conceptual geometry experiential co-ordinate points that, when juxtaposed next to the other experiential co-ordinate points in the geometry, obscure or mask the character of that to which one is making identifying reference.

In effect, the extraneous or arbitrary experiential reference points (e.g., purple men from Pluto) impede the formation of a connecting insight that is capable of tying together various facets of one's conceptual geometry. As a result, such arbitrary reference points hinder (if not prevent) the development of an understanding whose character is, to some extent, reflective of the character of that to which the focus of the phenomenology of one's experiential field is attempting to make identifying reference.

The nature of this impediment consists in the way an extraneous or arbitrary experiential co-ordinate point of reference resists being tied to other experiential co-ordinate points of reference in any consistent or defensible manner. Consequently, these extraneous or arbitrary co-ordinate points resist becoming part of any congruence relationship capable of accurately reflecting the character of that to which one is attempting to make identifying reference.

This is the case because the extraneous elements prevent one from developing a proper mode of demarcating or characterizing the various experiential co-ordinate points of reference in one's conceptual geometry out of which congruence must emerge. Moreover, to the extent these extraneous or arbitrary experiential points of reference do become part of a would-be congruence relationship, their presence in this sort of relationship undermines and

distorts the quality of the reflective properties of the phenomenological side of the congruence relationship.

If one is too inclusive in establishing one's framework of demarcation (by entertaining just any implausible experiential possibility that a skeptic might wish to throw out for consideration), then there tend to be too many essentially unrelated experiential possibilities. As a result, one will experience considerable difficulty in attempting to discover a single, unifying, connecting insight that will cover all the experiential co-ordinate points of reference in one's conceptual geometry that are believed, or understood, to have a bearing on, or are related to, the character of that to which one is making identifying reference.

Therefore, one will encounter numerous obstacles in trying to tie or structure such co-ordinate points together in a way that accurately will reflect the character of that to which one currently is making identifying reference. Consequently, a true connecting insight is unlikely to appear because there will be too many experiential possibilities for which one will be unable manner of characterization.

Ideally, a framework of demarcation or conceptual geometry represents two goals. 1) Maximizing the number of relevant, essential, significant, accurately reflective features (or experiential co-ordinate points of reference) to be entertained in a given set of circumstances to which one is attending. 2) Minimizing the number of irrelevant, inessential, insignificant, inaccurately reflective features (or experiential co-ordinate points of reference) to be entertained.

Out of this kind of focal/horizontal structuring of the phenomenology of one's experiential field, a person struggles toward establishing an appropriate connecting insight(s). If this does occur, it will tie together the various related experiential coordinate points of one's conceptual geometry or framework of demarcation into an understanding whose character is accurately reflective of that to which one is attending.

2 + 2 = 4 Versus 92 x 16 = 1472

In pursuing his strong/weak sense of "know" thesis, Malcolm provides another example to complement his triangle discussion:

"Now consider propositions like $2 + 2 = 4$ and $7 + 5 = 12$. It is hard to think of circumstances in which it would be natural for me to say that I know that $2 + 2 = 4$, because no one ever questions it. Let us try to suppose, however, that someone whose intelligence I respect argues that certain developments in arithmetic have shown that $2 + 2$ does not equal 4. He writes out a proof of this in which I can find no flaw. Suppose that his demeanor showed me that he was in earnest. Suppose that several persons of normal intelligence became persuaded that his proof was correct and that $2 + 2$ does not equal 4. What would be my reaction? I should say "I can't see what is wrong with your proof; but it is wrong, because I know that $2 + 2 = 4$ ". Here I should be using "know" in its strongest sense. I should not admit that any argument or any future development in mathematics could show that it is false that $2 + 2 = 4$.

"The propositions $2 + 2 = 4$ and $92 \times 16 = 1472$ do not have the same status. There can be a demonstration that $2 + 2 = 4$. But a demonstration would be for me (and for any average person) only a curious exercise, a sort of game. We have no serious interest in proving that proposition. It does not need a proof. It stands without one, and would not fall if a proof went against it. The case is different with the proposition that $92 \times 16 = 1472$. We take an interest in the demonstration (calculation) because that proposition depends upon its demonstration.

"A calculation may lead me to reject it as false. But $2 + 2 = 4$ does not depend on its demonstration. It does not depend on anything!" (pages 63-64)

Malcolm goes on to argue that cases like $92 \times 16 = 1472$ represent instances of "know" in the "weak" sense because one is prepared, according to Malcolm, to allow for the possibility of error in calculation. In the case of $2 + 2 = 4$, however, one is confronted with a case of "know" in the "strong" sense because one is not prepared to

admit, according to Malcolm, any possibility but what one considers to be true (in this case, that $2 + 2 = 4$). Moreover, this would remain so regardless of future developments in mathematics and irrespective of any proofs that might be brought forth that show $2 + 2$ cannot equal 4.

Malcolm's arithmetic example (like his hypothetical response to Prichard's triangle example) seems somewhat strained. His asking one to assume that someone came up with a flawless-looking proof that $2 + 2$ does not equal 4 is like asking one to imagine someone showed one a flawless-looking proof that what is blue is really white. Malcolm is constructing his examples in such a way that no matter how unlikely they might sound or appear, one must treat them as "evidence" for Malcolm's point of view or thesis.

There is nothing wrong in anyone using the foregoing sort of examples as a way of indicating what one means by a particular idea or term (in this case, "know"). However, the value of such a process will be related directly to the extent to which that characterizing process reflects something accurate about the phenomenon or object or issue to which the 'meaning context' serves as a way of making identifying reference. Unfortunately, Malcolm's 'supposals' tend to overlook a number of possibilities that must be considered in order to arrive at a tenable conclusion about the value of entertaining Malcolm's examples in relation to the problem of coming to grips with the character of knowing.

For instance, how reasonable is one to suppose that someone could not only show one a proof that $2 + 2$ does equal 4, but that one also could find nothing wrong with this proof? This is not so much a problem of trying to imagine what the future of mathematics might bring. Instead, it is a case of attempting to imagine how one could take two stones, and, then, take two more stones, and, then, proceed to come up with something other than a collection of four stones (assuming, of course, nothing further is done to, or with, the stones except to keep them together in a collection).

Even if someone could show that $2 + 2$ does not equal 4, and even if one could not find anything wrong with the given proof, how many people, automatically, would reject this proof for no reason and continue to cling to the original idea that $2 + 2 = 4$, despite possessing no basis for legitimately holding that $2 + 2 = 4$? In addition, even if a

person were to cling unreasonably to the idea that $2 + 2 = 4$ in the face of a flawless-looking proof that contradicted the idea or belief that $2 + 2 = 4$, in what way could one tenably maintain that the claim concerning $2 + 2 = 4$ was a matter of knowledge and not of belief? In other words, on what basis would one choose between the two alternatives without having to ask some fundamental questions about what $2 + 2 = 4$ meant when evidence supposedly existed that indicated what we formerly took to be the case (i.e., that $2 + 2 = 4$) might, in fact, not be the case?

Without answers to these questions, the idea of knowing loses all sense of meaning as far as its being an idea that establishes a defensible relationship of congruency between the character of the would-be knower's understanding and the character of that which would be known. Without answers to these questions, the idea of 'knowing' becomes reducible to a question of whatever one chooses to believe ... irrespective of evidence, reason, proof, demonstration, argumentation or reality.

Intuitively speaking, knowledge seems to be -- at a minimum -- a matter of being able to express something of the character of the reality of some aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field. This expression of structural character would be in terms of the available experiential data that concerns the aspect to which one is attending. Without this dimension of an understanding whose character accurately reflects the character of that to which one is attempting to make identifying reference, there seems to be nothing that remains to be said about the idea of knowledge that lends any substantive character to that idea.

One has extreme difficulty trying to see how Malcolm can defensibly contend that $92 \times 16 = 1472$ depends on its demonstration when $2 + 2 = 4$ does not depend on any demonstration. If one can't demonstrate $2 + 2 = 4$, one can't possibly demonstrate, in a convincing fashion, that $92 \times 16 = 1472$. As indicated previously, for the average person, $2 + 2 = 4$ rests on the fact one can take any two objects and, then, take any other two objects and place them all together in one collectivity or set and proceed to challenge anyone to demonstrate how putting these objects together will come to more or less than four individual objects taken together.

One might define words in any number of ways such that the signs "plus (+)", "equals (=)", "2" and "4" represent functions and entities other than what is normally the case. Yet, when one considers the meaning of what addition is about in the course of "normal events" and when "+", "=", "2" and "4" all have their usual properties within the perspective from which the operation of addition is normally considered, then seemingly, $2 + 2 = 4$ is every bit as demonstrable as is $92 \times 16 = 1472$.

In fact, one could easily argue that $92 \times 16 = 1472$ depends on, among other things, $2 + 2$ equaling 4, and if the latter is not demonstrable, then neither is the former capable of being demonstrated -- no matter how many calculations one makes. This is the case because the very idea of calculation is rooted in demonstrating, among other things, that $2 + 2 = 4$.

If one opens up the latter statement to doubt, one also opens up the former calculation to doubt. After all, how could one argue that $92 \times 16 = 1472$ (as opposed to being equal to, say, 1372 or 1561 or 986 or an indefinite number of other possibilities) if one could not show that $2 + 2 = 4$?

Alternatively, if one can know $92 \times 16 = 1472$, this is only because one can know, among other things, that $2 + 2 = 4$. Because one can understand, through the emergence of an appropriate connecting insight, how $2 + 2 = 4$ expresses an accurate reflection of the character of the experiential context in which one takes four objects, two at a time, and creates a set encompassing all four objects -- nothing more and nothing less -- one has the beginning of an understanding of how 92×16 could be, and is, equal to 1472.

One does not cling to $2 + 2 = 4$ unthinkingly and blindly such that one will reject, out of hand, any and all conflicting or contradictory possibilities. The understanding underlying $2 + 2 = 4$ that is rooted in everyday concrete experience, represents a willingness to challenge any claim to the contrary.

However, the sense of "challenge" intended here is not that of an unexamined rejection. Rather, it is intended to be construed in the sense of examining the very basis of meaning itself as meaning attempts to reflect, express, represent or establish congruence with the character of that which makes such meaning-experiences possible.

If one is more inclined to check the accuracy of $92 \times 16 = 1472$ than to check the accuracy of $2 + 2 = 4$, this is not because the latter is necessarily an instance of "know" in the "strong" sense while the former is a case of "know" in the "weak" sense. Such an inclination might be because, on the one hand, $92 \times 16 = 1472$ is somewhat more complicated and involved than $2 + 2 = 4$, and, as a result, there are more opportunities for errors to be made. Furthermore, the idea of $2 + 2 = 4$ is much more rooted in everyday experience through which it is confirmed or reinforced again and again, whereas $92 \times 16 = 1472$ is much less a matter of everyday experience and, therefore, more subject to uncertainty and a subsequent need for confirmation.

Right after the previously cited quote, Malcolm states:

"... in the calculation that proves that $92 \times 16 = 1472$, there are steps that do not depend on any calculation (e.g., $2 \times 6 = 12$; $5 + 2 = 7$; $5 + 9 = 14$)" (page 83).

To be sure, certain calculations like $2 \times 6 = 12$ might be "automatic" in that they are done without conscious awareness or because they are simply pulled from memory intact (i.e., as a memorized 'fact').

Nevertheless, at some point or another, those calculations were demonstrated to an individual (with apples and oranges, perhaps). As a result, he or she knows how to proceed in making use of these calculations in subsequent arithmetical processes.

An individual's knowledge is rooted in having developed a series of connecting insights concerning certain kinds of past experiences. These insights and experiences could be drawn upon, if required, to work out the actual steps of what was involved in some given calculation of either a simple or more complex nature.

If an individual couldn't produce these steps when required to do so, then one seriously might question if he or she really knew how to proceed arithmetically in examples like $92 \times 16 = 1472$.

Conceivably, someone could be told to memorize certain arithmetical relationships without being given any concomitant understanding of what the character of the conceptual foundations are

that tie these relationships together. However, the foregoing exception notwithstanding, the general rule in virtually all cases is that where no arithmetic calculation is directly evident, it is usually implicitly involved. Moreover, quite frequently, when one questions or checks the correctness of an instance like $92 \times 16 = 1472$, one attempts to make explicit, to some extent, that which previously had been treated in an implicit or horizontal fashion.

In any event, there are not two senses of knowing involved in the foregoing examples. There is only one sense. This is the sense in which one says: because one can demonstrate that $2 + 2 = 4$, one can also show that $92 \times 16 = 1472$. To whatever extent one is skeptical of $2 + 2 = 4$, one will be skeptical of $92 \times 16 = 1472$.

In addition, contrary to what Malcolm contends in the previously cited quote, a legitimate proof against the idea that $2 + 2 = 4$ also would have ramifications for one's commitment to the belief (in the case one did not know one knew) that one's understanding concerning $2 + 2 = 4$ was true or accurate. If one's commitment to belief in the truth of $2 + 2 = 4$ would not fall in the face of a flawless-appearing proof to the contrary, then one might begin to wonder about just what was meant by "truth", "knowledge", "understanding" and "belief".

Malcolm's Ink Bottle

As many of the foregoing pages of discussion have indicated, Malcolm's distinction between two senses of "know" (i.e., "strong" and "weak"), as well as his tendency to argue one cannot distinguish between belief and knowledge by reflecting on the character of the experiential contexts in which belief and knowledge claims are made, both have the effect of pushing one to adopt positions that entail much more skepticism than might be necessary or warranted. As one last demonstration in support of this contention, let us examine Malcolm's "ink-bottle" example.

"Suppose that as I write this paper someone in the next room were to call out to me "I can't find an ink-bottle; is there one in the house?" I should reply "Here is an ink-bottle." If he said in a doubtful tone "Are you sure? I looked there before," I should reply "Yes, I know there is;

come and get it." Now could it turn out to be false that there is an ink-bottle directly in front of me on this desk? Many philosophers have thought so. They would say that many things could happen of such a nature that if they did happen it would be proved that I am deceived ... It could happen that when I next reach for this ink-bottle my hand should seem to pass through it and I should not feel the contact of any object. It could happen that in the next moment the ink-bottle will suddenly vanish from sight; or that I should find myself under a tree in the garden with no ink-bottle about; or that one or more persons should enter this room and declare with apparent sincerity that they see no ink-bottle on the desk ... Having admitted that these things could happen, am I compelled to admit that if they did happen then, it would be proved that there is no ink-bottle here now? Not at all! I could say that when my hand seemed to pass through the ink-bottle I should then, be suffering from hallucination; that if the ink-bottle suddenly vanished it would have miraculously ceased to exist; that the other persons were conspiring to drive me mad, or were themselves victims of remarkable concurrent hallucinations....

"Not only do I not have to admit that those extraordinary occurrences would be evidence that there is no ink-bottle here; the fact is that I do not admit it. There is nothing whatever that could happen in the next moment or the next year that would by me be called evidence that there is not an ink-bottle here now. No future experience or investigation could prove to me that I am mistaken. (pages 66-68).

A few pages later in his article Malcolm adds:

I wish to make it clear that my statement "Here is an ink bottle" is strictly about physical things and not about 'sensations', 'sense-data', or 'appearances'."(page 71)

This latter additional quote represents part of Malcolm's attempt to respond to those philosophers who maintain that a distinction must be made between statements about sense perception and statements about physical things, and that the former kind of statement should

not be confused with the latter kind of statement. Some philosophers might go so far as to say that one really only can know one's sense data, and the physical world, as such, is colored by, or filtered through, this sense data that is at least one step removed from the "real" world.

Malcolm wishes to emphasize that in his "strong" sense of "know" he is not talking about sense data or appearances but about physical reality itself. He is not talking about what "appears" to be an ink-bottle. Rather, he is talking about, or so he claims, what "is" an ink-bottle, and if he were talking about "appearances" or "sense-data", he would not be using the "strong" sense of "know".

Even though on any given occasion one's statements actually might be about real physical things, these statements are simultaneously about appearances and sensations. Furthermore, there is not necessarily anything inherently contradictory about maintaining that statements can, at one and the same time, express truth about, on the one hand, sensations and appearances while, on the other hand, also accurately reflect various aspects of the character of the reality for which the sensations serve as mediating reference points. After all, it is only when one's hermeneutic of experience (which sensations, along with emotions, imagination, and rational faculties help shape and structure) correctly reflects the nature of some aspect of reality's character that there is congruency of sorts between the character of what one understands to be true and the character of some aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field or of some aspect of that (i.e., reality) which makes a phenomenological field of such character possible.

One can undergo psychotic episodes or hallucinatory interludes or experience optical illusions. An individual also can, and does, make errors of all kinds: perceptual, sensory, ideational, emotional and evaluative. The horizontal presence of these possibilities means a person constantly is confronted with the problem of trying to determine whether, or not, his or her understanding correctly reflects, to some extent, that to which the understanding is making identifying reference.

Malcolm's contention, however, that knowledge claims in the "strong" sense (e.g., "Here is an ink-bottle") are referring to physical things, and not to sensations or appearances, entirely short-circuits

the basic epistemological issues at stake in determining how one comes to acquire a true understanding of what is to be understood. This short-circuiting process occurs on several levels.

First of all, there is a certain degree of circularity implicit in Malcolm's "strong" sense of "know". This is so because it tends to presume that what one claims to know in this sense is true knowledge. Now, one can generate meaning in any way one wishes to.

Thus, one can stipulate, if one so chooses, that "know" in the "strong" sense refers to physical reality and not sensations or appearances. Yet, on what basis is one warranted in assigning meaning in this way as far as the nature of reality itself is concerned?

In effect, the circularity in Malcolm's "strong" sense of "know" is the belief that what we take reality to be or what we mean by reality is what in 'fact' reality must be. How else is one to explain that, according to Malcolm's view, an individual who claims to "know" in the "strong" sense is unwilling to call anything evidence that conflicts with, or undermines, one's knowledge claim?

Instead of treating evidence as the data or information that arises from whatever source and bears upon the aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which one is attending, evidence becomes a function of whatever one calls evidence in terms of individual meaning. As a result, reality becomes synonymous with the character of the meaning framework that an individual imposes upon reality, irrespective of whether the imposition is congruent or not.

Surely the goal of inquiry is to obtain a true understanding of that which is being inquired into. However, Malcolm creates the impression that the idea of knowledge in the "strong" sense is a matter of unyielding stubbornness in which the issue of understanding is superfluous, if not beside the point.

Yet, the character of knowledge is not a matter of claiming one is right. For something to be knowledge, it must be right or accurate. Unfortunately, Malcolm seems to emphasize the former to the exclusion of the latter.

In the long quote given just a few pages ago, Malcolm claims he could counter any of the possibilities that someone might put forth in

an attempt to show that Malcolm was deceived in the case of whether or not the ink bottle was really on his desk. Thus, if Malcolm were to reach for the ink bottle, and if his hand were to pass through it, then Malcolm contends he could say the ink bottle is not what is illusory and what actually does not exist.

Rather, the character of the illusion or hallucination is such that the ink bottle is made to appear to be not there when it really is. Or, if some friends came into the room and said -- when asked by Malcolm if there were an ink bottle on the desk -- that there was no ink bottle on the desk, then Malcolm asserts his friends could be trying to trick him into believing there is no ink bottle on the desk when, in fact, there is no ink bottle on the desktop. Alternatively, his friends themselves might be suffering from some sort of hallucination that makes them believe there is no ink bottle on the desk when there really is, and so on.

Quite conceivably, one could devise an indefinite number of explanations to counter each and every suggestion that might be put forth by someone to indicate there was no ink bottle on the desk. Indeed, there are psychotic conditions such as schizophrenic paranoia in which precisely the sort of scenario Malcolm is outlining actually occurs ... sometimes with deadly results.

In these instances, an individual so affected comes up with an appropriately slanted belief system to counter the logic of whatever evidence is advanced which runs counter to the "logic" of an individual's psychotic phenomenology. Nonetheless, there is often a huge difference between: (a) what one will commit oneself to in the context of speculative whimsy when there are absolutely no consequences that have to be accepted as a price for maintaining one's commitment and (b) circumstances (such as in everyday life) in which there could be serious ramifications that ensue from one's claims and commitments.

For example, if the events that Malcolm describes as possibilities actually did happen, then seemingly, one reasonably might surmise that an individual to whom these events occurred would become very disturbed and worried, if not frightened. This would be the case since his or her on-going experience would be at considerable odds with

what an individual's previous range of experiences appeared to encompass.

Let us suppose someone had to go to the airport and before he or she left, Malcolm -- who desperately needed some money -- wanted the person who was leaving to write Malcolm a check for one thousand dollars in payment of a debt owed to Malcolm. Let us further assume there were no pencils, crayons, paints or ballpoint pens available with which to write the check.

The only writing implement available was a dry fountain pen. One well might imagine that Malcolm probably would go to considerable lengths to try to establish whether or not the ink bottle actually was on the desk.

The possibilities that Malcolm would be willing to entertain in order to account for his experiences would be considered in the light of, or from the perspective of, the hermeneutical framework through which he approached the phenomenology of the experiential field up to that period of time. If Malcolm's friend, who owed the money, said, upon entering the room: "I see no ink bottle on the desk, and I really have to rush to the airport," Malcolm might remember this particular person always was a hard case as far as repayment of debts was concerned. Consequently, the friend might simply be lying about the nonexistence of the ink bottle in order to get out of paying back the debt.

On the other hand, if Malcolm asked, in turn, his wife and, then, his neighbor and, finally, an unknown third party chosen at random in the street outside his house to come into the room and testify as to whether or not there was an ink bottle on the desk, and all these people said there was no ink bottle on the desk, Malcolm can write what he likes, but one might suspect he would be somewhat shaken by this set of experiences and would begin to question whether there really was an ink bottle on the desk as he had been claiming to know there was.

Malcolm might also wonder if there might be some sort of mass conspiracy or elaborate practical joke being played on him. In this event, he would have to take into consideration whether his wife and neighbor might be the sort of people who would either conspire against him or try to play an elaborate joke upon him. He also would

have to think about whether the situation could have been manipulated to the extent that the unknown third party pulled in from the street by Malcolm could have been part of the conspiracy or joke. If none of these considerations made any sense and seemed too preposterous to be true, and there was no evidence suggesting these possibilities could be the case, Malcolm would have further reason to question whether he knew what he claimed to -- i.e., that an ink bottle was on the desk.

Only in the most extreme cases -- such as in the case of psychosis or blind prejudice or dogmatism -- would someone continue to insist, without any wavering whatsoever, that an ink bottle was on the desk when all 'reality' testing indicated, in an overwhelming fashion, this might not be the case. Alternatively, aside from such phenomena as psychosis, that is a somewhat negative possibility, there is also a much more positive possibility (or some would argue) in which someone might unyieldingly remain committed to a given understanding despite the fact that a large variety of so-called reality testing had seemingly resulted in contraindications to the claimed truth or correctness of the understanding in question.

This more "positive" possibility concerns the dimension of religion in general, and, especially, its mystical aspect in particular. This is not to say all claims of religious or mystical insight are true.

Nonetheless, it does tend to force one to take into consideration, for example, that mysticism refers to something (or purports to) which is said to transcend rational capabilities and, therefore, might not be amenable to the probing of various reality tests that have been devised by rational faculties. Whether, or not, in any given case, a certain mystical claim is actually legitimate -- despite many rational or evidential considerations that appear to be to the contrary -- or whether the claim merely gives expression to some sort of delusion on the part of the claimant might be a difficult issue to settle.

However, since both the possibilities of psychosis and mysticism fall beyond, or exist at the horizons of, the vast majority of human experiential frameworks, the present consideration is with the 'normal' course of experiential events. Even though one might be forced, at certain points, to entertain the possibility that a given knowledge claim is an expression of either psychotic or mystical

understanding, these two possibilities seem to constitute the limiting cases of the sort of circumstances in which someone might (but not necessarily) express behavior consonant with Malcolm's "strong" sense of "know".

Yet, even here the mystical possibility need not represent an out-of-hand rejection of all future evidence that might conflict with one's epistemic claim. The mystical path is said to be a long one, along which exist many spiritual way-stations and many levels of understanding. And, as has been said by the mystics themselves: for everyone who knows, there is one who knows more. While 'authentic' mystics might, perhaps, be unyielding in certain aspects of their understanding of the nature of reality, the mystical literature itself suggests there could be considerable accommodation for the possibility of revising understanding when the depth of mystical insight increases, as new evidence -- say in the form of mystical experiences -- accumulated.

In any event, what one calls evidence need not be a function of just what is consistent with a particular claim. Frequently, evidence is a matter of what precipitates from a given set of methodological and evaluative considerations that exist prior to any given epistemic claim.

In other words, before ever making an epistemological claim, one tends to establish -- formally or informally -- a way of exploring, processing and evaluating various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field. If, during the course of entertaining some idea, one subjects this idea to one's hermeneutical mode of interacting with experience, and, on the basis of this hermeneutical process, one became convinced one knows something, one's epistemic claim can be examined from various perspectives.

For example, one can ask how it relates to the character of the different facets of the hermeneutical process that helped establish the demarcated framework of understanding out of which the claim arose. One also might inquire as to how the claim relates to a variety of questions and issues that -- although not necessarily a part of the interrogative imperative dimension of an individual's hermeneutical framework (i.e., someone else asks the question or raises the issue), nonetheless -- seem to represent important themes to be considered or entertained as far as the question of the tenability of the original epistemic claim is concerned.

In most instances, if the individual concerned is honest and either is willing to acknowledge legitimate problems and difficulties in relation to his or her claim, or is willing to attempt, in good faith, to demonstrate how possible difficulties might be overcome, then one rarely, if ever, will encounter anyone who uses "know" in Malcolm's strong sense in which what one claims to know is independent of all future evidential considerations. However, if one does meet this kind of person, one must examine closely just what this person means by "knowledge" and whether his or her meaning is entirely idiosyncratic, arbitrary and without criteria, principles, rules or standards that are to be consistently applied, over time, to different situations. In addition, one must examine, carefully, the specific context in which that person's claims are made in order to attempt to determine whether or not what are called contradictory evidential considerations (in relation to an individual's epistemic claim) can be accounted for plausibly or overcome in terms of the understanding that stands behind the claim.

Attempting to meet epistemological challenges to one's claim might not be a matter of rejecting anything as evidence that conflicts with one's position. Instead, it might be a matter of believing or knowing one successfully can meet whatever challenge might come along because one believes what one claims is correct or because one understands the character of one's claim in relation to the character of the given evidential challenge.

In the latter case, this relational understanding helps establish a focal/horizontal framework in the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field through which an inference or series of inferences (e.g., connecting insight) might emerge concerning the tenability of a challenge(s) that is confronting one's epistemic claim. The way to engage evidential challenges is not to play semantic games, as Malcolm's "strong" sense of "know" would require, such that one is unwilling to label or treat certain data or information as evidence because it appears to conflict with one's epistemic claim.

The task is to demonstrate how this evidence -- when properly explained, analyzed or criticized -- is either really not contradictory or can be accounted for, adequately, in terms of the demarcated conceptual geometry that underlies one's epistemic claim. If one truly knows, as one claims to, one will be able to withstand all such

challenges, provided the challenge does not exceed one's intellectual capacity to understand the nature of the challenge.

Unfortunately, Malcolm's position distorts the whole issue of withstanding challenges to one's claims by making knowledge a matter of belief and not of true understanding. He, thereby, eliminates any basis within the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field from which an individual could differentiate between knowledge and belief.

Conclusion

In the two essays prior to the present one, a point had been touched upon without being studied in any great detail. More specifically, both in the discussion of Strawson's descriptive metaphysics and Putnam's theory of meaning, a warning had been noted that a certain kind of distinction needed to be made.

The present essay has been focused on providing the beginnings of a framework from which to approach the distinction between, on the one hand, our beliefs about the nature of the world, and, on the other hand, the actual character of the things of the world (e.g., events, states, conditions, processes, things, etc.) to which our beliefs attempt to make identifying reference. I say "beginnings" because the previous discussion has not focused on establishing what the nature of the distinction is in specific theories of reality such as physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, religion, and so on.

Instead, the intent here has been to draw attention to what seems to be an intuitive basis for the kind of distinction that is required when exploring any of these broader theoretical treatments of ontological and metaphysical issues. This intuitive basis revolves around the sort of methodological procedures and processes we tend to go through in order to differentiate between belief and knowledge with respect to the handling of everyday kinds of problems within the phenomenology of our experiential field.

By gaining insight into the character of the structuring processes that are used (consciously or unconsciously) in deciding whether our current hermeneutical stance concerning an everyday kind of issue is an instance of belief or knowledge (or a combination of both), we also

gain insight into the remnants of the structuring process that we tend to apply to epistemological and ontological problems in general. The only difference is that the latter problems usually are treated from a much more rigorous and complex methodological perspective, involving mathematics, formal logic, experimental design, statistical analysis, confirmation theory, and so on.

Nonetheless, despite the differences in logical sophistication and mathematical rigor, the latter really presupposes, and is built upon, the intuitive sense that emerges out of our capacity (whatever the limits and possibilities of that capacity, ultimately, might be) to differentiate between the character of the phenomenology of belief and the character of the phenomenology of knowledge during the course of everyday situations such as determining whether water is in the gorge or an ink bottle is on the table, and so on.

As developed in various ways during the present essay, the capacity to differentiate between the phenomenologies of belief and knowledge involves the establishing of different kinds of congruency relationships. Some of these relationships concern the mapping operations that tie the character of a given hermeneutical perspective to the character of a certain aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field. Some of the congruency relationships deal with the mapping operations that link the character of a given hermeneutical perspective to the character of that aspect(s) of reality that makes a given experiential field of specified phenomenological character possible.

However, regardless of the kind of congruency relationship one is exploring, all such relationships are rooted in transformation functions. In essence, transformation functions are the procedures by which one lays down a network of identifying references and meanings through which one hopes to generate connecting insight concerning the character of the relationship of the expressions (e.g., hermeneutical, phenomenological, ontological) that are being explored in any given instance.

For example, one of the transformation functions that was examined during the present essay concerned the notion of "in the course of normal affairs or events". In elaborating, somewhat, on this kind of transformation function, an outline was given of the sorts of

procedures and processes an individual could go through to develop a framework for what constituted "normal affairs" in any given set of circumstances such as the water in the gorge example, the arithmetic issue, or the ink bottle problem.

Once such a perspective or framework is established, then an individual would have a context out of which connecting insights might arise. Such insights, if they were to arise, would form the conceptual bridges that link different expressions (i.e., hermeneutical, phenomenological, ontological), and, thereby, ideally demonstrate, or give evidence of, their congruency, one with the other.

In the context of the belief/knowledge distinction problem with which the present essay has been concerned, transformation functions have been developed and used to point out potential differences in the phenomenologies of belief and knowledge in specific instances such as the water gorge example. These transformation functions don't always have names or labels such as "in the course of normal affairs" through which they can be identified readily.

Nonetheless they always do involve the setting up of some kind geometry or grid-work or conceptual geometry such that the various experiential co-ordinate points that make up such grid-works can be compared with, and juxtaposed next to one another (either singly or in combinations) while one searches for congruency relationships between or among those co-ordinate points. Even if these grid-works don't come with any readily identifiable labeling handle, over time, we do come to recognize their characters in terms of the sort of phenomenology of the experiential field to which they give expression.

Chapter 8: Building Models

Introduction

For Quine, the relationship between sensory data and theory is indeterminate in the sense that our theories are underdetermined by the evidence. According to Quine, one could construct many equivalent theoretical models that would be consistent with the available evidence, and as such, the data does not lend any more credibility to one theory over another.

In fact, Quine took the argument one step further and said that the relationship between language and the world is indeterminate as well. Quine maintained: there is an aura of inscrutability surrounding the way language attempts to make reference to the world such that one couldn't be sure in many, if not most, instances precisely what was being referred to in the context of any given word usage.

In effect, Quine believed there is, potentially, an indefinite number of ways of conceptually slicing up the world. As a result, one could not be certain that a given reference was slicing up the world in one way rather than another.

Quine augmented the 'inscrutability of reference' idea with his thesis on radical translation. In essence, the theory of radical translation held that one could not translate, with any sense of conviction, from one language to another, remote, radically different language, such that the translation would be capable of generating a meaning expression in the former language that was truly equivalent with the expression in the language being translated.

One of Quine's famous examples in this respect concerned the expression "gavagai" that was uttered in contexts when a rabbit was present. According to Quine, one would have no non-arbitrary and objective means of ascertaining whether the proper translation of that expression should be, for example, "rabbit", "rabbit stages", "undetected rabbit parts", or any number of other possibilities that might concern contexts in which a rabbit was present.

Once again, because, for Quine, there are an indefinite number of ways of conceptually slicing up the world into different categories and so on, with different focal points and emphases, one could not be certain, in any given instance of radical translation that a given method

of translation would be able to isolate the precise manner of slicing up the world that had been behind the use of a given expression such as "gavagai".

The underlying issues with which Quine was concerned in the problems of the inscrutability of reference, as well as the problems of radical translation, emerged, as well, in Quine's position concerning the relativity of theoretical and language networks. Indeed, in a sense, the relativity of theory and language were merely flip sides of the same set of issues.

However, in discussing the relativity of such networks, Quine was not maintaining just that we are trapped by the boundaries of our language and theories in our attempts to understand or contact reality in some extra-linguistic or extra-theoretical manner. He also was contending that our theories and talk about the world only made sense relative to some arbitrarily selected background language that had to be accepted as the base line from which we linguistically and theoretically approached our dealings with the world.

In other words, in exploring the character of the sort of ontology to which any given theory commits one, that theory makes sense: a) only when placed in the context of a background language that is arbitrary; and, b) only when that theory is translated into the background language according to some equally arbitrary set of rules for translating theoretical language into background language. As such, Quine believed it is meaningless to talk in terms of inter-theoretical dialogue or exchanges.

Instead, Quine believed one only can make epistemological progress within the confines of one's own theoretical perspective by being seriously committed to the particular brand of 'aggregate science' and the associated scientific method that is generated through such a theoretical perspective. Moreover, according to Quine, the scientific method that is associated with the aggregate science made possible by our theoretical perspective constitutes the last arbiter of truth.

Word and Object -- considered as a whole -- deals, in considerable detail, with all of the foregoing issues in one way or another. It discusses problems of radical translation, the inscrutability of reference, the relationship of language and theory, and especially the

problem of translation and background language. Indeed, much of *Word and Object* can be understood as an effort to spell out some of the fundamental characteristics in relation to the sort of background language that Quine believes stands behind theory and into which the latter ultimately must be translated in order to be given a frame of reference in which such theory makes sense.

Chapter 1 of *Word and Object* represents something of a portrait in miniature of the issues that he discusses and develops, in detail, throughout the remainder of his book. As such, chapter 1 of that book represents a very good opportunity to explore, albeit on a limited scale, some of the issues and problems with which Quine is concerned in *Word and Object* as a whole.

If one were to reduce, further, the various elements of Quine's position in chapter 1 down to their essential features, there are two fundamental themes that stand out for consideration. First, Quine is interested in developing at least the outline of a model for the learning or acquisition of language. In this respect, he places heavy emphasis upon a somewhat behavioristic approach to language learning that relies on the notion of 'contextual conditioning'.

Secondly, Quine is interested, equally, in establishing the rudiments of a model concerning the meaning, significance and construction of theoretical networks within the context of aggregate science. For Quine, this sort of model is caught up in, among other things, notions such as 'simplicity', 'positing', 'theory-building process' and a scientific method that is "unsupported by ulterior controls".

In point of fact, however -- and as intimated previously -- as far as Quine is concerned, one really cannot separate issues of language learning from issues of theory development. Indeed, the former stands as the deep and immediate background against which and through which theoretical discussion and progress takes place. In this sense, Quine's theory of language acquisition is a sort of prototype for the development and learning of models in general -- theoretical or otherwise.

In the present essay, I intend to argue against both of the aforementioned themes of Quine's opening chapter of *Word and Object*. More specifically, I propose to analyze, critically, Quine's theory of language learning as it is presented in chapter 1 of his book. I

maintain that his idea of contextual conditioning (together with related notions such as induction, analogy, abstraction, chain stimulations and the interanimation of sentences) is a flawed and inadequate representation of language learning. Furthermore, I intend to take issue with Quine's position on the character of the theory building process and how that process relates to such issues as simplicity, hypothetical positing, the role of scientific methodology, theoretical relativity, and the possibility of meaningful inter-theoretical exchanges.

The structures and structuring process of understanding do not give expression to just themes of identifying reference, meaning, and the capacity to differentiate between belief and knowledge. Understanding also gives expression to the way in which all of the foregoing elements are woven together into models or representations that identify, signify (i.e., mean), and involve distinctions between belief and knowledge. In this respect, the dimension of understanding concerned with model building encompasses those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that are preoccupied with the character of the processes by which models are acquired, generated, and developed (or discarded) over time.

Quine's perspective in chapter 1 of *Word and Object* constitutes a heuristically valuable means of exploring the foregoing issues since they are precisely the focus of his concerns as well. By investigating Quine's position on such matters, one has a very good opportunity to reflect upon the character of the structuring process of understanding as it encounters and inquires into one of its own dimensions -- namely, the nature of one's own model/theory building process as it engages someone else's (i.e., Quine's) ideas concerning the model/theory building process.

The Context of Language Acquisition

On the opening pages of *Word and Object*, Quine claims:

"Each of us learns his language from other people, through the observable mouthing of words under conspicuously intersubjective circumstances. Linguistically, and hence conceptually, the things in

sharpest focus are the things that are public enough to be talked of publicly, common and conspicuous enough to be talked of often, and near enough to sense to be quickly identified and learned by name; it is to these that words apply first and foremost. Talk of subjective sense qualities comes mainly as a derivative idiom. When one tries to describe a particular sensory quality, he typically resorts to reference to public things - describing a color as orange or heliotrope, a smell as like that of rotten eggs...

"Impressed with the fact that we know external things only mediately through our senses, philosophers from Berkeley onward have undertaken to strip away the physicalistic conjectures and bare the sense data. Yet even as we try to recapture the data in all their innocence of interpretation, we find ourselves depending upon sidelong glances into natural science." (pages 1-2)

To be sure, one of the most fundamental inputs of language learning for an individual does consist of the data acquired by observing, in a variety of circumstances, the linguistic behavior of those around that individual. However, the fact is, being exposed to this kind of information is not enough in and of itself. If it were, then presumably, all domesticated animals also would learn language in precisely the same way. Thus, one would expect, say, kittens and puppies to pick up a language "through the observable mouthing of words under conspicuously intersubjective circumstances".

There is some evidence that, for example, dogs and chimpanzees can acquire a certain amount of understanding with respect to a fairly large range of words, symbols and phrases. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, there is a tremendous difference in the scope, depth and flexibility of language competency that occurs in human beings from that which seems to occur (if one actually can refer to it in terms of language competency) in dogs and chimpanzees.

The foregoing difference suggests that the claim, "each of us learns his language from other people", is only partially true. What is necessary, as well, is some internal, subjective means capable of: a) directing intellectual focus to the aspects of the behavior that are linguistically relevant (as opposed to those features of behavior that are linguistically irrelevant); b) characterizing the nature of the

behavior in question; c) inferentially linking the characterized structure of linguistic behavior to other facets of the experiential field in such a way that one can differentiate appropriate from inappropriate experiential contexts in relation to the referential dimension of the given linguistic behavior; d) narrowing down the appropriate (that is, language-behavior relevant) experiential context sufficiently to isolate the specific criterial features that are central to establishing the precise combination of features that constitute the focus of the identifying reference of the given language behavior; and, e) assigning a framework of significance or a hermeneutic to the aspect(s) of the current experiential field being identifyingly referred to such that the character of one's understanding of the reference one has identified reflects the character of the reference that the speaker intended to identify by means of his or her (i.e., the speaker's) linguistic behavior.

There is, of course, a great deal of disagreement over what stands behind capacities a) through e) (as well as other language-related capacities) and, thereby, makes such capacities possible. Nevertheless, anyone attempting to construct a plausible theory of language acquisition that ignored the considerable input of effort and ability that is required by an individual to learn a language and that is above and beyond the data the individual is able to pick up by observing the behavior of others, would, presumably, encounter many problems on the road to trying to generate a plausible theory of language acquisition.

In the foregoing quote, Quine says, "Linguistically, and hence conceptually, the things in sharpest focus are the things that are public enough to be talked of publicly." In saying this, Quine appears to be saying that, to all intents and purposes, language and conceptualization are one and the same thing, or he is saying that conceptualization is a function of, and follows from, language acquisition.

Even if one were to agree with Quine that those facets of experience that are most public, most intersubjectively conspicuous, most frequently encountered, as well as being most readily likely to be registered through the senses, are the facets of experience for which words will be learned most quickly, one is not compelled to conclude

that what is "in sharpest focus" for purposes of initial language learning will be precisely the same sorts of things that will be "in sharpest focus" conceptually. Indeed, months prior to the onset of even the first spoken instance of coordinated identifying reference, there might be many aspects of an infant's experiential field that are being conceptualized in various ways that are not necessarily tied exclusively to those "things" that might be considered by adults to be most publicly conspicuous and sensorially accessible.

Sensations of hunger, thirst, tiredness, waking, being startled, fear, pain (e.g., from diaper rash, colic, excessive exposure to heat or cold), pleasure of tactile and proprioceptive stimulation, play, dreaming, various felt emotional responses of anger, likes and dislikes, frustration (even if none of these emotions are identified as such by the infant), and so on, all have been going on for a long time before spoken language ever makes an appearance. In this sense, the phenomenology of subjective experience, in all its diversity, marks the most conspicuous, the most readily accessible, and the most commonly encountered aspect of existence for a child.

Consequently, within the pre-linguistic child, some form of experiential co-ordinate grid system already has begun to be laid down in however primitive a fashion. This primitive, experiential grid system or conceptual geometry will help form the pre-understandings through which the language behavior of others will be engaged by a child.

In other words, these early conceptualizations, of one sort or another, constitute the backdrop against which subsequent experience -- including that of language -- is to be considered. Naturally, in order to communicate with someone else, a common experiential ground must be found with respect to which one can begin to establish points of identifying reference about which some sort of interaction -- including, possible, further discussion -- might take place.

Furthermore, to a certain extent, the "things" that are public in some physical manner that renders them easily accessible (experientially) to human sensory capabilities do tend to constitute the things that are most conspicuous in Quine's sense of being high-profile candidates for being talked about intersubjectively, and, thereby, becoming the focus of a child's early word learning

experience. Nonetheless, language is only one dimension about which an individual conceptualizes.

Very likely, whatever words are learned will be placed in an already existing, albeit limited, conceptual geometry that represents the way that experience has, up until the time of learning words, been individualized, particularized and inferentially related in terms of the hermeneutical co-ordinates that structure a given child's world. After all, if the words that are learned refer to "things", "objects" and "items" that are conspicuous enough to be accessible to intersubjective processes of identifying reference, then they represent features that very likely have been encountered experientially by the child prior to the learning of the appropriate words. The word-label merely represents one more component to fit into the co-ordinate system that has been developed during the course of experiential encounters with the physical environment prior to the learning of some given word.

A child might resort "to reference to public things" in order "to describe a particular sensory quality" of a subjective nature. Yet, this only is because the nature of communication is such that one has to constantly work at maintaining some sort of common ground through which the hearer can have a point of identifying reference to hold onto as he or she (the hearer) tries to place what is said within an aspect of his or her (the hearer's) conceptual geometry in order to make some sort of sense out of what is being said by a speaker.

Thus, in contrast to Quine's position, "talk of subjective sense qualities" might not come "as a derivative idiom" in relation to talk of public things. Rather, "subjective sense qualities" are experientially prior "to talk of public things". As a result, the latter might be treated as merely an extension of the former. Or, public things might be talked about in terms of (i.e., from the perspective of) the experience one has had with those "public things" and in terms of the conceptualizations that have been built up over time in relation to one's experiential interaction with these "public things".

On the basis of the discussion of the last several pages, one is not forced to maintain "that we know external things only mediately through our senses" as Quine seems to indicate in the quote noted earlier. Our senses do mediate between us and external things.

However, one could say, equally well, that our conceptual geometries mediate between us and external things.

We do not always leave sensory data in an unprocessed, raw form that is a purely physiological/biochemical framing of such experience. We also tend to individuate sensory data, particularize it, interpret it, and assign various shadings of valuation or significance to the incoming data.

This manner of characterizing our experience forms the basis for the conceptual co-ordinate grid system that is constructed over time and forms the structural character or logic of the conceptual geometry by which, and through which, one interacts with, and interprets, both subsequent and past experience. Just as conceptualization need not be restricted to the language we learn from others, so too, our epistemological interaction with the external world need not be restricted to purely sensory events. Data must be taken and worked into a conceptual model capable of reflecting the character of that to which the sensory data in question gives expression.

Moreover, this model often is capable of assigning to data, or discovering in it, a form of significance or meaning that is consistent with such a characterization. The conceptual characterization, in turn, must be reconcilable with the character of the sensory data that is available, so that the former reflects, in some sense, various facets or dimensions of the latter.

Consequently, the epistemic character of the task facing an individual need not be one that requires the individual "to strip away the physicalistic conjectures and bare the sense data" ala Berkeley et al. On the other hand, the epistemic character of the task before us need not be one in which "we find ourselves depending upon sidelong glances into natural science" (with its physicalistic overtones) as Quine seems to be suggesting in the previously cited quote from *Word and Object*.

In point of fact, the experiential or phenomenological field in which each of us finds ourselves embedded has a variety of characteristics. We particularize and individuate these features according to an existential dialectic that plays off sensory features against hermeneutic features. This dialectic generates epistemic structures that vary, to some extent, from individual to individual, as

well as display similarities, to varying degrees, among different individuals.

Even if we were able to isolate, clearly, the nature of the contribution of uninterpreted sense data, we still are faced with the problems of determining the following. What do such 'base sense data' mean? To what degree does such data distort or accurately reflect the character of that which helps give rise to a certain sensory experience of given character?

Furthermore, let us assume one were to grant there are physical, external objects in the world. Nonetheless, one still is faced with the problems of trying to determine what the character of the relationship is between the nature of one's experiential field and those 'physical, external objects' that are assumed to exist.

One also is confronted with questions of the following sort. What exactly is entailed by the existence of such objects? What does it mean to describe something as "physical"? Are physical objects necessarily material objects? If they aren't, just what is the metaphysical status of the physical character of such "objects"? That is, what manner of objects are physical ones, if by "physical" we do not mean material in nature (whatever this means)?

The foregoing problems are complicated further when one is faced with trying to figure out precisely how language fits into all of this. In other words, is language a distorting or a reflective medium with respect to the way it relates the conceptual aspects of the experiential field to other aspects (e.g., so-called sensory data) of that field? Or, what is the distorting and/or reflective character of the way language relates the experiential field to that which makes, or is thought to make, such a field possible and gives it the demarcated character it seems to have?

In Search of Bare Sense Data

While criticizing those philosophers like Berkeley who are in search of bare sense data, Quine states:

"Aware of the points thus far set forth, our philosopher might still try, in a spirit of rational reconstruction, to abstract out a pure stream of

sense experience and then, depict physical doctrine as a means of systematizing the regularities discernible in the stream.... Talk of ordinary physical things he would then see as, in principle, a device for simplifying that disorderly account of the passing show.

"But this is a misleading way of depicting matters, even when the idea of a sense-datum "language" is counted frankly as a metaphor. For the trouble is that immediate experience simply will not, of itself, cohere as an autonomous domain. References to physical things are largely what hold it together. These references are not just inessential vestiges of the initially intersubjective character of language, capable of being weeded out by devising an artificially subjective language for sense data. Rather they give us our main continuing access to past sense data themselves; for past sense data are mostly gone for good except as commemorated in physical posits. All we would have apart from posits and speculation are present sense data and present memories of past ones; and a memory trace of a sense datum is too meager an affair to do much good. Actual memories mostly are traces not of past sensations but of past conceptualization or verbalization."(pages 2- 3)

One might agree with Quine that a position that viewed "talk of ordinary physical things ... as, in principle, a device for simplifying that disorderly account of the passing show" could be "a misleading way of depicting matters". However, the agreement would not have to be predicated on Quine's belief that "immediate experience simply will not, of itself, cohere as an autonomous domain".

Part of the problem here is in not knowing what the parameters are of Quine's use of the term "autonomous domain" with respect to immediate experience. By this phrase, Quine could be raising an implicit question for those philosophers against whom he is arguing.

This question concerns the problem of explaining why immediate experience has the character it does and why one cannot assume immediate experience coheres into a given structural form, in and of itself, as an autonomous realm of internal events independent of the rest of reality. If this is the case, then one could acknowledge the importance and relevance of the question so raised.

In effect, the question is: if immediate experience does cohere, in and of itself, then what is the character of the autonomous domain that causes immediate experience to cohere in the various ways it does? Quine contends that one cannot come up with a plausible explanation for the reason why immediate experience has the character it does unless one makes reference to physical things.

Unfortunately, this sort of response can be as misleading as the kind of position advocated by those Quine is criticizing. In other words, if the reason why part of the immediate experience has the character it has is because physical things have the character they do, then only by referring to the character of these physical things will the observed character of immediate experience make sense.

On the other hand, part of the reason why immediate experience has the character it does might be because the internal phenomenological laws, principles or rules of coherence that give expression to an individual's immediate experience have a certain autonomous character that is a function of the neurophysiological and/or biochemical and/or mental structure of the individual undergoing the immediate experience. In this respect, the character of a given sensory experience is as much a function of the structural and process logic of the capabilities inherent in an individual's sensory/conceptual equipment (both in terms of limitations as well as in terms of access ranges) as it is a function of the character of the physical thing being encountered.

Of course, these capabilities might need to be activated by 'something' (external or internal) in order to register an experience that will show up phenomenologically as an experience with determinate characteristics of a certain nature. Nevertheless, the structure of the logic by which they operate is, in a sense, autonomous and independent of physical things being the way they are.

Some organisms respond to a certain range of sound waves. Others do not respond to the same range. Some organisms respond to differences in magnetic field properties. Other organisms do not respond to such field differences. Some organisms are capable of living in physical environments that prove to be deleterious, if not fatal, to other kinds of organisms.

To use some computer terminology, there seems to be a certain amount of interfacing that goes on between organism and environment. During this interfacing, each side brings something in the way of autonomous domains of principles, structural logic, and so on, to the ontological points that mark the areas or instances of interfacing engagement. From the organism's point of view, out of these interfacing-engagements arises an experiential field of a given character.

Assuming the foregoing is true, then if one is being misleading by saying physical things are "a device for simplifying that disorderly account of the passing show", one also is being misleading when one says "references to physical things are largely what hold it [i.e., immediate experience] together". This is the case because there might be principles of "coherence-logic" on both sides that constitute the basis for organisms and physical things having the apparent character for which their ontological expression seems to provide evidence. Therefore, while one might not be quite correct if one were to say that immediate experience coheres in and of itself, one might not be quite incorrect if one were to make such an assertion provided that it is qualified in a defensible manner.

Consider another aspect of Quine's position. Let us assume one were to agree with Quine that references to physical things "are not just inessential vestiges of the initially intersubjective character of language".

Such an agreement does not commit one, automatically, to maintaining that physical things "give us our main continuing access to past sense data themselves; for past sense data are mostly gone for good except as commemorated in physical posits". That Quine should claim past sense data are commemorated only in the form of "physical posits" is strange.

After all, just a few sentences later, he stipulates: "memories are traces not of past sensations but of past conceptualization or verbalization." Is he equating "physical posits" with past conceptualizations and verbalizations? If so, in what way are past conceptualizations and verbalizations physical posits? And, what is the character of a "physical posit"?

Is he advancing some sort of mind/brain identity theory in which all conceptualizations and verbalizations reduce down to the functioning of a physical thing -- namely, the brain? Even if he is advancing such a thesis, why should one not suppose that memories are indeed traces of past sensations that have been encoded in a stored form whose character accurately reflects the character of the original sensation experience? Certainly, Quine has not put forth any arguments, yet, to demonstrate why memory traces cannot reflect, accurately, the character of past sensations -- as sensations -- and not as some conceptualization or verbalization.

Conceivably, one's memory of a past sensation might be a function of some conceptualization or interpretation of a certain experience. As a result, what one remembers is not an accurate encoding of the past sensation, but is, instead, one's interpretation of that sensation. However, such a possibility represents only one alternative.

For example, what one remembers might not be a conceptualization or interpretation of past experience. It might be an accurate reflection of, or even a re-invoking of, the full phenomenological nature of the past experience. This sort of possibility is something that is suggested by the findings of psychologists who have worked in the area of eidetic memory images.

One might conceive of an innumerable set of combinations of the possibilities stated at the beginning of this paragraph. Presumably, one of the jobs of epistemology is to try to sort out which of the foregoing alternatives might be most plausible in any given instance of memory. In any event, one, simply, cannot assume, as Quine seems to be doing, that the memory trace is a "physical posit" (whatever this means) or that it is only a 'conceptualization' or 'verbalization' (whatever this means).

Intersubjectivity and induction

At one point in his early discussion of the relationship between *Word and Object*, Quine argues:

"Each of a party of observers glances at a tile from his own vantage point and calls it square; and each of them has, as his retinal projection

of the tile, a scalene quadrilateral that is geometrically dissimilar to everyone else's. The learner of "square" has to take his chances with the rest of society, and he ends up using the word to suit. Association of "square" with just the situations in which the retinal projection is square would be simpler to learn, but the more objective usage is, by its very intersubjectivity, what we tend to be exposed to and encouraged in.

"In general, if a term is to be learned by induction from observed instances where it is applied, the instances have to resemble one another in two ways: they have to be enough alike from the learner's point of view, from occasion to occasion, to afford him a basis of similarity to generalize upon, and they have to be enough alike from simultaneous distinct points of view to enable the teacher and learner to share the appropriate occasions. A term restricted to squares normal to the line of sight would meet the first requirement only; a term applying to physical squares in all their scalene projections meets both."(page 7)

A short while later, Quine adds:

"The uniformity that unites us in communication and belief is a uniformity of resultant patterns overlaying a chronic subjective diversity of connection between words and experience. Uniformity comes where it matters socially; hence rather in point of intersubjectively conspicuous circumstances of utterance than in point of privately conspicuous ones." (page 8)

If the "subjective diversity of connection between words and experience" were as chaotic as Quine seems to believe is the case, then one might wonder how to satisfy either of the two conditions that Quine indicated were necessary for "a term ... to be learned by induction from observed instances where it is applied".

To be sure, the connection between a given word and concomitant experience could be subjectively chaotic. Yet, if this is always the case, then how will an individual ever come to appreciate the fact that instances in which the same term is applied "have to be enough alike

from the learner's point of view from occasion to occasion, to afford him a basis of similarity to generalize upon"? Amidst chaos, where can there be "a basis of similarity" that is recognized by the individual and with which he or she can work in order to try to discern the character of the relationship between word and the various experiential instances in which the word is used?

On the other hand, the source of the alleged chaos to which Quine alludes could be, as he asserts, a function of the diverse ways in which different individuals subjectively connect words with experience. However, if this is the case, then how can one maintain that the instances where the term in question is applied will be viewed as being "enough-alike from simultaneous distinct points of view to enable the teacher and learner to share the appropriate occasions"?

The phrase "chaotic subjective diversity of connection between words and experience" is a somewhat ambiguous string of terms since one is not quite certain of the source of the presumed chaos. Nevertheless, whether the blame is laid at the feet of the individual's subjectivity or is attributed to the diversity of numerous subjective viewpoints, Quine's claim about the chaotic nature of the "subjective diversity of connection between words and experience" appears, at best, to be problematic ... if not just incorrect.

This is not to say there could not be a general confusion and chaos in the mind of an individual concerning the connection between words and experience. After all, most of us do have trouble, at one time or another, with trying to figure out what a given word or term means in a context to which it is applied. In such circumstances, we might have nothing to show for our efforts but a lot of disjointed, incomplete and divergent connections between various words and the associated experience(s).

Moreover, none of the foregoing is meant to rule out the all too pervasive way in which we seem to miss one another in our linguistic attempts to make intelligible contact. In these circumstances, conversations tend to disintegrate into the uneasy situations, arguments, or disquieting, frustrating experiences from which arise the chaos of our modern counterparts to the Biblical story of Babel.

Despite the above provisos, in order for terms or words to be learned from those experiential instances in which such words are

used, then, one or more of the following will have to be the case. Either the learner on his/her own, or the teacher and learner together, are going to have to establish, correctly, the connection between the words used together and the character of the contexts to which they apply, as well as establish the specific aspect of the general experiential contexts in which they appear.

Consequently, whatever "uniformity of resultant patterns" of communication arises, this uniformity will emerge not because it overlies "a chaotic subjective diversity of connection between words and experience". Rather, this uniformity will emerge because it overlies an existential intersection of phenomenological/experiential fields of subjectivity that, in spite of their differences, have certain points of overlap of perceived/conceptualized experience.

Quine maintains "uniformity comes where it matters socially" -- as if this adequately explained the moving force behind how individuals are able to communicate. Apparently, he feels that where things matter socially, this "mattering" is somehow able to impose a modulating and clarifying effect upon the "chaotic subjective diversity of connection between words and experience" ... generating a "uniformity of resultant patterns" of belief and communication. However, Quine seems to fail to take into consideration that his account really doesn't explain how individuals come to identify or understand what it is that matters in society.

What matters to the adults of a given society might set the thematic character of many of the experiential contexts that the young learner will encounter. Yet, this doesn't explain how an individual comes to understand the character of those themes or the meaning of the words that are applied to those contexts by the adults whom the learner encounters.

Uniformity, whether in relation to communication or belief -- and irrespective of whether or not it concerns things that "matter socially" -- is possible because two or more individuals are able to establish corresponding subjective frameworks of meaning that connect words and experiences (or aspects thereof) in ways that reflect similar properties. These similar properties concern the manner in which the respective parties characterize certain of those experiences that are said to connect word and experience in each framework. These similar

properties also involve the character of the logical or structural links that are said to connect word and experience in each framework.

Nonetheless, this process of noting similarities is not a matter of placing into opposition "intersubjectively conspicuous circumstances of utterances" with "privately conspicuous ones" as one might conclude from Quine's manner of stating the issue. Instead, the aforementioned process is a matter of recognizing the following. Intersubjective agreement is reached only by getting the privately conspicuous experiential circumstances of two or more individuals to reflect each other in a way that permits mutual recognizable identifying references to be determined with respect to the manner in which a certain word is to be applied to a specified range of experiences within the context of an intersubjective exchange.

According to Quine in the previously cited quote, the "association of 'square' with just the situations in which the retinal projection of square would be simpler to learn, but the more objective usage is, by its very intersubjectivity, what we tend to be exposed to and encouraged in". The "more objective usage" of which Quine speaks refers to the following fact.

When a number of different people look at a square tile, they all perceive a "scalene quadrilateral that is geometrically dissimilar to everyone else's". This is due to the differential character of the retinal images that are formed according to the precise and unique character of the relationship of the observers' eyes with the square tile being observed. Apparently the reason why experiences involving retinal images of scalene quadrilaterals constitute the basis for a "more objective usage" of the term "square" is because, in intersubjective contexts in which the word "square" is applied, the experience of the individuals involved is more likely to correspond with the character of a scalene quadrilateral than that of a "true" square.

One could concede Quine's point that in instances of intersubjective observance of a square tile, the general experience (with the exception of possibly a few people who were positioned just right) might more clearly approximate the character of a scalene quadrilateral than a 'true' square. Nevertheless, the basis of the uniformity of applying the term "square" to what appears to many individuals in a given instance to be a scalene quadrilateral rests with

the manner in which each of the people involved has built up, over time, a concept of the "experience of a square". (The idea of a 'concept of the experience of a square' is to be differentiated from just the 'concept of a square' in which one has a closed, four-sided plane figure whose sides are equal in length and the intersection of which, with one another, gives expression to interior angles of 90° at the point of intersection -- since one's 'experience of a square', depending on one's line of sight, might yield results that are at odds with the 'concept of a square'.)

One and the same square can be experienced, first, as a "true" square (i.e., one that appears square in the retinal projection in the sense that the character of the figure's appearance is congruent with the character of the description for which the term "square" acts as a means of specifying the focus of identifying reference). The "square", subsequently, can be seen as various kinds of scalene quadrilateral as an individual moves about the square and observes it from various distances and angles. All of these experiences (whether encountered sequentially in one experiential setting or intermittently across different experiential settings) form the phenomenological backdrop against which the conceptual geometry of the "experience of the square" develops.

Depending on the character of the experiences that a given individual has with squares, the "parameters of permissibility" might vary somewhat from individual to individual. The phrase "parameters of permissibility" gives expression to the way in which an individual's conceptual geometry establishes the conditions and/or criteria by means of which an individual would be willing to acknowledge a given experience as constituting a "square-experience" providing the specific experiential encounter manifests characteristics that fall within the structural confines of one's parameters of pre-understanding concerning the nature of square-experiences. Obviously, if one had never encountered a square, one's 'pre-understanding' concerning square-experiences would be couched in relative ignorance.

In any event, assuming there has been some degree of prior experience concerning 'squares', some people would acknowledge that, despite appearances, a given experience of a scalene quadrilateral

retinal projection constituted a "square-experience". They would do so because the given experience fell within the parameters that had been set up previously (informally or formally, consciously or unconsciously) in relation to prior encounters with "true" squares. Other people, with other "parameters of permissibility" rooted in prior experiences with "true" squares, might either reject or doubt whether the same kind of an experience of a scalene quadrilateral retinal projection is an instance of a square. As a result, these people might wish to take a closer look from a less distorting perspective of angle and distance.

Differences might exist from individual to individual with respect to their individually derived conceptual frameworks of "parameters of permissibility" for identifying a "square-experience". But whatever the differences might be, intersubjective agreement is reached where their parameter frameworks coincide and reflect similar characters that can be referred to identifyingly, and recognized as such, by all individuals involved.

Therefore, intersubjectivity, per se, doesn't underlie the more 'objective' usage of a term. The underpinnings of objective usage are a function of the way agreement can be reached in any given instance concerning the overlap of the "parameters of permissibility" that are embedded in distinct conceptual geometries that serve as the basis for a mutually acceptable context in which to establish identifying reference concerning a "square-experience".

Contrary to what Quine maintains, "a term applying to physical squares in all their scalene projections" might, or might not, satisfy the two conditions stipulated by Quine on page 7 of *Word and Object* (quoted earlier) with respect to what will "be learned by induction from observed instances where" the term -- in this case, "square" -- is applied. Whether the specified conditions are satisfied, or not, will depend on the "parameters of permissibility" that have built up in the various individuals concerning what they would acknowledge as a "square-experience". In addition, one cannot contend, as Quine does, that "a term restricted to squares normal to the line of sight would meet the first requirement only". Instead, the aforementioned conditions are a matter of satisfying a learner that the experiential instances are "enough alike from the learner's point of view, from

occasion to occasion, to afford him, or her, a basis of similarity to generalize upon".

The central factor in every individual's development of a "concept of the square experience" is the variations of retinal projection that occur in relation to objects known to be "true" squares. As a result, at the heart of every "parameter of permissibility" framework is an aspect of the experiential field whose character reflects that of squares "normal to the line of sight". The rest of the framework of the "parameters of permissibility" is constructed in relation to, and revolves about, the character of this central experience.

There is one final point to make with respect to the previously cited quote of Quine. Quine said in that quote: "In general, if a term is to be learned by induction from observed instances where it is applied, the instances ... have to be enough alike from the learner's point of view, from occasion to occasion, to afford him a basis of similarity to generalize upon".

Nonetheless, one might question whether the individual uses "induction from observed instances" of a term's being applied as the basis for learning the meaning of a term. One also might question whether generalization of any sort is used in the learning of a given term. In order to understand why one might have these questions, consider the following.

Let us assume that a given child is far enough along in development to have a somewhat, conscious recognition of the idea that word sounds have the potential for referential identification in a given experiential context. Each time an individual hears a certain word or term being applied the linguistic/behavioral setting in which the term appears can be characterized by the child in any number of ways.

In those instances when the adult's verbal behavior forms an important part of what the child is attending to, the phenomenological field seems to manifest itself in two broad experiential categories: focus and horizontal background. Each of these categories has conspicuous components and peripheral components as far as consciousness of the experience is concerned.

The character of intentionality that comprises the focus aspect of the experience is directed at specific facets of the phenomenological field. This "light" of consciousness is often colored by (and its intensity modulated by) cognitive, emotional and physiological factors that impinge upon consciousness and affect the character of the "light" that is focused in any given instance

The term "light" is an analogy of sorts that is intended to convey the luminous quality of consciousness. As such, the objects that appear in consciousness or through it or by means of it are entities of which one becomes aware -- much as one is apprised of the presence of, say, a chair when one casts the beam of a flashlight upon it. The analogy is intended to be heuristically suggestive rather than explanatory.

Which facets of an individual's phenomenology of experience will be focused on will be determined by a function (akin to a mathematical sense of this word) that collectively structures in some fashion (according to the nature of the function) the following inputs: current needs; interests; external, horizontal contingencies; inclinations; aptitudes; as well as the moods, motivations, and/or memories that shape and texture the character of focus. In addition, the aforementioned function will be shaped by the object, action, process or situation that occupies center state in the phenomenological field of a given individual at a given time and that also lends a character of its own to the function that constitutes the focus aspect in question in the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field.

Whatever the character is of the facet of the field to which attention is being drawn, then in terms of the way in which an individual's consciousness is oriented within the context of the phenomenology of the experiential field, there will be aspects that are focused more centrally and there will be aspects that are focused less centrally. The less centrally focused aspects tend to merge into the ground or background features of the experiential field -- that is, they become part of the phenomenological horizon.

However, this phenomenological background is not just a featureless, vague dimension. It has themes and characteristics that are themselves functions of a variety of inputs, but that, for whatever reasons, play only a supporting role (at least, for the moment) in establishing the general context of the experiential setting.

In effect, the phenomenological background frames consciousness, and just as with framed pictures, although the portrait or drawing might represent the main theme to be attended to, the kind of frame used (in terms, say, of color, size, texture, pattern, etc.) can affect how one attends to the main theme. That is, the mode of framing can affect what is focally perceived and how something is focally perceived.

The major difference between the two cases is that with a picture and its frame, the relationship is a rather fixed, static one. In the phenomenology of the experiential field, however, the character of consciousness constantly can shift as new inputs manifest themselves and as the focus of attention moves to different facets of the experiential field -- what had been background might become focus and vice versa.

Even with the focus aspect of the experiential field, there will be features that are registered more clearly and less clearly or that will be focused upon more closely and less closely. These features will play off against, and interact with, the main themes of the focus of the phenomenology of a given individual's experiential field.

To suppose, as Quine does, that in the contexts in which a term is applied such instances "have to be enough alike from the learner's point of view, from occasion to occasion, to afford him or her a basis of similarity to generalize upon" might not be sufficient. In point of fact, the learner must characterize or conceptualize the various contexts in which the term is applied.

This is true even if the contexts, themselves, in which the term is applied, should turn out to be different from one another with respect to various criterial features. Moreover, the individual might settle on any number of features as ground in a given experiential field.

Similarly, an individual might settle on any number of features as a focus under such circumstances. Yet, whatever the choice for ground and focus might be, the character of the link that ties -- for an individual -- a given word to a given experience will be a function of how the learner forges this link in terms of the features of the experiential field that the learner considers to be relevant to the foregoing process of characterization.

On each occasion that a specific term is applied to a context, experiential data accumulates for the child. Part of this data will be the gestures and actions of the adult(s) whose verbal behavior is being observed and that might, or might not, constitute important clues to the identification of the aspect(s) of the experiential field being referred and/or attended to.

Part of this experiential data that accumulates will be the actions and behavior of others (if any) who help form the contexts in which the term in question is being applied. Part of this data also will be the feedback, if any, that the child receives as he or she attends to – and behaves in relation to -- different aspects of the experiential field arising out of the encountered contexts in which the term is applied, and so on.

All of these experiential encounters are characterized by the individual in one way or another and fed into that person's conceptual geometry. This geometry is forming according to the manner in which the experiential co-ordinate points of phenomenological reference are being characterized and linked together through the dynamic interplay between ongoing experience and the already stored, characterized memories (i.e., pre-understanding) which form a part of the horizon that frames the current experiential field and that have been derived through previous phenomenological encounters of one experiential kind or another.

Over time (sometimes gradually, sometimes quickly), an individual makes inferences concerning the character of the relationship between the applied term and the various experiential contexts to which it has been applied. The nature of these inferences might be a function of a belief whose character links word and experience according to the logic of the belief. The nature of these inferences also might be in the form of a hypothesis in which the individual is forging a tentative link between word and experience that could be confirmed, dropped or changed in character as a result of subsequent experiences. Or, the character of these inferences might be in the form of a guess of some sort whose structure is influenced by one aspect or another of the experiential field that have been noticed in all of the contexts in which the term previously has been observed to be applied.

On the other hand, the nature of these inferences could be in the form of a correct deduction or "insight". This deduction could have resulted from accurately having characterized the experiential data which is relevant to the relationship of term to experiential context(s). Furthermore, out of this kind of characterization the individual might "derive" the character of the referential link that has been identified previously by one or more speakers, and that is now identified by the young learner or hearer.

While the precise nature of the "deriving" mechanism or process that makes this kind of inferential insight possible is more than a little mysterious, this mechanism does not seem to exhibit any of the characteristics normally attributed to the concept of "induction" that Quine is using to characterize the situation to which he is trying to make identifying reference. That is, the nature of the process being described does not seem to be so much a matter of going from known, present instances to unknown, future, or non-present instances, as much as it appears to be a matter of trying to grasp the character of the logic or structure that binds or links a variety of experiential contexts together.

This binding process seems to be a function of some epistemic dimension or theme whose character reflected the character of the intentional frameworks of the identifying reference of different speakers that stand behind a term's being applied to various experiential contexts. In other words, there is a conceptual process involved in inferential 'events' that links the focal character of a given aspect of the phenomenology of an experiential field with the character of past experiences that manifest congruent themes with the aspect(s) of the field now being attended to.

The congruency of these themes with the aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field now being attended to allows one to make sense of a term's being applied to both the present experiential context, as well as all past remembered instances of the term's being applied to experiential contexts of specified character. In this respect, the inferential processes being used appear to give expression to processes that are much more deductive, abductive, and/or insight-oriented in character than they are inductive.

Before one inductively can project into the future from present cases (or to absent cases from present cases), one has to be able to grasp the character of those cases. Such grasping usually requires one to consider the present cases in relation to past cases that are deemed to be relevant in various aspects, in order that one might have a pool of experiential data from which one might gain connecting insight into the character of the cases being attended to. Only after an experiential context has been characterized and integrated with other, similarly characterized experiential contexts is one in any position to make inferences about the nature of future instances of these contexts or about the nature of instances of those contexts that are now present.

Each experiential datum has a character. The structure of this character sets up parameters of permissibility for inferences. These parameters indicate the boundaries within which one must work in order to show that a given inference could be tenably defended and plausibly shown to be linked to the given data.

Inferences that are not capable of being demonstrated to be linkable to the character of these parameters would not be deductive in nature. They would be a product of some other process such as informed speculation, guesswork, learned beliefs, biases, etc.

Whatever the precise nature of those inferences might be (i.e., deductive or otherwise), induction seems to presuppose a determinate sense of the character of either future or absent cases. As a result, one cannot use induction to generate the character of the basis from which induction starts without becoming entangled in an infinite regress in which induction is forever presupposing itself.

Induction only makes sense when one has a basis of operations with determinate character from which to launch one's inductive projections. If this were not the case, an inductive inference would have nothing to draw on to give its projections direction, scope and definition concerning the nature of future or absent instances of the context at issue.

Consequently, contrary to what Quine seems to suppose to be the case, the learning of a term is not a function of inductive processes. Moreover, the learning of a term is not a matter of having "a basis of similarity [of experiences] to generalize upon".

Instead, the learning of a term appears to be a function of an inferential process. As indicated previously, the character of the inferential link between applications of a specific term and the experiential contexts in (and to) which it is being applied is drawn from one of the alternatives that are permitted by the parameters of permissibility that previously have been established by an individual.

These parameters have been established over time through his or her characterizing of the various experiential contexts surrounding the application of the term in question. As such, these characterizations form the experiential foundations on which individual inferences concerning the character of the given term is based.

Although a term could be "learned" on the basis of a defensible or valid deduction/abduction, the inference still could be incorrect. In other words, one's understanding of a term might be based on an inference that could be linked plausibly to available data. Yet, the reference might characterize a link between a 'working application' and concomitant experiential contexts in a way that does not reflect, accurately, the character of the identifying reference intended by the individual whose verbal behavior is being observed by a child or language learner.

Under these circumstances, the learner could do one of two things. On the one hand, the learner might proceed to misuse and misinterpret the given term when it is applied in future instances. On the other hand, the individual might come to recognize that the character of his or her grasp of the term is out of kilter with the sort of feedback the individual is receiving from others, and/or out of kilter with the character of the experiential contexts to which the term is observed to be applied subsequently.

Irrespective of whether the inference(s) underlying the learning of a term is, in the above senses, plausible (or possible) but incorrect, or valid and correct, the inference(s) involved seems to be neither a function of induction nor generalization or any sort. As was discussed both in the last several paragraphs as well as in the case of the example dealing with squares and scalene quadrilaterals, identification of a given word's referential framework is done in terms of the character of the "concept of the experience" in relation to that word's context of application. This usually consists of one or more

central themes constituting the main character of the word in question.

For example, in the case of a square, this consisted in the character of a line-of-vision square that yielded a "true" square retinal projection. In addition, one must consider a variety of other secondary and tertiary dimensions of character that revolve about the main thematic axis.

For instance, to revert to the square example again, these secondary and tertiary dimensions of character would involve the diverse array of scalene quadrilaterals that appeared in retinal projections as a result of different angle and distance inputs to the perceptual experience of a "true" square. The ongoing and remembered phenomenology of these themes, taken collectively, encompasses the entire set of experiential co-ordinate points of reference that mark or characterize the hermeneutical shape of the conceptual geometry to which application of a given term corresponds.

Thus, an individual's use of this term or his or her interpretation of someone else's use of the term will be, respectively, a function of, or matched against, the character of the conceptual geometry that constitutes the term's meaning for the individual or for the other person(s) using the term. But, the foregoing does not serve as a basis for generalizing meaning to new experiential contexts or for inductively projecting meaning onto future or absent contexts. In fact, it indicates one must ensure that the character of any new context is such that an application of the given term (and its underlying conceptual geometry) would reflect, appropriately and correctly, the aspect of the new context's character to which one wished to make an identifying reference.

Conditioning and Association in the Learning of Sentences

While attempting to further elaborate upon his theory of language, Quine criticizes a more or less behavioristic model of language in the following way:

"But think how little we would be able to say if our learning of sentences were strictly limited to those two modes: (1) learning sentences as wholes by a direct conditioning of them to appropriate non-verbal stimulations, and (2) producing further sentences from the foregoing ones by analogical substitution.... The sentences afforded by mode (1) are such that each has its particular range of admissible stimulatory occasions, independently of wider context. The sentences added by (2) are more of the same sort -- learned faster thanks to (2) but no less capable of being learned in mode (1). Speech thus confined would be strikingly like bare reporting of sense data."(page 9)

Shortly after this, Quine indicates what he feels is missing in such a behavioristic model:

"What more is needed in order to capitalize the riches of past experience is hinted in the remark ... that actual memories are mostly traces not of past sensation but of past conceptualization. We cannot rest with a running conceptualization of the unsullied stream of experience; what we need is a sullyng of the stream. Association of sentences is wanted not just with non-verbal stimulation, but with other sentences, if we are to exploit finished conceptualizations and not just repeat them." (page 10)

He, then, proceeds to expand, in part, on what he has in mind with respect to the foregoing notion of the "association of sentences":

"... the power of a non-verbal stimulus to elicit a given sentence commonly depends on earlier associations of sentences with sentences. And in fact it is cases of this kind that best illustrate how language transcends the confines of essentially phenomenalist reporting. Thus someone mixes the contexts of two test tubes, observes a green tint, and says 'There was copper in it.' Here the sentence is elicited by a non-verbal stimulus, but the stimulus depends for its efficacy upon an earlier network of associations of words with words; viz., one's learning of chemical theory. Here, as at the crude stage of (1) and (2), the sentence is elicited by a nonverbal stimulus;

but here, in contrast to that crude stage, the verbal network of an articulate theory has intervened to link the stimulus with the response.

"The intervening theory is composed of sentences associated with one another in multifarious ways not easily re-constructed even in conjecture. There are so-called casual ones; but any such interconnections of sentences must finally be due to the conditioning of sentences as responses to sentences as stimuli. If some of the connections count more particularly as logical or as causal, they do so only by reference to so-called logical or causal laws which in turn are sentences within the theory. The theory as a whole ... is a fabric of sentences variously associated to one another and to non-verbal stimuli by the mechanism of conditioned response." (pages 10-11)

Quine is quite right to maintain that the "unsullied stream of experience" that is sought after by those inclined toward phenomenalist reporting is not enough to provide the richness of linguistic/experiential interaction that might be necessary to come to epistemological terms with the ontological objects we encounter in experience. Yet, Quine's solution for improving upon the phenomenalist approach is to say: "What we need is a sully of the stream" (page 10).

His suggestion for how we are to accomplish this sully process is to argue we should not limit ourselves just to: associating sentences with non-verbal stimuli. He contends we also must begin to associate sentences with other sentences so that we might generate a theoretical network that binds a given non-verbal stimulus with a verbal response.

Furthermore, according to Quine (and as quoted above):

"The theory as a whole ... is a fabric of sentences variously associated to one another and to non-verbal stimuli by the mechanism of conditioned response."

As used by Quine, the terms: "associated" and "mechanism of conditioned response," create a large degree of vagueness. This vagueness interferes with one's gaining insight into just what is going

on in the individuals to whom such terms are applied descriptively with respect to the development or generation within individuals of the theoretical network that allegedly binds nonverbal stimulus and verbal response to the stimulus.

For instance, Quine mentions, in passing, an example concerning the mixing of the contents of two test tubes that results in the mixture assuming a green tint. The person who has mixed the test tubes says, according to Quine:

"There was copper in it." Quine goes on to say: "Here the sentence is elicited by a non-verbal stimulus, but the stimulus depends for its efficacy upon an earlier network of associations of words with words; viz., one's learning of chemical theory."

In point of fact, the non-verbal stimulus might not have elicited anything. In other words, to say the non-verbal stimulus somehow acted upon the individual and forced the individual -- due to its acting upon the individual in a specific way, to say precisely: "There was copper in it" -- appears to be misleading.

Why not say: "It seems there is some copper in it," or, "I wonder why it turned green?" or, "It's very pretty, but what does it mean?" or, "I wonder if this indicates there was a specific kind of catalytic agent present in one of the test tubes, and the green tint is a clue as to what the identity of that agent might be?" or, "Maybe one of the test tubes had a new kind of pH indicator that reveals whether the contents of the other test tube is acidic or basic when the contents of the two tubes are mixed?" or, "This reminds me of that sweater I wanted to buy," or, "What do you think of that new instructor Mr. Green?" In short, there seems to be nothing in the fact that the mixing of the contents of the two tubes resulted in the mixture's having a green tint that would compel an individual to utter a specific, precisely worded verbal response such as the one cited by Quine.

The test tubes do constitute a stimulus. The mixing of the test tubes' contents constitutes a stimulus. The emergence of a green tint in the mixed contents constitutes a stimulus. However, none of these

stimuli, taken individually or collectively, can be said to have elicited – in a strictly causal sense -- a given verbal response.

The stimuli are just that: stimuli. They merely represent information or data inputs that are received through the senses and that have to be cognitively processed.

For instance, first they must be characterized according to the nature of the stimuli. Secondly, the data must be interpreted according to current pre-understandings (if any) and assigned some sort of significance as to the meaning of the collective sequence of data-producing events.

This assigning process would be done according to whether or not the observed data fits into the conceptual geometry expressed in those pre-understandings. If the data does not fit in with one's existing conceptual geometry, one must generate some sort of proposal that is capable of taking into account the available data.

Finally, the individual has a large choice of verbal responses he or she can make (if one chooses to make any at all) that might be directly, indirectly, metaphorically, analogically, inferentially or idiosyncratically related to the observed color change. What kind of a response an individual will make, if any, depends on the individual and his or her understanding, interests, motivations, and mood (to mention but a few), as well as on the circumstances and who else is present (e.g., what is said when a professor is looking over one's shoulder might be quite different than when a close acquaintance is standing nearby).

All of the factors (whether internal or external) that impinge on an individual's experiential field at any given time and that shape the general phenomenological character of that field and its specific focus are all stimuli. Thus, to try to maintain -- as Quine seems inclined to do -- that a given "sentence is elicited by a nonverbal stimulus" appears to be both misleading and oversimplified. To say verbal responses bear a complex and dynamic relationship to the underlying phenomenology of the experiential field out of which they emerge seems much more accurate and appropriately complex.

Quine does note, as pointed out earlier, that "the stimulus depends for its efficacy upon an earlier network of associations of words with

words". In the case of the example he cites, the "network of associations of words with words" is the chemical theory that has been learned by an individual.

As such, the chemical theory constitutes one of the major sources of the stimuli that shape the phenomenological texture of the individual's experiential field in the test tube example. However, if a stimulus' efficacy to elicit, allegedly, a certain verbal response depends "upon an earlier network of words with words", then perhaps, the stimulus really is not eliciting a certain verbal response.

Instead, one's understanding of the "network of associations of words with words" (i.e., the underlying theory) might be preset in various ways to manifest itself if certain conditions are satisfied or believed to be satisfied. In the present case, one of these conditions is this: the mixing of two test tubes results in a green tint for the combined contents. Yet, other conditions might be necessary, too - namely, how quickly the green tint appears after mixture; the temperature and pressure under which the test tubes are mixed; how pure the ingredients are that are being mixed; the size of the amounts that are mixed; and, of course, whether one knows the identity of the contents of the test tubes being mixed.

In the latter instance, if one doesn't know what is being mixed, but one is being asked, let us say, to deduce the contents of the two tubes on the basis of the observed reaction, then one's verbal response might depend on the precise character of the "network of associations of words with words" that form the chemical theory one knows. As a result, one couldn't tenably maintain that the green-tint-stimulus necessarily elicits any response at all.

The dominating forces or factors that could be said (if anything could be said) to elicit the verbal response are a function of the perceptual/reflective/interpretive/inferential processes that generated the verbal response in question. In addition, because various people might respond differently to the same green-tint-test-tube stimulus, one cannot conclude, with any confidence, that this particular stimulus is what must have elicited the given response. More likely than not, one would have to infer that the source of the differences in verbal responses lay elsewhere, to some extent, within

the individual who is involved in set of circumstances being described by Quine.

A stimulus, in and of itself, has no capacity to elicit any response, verbal or otherwise. What happens in a given stimulus-context will depend on both the character of the being or organism that is exposed to or encounters the stimulus-context, as well as on the character of the stimulus-context itself and how that context is capable of engaging and being engaged by a given organism, as well as how that context has, in past instances, engaged and been engaged by such an organism.

Let us suppose that one knows the exact contents of the two test tubes, and all the necessary conditions are satisfied to enable an individual to identify, determinately (on the basis of his or her underlying or background "network of associations of words with words"), the reasons why the mixture of the contents of the two test tubes had a green tint to it. Even in this case, there can be no guarantee that a specific verbal response will be forthcoming or elicited.

In fact, as previously suggested, there is no guarantee the word "copper" or the word "green" or the words "test tube" or the word "mixture" will appear in any forthcoming remark concerning the observed happenings in relation to the two test tubes being mixed. One easily could come up with plausible sentences or responses that contained none of these terms.

One also could construct sentences that contained only some of the terms, but combined the terms in ways that bore no resemblance to the sentence: "There was copper in it." This is the sentence that Quine cited that would be generated by an underlying "network of associations of words with words" when the individual is presented with the appropriate eliciting stimulus.

A large part of the problem with Quine's account, at this point, is he believes the means by which words are "variously associated to one another and to non-verbal stimuli" (page 11) is a function of conditioned response. Unfortunately, he provides no account of the nature or character of the mechanism(s) responsible for such conditioned responses or why and how the various associations of words to words or words to non-verbal stimuli come into being.

Moreover, he doesn't provide an account of the nature of the principles that forge such associations. However, he does make, from time to time, and in an approving manner, some vague allusions to the work of B.F. Skinner. Quine speaks of the "network of associations of words with words" or the theory that supposedly binds a given stimulus with a given response. Yet, he doesn't account for how a given network or theory comes to have the character it does or why words are associated with one another or with non-verbal stimuli in the ways that the network or theory stipulates.

Quine does say "there are so-called logical connections, and there are so-called causal ones" that exist in a given network of associations. Nonetheless, he goes on to claim that "any such interconnections of sentences must finally be due to the conditioning of sentences as responses to sentences as stimuli". Therefore, for Quine, all logical or causal laws are themselves merely conditioned "sentences within the theory" or "network of associations of words with words" and words with non-verbal stimuli.

Even after digesting the foregoing considerations, one still wonders why different sentences have the character they do. For example, why do some sentences come to have a logical character of a specified nature, and why do some sentences have a causal character of a specified nature? Or, why are certain words associated with non-verbal stimuli in a certain manner of specified character? Furthermore, why are various words associated with one another in different contexts of modulated character?

One also wonders how any of these sentences come into being in the first place. In other words, why do different people come up with sentences of such diverse character when they (the people) are exposed to many seemingly very similar stimulus-circumstances?

Quine's answer to all of these musings, questions and wondering lies in the idea of conditioning, but, as indicated earlier, this idea is never really explicated or delineated in any clear fashion. 'Somehow' an individual is exposed to a context of given stimulus character. As a result, 'somehow' a fabric of sentences is built up over time in which words are 'somehow' associated with one another and 'somehow' are associated with non-verbal stimuli.

'Somehow' some of these words and sentences take on logical hues, and sometimes, 'somehow', they take on causal hues. However, the logical and causal hues that words and sentences take on are merely a function, 'somehow', of other sentences within the broader "network of associations" that constitutes the theory that intervenes between stimuli and response. In short, the idea of "conditioning" is, for Quine, largely an empty term that serves as a conceptual place holder that refers to aspects of the processes of learning and understanding that Quine can't, or doesn't bother to, pin down with any specificity.

Neither the association aspect of Quine's "network of associations of words with words", nor the network aspect of such associations, can be, strictly speaking, a matter of either words or sentences. A network is not merely a collection of random or arbitrary words and/or sentences. It is a collection of words and/or sentences connected, arranged, structured, organized or ordered in a particular manner. This ordering or structuring is done according to some given set of values, beliefs, principles, ideas, interpretations or understandings concerning the interactional character of the words and sentences involved in the network.

Moreover, an "association" is not a synonym for words and/or sentences such that what links words with words or words with non-verbal stimuli are merely more words and/or sentences. The idea of the association of words with words and so on refers to the character of the conceptual link that brings one word or sentence of a given character into juxtaposition with another word or sentence of a given character. This condition of being in juxtaposition to one another generates: word/concept/word, or word/concept/sentence, or sentence/concept/sentence contexts. These contexts are shaped by the manner in which the concept(s) in question ties together given words and/or sentences, as well as by the manner in which, once tied together, the structural characters of the words and/or sentences modulate one another within an individual's hermeneutical framework.

Words and sentences might be used to describe, characterize, explain, identify, or refer to the nature of these networks and associations. However, the network and associations are not, in and of

themselves, words or sentences. At least one cannot contend the foregoing if one wishes to avoid the pitfalls of trying to explain intelligibly what it means to say that the "associations of words with words" is a function of words, or that the network of those associations is also a function of words.

The problem here centers on the character of the function involved. This function links words with words in the form of an association, or it binds "associations of words with words" into a cohesive, identifiable network of given logical character. If the character of the function is, ultimately, a matter of words and sentences, then in what way can one say that words and sentences link words with words to generate associations or networks?

As indicated previously, the nature of the link or function proposed by Quine is that of conditioning or the conditioned response. However, as also discussed previously, this kind of proposal is totally inadequate as it stands. As such, it would have to be developed substantially before one might even begin to consider it as a plausible account of what precisely is entailed by the terms "network" or "associations" in the pre-sent context.

According to Quine, "actual memories are mostly traces not of past sensation but of past conceptualization". One wonders what Quine means by the word "mostly".

It seems to imply there are some memories, or parts thereof, which are not traces of past conceptualization. If this is the case, then what exactly is the nature of such traces? Are they traces of past sensation? If so, is the nature of the trace similar to that of the unsullied stream of the phenomenalist reports of sense experience? And, if not unsullied, then what is the nature of the process by which sense experience is altered or contaminated? Answers to these questions would help fill out Quine's position in a clearer manner than is presently the case.

In addition, one cannot help but wonder exactly what Quine has in mind in relation to the notion of "conceptualization". Let us suppose, as Quine's position at this point seems to imply, that conceptualization is merely another way of referring to words and sentences and stands for nothing apart from words and sentences.

If, for the sake of argument, the foregoing supposition is accepted, then almost by definition, a pre-linguistic child cannot conceptualize because the child has no words or sentences through which he or she somehow is able to forge networks and associations of words with words and words with non-verbal stimuli. Yet, if a pre-linguistic child cannot conceptualize, then the child has no means, for the most part, of storing memories, which Quine has described as "traces ... of past conceptualization".

Moreover, if a pre-linguistic child cannot conceptualize, and, thereby, has a very limited means, if any, of generating memories, then one wonders how the mechanism of conditioned response can act as a medium for the learning of words, sentences and the networking and associating of those words and sentences. If conceptualization is a strict function of words and sentences, and if it has no autonomous dimension apart from words and sentences, then Quine has to explain how the mechanism of conditioned response, that is to be the vehicle through which words and sentences are learned, seems to presuppose what, from a Quinean perspective, cannot exist in a pre-linguistic child.

The only way for Quine to extricate himself from this difficulty is for him to both tighten and clarify his use of the notion of "conditioned response". Furthermore, he needs to show the character of the relationship between "conceptualization" and "conditioned response".

In other words, he must explain just what it is that the former brings to the latter, thereby helping lend to a given conditioned response the character that this response has in any given case. Yet, he would have to accomplish all of this without abandoning his belief that theories, networks, associations and logic were, ultimately, a matter of words and sentences. Quite frankly, I don't see how Quine could manage to do this in any plausible fashion.

If conceptualization is not strictly a matter of function of words and sentences, then room is left open for theoretical maneuvering with respect to developing a model of language and language acquisition. This maneuvering room would have potential ramifications for re-thinking the notions of "network", "associations" and the "mechanism of conditioned response", all of which play such important roles in Quine's approach to describing language and its relationship to the objects of the world.

Such an altered conceptualization of "conceptualization" also would open up the possibility that the issue of logical connections between words and words, words and sentences, or words and/or sentences and non-verbal stimuli might not be necessarily "due to the conditioning of sentences as responses to sentences as stimuli". Instead, these logical connections might be an expression, at least in part, of extra-linguistic functions, processes and abilities (e.g., general intelligence or specialized non-linguistic cognitive abilities) which are prerequisites to, and/or run parallel with (but are distinct from), linguistic functions, processes and abilities.

Abstraction, Analogy, Description and Theory in Language Learning

In elaborating upon the various ways in which words can be learned, Quine contends that:

"In the case of words it is a contrast between learning a word in isolation -- i.e., in effect, as a one-word sentence -- and learning it contextually, or by abstraction, as a fragment of sentences learned as wholes. Prepositions, conjunctions, and many other words are bound to have been learned only contextually; we get on to using them by analogy with the ways in which they have been seen to turn up in past sentences. It is mostly just substantives, adjectives, and verbs that will occasionally have been learned in isolation. Which of them are learned thus, and that only contextually, will vary from person to person....

"The same would seem plausible for terms like "molecule" which, unlike "red", "square" and "tile", do not refer to things that can be distinctively pointed out. Such terms can, however, be inculcated also by yet a third method: description of the intended objects. This method could be grouped under the head of the contextual, but it deserves separate notice.

"What makes insensible things intelligibly describable is analogy, notably the special form of analogy known as extrapolation. Thus consider molecules, which are described as smaller than anything seen. This term "smaller" is initially meaningful to us through some observable contrasts as that of a bee to a bird, a gnat to a bee, or a

mote of dust to a gnat. The extrapolation that leads to talk of wholly invisible particles, microbes for example, can be represented as an analogy of relation ..." (page 14)

But after further indicating how, in addition to the size-relational analogy, a variety of other analogies can be brought to bear on the problem of providing an intelligible description of an insensible entity, such as a molecule, Quine stipulates:

"... the fact is that what one learns of molecules by analogy at all is meager. One must see the molecular doctrine at work in physical theory to get a proper notion of molecules, and this is not a matter of analogy, nor of description at all. It is a matter of learning the word contextually as a fragment of sentences which one learns to bring forth as wholes under appropriate circumstances." (page 15)

Although Quine uses different notions (e.g., learning in isolation; learning contextually or by abstraction; learning by analogy or extrapolation; and learning through description.) to account for how words can be learned, all these allegedly different modes of learning words are, in one way or another, contextual in character. The context at issue in any given instance is always the phenomenology of the experiential field of the individual. This phenomenology has a shape and a texture that always are changing as a result of the dynamic of focal/horizontal interplay over time.

The varying character of the experiential field, from one time to the next, provides a basis for individuation, particularization, or characterization to be made. These processes capture, in part or entirely, the structural or logical nature of the experiential features that differentiate one phenomenological context from another according to the focal/horizontal character that is used to represent, express, reflect or depict such contexts.

"Abstraction", "analogy", "extrapolation" and "description" are merely ways of referring, in general, to some of the cognitive processes that might be involved in the particularization or characterization of the experiential field into phenomenological coordinate points of

reference. Taken collectively, these experiential co-ordinate points give expression to the conceptual geometry that makes up one's pre-understandings and understandings at any given moment.

Indeed, "abstraction", "analogy", "extrapolation" and "description" are themselves examples of words that have come to be associated with, or are labels for, different phenomenological co-ordinate points of reference. These points of reference have been individuated or particularized on the basis of the focal/horizontal character of the experiential field occurring when such words have emerged as part of the phenomenological context experienced by a given individual.

The precise character of the conceptual co-ordinate points of reference to which these words ("abstraction", etc.) refer might vary, to some extent, from individual to individual. This variance is due to the differences (sometimes subtle, sometimes substantial) in the nature of the factors shaping the character of focus and horizon in such individuals with respect to the phenomenological/experiential circumstances through which these words were encountered originally and subsequently. As a result, each of the words in question refers to a generally determinate and small number of experiential particularizations that form the basic "structural core" from which meaning is generated and around which additional shadings and nuances of meaning are woven.

For example, the basic structural core of that to which "abstraction" refers concerns the following kind of phenomenological context. The nature of focal/horizontal interplay in this context is such that cognitive activity is geared toward creating a conceptual representation or understanding of that which an individual's focus is attending to.

This representation or understanding is to be based on a characterizing of certain features and aspects of the subject of focus. However, this characterization process emphasizes only some of these individuated features. Other features and aspects are de-emphasized or excluded entirely from the representation, even if they are relevant to the true representation. In other words, in abstraction, one is, in a sense, removing oneself from the totality of the character of the subject of focus. In the process of removing oneself in this manner, one is narrowing the scope and character of that part of the focal process

that is producing a representation – and, therefore, in this sense one has not removed oneself from the context in question but one has, instead, oriented oneself to that context in a certain way that emphasizes some features of the context while de-emphasizing other aspects of that context.

Thus, the ensuing representation or understanding will be a function of the features of the given 'subject' that have been selected out, for whatever reasons, to serve as the basis for representing or helping one to understand the given subject of focus. Such 'edited' themes will, then, be organized in a way that is thought to reflect accurately within the limits of the edited theme the character of the focal subject for which it is intended to act as a conceptual representation or way of understanding that subject of focus.

The description of the phenomenological aspects of the process -- or, more precisely, those parts of the process that we could observe and focus upon in consciousness -- is complex. Presumably, the underlying mechanism(s) that makes such a process possible is also complex.

Nonetheless, the actual process is something we do all the time as we individuate, particularize, or characterize the phenomenology of the experiential field from instance to instance as the focal/horizontal interplay varies over time. When we come to understand that the term "abstraction" refers to this way of engaging or orienting oneself toward the experiential field, we in effect come to grasp the basic structural core of the abstraction concept in question.

The character of the phenomenology through which we come to grasp the nature of the experiential field to which "analogy" refers differs somewhat from the contextual circumstances surrounding the learning of "abstraction's" frame of reference. In fact, the structural core of the underlying conceptual reference points for "analogy" actually builds upon, not the concept of abstraction, but upon the processes to which the concept of abstraction refers. More specifically, "analogy" refers to those instances in the phenomenology of the experiential field in which focus is characterized, in part, as being concerned with, or attending to, the recognized similarity of likeness between two kinds of particulars.

On the one hand, there are particulars that, at some previous time, have been generated through abstraction during the process of something's being characterized as a focal subject of a certain kind in the context of a broader experiential field. On the other hand, there are particulars that now are being generated through the process of abstraction. The character of the analogy being drawn will depend on both the character of the abstractions to which the particulars being focused upon give expression, as well as on the specific features of such abstractions that the 'phenomenology of focus' experiences as being alike, for whatever reason(s).

When an individual comes to grasp what "analogy" is referring to, then in effect, he or she comes to understand the following. The term "analogy" is labeling or directing attention to that aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field that encompasses the processes involved in likening one, or more, abstracted particulars to other abstracted particulars according to the character of the theme of likening that is occurring in a given experiential field.

The individual might not describe the phenomenology of grasping the reference of "analogy" in the foregoing terms. In addition, even his or her reflective, conscious understanding of this phenomenology might not necessarily be very clear.

Nevertheless, in order for the structural core of the analogy concept to be established, there must be some degree of the following kind of realization. The character of the aspect(s) of the experiential field to which "analogy" is giving labeling reference must be seen to concern the likening of the particulars (which are the subject of focus) along some thematic dimension(s) that is perceived, rightly or wrongly, to reflect some portion(s) of the abstracted character of each particular being considered.

Quite conceivably, however, an individual could come to such a realization without having the term "abstraction" in his or her vocabulary. The structural core of the understanding to which a word gives reference concerns insight into the character of certain aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which the word is linked. The nature of the link sets the parameters of reference (i.e., permissibility) that demarcate the given world's phenomenology. As such, these parameters must be recognized by the individual if the

structural core of that to which the word refers is to be understood to some degree.

In likening two particulars according to some perceived overlapping theme(s) of their abstracted character, the individual might not realize consciously he or she is dealing with abstractions per se. Nonetheless, the character of the likening process that underlies that to which "analogy" refers makes use of the fact that abstractions of a certain character exist. The individual might come to realize at some later stage of language learning that the word "abstraction" has a reference that overlaps, in various ways, with those aspects of phenomenology of the experiential field to which "analogy" gives reference.

In the case of "description", a reference is being made to that kind of focal/horizontal interplay in which various aspects of the character of focus, horizon and the interaction of the two are being individuated, characterized or particularized for the purposes of being conveyed to someone else. Hopefully, if the process is successful, the latter (i.e., the hearer) has a means of making an identifying reference, in terms of those aspects of the phenomenology of his or her own experiential field, whose character answers to, or reflects, the character of the particularization being conveyed or described.

If the latter individual has difficulty establishing or finding something in his or her experiential field that matches the nature of the former's characterization of a certain aspect of the speaker's experiential field, then normally, several things might happen. For example, the hearer could seek further elaboration of the character of the aspect of the experiential field being delineated by the speaker.

The hearer also might begin to inquire whether the aspect of the hearer's experiential field that had a character somewhat similar to that being conveyed was the sort of idea, entity, feature, etc. the speaker had in mind. Alternatively, the hearer simply could indicate that he or she didn't understand what the speaker was talking about. In any event, the structural core of the character of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which "description" gives reference concerns the delineating, elaborating upon, or unraveling of various facets of the character of the focal/horizontal intersection

within any phenomenology of the experiential field of a given individual.

Generally speaking, human beings are busy in the processes and activities of describing long before they have occasion to need to grasp the character of that to which "description" gives reference. If the individual does grasp the character of those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which "description" gives reference, this is because there is a connecting insight into, or a realization of, the basic structural core of the phenomenology of some of the processes (of which we can be aware) that are involved in those aspects of phenomenology to which "description" gives reference.

When Quine speaks of words being learned "contextually, or by abstraction, as a fragment of sentences learned as wholes" one might question whether sentences really are learned as wholes (although some might be). Moreover, one might question whether the nature of contextual learning is really a matter of abstracting fragments of sentences that have been learned as wholes.

Of course, sentences and fragments of sentences form part of the input that is shaping the focal/horizontal interplay that characterizes the context(s) within which the learning of certain words is to take place. However, these sentences and fragments of sentences only have any shade of intelligibility in direct proportion to their being tied to the phenomenology of an experiential field that has been individuated and particularized sufficiently to allow one to set up a congruence relationship of some sort. This relationship would be between, on the one hand, sentences and fragments of sentences, and, on the other hand, various facets of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which such sentences and fragments of sentences are thought to make identifying reference.

Consequently, the context that serves as the basis on which abstraction is to operate is not really the sentence from which a sentence fragment is taken, as Quine maintains is the case. The context in question is the whole series of inputs (of which the sentence is but one such input) that shape, orient and lend qualitative texture to an individual having a framework of focal/horizontal interplay, over time, of a certain hermeneutical character.

Furthermore, the nature of the abstraction is such that the fragment of sentence that is being singled out from the given sentence in order to be learned must be capable of being understood by an individual. That is, an individual must be able to grasp that the process of abstraction (that is, a hermeneutical mode of orienting oneself to a certain aspect of experience) is referring identifyingly to a certain aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field, and not other facets of that field.

In addition, an individual also must have insight into what the character of the aspect(s) is to which reference is being made. Reference not only establishes the general location within the phenomenology of the experiential field to which the individual's (i.e., the hearer's) attention is being drawn; reference attempts, as well, to particularize the character of the phenomenological location to which the hearer's attention is being directed. These attempts might or might not be accurate in the way they characterize such locations.

In effect, the basic difference between learning words in isolation and learning words contextually is, for the most part, a function of the increased complexity of the learning task of the latter in relation to the former. This is so since, essentially, both modes of learning are contextual, given that they each are embedded in the context of the phenomenology of the experiential field of the individual who is confronted with the task of coming to an understanding of what is meant or intended by a speaker in a given set of circumstances.

Nevertheless, in so-called instances of contextual learning, the individual is faced with several difficulties. To begin with, there is the problem of trying to grasp the specific character of the aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which reference is being made by a single word (as is the case in so-called 'word in isolation learning'). Moreover, the hearer also is faced with trying to discern the way in which an abstracted sentence fragment fits into the sentences from which the fragment was abstracted. This in turn must be placed in proper relation to the phenomenological location and location-character of the aspect(s) of the experiential field to which the sentence is making identifying reference.

As a result, so-called contextual learning usually requires more conceptual refinements and a greater awareness of, and insight into,

the logical or structural character of a phenomenological context than does so-called 'word in isolation learning'. Obviously, however, some isolated words (e.g., "God", "justice", "love") might present learning problems as complex as those of contextual learning situations.

To say, as Quine does, that the learning of a word like "molecule" is a matter of learning the word contextually as a fragment of sentences that one learns to bring forth as wholes under appropriate circumstances is to gloss over the character of the learning process. In other words, it glosses over the issue surrounding what it would mean to learn to bring forth sentences "as wholes under appropriate circumstances" (assuming this is what actually occurs).

In addition, Quine's approach to things fails to deal with what is involved, to some extent, in an individual's determination of just what constitutes the nature of "appropriate circumstances" with respect to either certain sentences or sentence fragments. All of this (i.e., the learning, the identification of appropriate circumstances, etc.) is done through the phenomenological context in which such sentential considerations take place.

One cannot learn what the meaning of either whole sentences or abstracted sentence fragments are until one knows the following. One must know how the general character of the intentional framework that generated the sentence/sentence-fragment in question fits in with the character of the circumstances (whether phenomenological and/or metaphysical) deemed to be appropriate with respect to what is being identifyingly referred to in the sentence or sentence fragment.

Therefore, this learning cannot be accomplished merely in the context of sentences and sentence fragments. It must be done with some understanding, on the part of the hearer, of what the character of the relationship is between: a) the intentional framework underlying the saying of the sentence or sentence fragments; and, b) the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field on which the intentionality of the speaker is focusing.

The foregoing suggests one does not learn sentences as wholes, nor does one learn sentence fragments in the context of sentences which "one learns to bring forth as wholes under appropriate circumstances". Instead, the foregoing suggests that one learns words and word/sentence relationships through several processes.

First, the individual must undertake a hermeneutical analysis of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which such words and word/sentence relationships are thought to make identifying reference. Secondly, the individual must come to grasp, on the basis of the aforementioned hermeneutical analysis, what the character is of the phenomenology of the location in the experiential field to which reference is being made by a given word or word/sentence relationship.

Therefore, rather than assert, as Quine does, that: "prepositions, conjunctions, and many other words are bound to have been learned only contextually; we get on to using them by analogy with the ways in which they have been seen to turn up in past sentences", one might argue in the following manner. The use of "prepositions, conjunctions, and many other words" presupposes a hermeneutical investigation into the problems surrounding the identification of the character of various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field of the speaker to which these words refer. To whatever extent analogy is involved in either the encoding (by the speaker) of the sentential message or its decoding (by the hearer), it will be a function of having connecting insight into the nature of the character of the relationship(s) between word/sentence(s) and the phenomenological context(s) of which such a word/sentence(s) is a part.

From the foregoing perspective, analogy will not be a function of "the ways in which they [i.e., the words] have been seen to turn up in past sentences". This is the case because when sentences are removed from the phenomenological context of which they are a part, then, there is nothing upon which to reflect analytically in order to establish the character of an analogical relationship in the use of a word from one sentence to the next.

On Understanding a Speaker

According to Quine:

"One tends to imagine that when someone propounds a theory concerning some sort of objects, our understanding of what he is saying will have two phases: first, we must understand what the

objects are, and second we must understand what the theory says about them.... In the case of the wavicles (i.e., light manifests properties of both waves and particles) there is virtually no significant separation; our coming to understand what the objects are is for the most part just our mastery of what the theory says about them. We do not learn first what to talk about and then, what to say about it.

"Picture two physicists discussing whether neutrinos have mass. Are they discussing the same objects? They agree that the physical theory which they initially share, the pre-neutrino theory, needs emendation in the light of an experimental result now confronting them. The one physicist is urging an emendation which involves positing a new category of particles, without mass. The other is arguing an alternative emendation which involves positing a new category of particles with mass. The fact that both physicists use the word "neutrino" is not significant. To discern two phrases here, the first an agreement as to what the objects are (viz. neutrinos) and the second a disagreement as to how they are (massless or massive), is absurd." (page 16)

Quine uses a somewhat misleading manner of describing the two phases that some people (though Quine is not among them) believe characterize the hearer's understanding of what a speaker says of an object. For instance, Quine has designated the first step or phase of such an approach as one in which "we must understand what the objects are". Quine criticizes this kind of approach when, a short while later, he maintains: "We do not learn first what to talk about and then, what to say about it."

Yet, in point of fact, we often do first learn "what to talk about" before we go on to learn what others say about it and what we ourselves can say about it based on our own experience. However, in learning what to talk about in any given circumstance, this need not mean one has come to "understand what the objects are".

Rather, the nature of identifying reference is such that one has come to recognize the general character of, at least, the aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which attention is being drawn. Thus, the character of the object in question is a matter of establishing the parameters set down by intentional focus as it

interacts, in terms of the hearer's own experiential field, with the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field being described by the speaker.

The first phase of a hearer's trying to understand what a speaker is saying concerns the task of identifying the nature of the general parameters of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which the speaker is giving reference. The character of that reference -- as understood by the speaker -- becomes the "object" of focus toward which a hearer is directing his or her initial efforts of attempting to grasp what the character of the speaker's intentional object is.

Once a speaker's intentional object has been assigned certain coordinate points of reference within a hearer's conceptual/perceptual geometry (i.e., located, to some extent, within the phenomenology of the hearer's experiential field), the hearer can, then, explore the phenomenology of his or her own experiential field. In doing this, the individual can set about determining, as best he or she can, whether the object described, identified or characterized by the speaker has the structural nature that the speaker claims it has in terms of its perceived character in the context of the phenomenology of the speaker's experiential field.

As a result, a certain amount of comparing and contrasting of phenomenologies and experiential fields occurs at this stage or phase. But, as indicated previously, none of this means that either the speaker or hearer understands what the objects being referred to are. Rather, it only might mean that the character (or some portion thereof) of the aspect(s) of the phenomenologies of the experiential fields being attended to has been identified, to some extent, by the speaker and recognized (let us assume) by the hearer.

Quine is quite right to say that in order for a hearer to understand what a speaker is saying about given objects "we must understand what the theory says about them". In this case, "the theory" represents the network that ties together a speaker's conceptual geometry with respect to the aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which a speaker is making reference.

"The theory" also entails an account or explication of why that aspect or 'object' of phenomenology has the character it appears to have on the basis of a speaker's mode of particularizing (i.e.,

objectifying) it. This again, however, might not be a matter of understanding what the object being referred to is. It only might be an understanding of what the speaker believes that object is.

In coming to grasp the character of the speaker's theory of the 'object' that has been located in the phenomenology of the hearer's experiential field, the hearer has come to understand something about how a speaker's hermeneutic of experience operates. However, the hearer might not have learned anything about the actual, true nature of the subject matter upon which such a hermeneutic allegedly is focusing.

Therefore, when Quine says "What the objects are is for the most part just our mastery of what the theory says about them", Quine tends to make reality (in this case, the "object" being studied) a function of theory, instead of making theory a function of reality. Consequently, Quine's characterization of the two phases of a hearer's understanding vis-à-vis a speaker's words of reference, etc., is quite misleading as far as the "reality" of what is going on in a hearer's attempt at understanding is concerned.

The subject matter, focus, or theme that an individual is exploring and/or on which a person is analytically reflecting -- by means of, among other things, the interrogative imperative -- is a phenomenological one. As such, it concerns the character of the experiential field, or some part thereof, through which an individual is ontologically linked with reality.

The hermeneutic of experience is an interpretive/descriptive methodological program that encompasses, potentially, every aspect of the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field. Moreover, if the occasion, interest or need should arise, the aforementioned program might engage every aspect of the experiential field in an interplay of changing focal and horizontal components as one seeks to piece together or map a conceptual geometry that accurately reflects the character of one's range of experience.

Through this interplay of focus and horizon, one also hopes to piece together a model of reality (or some aspect thereof) that is capable of providing an evidential basis out of which insight and understanding might arise. This evidential basis concerns not only the character of the phenomenology of an individual's own experiential

field, but it also involves determining or demarcating the character of the phenomenology of the experiential fields of others as mediated or processed through the phenomenology of one's own experiential field. This latter aspect is the case since the reported experiences of others form part of the fabric of the phenomenology of one's experiential field with which one is trying to come to grips hermeneutically.

The "objects" of an individual's experiential field are phenomenological in nature. The character of an individual's phenomenology with respect to these "objects" is a function of all the cognitive, emotional, sensory and/or spiritual forces that shape the structural nature of the focal/horizontal components that make up the phenomenological panorama through which a person perceives, engages, interprets, and interacts with the experiential field that constitutes the substantive material with which consciousness is confronted at every turn and shift of attention or focus. These phenomenological objects -- which are objects upon which our theoretical/hermeneutical efforts concentrate -- might or might not constitute an accurate reflection or representation of those aspects of reality that help make phenomenological objects of such character possible.

In time, an individual might explore, describe, analyze, question, hypothesize about, reflect upon, evaluate and, finally, assign such objects a set of conceptual co-ordinate points of reference. These points represent the character of that object in terms of the phenomenological location it has and role(s) it plays in our conceptual geometrization or mapping of the phenomenological space that marks the structuring of an individual's conscious orientation towards his or her experiential field.

Nonetheless, the act of identifyingly referring to, or singling out, an aspect or object of the phenomenology of the experiential field does not mean we know what the character of that phenomenological object is (although we might have certain first impressions of it ... the character of which might vary from individual to individual). Furthermore, the act of identifying reference need not mean we know what the character of the relationship, if any, is between the character of the phenomenological object and the character of any metaphysical or ontological object or aspect of reality that might exist independently

of the phenomenological object but which could play a fundamental role in the phenomenological object's having the character it does.

In view of the foregoing, our understanding of what someone else is proposing in the way of a theoretical account of the relationship between phenomenological object and a metaphysical or an ontological object does not require that, first, "we must understand what the objects are" which are referred to in the speaker's account, if by "object" Quine means metaphysical or ontological object. What is first required is the following. A phenomenological object that is referred to in a speaker's expounding of his or her theory must be located, to some extent, in the phenomenology of the hearer's experiential field according to the evidential clues that are provided by the speaker concerning the character of the given phenomenological object.

On the other hand, if, in his sentence "we must understand what the objects are", Quine means by "object", 'phenomenological object', one might agree, to some degree, with Quine when he says that "what the objects are is for the most part just our mastery of what the theory says about them". This is the case since, surely, as far as a speaker's understanding is concerned, the character of the phenomenological object is (partially or fully, depending on the individual) a function of the place that that object holds in the conceptual geometry of the theory as believed or understood by the speaker.

The aforementioned functional relationship is used to refer to, represent and/or account for the phenomenological object in question. Thus, if one is to understand what a speaker is propounding in the way of a theory about a given object, one must try to grasp the character of the theoretical network that a speaker uses with respect to the phenomenological object in question. In other words, a hearer must try to merge horizons with a speaker's hermeneutic in which the phenomenological object is embedded.

Notwithstanding the foregoing considerations, one still might inquire about whether, even in the case of phenomenological objects, a speaker's theory of the phenomenological object is a tenable one. Tenability could be considered in terms of either the character of the experiential data that the speaker might cite in justification of his or her theory.

Tenability also could be considered in terms of the character of the experiential data that a hearer might bring to bear on the issue of trying to establish the nature of the phenomenological object in question. In addition, there is the problem of trying to determine the nature of the relationship, if any, between: a) the phenomenological object that has been identified and located in the respective experiential fields of the speaker and hearer; and, b) any metaphysical and/or ontological object that might stand behind, underwrite, or give expression to the character of the phenomenological object under consideration.

A theory of a given phenomenological object is a function of the theorizer's efforts to enter into a hermeneutic of experience. This hermeneutic concerns those aspects of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field that have been individuated, particularized, or "objectified" into the form of a constructed representation with a given character. We refer to this representation as an 'object' of the focal/horizontal interplay of a certain facet of the phenomenology of the experiential field.

How one goes about generating such a constructed representation of determinate character will depend on what factors went into particularizing or characterizing the aspects of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field from which the 'object' is derived. Some of the factors shaping the structural character of the phenomenological object were a function of beliefs, values, assumptions, misperceptions, needs, emotions, illusions, and/or hallucinations that serve to distort the hermeneutical character of the way the individual interacted with the metaphysical/ontological object that serves as the experiential basis from which an individual derived his or her constructed phenomenological-object-representation.

As a result, in hermeneutically approaching such a representation, a hearer would have to try to establish a conceptual framework of demarcation that separated the notion of a "theoretical object" from that of a 'phenomenological object' (and surrounding experiential considerations). The phenomenological object(s) serves as the former's thematic subject from which the constructed representation embodied in a theory's character was, faithfully or unfaithfully, derived. Similarly, one must try to establish a conceptual framework of

demarcation that separates the notion of a phenomenological object from the metaphysical/ontological object that might serve as a given phenomenological object's experiential subject of focus.

Given the foregoing, a constructed representation embodied in the character of the phenomenological object was -- faithfully or unfaithfully -- derived. In other words, a "theoretical object" is a representation of the phenomenological object to which it refers, just as a phenomenological object is a representation of the aspect(s) of reality (i.e., the metaphysical/ontological object) to which it refers.

In view of the above, one has to be very careful in determining just which kind of "object" is involved when one says, as Quine does, that "what the objects are is for the most part just our mastery of what the theory says about them". One might agree with Quine's position with respect to theoretical objects. However, one need not agree that "what the theory says about them" (i.e., objects) is accurately reflective of either experientially-based, phenomenological objects or metaphysical/ontological objects.

The whole purpose of inquiry, analysis, critical reflection, and evaluation is to attempt to differentiate between the "myths" and "realities" surrounding each of these various kinds of "objects", and to determine what, if anything, one kind of 'object' has to do with the other sorts of 'objects'. The starting point for such a program of differentiation is to delineate the character of a given object(s) as one understands or believes it (them) to be.

One, then - conceptually -- would begin to bounce this characterization off the phenomenology of the experiential field (mine and that of others) in order to determine if the characterization has staying power (i.e., tenability) or congruence in the face of additional data and hermeneutical investigation. The character of such 'conceptual bouncing' would be expressed through processes such as the interrogative imperative, establishing congruence relationships, model building and so on.

Subsequently, one notes where one's characterization requires repair, trimming, reconstruction, and additional development in the light of this further data, inquiry, analysis and so on. If the hermeneutic of experience is pursued far enough and with sufficient rigor, the sought-after goal of this quest is to achieve a sort of congruency or

merging of horizons (in understanding that is) among the various kinds of objects. If successful, then the character of one object (say, the theoretical object) will reflect, to varying degrees of congruency, the character of the object(s) to which it is being related (e.g., either the phenomenological object or a metaphysical object or both).

This program of differentiation is complicated, considerably, in the case of metaphysical objects. This is so for the following reasons.

Whenever one is proposing or advancing a theory or a belief about some aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field, the latter aspect becomes the phenomenological object, and the former proposing or belief becomes the theoretical object. However, the theoretical object is itself a part of the phenomenology of the experiential field, but, a theoretical object does not become a phenomenological 'object', per se, until the former becomes the focus of reflection, analysis, exploration, etc. Prior to this (if it occurs at all), a theoretical object often makes its existence felt through horizontal influence in terms of the manner in which the character of the theoretical object sets conceptual parameters of pre-understanding through which phenomenological objects are viewed, approached, studied, and treated.

Theoretical objects can be constructed or developed somewhat passively or actively, as well as informally or formally. Which will be the case will depend on whether one merely adopts a belief system developed by someone else, or on whether one undertakes to derive a belief system of one's own on the basis of entering into the hermeneutic of experience. Either of these alternatives can be pursued rather informally and un-rigorously or formally and rigorously. When a theoretical object is being developed or learned, it is encountered as a phenomenological object in the sense that at such times the orientation of focal consciousness is toward the aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field that gives expression to the particularization of experience that becomes the object of focus and, therefore, the phenomenological object.

As indicated above, within the context of one's own experiential field, one can compare, directly, the character of theoretical objects with the character of phenomenological objects, in order to see what congruencies, if any, exist between the two. However, making such

comparisons in relation to metaphysical/ontological objects seems to be a much more elusive process.

Often times (if not invariably), we are forced to make inferences about the character of metaphysical/ontological objects on the basis of what we understand and can surmise about the character of theoretical and phenomenological objects. Inferences are necessary because we might not have direct access to, or perception of, the aspects of reality that appear to underlie, but make possible, the phenomena that we experience as theoretical and phenomenological objects.

As a result, our methodological position with respect to metaphysical/ontological objects is frequently as follows. Given that 'such and such' (this refers to some descriptive network) is the character of certain theoretical and/or phenomenological objects, what is capable of being inferred about the character of reality (or aspects thereof) that would make theoretical or phenomenological objects of such and such character possible?

Obviously, if there is some sort of error involved in the characterization of either theoretical or phenomenological objects, then this error is likely to be passed on to the network one constructs as a model of reality. This error or distortion is passed on through the inferences one makes on the basis of erroneous or distorted premises. One potential area for error and distortion that tends to be quite pervasive (and one that potentially exists in the foregoing discussion) is to assume that because one talks in terms of theoretical objects and phenomenological objects, therefore, there must be corresponding metaphysical/ontological objects.

One should keep in mind that the "objects" of theory and the phenomenology of the experiential field are the end result of a process of 'objectification' of experience. During this process, different aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field are characterized, particularized, or individuated in various ways.

This objectification of experience will proceed as a function of the influences (e.g., emotions, cognition, sensory input, temperament, past experiences, etc.) which impinge upon and help structure focal/horizontal interaction. These structural influences collectively

generate the character of the experiential themes, as well as weave such themes together into, for example, hermeneutical structures.

Out of this context arise both theoretical and phenomenological objects. But, the reality that makes these objects a possibility and to which theoretical and phenomenological objects attempt to refer identifyingly might not be itself a matter of objects. For example, maybe the ultimate nature of reality is not a matter of any sort of physical or material substance that can be objectified. Perhaps the ultimate nature of reality is a function of, or gives expression to, various principles, processes, conditions, etc. that are not themselves objects, but do make certain structures -- which are referred to as 'physical' or 'material' objects -- possible.

Consequently, perhaps the most that could be said in this respect is the following. The character of metaphysical/ontological reality is such that it allows for the possibility of there being theoretical and phenomenological objects of certain determinate characters that can be used as conceptual/perceptual representations of certain facets of the underlying reality.

Under these circumstances, the determination of the extent to which the character of a theoretical or phenomenological object is congruent with, or reflective of, the character of the reality to which the object refers becomes somewhat difficult. This is the case since there might be no object, per se, in reality that can be isolated or objectified in order to make the sort of comparisons that are needed to establish the degree of accuracy entailed by a theoretically or phenomenologically objectified representation of ultimate reality.

On the other hand, reality does have a character that is a function of all that it (i.e., reality) is. Therefore, congruency becomes a matter of trying to grasp reality's character as mediated by inferences about the character of theoretical and phenomenological objects as checked against the phenomenology of the experiential field (both the individual's and that of others). Through this mediation of the inferential process, one, in effect, is seeking a tenable account of what kind of character reality might have in order to make such theoretical and/or phenomenological objects possible.

If, in the light of the foregoing, one were to examine Quine's earlier stated example concerning "two physicists discussing whether

neutrinos have mass", one need not arrive at the same conclusion as Quine does when he asserts: "To discern two phases here, the first an agreement as to what the objects are (viz. neutrinos) and the second a disagreement as to how they are (massless or massive) is absurd." Quine stipulates that the two physicists "agree that the physical theory that they initially share, the pre-neutrino theory, needs emendation in the light of an experimental result now confronting them."

Yet, Quine's manner of describing the nature of this agreement is rather elliptical, since the two physicists do not just share a pre-neutrino theory. They also share a willingness or commitment to using the theory as a way of referring to and/or describing and/or accounting for a certain range of the particulars that are considered to "inhabit" various aspects of the phenomenology of their respective experiential fields.

These particulars are ones that can be phenomenologically located, identified, characterized, described, and intersubjectively agreed upon by the two physicists. The differences of perspective for the two physicists emerge in relation to the new data generated by a given experiment or series of experiments.

The problem for the two individuals becomes one either of: how to reconcile this new data with the pre-neutrino theory, or, how to reorganize the data (both new and old) according to the structure or character of some new theory. In Quine's example, one physicist attempts to deal with the challenge of the new experimental data by hypothesizing the existence of an, heretofore, unsuspected entity. The character of that new entity is said to be massless. The other physicist hypothesizes that although there is an, heretofore, unsuspected entity involved that is responsible, to some extent, for the experimental result having the character it does, nevertheless, the character of this newly discovered entity is said to have mass.

Regardless of how the differences in the proposed character of the hypothesized entity arose within the respective hermeneutics of the two physicists' exploration of the phenomenologies of their experiential fields, the following fact remains true. Prior to the experimental result, there had been an agreement about the character of the parameters of the aspects of the phenomenology of their experiential fields to which they were prepared to apply pre-neutrino

theory. The addition of the new experimental data does not alter, totally, the character of the given experiential parameters on which, and within which, pre-neutrino theory has focused. Instead, the new evidence is a manifestation of a phenomenon that expresses itself within the experiential parameters referred to by pre-neutrino theory.

However, the character of this manifestation is such, apparently, that it cannot be reconciled with, or fit into, the character of pre-neutrino theory (i.e., the former is incongruent with, or anomalous in relation to, the latter). As a result, the incongruencies have forced both physicists to acknowledge the inadequacies of pre-neutrino theory, as well as to acknowledge the need for some sort of re-working of this theory in order to be able to accommodate the new experimental data.

Thus, the two physicists still are agreed upon the character of the experiential parameters to which both pre-neutrino theory and the new experimental data refer or apply. That is, they are agreed upon the aspects of the phenomenology of their experiential fields to which their focal attention is oriented under the circumstances of considering the new experimental results against the backdrop of pre-neutrino theory. Nonetheless, the two physicists part company in relation to the manner in which they assign hermeneutic significance to the new experimental data in relation to both pre-neutrino theory and the data for which this theory allegedly accounted.

Building Models

Quine is correct when he says: "The fact that both physicists use the word 'neutrino' is not significant,' for "neutrino" is just a means of encoding or addressing (as they say in the computer world) a certain facet(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field that is the "object" of focal attention. What is significant, on the other hand, is that the character of the aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field that each physicist associates with the label "neutrino" is different in at least one respect -- namely, the feature of mass. Given this difference of character, how is one to answer Quine's question: "Are they discussing the same objects?"

Before tackling the above question directly, let us ask a slightly different question. However, the latter question is one that seems to be akin to the sort of question Quine is asking.

Let us suppose there are two individuals who are standing together in the same room. Let us further assume they both agree that they see a certain round object that is beneath the rectangular table in the middle of the room and that is near to the base of the table's leg. The table leg in question is to their right and farthest from them.

Suppose they also agree that the size of the round object is about four inches in diameter and has an exterior surface that is, as far as they can determine, solid in color (i.e., no stripes or dots). However, let us suppose they disagree as to what the nature of that color is. Do these individuals see different objects or the same object?

If one contends the two individuals see different objects, then surely, one can inquire as to the precise nature of the basis for justifying the existence of more than one object. After all, in all other respects the evidence indicates the existence of only one object about that there is a dispute in relation to one facet of its character -- i.e., its color. Do they see different objects or do they see the same object differently? If one maintains the two individuals see the same object, then one must provide an explanation of how they could come to characterize that same object in different ways.

A common means of approaching this issue is to differentiate between the perception of a thing and the thing being perceived. This corresponds, to a certain extent, to an earlier distinction made in this essay between phenomenological objects and metaphysical/ontological objects.

More specifically, in the context of the previously described circumstances, we are assuming that certain aspects of the character of the phenomenology of the experiential field of two individuals reflect one another in a congruent manner in every respect but one. The one difference concerns the color of the round object to which identifying reference is being given.

Under these circumstances, the usual tendency is to attribute the difference to perception (i.e., the phenomenological objects involved) and not to the character of the aspect of reality that is being

perceptually characterized. One might come up with any number of explanations as to why there was a difference of phenomenological objects in relation to the aspects of reality to which such objects supposedly gave reference.

For instance, perhaps one (or both) of the individuals is color blind. Perhaps, although both individuals are standing together, the angle of sight for one individual places the object in more shadow than is the case for the other individual's angle of sight.

For one of the two individuals, the existence of shadows causes an altering of the appearance of the color of the round object being focused upon. Another possible explanation is that, although in reality both individuals have the same kind of color experience, they learned different words to label those experiences.

Alternatively, perhaps one of the two has been given a posthypnotic suggestion in relation to the color of the round object beneath the table. This possibility raises all kinds of interesting issues as to just what it is that the individual under the influence of a posthypnotic suggestion actually does "see".

Does the hypnotized individual see the actual object, but with a different color somehow superimposed on it? Or, does he or she see a phenomenological object of a certain color that occupies the place of the actual object? Or, does he or she see both 'objects' but only reports or attends to the one answering to the description of the posthypnotic suggestion's character?

With a reasonable amount of further inquiry the individuals involved in the foregoing set of circumstances, probably, could arrive at a satisfactory means of determining the reason(s) for the reported differences in the character of the round object. More importantly, throughout the process of further investigation, both individuals seem to have a clear sense of the character of the horizontal or contextual parameters of the phenomenology of the experiential field about which they are inquiring. They also seem to have a clear sense of the nature of the specific focal character of the aspect of their respective phenomenologies that they find problematic -- namely, the color of the round object in question. As a result, whatever the nature of the reason that underlies the differences in the phenomenology of the experiential fields of the two individuals, in most instances (with the

possible exception of the posthypnotic suggestion alternative) the two individuals, in all likelihood, would agree, eventually, that they saw the same object differently, and would not conclude they saw different objects.

The case of the two physicists is, of course, not quite the same as the foregoing example. The "neutrino" doesn't refer to something that can be seen like a round object beneath a table.

"Neutrino" is a label for a theoretical object of a certain character that is hypothesized as a means of accounting for both the new experimental data as well as the earlier data in which the pre-neutrino theory was rooted. Consequently, when one asks: are the two physicists discussing different objects or the same object?, the question is complicated by the fact that the object(s) in question is theoretical in nature and might not correspond to any actual metaphysical/ontological "object(s)".

Moreover, the character of the phenomenology of the physicists' experiential fields is such that there is no phenomenological object, per se, answering to the description of the hypothesized neutrino. There is only the theoretical object upon which they are focusing or the aspect(s) of the phenomenologies of their experiential fields to which their attention is drawn (e.g., the new experimental results), from which -- together with the horizontal data entailed by pre-neutrino theory and concomitant evidence -- the inference concerning the possible existence of the neutrino particular emerges.

Nevertheless, here too, just as in the case of the round object, the two physicists seem to have a clear understanding of the character of the horizontal or contextual parameters of the phenomenology of the experiential field about which they are inquiring. Moreover, they also seem to have a clear sense about the nature of the specific focal character of the aspect of their phenomenologies that they disagree on -- in this case, whether or not the proposed neutrino has mass.

In each case, the proposed neutrinos are intended to account for precisely the same aspects of the phenomenology in the experiential field of both physicists. The only difference between the two physicists lies in the nature of the character of the proposed entity that each physicist believes to be an accurate characterization of the reality that underwrites the manner in which the phenomenologies of their

experiential fields -- vis-à-vis the new experimental results and the pre-neutrino theory/data -- have the character they are observed to have and on which the two physicists agree. Only further inquiry will determine if either characterization constitutes an accurate representation of the character of the aspect(s) of reality being referred to on the basis of the physicists' respective inferences about why the phenomenology of their experiential fields have the character they do.

Simplicity and the Interanimation of Sentences

Toward the end of chapter 1 in *Word and Object*, Quine discusses how he believes the idea of "simplicity" plays a key role in establishing the 'center of gravity' for a given body of evidential data. For Quine, this 'center of gravity' is extremely important as one seeks to balance, delicately, the "varied forces transmitted across the fabric of sentences from remotely relevant stimuli" (page 18). According to Quine:

"What we are doing when we amass and use circumstantial evidence is to let ourselves be actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations as they reverberate through our theory, from present sensory stimulations, via the inter-animation of sentences." (page 18)

He goes on to ask, and then answer, a question concerning the criteria to be used in evaluating this "interanimation of sentences":

"What conscious policy does one follow, then, when not simply passive toward this interanimation of sentences? Consciously the quest seems to be for the simplest story. Yet this supposed quality of simplicity is more easily sensed than described." (page 19)

Quine further adds:

"... simplicity considerations in some sense might be said to determine even the least inquisitive observer's most casual acts of individual recognition. For he is continually having to decide, if only implicitly,

whether to construe two particular encounters as repeated encounters with an identical physical object or as encounters with two distinct physical objects. And he decides in such a way as to minimize, to the best of his unconscious ability, such factors as multiplicity of objects, swiftness of interim change of quality and position, and, in general, irregularity of natural law.

"The deliberate scientist goes on in essentially the same way, if more adroitly.... It is part of the scientist's business to generalize or extrapolate from sample data, and so to arrive at laws covering more phenomena than have been checked, and simplicity, by his lights, is just what guides his extrapolation. Simplicity is of the essence of statistical inference....

"Simplicity is not a desideratum on a par with conformity of observation. Observation serves to test hypotheses after adoption for testing. Still, decisive observation is commonly long delayed or impossible; and insofar at least, simplicity is final arbiter." (pages 19-20)

There are any number of issues that are problematic in the foregoing excerpts from *Word and Object*. For example, earlier in the present essay, Quine had been criticized for the inadequacies and vagueness that permeate his largely behavioristic position concerning the manner in which sentences supposedly are learned, somehow through contextual conditioning (In Quine's words: "We just try to be as sensitively responsive as possible to the ensuing interplay of chain stimulations" -- page 19.).

With respect to the lengthier quote noted above, one might wonder, as well, about the nature of the means by which "varied forces [are] transmitted across the fabric of sentences from remotely relevant stimuli" (page 18). In other words, what is the character of this mechanism of transmission by means of which "varied forces" impinge upon the "fabric of sentences from remotely relevant stimuli"? Moreover, on what basis does one determine the relevancy (remotely or otherwise) of stimuli that are linked to the "fabric of sentences" via the agency, on the one hand, of "varied forces", and, on the other hand, some, as-yet-unspecified, mechanism of transmission

that transports such "varied forces" from "remotely relevant stimuli" to the "fabric of sentences"?

In addition, Quine has indicated "evidence is a question of center of gravity" (page 18) in which the individual must undertake a task of "delicate balancing of varied forces transmitted across the fabric of sentences from remotely relevant stimuli" (page 18). In view of Quine's above perspective, one wonders about the character of that which stands behind, directs, or regulates this process of "delicate balancing" to which Quine alludes. One also wonders about the principles or criteria according to which the balancing process is to be carried out.

Although Quine uses slightly different language, the following excerpt (previously cited) reflects the same basic idea (and concomitant problems) as does Quine's position outlined in the last paragraph:

"What we are doing when we amass and use circumstantial evidence is to let ourselves be actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations as they reverberate through our theory, from present sensory stimulations, via the interanimation of sentences." (page 18)

Just what is meant by the idea of letting: "ourselves be actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations ... via the interanimation of sentences"? Or, how does one go about being so actuated?

One also would like to know just what is entailed by the idea that chain stimulations "reverberate through our theory, from present sensory stimulations, via the interanimation of sentences". In other words, what is the character of this reverberation phenomenon to which one is supposed to "be actuated as sensitively as possible"? Furthermore, what is the precise character of the manner in which the interanimation of sentences is to mediate this reverberation phenomenon "as sensitively as possible"? Finally, what are the criteria by which the notion: "as sensitively as possible", is to be discerned and measured?

Because Quine believes that what objects "are is, for the most part, just our mastery of what the theory says about them" (page 16), one is

not surprised to find he appears to believe that the idea embodied in the phrase "the interanimation of sentences" has adequate explanatory power to account for how "chain stimulations ... reverberate through our theory". After all, Quine seems to maintain that chain stimulations (which are occasioned by one's encounter with objects) represent the context in which sentences are learned by the conditioning effect that exposure to such contexts supposedly has upon the individual.

If what Quine says is so, then according to the logic of that position, one's understanding of objects will be a function of several factors. One factor will be the theory that inhabits, so to speak, the sentences that are learned through contextual conditioning. The other factor that, in Quine's view, would be related functionally to understanding is the "interanimate" manner in which such sentences play off against one another while mediating "chain stimulations as they [i.e., the chain stimulations] reverberate through our theory, from present sensory stimulations". However, as previously indicated, one has considerable difficulty understanding how Quine proposes to explain the character of the transition from "present sensory stimulation" to the emergence of a theory of determinate (or partially determinate) character.

When Quine says "the pattern of conditioning is complex and inconstant from person to person" (page 17), he is undoubtedly correct. Nevertheless, one should permit neither the complexity nor inconstancy surrounding this issue to deter one from trying to explore and, if possible, come to understand both the "patterns of conditioning" as well as the character of all that is involved or encompassed by such a conditioning process.

Indeed, until one comes to grips with these issues and resolves the problems in which they are entangled, then the whole idea of the "interanimation of sentences learned through contextual conditioning" does not supply one with any real understanding of how objects, sensory stimulation, language and theory are interrelated. In addition, despite Quine's noting, with respect to these patterns of conditioning, that:

"there are points of general congruence: combinations of questions and non-verbal stimulations that are pretty sure to elicit an affirmative answer from anyone fit to be numbered within the relevant speech community," (page 17)

At best, the foregoing permits an individual to identify who can be "numbered within the relevant speech community". It suggests nothing about the process by which one becomes a member of the speech community in question, nor does it provide any hints as to what stands behind and makes possible the arriving at "points of general congruence" that alone makes a speech community feasible.

Similarly (and as noted previously), one is, to a large extent, left in the dark as to just what is meant and entailed by phrases like: "let ourselves be actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations"; "reverberate through our theory ... via the interanimation of sentences"; and, the "delicate balancing of varied forces transmitted across the fabric of sentences".

One also is left in the dark with respect to finding answers concerning the following sort of questions. For example, how do these phrases come to have the character that Quine assumes them to have if one, allegedly, learns their meaning through contextual conditioning?

In addition, why, on occasion, do different people -- even though members of the same speech community -- interanimate their sentences differently, and, thereby, allow chain stimulations to reverberate differently through their theory? Moreover, why are such people differently actuated by a similar series or sequence of chain stimulations? In all these cases, a great deal more work must be done before the idea of the 'interanimation of sentences learned through contextual learning' -- an idea that plays a fundamental role in Quine's model -- can be of much help in establishing, with any degree of specificity and tenability, the relation between *Word and Object*.

Interestingly enough, much of the previous discussion is, for Quine, subsumed under what he takes to be a "passive" approach to the interanimation of sentences. According to Quine, in the "passive" approach, "we just try to be as sensitively responsive as possible to the ensuing inter play of chain stimulations" (page 19).

A more active participation in the interanimation of sentences involves, according to Quine, "the quest ... for the simplest story" (And, remember, Quine is quick to acknowledge that "this supposed quality of simplicity is more easily sensed than described"). One justifiably might argue that such active participation in the inter-animation of sentences presupposes the so-called passive approach to the inter-animation of sentences.

This is so because before one can try to identify "the simplest story" with respect to any two sets of interanimated sentences dealing with a given body of sensory data, then one, first, must identify the character of the chain stimulations with which one is dealing in a given sensory data context. Furthermore, from Quine's point of view, this sort of identification of the character of a certain framework of chain stimulations is accomplished by one's trying "to be as sensitively responsive as possible to the ensuing interplay of chain stimulations".

This passive approach might even be considered to be at the very heart of the process of contextual conditioning through which Quine believes language (in the form of isolated words and whole sentences), allegedly, is picked up. For instance, let us suppose that an individual is "as sensitively responsive as possible to the ensuing interplay of chain stimulations" that occur in the context in which words (sentences, partial sentences or single words) are uttered by a speaker.

Given the foregoing, then somehow, according to Quine, the individual (in the present case, a child trying to understand what is said) will make a connection between context and linguistic utterances. Quine construes this connection in terms of conditioning in some, as yet, undefined sense.

Through this connection, the child will be permitted to gain at least partial entry into the speech community of which the speaker is a member. If this is the case, then once the rules of application for a more active criterion such as simplicity were specified and clarified, this criterion could be used to decide between alternative beliefs or theories. According to Quine, these beliefs or theories are those that arose in relation to the child's contextual conditioning within circumstances in which the verbal utterances remained constant.

Notwithstanding the foregoing considerations concerning constancy of verbal utterances, nevertheless, various non-linguistic

aspects of the circumstances might have changed over time ... in other words, the character of those contexts in which learning by conditioning is supposed to take place frequently change. Therefore, even when the linguistic stimulus remains constant across these contexts, one still might anticipate something such as the following.

In a series of encounters with a variety of contexts where a linguistic stimulus remained constant, the individual could juxtapose the linguistic stimulus with various aspects of these contexts and come up with alternative possibilities with respect to the connection between the constant linguistic stimulus and the varied contexts in which that stimulus appeared. For example, the sentence "There is a rabbit" could be related to a variety of different circumstances in a variety of different ways to generate a number of different meaning possibilities concerning the relationship between, on the one hand, the sentence that remains constant, and, on the other hand, the circumstances that do not remain constant but in which the same sentence occurs.

Moreover, the foregoing assumes, of course, that the individual already had grasped or suspected there was some sort of representational link between linguistic stimulus and the various experiential contexts in which the linguistic stimulus is embedded. In any event, according to Quine, one way to choose amongst the aforementioned alternatives would be to generate or adopt some criterion of selection. The purpose of this criterion would be to permit one to eliminate those possibilities concerning the connection in question that somehow did not 'fit' the available experiential data to that point with respect to the contexts of interest -- namely, those in which a given linguistic stimulus was constant.

Quine's candidate for this criterion is 'simplicity'. Although he, actually, doesn't employ this term in his discussion of the process of contextual conditioning through which language theoretically is learned, nonetheless, such an application seems to suggest itself naturally in light of what Quine does say about the idea of simplicity.

At the same time, attempting to apply the term "simplicity" to the process of contextual conditioning by means of which, in Quine's view, language is learned, raises some important questions. For instance,

Quine uses the idea of simplicity as an active approach to evaluating and shaping the interanimation of sentences.

Yet, if no sentences exist -- as would be the case with a child just starting to engage language -- then the character of those aspects of the process of contextual conditioning to which simplicity is to be applied would not appear to be essentially sentential in nature. In these circumstances, an understanding -- which is pre-linguistic in nature -- that embodies the idea of simplicity would be called upon to select between alternative theories, beliefs, ideas or understandings that differentially connected a constant linguistic stimulus to various features of the contexts in which such a stimulus manifested itself.

On the basis of the foregoing perspective, it is a pre-linguistic or non-linguistic selection process concerning the "simplest story" that is believed to link a constant linguistic stimulus to various contexts that will determine what is learned, be it right or wrong. That is, 'simplicity', in this case, involves the selection of one theory or idea (among, say, several) concerning the connection between constant linguistic stimulus and certain associated contexts that would underlie the process of contextual conditioning.

This selection mechanism is rooted in a non-sentential framework in the sense that the mechanism itself is not a function of sentences or the interanimation of sentences. Instead, a nonlinguistic mental or cognitive mechanism is responsible for the acquisition of such sentences. Furthermore, the aforementioned selection process would be responsible for the generating of the various possible theories of connection between constant linguistic stimulus and the varying surrounding experiential contexts in which such constant stimuli were embedded.

The sentence that is learned cannot, in and of itself, be the source of the theories that arise concerning the possible significance of that sentence (i.e., the character of its connection to the contexts in which it appears). Moreover, the sentence that is learned cannot be the source of the selecting process that settles upon one sort of connection between linguistic stimulus and associated contexts rather than some other sort.

A usable sentence (i.e., one that can be utilized effectively in a given speech community) is the end result of processes that seem to

be somewhat independent of sentences qua sentences. These processes seem to operate in circumstances in which sentences are only one of the data inputs that are taken into consideration in the formation or generation of the character of the connecting link that stands between experiential contexts and linguistic stimulus.

The sentence, by itself, cannot stipulate what the nature of this link must be. The hearer must somehow grasp, or gain insight into, the referential nature of the intentionality that stands behind the sentence.

The hearer must do this on the basis of the data provided by the character of the experiential contexts in which the linguistic stimulus remains the same. This includes the data that comes through the individual's attempt to characterize such contexts. However, these experiential contexts also include data that arises through the individual's processes of abstracting, reflecting, analyzing, and questioning (on however primitive a level) in relation to such contextual characterizations once the latter have arisen.

As quoted earlier, Quine believes:

"... simplicity considerations in some sense might be said to determine even the least inquisitive observer's most casual acts of individual recognition. For he is continually having to decide, if only implicitly, whether to construe two particular encounters as repeated encounters with an identical physical object or as encounters with two distinct physical objects. And he decides in such a way as to minimize, to the best of his unconscious ability, such factors as multiplicity of objects, swiftness of interim change of quality and position, and, in general, irregularity of natural law." (page 19)

One wonders, however, if "simplicity considerations in some sense" really are what are at work in the problem of identification concerning a current encounter with an object that bears a perceived resemblance or similarity to a remembered instance of a previously encountered object.

Quine seems to be arguing in the previous quote that the decision of whether "to construe two particular encounters as repeated encounters with an identical physical object or as encounters with two

distinct physical objects" is a function of "simplicity considerations in some sense". Yet, the aforementioned decision appears to be based on the degree of congruency between present and past encounters with the objects in question.

Determining the degree of congruency is not done for the sake of simplifying the situation per se. After some time, simplifying the situation "in some sense" might be one of the ramifications that results from this sort of re-identification determination by means of congruency. In any event, the reason why congruency relationships come to the forefront in such instances of re-identification is because, phenomenologically, two experiential encounters are perceived or characterized by the individual as being the same, similar, or disparate in relation to one another.

Then again, 'simplifying the situation' might not be one of the results if one should happen to decide that the present object is a different, though similar, object to one previously encountered. Under such circumstances, one appears to be stretching the notion of simplicity beyond the bounds of recognition to try to argue that the reason for deciding that a presently encountered object is distinct from a previously encountered object is due to "simplicity considerations" (whatever these are supposed to be). In any case, the reason for differentiating the current stimulus from past stimuli of similar character is done for other considerations.

Essentially, such differentiation occurs because an individual recognizes and acknowledges the presence of one, or more, themes, features, facets or characteristics in the presently encountered object that did not seem to manifest themselves in the previously encountered object, and vice versa. The line of demarcation, in other words, between deciding, on the one hand, that the present object is a re-identified instance of a previously encountered object and, on the other hand, that the present object is a separate, different object from ones previously encountered, seems to be a function of two sorts of conditions. First, there is the extent (if any) of the congruence relationship between present and past experiential encounters. Secondly, the line of demarcation is functionally dependent on the 'parameters of minimal acceptability' that an individual sets up for

treating objects that are experientially encountered as either the same as previously encountered objects or as different from them.

The character of these 'parameters of minimal acceptability' might change with interests, experience, understanding, goals, needs, and so on. In any event, these parameters form as a result of the way an individual individuates, particularizes, or characterizes his or her experiential encounters on any given instance.

In addition, such parameters form as a result of an individual having decided that subsequent experiential encounters are identical to, similar to, or disparate from the earlier encounters on the basis of how the particular aspect(s) of the current experiential encounter on which the individual is focusing 'strikes' one as being congruent or incongruent with some remembered past instance of experiential encounters that have been stored in memory in some fashion. These memories manifest themes, characteristics, or features that can be compared, to whatever degree, with the themes, characteristics and features of current aspects of experiential encounters.

This essay does not put forth any theory or answer that might account for why different people develop different senses of what strikes them as being congruent or incongruent. The present essay is only trying to draw attention to the fact that this does seem to take place as well as attempting to indicate the general character of the way in which this process happens ... along with alluding to the sort of factors that are involved in shaping and structuring the character of these congruence/incongruence orientations.

The rightness or wrongness of one's perception or characterization will be tested subsequently in any number of experiential ways. Furthermore, an individual might devise any number of means (one of which might be, to some extent, a function of simplicity considerations) to measure or assess the accuracy of such a perception. However, the issue of the correctness of the phenomenological perception or characterization in question is irrelevant to, and a separate issue from, the process by which an individual decides whether or not a currently encountered object is a repeated encounter with a previously encountered object or is distinct from any previously encountered objects.

On the one hand, this latter process is entirely a matter of establishing the degree of congruence between, or among, different aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field at any given time. For example, this involves the determination of the degree of congruency between the memory component of the phenomenology of the experiential field and an ongoing visual input component of the phenomenology of the experiential field. On the other hand, the above mentioned process is also a matter of how an individual determines the character of the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field where the individual is prepared to set the lines of demarcation for the 'parameters of minimal acceptability' that differentiate identical, similar and disparate experiential objects that are encountered.

For a very young child, the lines of demarcation might be very ill-defined and easily subject to confusion or mistaken identity. For a very young child, the lines of demarcation might consist of very liberal parameters of minimal acceptability in which anything that manifests, say, merely one given theme, feature or character (be it color, shape, number of legs, presence of fur, taste, strangeness and so on) will be enough to establish a congruency between (or among) objects as being the same or similar. This will be the case even if, in reality, the objects being considered might be quite distinct and disparate (e.g., calling all four legged, furry animals "dogs" or "cats").

As we grow older, these initial lines of demarcation might be refined in accordance with the character of various subsequent experiential encounters and with the expanded understanding one develops as a result of such encounters. This has the effect of setting more stringent conditions for the parameters of minimal acceptability in determining whether (and how) two objects are the same, similar or disparate.

The refining of the lines of demarcation also has the effect of rendering those parameters more complex. This is done in order to take into account the possibilities that one and the same thing might express itself differently under varying conditions, or that one and the same object might, over the course of time, have its appearance altered without its basic nature or character undergoing any substantial change.

One of the factors that might shape the character of the parameters of minimal acceptability that begin to form around the phenomenology of congruency relationships might be that of "simplicity considerations in some sense". In any event, these considerations arise only after the fact of the emergence of an experiential situation in which something presently encountered is being compared with something previously encountered in order to determine the degree and nature of the congruency that is perceived to exist between or among the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field in question.

Therefore, eventually, one might develop a set of simplicity criteria or principles as a means of adjudicating between, or among, various ideas, beliefs, values, theories and so on. However, these sorts of criteria and principles cannot be applied until the following has occurred.

One has to have characterized or individuated a certain aspect(s) of the current phenomenology of the experiential field. Once this process of characterization or individuation has taken place, the individual tries to fit this characterized particular into the conceptual geometry that has been developed or constructed along various thematic lines within the phenomenology of the experiential.

These thematic lines emerge due to earlier instances of characterizing and particularizing previous experiential encounters. Only during the fitting or mapping process would decisions be made in accordance with the simplicity criteria one had devised as to which of the possible conceptual geometries that could arise when the current data is taken into consideration might be considered as "the simplest story" among the alternatives open to one from which one can select. In effect, this fitting or mapping process might be, in part at least, one kind of expression of what Quine referred to when he said we must "be actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations as they reverberate through our theory" or conceptual geometry.

One might be able to conceive of instances in which a decision is consciously or unconsciously made to individuate, particularize or characterize a given experiential encounter according to some mode of abstraction orientation. When such an orientation of abstraction is applied or used, only certain facets, features or dimensions of the

phenomenology of the experiential field of which that encounter is a partial manifestation are singled out to represent the general character of the thing, object, event or phenomenon encountered.

Conceivably, this kind of abstraction process might be undertaken to simplify the complexity of the ontological territory one was encountering in order to better understand some of the logical character of that territory. If so, the abstraction process would need to be proceed in such a way so that the representation to be generated through the abstraction process would not be just the simplest, in some sense. The abstraction in question also would have to be the least distorting (which would have to be spelled out within the context of the process of developing a simplicity story or model) of the representational possibilities of what was being depicted within the individual's conceptual geometry.

Thus, a certain tension would emerge during the development of an abstracted representation. This tension is between the requirements of simplicity and the needs of accuracy. In fact, the criterion of simplicity is dependent, functionally, on considerations of accuracy in the following sense.

The ultimate arbiter for acceptable conditions of "simplicity considerations" necessarily will be the actual nature of the context to which such considerations are being applied. Essentially, the "simplest story" possible can be nothing other than the truth itself, for any deviation from the truth unnecessarily complicates the story line.

Consequently, the simplest story possible in any given set of circumstances will be that "story", among all those that are currently available, that is both most reflective of, and least distorting of, the actual character of the truth concerning those circumstances being considered. At the same time, the simplest story will be that one which achieves the foregoing while simultaneously conforming to, or falling within, the boundaries of the character of an abstracted representation of the circumstances in question that is most economical in the way it (the representation) gives expression to this process of balancing 'maximum reflection/minimum distortion' considerations.

An individual can decide "in such a way as to minimize, to the best of his or her unconscious ability, such factors as multiplicity of objects, swiftness of interim change of quality and position, and, in general,

irregularity of natural law" (previously cited). However, before the individual can decide in this fashion, she or he, first, must be able to develop a framework of demarcated understanding concerning the individual's beliefs about, or insight into, or perception of, the character of some aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field and that which makes a field, with an aspect(s) of such character, possible.

Once one, or more, of these frameworks of demarcated understanding has been developed, an individual could undertake his or her program of minimization (i.e., simplicity considerations), but this program will have to be done while keeping in mind the aforementioned tension between the requirements of simplicity and accuracy. As a result, there will be a corresponding tension between the following aspects.

On the one hand, there is any given framework of demarcated understanding that arises in the context of the phenomenology of the experiential field. On the other hand, there are the horizontal aspects of that experiential field that do not easily, if at all, fit into one's theory of conceptual geometry. In addition, through this process of being "actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations", one attempts to particularize, characterize or individuate the phenomenology of such an encounter as it transpires within the experiential field.

Generally speaking, at the heart of this characterization phenomenon is a program of abstraction. In this program, the individual first generates (or learns) and, then, applies, a framework of demarcated understanding that expresses some sort of tension between its dual features -- namely, the simplifying action of its abstraction component and the exacting action of an accuracy requirement concerning such a tendency toward simplification.

For whatever the nature of the themes, features, aspects or facets of the phenomenology of an ongoing experiential encounter that are being singled out or selected by an individual during the process of abstraction, and irrespective of the character of the factors (e.g., emotions, reasons, needs, desires, beliefs, etc.) which are shaping this selecting process, sooner or later the model or representation or conceptual geometry that is generated through abstraction is going to

have to reconcile its character with the numerous horizontal features that phenomenologically impinge upon that representation.

These are features that, when analyzed closely during some shift in focal attention, are, themselves, characterized into various category particulars to be positioned coordinately in the individual's developing conceptual geometry. This positioning is done according to the manner in which they are perceived to be: conflicting with; confirming of; irrelevant to; an elaboration on; a refinement of; or consistent with the character of the abstraction/characterization of some aspect of the phenomenology of a previous experiential counter(s) undergone by the individual.

Out of this dynamic of the interaction between focal and horizontal elements emerges an understanding. This understanding concerns the structural nature of the conceptual geometry that is formed within the phenomenology of the experiential field through a whole succession of focal/horizontal interludes during the series of experiential encounters that help give expression to the phenomenology of an individual's life history.

In the context of this focal/horizontal dynamic, the previously discussed tension between the requirements of simplicity and the requirements of accuracy manifests itself. Moreover, through this tension, the interrogative imperative aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field expresses itself as it attempts to explore – and seek for a clarification of -- the problems (if any) surrounding the abstracted character of the issue being focused upon.

Contrary to what Quine is maintaining in the previous quote, simplicity, per se, does not prompt one to adopt any given hypothesis for testing. What prompts one to adopt a hypothesis for testing or investigation is an individual's perception that a given hypothesis has a character that constitutes an 'acceptable' maxi/mini balance of the accurately reflective and distorting features, respectively, that give expression to the tension between simplicity requirements and accuracy, requirements with respect to focal/horizontal interactions.

What constitutes an acceptable maxi/mini balance will vary with the individual. However, this does not mean that hypothesis testing is, ultimately, relativistic.

The bottom line in hypothesis testing is the extent of the congruencies and incongruencies that are generated by that testing procedure. Consequently, regardless of what one initially considers to be an acceptable maxi/mini balance between simplicity and accuracy, that balance will have to survive the rigors of being tested, explored, analyzed, and queried in the context of all subsequent experiences -- not only those of the individual but those experiences of others as well.

In this respect, Quine is quite right when he says: "Simplicity is not a desideratum on a par with conformity to observation." This is so since, on the one hand, "simplicity" is a function of observation. That is, simplicity depends on the presence of observational givens before it can be manifested through the phenomenological tension that follows upon an abstracted characterization of such givens.

The other reason why "simplicity is not a desideratum on a par with conformity to observation" is because simplicity involves something more than mere observation or being "actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations" (the so-called passive element in Quine's view). Indeed, "simplicity considerations" are one of the components that tend to structure the analytical, investigative, reflective and evaluative program that is, under the most ideal of circumstances, capable of helping to establish the "simplicity story" with regard to the character of a given body of observational evidence that has been experientially encountered and subsequently characterized by the individual.

However, as noted in the foregoing pages of discussion, part and parcel of this "simplest story" on which one is focusing is a horizontal dimension or requirement of accuracy. This component of the horizon frequently appears in the form of the interrogative imperative that probes the tenability of the story line (advanced through a given "author's" simplicity orientation). This probing attempts to determine if the story line being advanced is an accurate, abstracted representation [i.e., it gives expression to a correct connecting insight] of that which the individual is referring to, either in the phenomenology of his experiential field, or in terms of that (i.e., reality) which makes such a phenomenology possible, or both.

In light of the above considerations, one might not be inclined to go along with Quine in the previously cited quote when he asserts, in

relation to scientists, that "simplicity, by his [i.e., the scientist's] lights, is just what guides his extrapolation". Arguing that "simplicity considerations" are just one of the factors that guide the scientist's extrapolations seems more appropriate.

Among other things, any specific set of "simplicity considerations" must itself be weighed against the requirements of accuracy that horizontally impinge upon these considerations through, for example, the agency of the interrogative imperative that emerges. The interrogative imperative arises as a function of an inability -- or problems generated while trying -- to attain and/or maintain the delicate balance of the maxi(reflective)/mini (distortive) components of the phenomenological tension that tends to characterize almost any epistemological focal/horizontal interplay. As indicated earlier, this sort of interplay occurs during the construction or development of a conceptual geometric representation of either the phenomenology of the experiential field or of the reality that is believed to underlie or give expression to such a phenomenology, or both.

Of course, in one sense, accuracy or correctness of truth is, as noted previously, the "simplest story" possible. Nonetheless, there is only one tenable way in which one could hope to argue that "simplicity considerations" played a role in the determination or identification or understanding of what the truth is in any given set of circumstances. This way involves construing "simplicity considerations" as a matter of being "actuated as sensitively as possible by the chain stimulations as they reverberate through our theory" or conceptual geometry. Under these circumstances, and if successful, the character of the theory or conceptual geometry reflects (i.e., is congruent with) -- within some minimal degree of acceptable accuracy -- the character of the reality to which the chain stimulations in question were, in some way, functionally related.

In other words, the process of being "actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations as they reverberate through our theory" or conceptual geometry would be a matter of getting the character of the story line of one's theory to be congruent with the character of that to which the theory refers. The congruency relationship involves either a given aspect of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field, or a facet of that which makes such an aspect of the

phenomenology possible ... thereby lending to this phenomenological aspect the character it does manifest.

The "simplest story" in this regard is the one where there is an exact congruence between: a) the character of the theory or conceptual geometry being mapped, studied, or focused upon; b) the character of the chain stimulations that are the sensory mediators linking the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field with the underlying reality (of which the given field is but one expression); and c) the actual character of the dimension(s) of ontology or metaphysics to which a) and b) are making identifying reference. Furthermore, the foregoing congruency relationship -- precisely because of its accuracy -- is not disturbed or undermined by the character of the data generated by pursuing the interrogative imperative's exploration of the horizontal tensions that emerge in relation to a given theory's or conceptual geometry's attempt to represent: a) the character of a given set of chain stimulations; or, b) the character of the relationship between such chain stimulations and that aspect of reality that makes chain stimulations of that character possible.

Under the foregoing circumstances, simplicity considerations" do not guide extrapolations. Rather, "simplicity considerations" and extrapolations are both answerable to the requirements of accuracy in seeking a minimally defensible congruency relationship between, stated in its simplest form, theory and reality.

As a result, that which, ideally, guides the formation and application of "simplicity considerations" and extrapolations in the development and adopting of hypotheses, will be the following. The scientist is guided in her or his selection process by that which is perceived by that individual to reduce any tensional imbalance that exists or emerges in the juxtaposition of the character of a given theory or conceptual geometry next to the character of the horizontal considerations that are believed to be, or actually are, in conflict with the given theory or conceptual geometry.

However, this reduction of tension is not to be construed as merely a matter of removing, or getting rid of, cognitive dissonance in any way one can. Instead, the cognitive dissonance must be resolved in the direction of satisfying the demands or requirements of accuracy,

correctness and truth that the interrogative imperative places upon the epistemic/hermeneutical interaction of focal/horizontal components within the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field.

On the surface, the foregoing pages of discussion were a matter of attempting to trace the effects of "varied forces transmitted across the fabric of sentences" and to study the reverberative implications for theory of various chain stimulations "via the inter-animation of sentences". After all, nothing but sentences appeared on each of the pages, and their juxtaposed character constitutes, one might suppose, the "interanimation of sentences". Yet, sentences do not interanimate themselves.

According to Quine, "contextual conditioning" is the means by which one learns the sentences that are to populate the inter-animation process. In addition, presumably, "contextual conditioning" also represents the regulatory force that is directing the inter-animation process and providing it with its observed character in any given set of sentential circumstances. However, the mechanism or process of this interanimation or the principles that regulate it do not seem to be explainable in terms of the rather vague notion of "contextual conditioning" that Quine proposed in order to try to handle the matter.

In the terminology of the discussion on "simplicity considerations", there seems to be a serious imbalance in the hermeneutical tension between the character of Quine's model or theory of language at this point and the character of a wide variety of horizontal considerations impinging upon that model. As a result, when both of these components are pursued through the agency of the interrogative imperative, the "simplest story" line which Quine has devised seems to be incongruent with any number of horizontal considerations that bear upon his position.

This suggests the requirements of accuracy have not been attended to adequately in relation to Quine's model of language as so far outlined. Moreover, to the extent Quine's theory does depart from what is correct or accurate concerning the actual character of the aspect(s) of reality to which language phenomena give expression,

then, to that extent Quine's perspective does not constitute the "simplest story" concerning this set of phenomena.

Improving Upon a Theory Theta

Quine follows up his comments on "simplicity considerations" in the following way:

"We may think of the physicist as interested in systematizing such general truths as can be said in commonsense terms about ordinary physical things. But within this medium the best he achieves is a combination theta of ill-connected theories about projectiles, temperature changes, capillary attraction, surface tension, etc. A sufficient reason for his positing extraordinary physical things viz. molecules and sub-visible groups of molecules is that for the thus-supplemented universe he can devise a theory theta-prime which is simpler than theta and agrees with theta in its congruencies for ordinary things....

"Actually the truths that can be said even in common sense terms about ordinary things are themselves, in turn, far in excess of any available data. The incompleteness of determination of molecular behavior by the behavior of ordinary things is hence only incidental to this more basic indeterminacy: both sorts of events are less than determined by our surface irritations....

"Everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory-building process, and simultaneously real from the standpoint of the theory that is being built. Nor let us look down on the standpoint of the theory as make-believe; for we can never do better than occupy the standpoint of some theory or other, the best we can muster at the time.

"What reality is like is the business of scientists, in the broadest sense, painstakingly to surmise; and what there is, what is real, is part of that question. The question how we know what there is simply part of the question ... of the evidence for truth about the world. The last arbiter is so-called scientific method, however, amorphous. "... scientific method, whatever its details, produces theory whose connection with all possible surface irritation consists solely in

scientific method itself unsupported by ulterior controls. This is the sense in which it is the last arbiter of truth." (pages 21- 23)

Although the foregoing represents a compressed version of the position that Quine develops over three pages toward the end of the first chapter of *Word and Object*, I do not feel it really distorts Quine's basic perspective despite the fact that certain details, elaborations and provisos have been deleted. As such, the above quote constitutes a good running summary of the character of Quine's orientation at this stage in his general argument. Consequently, it will provide a strong source of ideas, values and assumptions against which to apply the interrogative imperative in order to probe the tenability of what Quine is advocating at this point.

The devising of "a theory theta-prime that is simpler than theta and agrees with theta in its consequences for ordinary things" might be a "sufficient reason" for someone's "positing extraordinary physical things, viz. molecules and sub-visible groups of molecules". Nevertheless, one is not necessarily convinced that "simplicity considerations" are really the driving force behind why most individuals posit extraordinary theoretical entities, physical or otherwise.

This lack of conviction remains even if a given hypothetical positing should result in a theory theta-prime that is both simpler than some theory theta, as well as equally capable, if not more so, as theta is in relation to predictive and explanatory powers. The reasons for this lack of conviction are several.

For one thing, one often cannot gauge, immediately, the true extent of a theory's ability to satisfy "simplicity considerations". One requires a certain amount of time to assess the nature of the problems that such a theory might run into in the context of incoming data and subsequent experimentation.

What initially appears to show theoretical promise might fade in the light of forthcoming experiential/experimental evidence that creates insurmountable difficulties for the theory to plausibly handle. For instance, the positing of, say, phlogiston, epicycles, or an ether to help account for certain observed phenomena might work very well

when considered within a certain restricted range of data and, as a result, satisfy "simplicity considerations" for that range of data.

However, when these hypothetical entities are considered against an expanded backdrop of data and evidence, one often finds that these theoretical positings create more problems than they solve. The history of science is replete with the discarded remains of hypothetical positing with unfulfilled promise.

If theta is just some kind of combination "of ill-connected theories about" whatever aspect of the world on which one is focusing, then one of the main impetuses behind the positing of, for example, "extraordinary physical things" very well might be in order to seek a means of accounting for the problems, difficulties, lacunae and so on that surround theta but that theta itself doesn't appear able to adequately handle. Theta represents a conceptual geometry whose various co-ordinate points of experiential reference and logical links that are being mapped among such points gives expression to an hermeneutical/epistemological shaping and structuring of different facets of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field.

At the same time, there frequently are horizontal elements impinging upon this conceptual geometry that are incongruent with the latter. In other words, the structural character of the former does not seem to fit in with the structural character of the latter. As a result, a certain amount of hermeneutical tension is generated when the two are juxtaposed.

The tension of incongruence is pursued through an individual's hermeneutical capacity -- when assisted by the interrogative imperative -- to isolate important areas (or areas deemed to be important) of difficulties, problems, inconsistencies, oversights, evidential weaknesses and so on. The ability of the interrogative imperative to isolate important areas in this manner is done through the questions that are raised in relation to perceived incongruencies between the characters of theoretical framework and experimental data.

In raising such questions, an individual is attempting, among other things, to discover a means of resolving the problems that emerge during the course of the exploration/investigation. This search likely is to be guided by efforts to find the reasons for the existing incongruities

and eliminate, or posit, whatever seems necessary to get the character of theory to more closely approximate, and less problematically handle, the overall structural character of the available data. Therefore, a "sufficient reason for ... positing extraordinary physical things" is if such positing helps one's program of achieving a better maxi(reflective)/mini(distorting) balance between the character of theory and the character of the experiential data on which such theory referentially, descriptively and explanatorily focuses.

Whether, or not, any given positing will, in the long run, lead to a simpler story line (that is, one that is closer to the truth) is something that will take time to properly assess. Of course, the underlying hope in positing a hypothetical entity might be to achieve such a simplified story line.

Nevertheless, the immediate reason for positing these entities is because they have a character that is believed to be a means of enhancing the degree of congruency between the character of one's conceptual geometric representation of the world and the character of the available evidence gained through various experiential encounters. This issue of congruency in the context of theory construction or model improvement is important to keep in mind, and Quine's apparent failure to do so has led him to commit some basic mistakes.

For instance, Quine claims (as quoted earlier):

"... the truths that can be said even in commonsense terms about ordinary things are themselves, in turn, far in excess of any available data. The incompleteness of determination of molecular behavior by the behavior of ordinary things is hence only incidental to this more basic indeterminacy: both sorts of events are less than determined by our surface irritations."

Yet, after considering Quine's perspective in this quote, one needs to ask: what allows one to say any truth at all -- "even in commonsense terms -- about ordinary things"?

Surely one's insight into, or understanding of, the character of the "ordinary things" upon which one is focusing is what permits one to arrive at "the truths that can be said even in commonsense terms". If

these truths were not dependent functionally upon the character of the "ordinary things" on which one was focusing, then from whence would these truths arise, and on what would they be based?

One cannot get more truths out of the character of either "ordinary things" or "extraordinary physical things" than exist in the ontological facticity of something's being what it is. Indeed, because something is what it is, its character is what it is, since the character of that 'thing' is an expression of that thing's 'being' being what it is.

"Available data" is a function of the existential encounters that emerge in the form of aspects of the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field having the character they do. This data serves as the inferential basis in which the individual's positing, hypothesizing, model-building, and theorizing processes are rooted. These processes generate a conceptual geometric representation of the nature and significance of the available data, both in and of itself, as well as in relation to the reality that makes data of such determinate character possible.

The more this data's character is reflective of that which underlies it and makes it possible, and the less such data's character is distorting of that which underlies it, the greater is the degree of congruency possible between the character of the individual's understanding of, or insight into, the character of that (i.e., reality) which makes data of such determinate nature possible. As a result, "the truths that can be said even in commonsense terms about ordinary things" cannot be "far in excess of any available data". In fact, they cannot be even slightly "in excess of any available data".

This is so because the available data is the gateway through which one derives whatever truths one is capable of. Therefore, the upper limit on the quantity of truths one can come up with in relation to this data will be regulated strictly.

This regulation will be according to the extent to which the manifested character of such data permits one -- under the best of inferential circumstances -- to have or gain an insightful understanding of those aspects of reality to which one is experientially linked by the data in question. Whatever truths we are able to generate with respect to this data are a function of what the character of this data permits one to generate in the way of discovering the right

hermeneutical or epistemological stance, orientation or approach to the actual ontological/metaphysical significance of the given data.

In this sense, the framework within which the rational determination of truth is to take place is established, to a great extent (and in contrast with Quine's aforementioned position) through our "surface irritations". The character of these surface irritations help set up and structure a significant portion of the experiential parameters within which one infers, intuit, and/or perceives the character of the sort of world one believes or understands to be necessary in order to establish parameters with the character one observes in the focal/horizontal interplay of the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which one is currently attending. This is not so much because "surface irritations" determine what the truth is as much as it is because these "irritations" are one of the primary access roads through which we approach reality. To a very great extent, our understanding of reality is restricted by the character of the inherent limits in the 'scenery' that these access roads permit one to be exposed to and reflect upon.

Therefore, "the truths that can be said even in commonsense terms about ordinary things" must be a reflection, in one way or another, of what the character of the "available data" allows one to infer about the character of that which makes data of such character possible. In other words, the character of these hermeneutical truths must be congruent, more or less, with the character of the available data if anything of any minimal degree of accuracy or correctness is to be said "even in commonsense terms about ordinary things". Only by overlooking or disregarding the crucial role that this sort of congruency determination plays -- as Quine appears to have done in the foregoing quote -- could Quine feel comfortable in saying what he does about the alleged undetermined nature of the relationship between stated truths and "available data" and/or "surface irritations".

The kind of problem outlined above with regard to Quine's perspective and the manner in which his perspective apparently fails to appreciate the nature and central importance of congruency relationships in establishing epistemological frameworks, emerges in a slightly different form later on in his argument. More specifically, at

one point Quine contends: "anything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory-building process, and simultaneously real from the standpoint of the theory that is being built."

Just because "from the standpoint of the theory that is being built", something is being conceded existence, this concession might not mean, in and of itself, anything more than the following. The character of the theory has made room for an entity of a designated character to play some sort of role with respect to the way in which the theory depicts an alleged corresponding part of reality to: be, behave, manifest itself, or be linked with other facets of the character of the theory that is being projected onto reality as a supposedly congruent, representational expression of the latter's character.

This theoretical sense of "real" means that "everything to which we concede existence" in the theory is considered, rightly or wrongly, by the individual proposing the theory to have an actual counterpart in reality. Supposedly, this 'ontological' counterpart manifests a character displaying similarities to the character of that to which one is conceding existence within the context of the theory. The task, then, becomes one of determining, as best one can, the extent to which that to which we are conceding existence in the theory actually reflects anything of the true nature of reality to which such a theoretical entity supposedly is making identifying reference.

As pointed out previously in the present essay, one creates a very great potential for confusion if one assumes that the character of the "reality" of an 'entity' within a theoretical context is necessarily, or even presumptively, on an ontological par with the reality of an entity, thing or whatever, that is independent of such a context but for which that hermeneutical context serves as a representation of the latter kind of entity, etc. To be sure, the conceptual reality of the posited entity to which one is conceding theoretical existence in the ontology of the extra-theoretical world might reflect some aspect -- partially or fully -- of the character of the latter's actual reality. To the extent this reflection is accurate, then the character of the conceptual reality becomes rooted in a defensible basis for inferentially establishing the actual ontological existence of something that manifests a character

that is akin, to some degree, to the character of the theoretical entity that one is currently positing as having existence.

Having said the foregoing, I'm not sure one can tenably argue that "everything [emphasis mine] to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process". Perhaps one of the most pertinent questions one can ask at this juncture in order to cast doubt upon the tenability of Quine's perspective is to inquire about the source of the character of the things to which we are conceding existence in any given instance and that Quine claims is the function of a process of theoretical positing. In effect, one is asking how and where a given theoretical posit derives its character.

The Nature of Positing

Not everyone sees or approaches the existence of "everything ... from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process". For, although human beings have theories about almost everything, not everything we have a theory about owes its existence to a theoretical posit.

Quine appears to want to argue that theory, in some sense, precedes existence in all instances. If this is not what Quine wants to argue, one has difficulty in understanding how else one is to interpret his statement that "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process".

This gives the impression that whatever we concede existence to is a function of some positing dimension of a theory-building process. As a result, 'somehow' the existence of the "thing" in question derives from such a theoretical positing process. This contention seems to imply that theory preceded the ontological 'birth' of the thing so posited. If the foregoing is correct characterization of Quine's position, then one begins to sink into something of a metaphysical quagmire. If that to which we concede existence is a posit of a theory building process, then one wonders what the ontological status is of the theory building process itself.

On the one hand, the theory building process would seem to have to presuppose its own un-positing existence in order to be able to posit anything at all. Otherwise, one would have to argue that the theory building process posited its own existence out of nothingness.

On the other hand, if we were to concede existence of some sort to the theory-building process, then in order to accept what Quine appears to be saying, our very act of conceding existence to the theory building process requires us to maintain that such existence is a "posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process". This appears to suggest that in order to exist, a theory building-process would have to posit its own existence (that is, the process, itself) ... not just conceptually but ontologically.

Part of (and maybe a large part of) the problem here surrounds the issue of 'positing' and just what it means to posit something. If one is not very careful, one quite easily can be misleading, or become misled, when discussing or using this term.

There is one sense of "posit" in which one is hypothesizing the existence of an entity, process, phenomenon, state or condition. This sense of positing is not because such an entity, process, etc., actually exists but because the available experiential data suggests to one this might be the case.

In this instance, that to which we concede existence is a "posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process" since one is projecting theory onto those aspects of the experiential field to which one is referring or attending. Furthermore, one is proposing there is an actual metaphysical/ontological thing, process, phenomenon, state, event, or condition that answers to the description of that which one is theoretically positing.

There is another, slightly different sense of "posit" that acknowledges the reality of that to which a certain aspect of the phenomenology of one's experiential field is currently attuned or attending. However, in this sense of positing, one characterizes and/or interprets this reality according to the nature of the theory-building process to which one is committed or inclined. By means of this process, one posits the existence of "atoms", "molecules", "forces" and so on, as would-be representations of the logical character of that to which one is attending.

In this view, instead of claiming that, say, atoms exist, one is saying something like the following. There exists an aspect of reality whose manifested character is such that a theoretical construct, "atoms" (with a posited character of "a, b, c, ..., z") seems to reflect or capture, accurately, the various dimensions of the observed manifested character of the aspect(s) in question to which one is attending. Thus, rather than say "atoms" actually exist, one is saying the theoretical positing of "atoms" helps make sense of the aspect(s) of reality to which one is attending -- that is, the idea of 'atoms' has a heuristic value that helps one to make sense of experience in a better manner than previously had been the case, even while acknowledging that what one is positing might have no actual ontological counterpart.

In the first sense of "posit", one is, on the basis of theoretical considerations, conceding existence to something that actually might not exist, but that one's hermeneutic of the phenomenology of one's experiential field is proposing as an accurate representational expression of what is observed or experienced. In this sense, one might posit an, heretofore, undetected planet to account for the perturbations in the orbit of a known planet. Or, one might posit an, heretofore, undetected subatomic particle in order to account for some irregular aspect of the behavior of subatomic particles of known characteristics.

In the second sense of "posit", one is not conceding the existence of something on the basis of theoretical considerations. One is conceding that some aspect(s) of the phenomenology of one's experiential field is a function of an undeniable reality. Moreover, in conjunction with this concession, one is positing a theoretical construct as a representational model of that aspect(s) of reality that one is acknowledging and not positing.

The positing that occurs in this case concerns the character of the hermeneutical model one has developed through one's theory-building process. It need not involve any claims concerning the precise ontological character of reality with respect to which one's positing refers.

Thus, in the second sense, one might posit a theory of gravity to account for the way, say, bodies on Earth act under various circumstances, or to account for the way celestial bodies interact. In

this sense of positing, one does not question the existence of the objects being considered. One also doesn't question the reality of the actions and interactions of such objects. What one is questioning, and what gives rise to the theoretical positing, is curiosity concerning the actual nature of the reality underlying such ontological objects and interactions.

If we construe "posit" in the first sense, then "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process". If we construe "posit" in the second sense, then "everything to which we concede existence" becomes the starting point or given about which, "from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process", we posit various theoretical representations as possible interpretations or characterizations of the ontological given in question on which we are focusing.

The fact of the matter is that we tend to use "posit" in both senses in virtually all of our hermeneutical/epistemological discussions. Unfortunately, we often do not distinguish clearly that sense we are employing in any given instance. Not surprisingly, when this occurs, a great deal of confusion frequently emerges concerning whether one's theoretical positing is about potentially non-existent entities, processes, etc. whose ontological reality we are attempting to establish, or whether this positing is about ontological realities whose existence is not in question, but with respect to which, the precise character of their underlying ontology is in question.

From the vantage point of the second sense of "posit", and in opposition to what Quine appears to believe, "everything to which we concede existence" is not necessarily "a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process". This is the case because, on the basis of the second sense of "posit", there would seem to be certain dimensions of the phenomenology of the experiential field that either give expression to, or in some way are tied to, 'things' or phenomena, the existence of which we concede prior to any theoretical positing that might take place.

In fact, any positing that occurs in such instances as a function of a theory-building process will not transpire until after a focal context has been established within the phenomenology of the experiential

field. Usually this is a context that can, within certain limits, be unproblematically identified and, if necessary, re-identified with respect to at least some aspects of its (that of the context) character.

One might be enticed to suppose pre-linguistic children -- or children just beginning to gain some degree of rudimentary linguistic competency or children who have achieved something more than a rudimentary competency in language capability -- are actively engaged in theory-building processes in which everything to which they theoretical posit is in the first sense outlined earlier. This kind of supposition is alluring because it lends a certain degree of continuity to a model of human intelligence and conceptualizing that holds that scientific method -- in which theory building processes play a prominent role -- is merely a more sophisticated version of what infants do, in more primitive fashion, from the moment of birth onward. Yet, intuitively, one might strongly suspect that the foregoing sort of supposition could be somewhat incongruous with what actually might be going on in the mind of the infant or young child.

One tends to be on somewhat dangerous grounds even when one tries to assess what is going on in the mind of another human being who is capable of clearly articulating his or her mental processes. Therefore, the difficulties are quite prodigious when one tries to resolve the problems that surround judgments about the mental processes of children who usually aren't all that articulate about what's actually happening mentally or cognitively at any given time.

To assume children (and, perhaps, even adults) 'posit' only in the first sense of "posit" discussed above seems to entangle one in a series of infinite regresses. As a result, one cannot identify or fix the character of the starting point from which the individual posits the existence of something. Moreover, one cannot provide a tenable account of why a given ontological positing has the specific character that it has.

Let us suppose that an individual, in response to the latter issue, adopted the first sense of "posit" describer earlier. Let us further suppose that an individual were to maintain that the character of any given ontological positing was merely a random, arbitrary, haphazard collection of features that were 'floating' about in the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field. At the very least, this individual

would have some substantial problems explaining how these features came to be 'floating' about in the phenomenology of the experiential field.

Furthermore, the foregoing person would also be confronted with the problem of accounting for how such features came to have the structural characteristics that they seem to have. Seemingly, this individual has to contend that the features that were 'floating' about owed their existence to the positing mechanism of some theory building process. Yet, when such an individual began investigating the character of the theory building process, he or she would have to suppose that this kind of conceptual or hermeneutical process owed its existence to the positing of some still more subtle theory building process, and so on ad infinitum.

An undeniable consequence of the delineation of the character of "posit" in the first sense seems to be that if "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process", then the theory-building process whose standpoint is being described in a given instance is itself but a posit. Consequently, when one begins to unravel the various layers of positing, one tends to discover that the phenomenon or process of positing is a bit like peeling a metaphysical onion.

For after all is said and done, there doesn't seem to be anything substantive at the core of the positing process to which one can point and say: 'this' is what gives the positing process its character; or, 'this' underlies any specific instance of positing having the character that it (i.e., positing) does. One merely is left with a series of mysteries in which positing presupposes itself in an unknown manner. Thus, if this is what Quine had in mind, then the criteria of intelligibility requires, if not demands, an explication or resolution of the mysteries that this sense of positing encompasses.

A less problematic approach to speculating about what goes on in the mind of a child (and adults) might be the following. A child, to the extent he or she posits about anything, posits in relation to features that appear in the phenomenology of the experiential field. These features need not be themselves a function of such positing (although, in some instances, they might be).

As a result, the ontological status of these features is traceable, presumably, to something other than the positing process. Although the positing process might shape and structure how one perceives or conceptualizes such features, under the present interpretation, one is not left in the untenable metaphysical position of having to concede the existence of these features on the basis of something, the very existence of which is itself the result of some mysterious, bottomless positing process.

Rather, such features become the experiential givens around which one's theory-building processes begin to weave their story line, simple or otherwise. Moreover, one of the tasks of such a story line is to try to discover, by means of one's capacity to posit (as well as through such means as the interrogative imperative, inferential mapping, and establishing congruency relationships) why such features have the character they do and what it is that makes features of this character possible to begin with.

The infant who is hungry or thirsty does not fabricate the hunger or thirst to which he or she is conceding existence in the phenomenology of hunger and thirst. The infant who is suffering from diaper rash does not posit, *ex nihilo*, the pain to which he or she is conceding existence in the phenomenology of such pain. The infant who is too hot or too cold does not fabricate the discomfort to which he or she is conceding existence in the phenomenology of felt discomfort. The infant who is attracted by a nearby mobile does not invent the attraction to which he or she is conceding existence in the phenomenology of attraction. The infant who is hugged or kissed or cuddled or rocked or fed or changed or played with does not posit, *ex nihilo*, the activity or its pleasurable aspects to which he or she is conceding existence in the phenomenology of these kinds of interactions. The infant who dreams or fantasizes or conceptualizes does not posit, *ex nihilo*, the imagery or ideas to which he or she is conceding existence in the phenomenology of these sorts of experiences, and so on.

In fact, even if one were to claim that people do create or generate everything that they experience from nothing -- as some solipsist might -- nonetheless, such a person still has a problem. What is the nature of the ontology of the positing process through which such

experiences are given expression? One cannot assume one's conclusions by saying that the posing process is itself a mysterious function that posited itself into existence.

All of the previously noted aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field of an infant, and many others, are expressions and manifestations of some dimension of an unknown reality. The existence of this reality is conceded by the very act of acknowledging or attending to aspects within the phenomenology of the experiential field whenever those aspects emerge or appear or erupt into the fabric of consciousness. The character of this consciousness sets the focal/horizontal parameters within which the phenomenology of an individual's experiential field unfolds and through which that phenomenology begins to individuate or particularize itself according to the differential manner in which the character of various experiences display themselves from one focal/horizontal interlude to the next.

Once having transpired or occurred, such features become the particulars of the phenomenology of the experiential field with which we busy ourselves in trying to figure out and discover their character, significance and relationship, if any, to one another. These features might consist of: colors, sounds, textures, tastes, pains, thoughts, interests, judgments, pleasures, needs, inferences, emotions, intuitions, and all other sundry qualitative and quantitative features that are supported and made possible by one's existential encounter with different facets and levels of the ocean of metaphysical and ontological reality in which we are immersed and of which such encounters are but an expression.

At this experiential juncture, "the standpoint of a description of the theory building process" might begin to assume some relevance in the phenomenological life of the individual. However, this emergence of relevance for the theory-building process is not because the theory-building process has posited the existence of these differentiated phenomenological aspects of the experiential field. Instead, the theory-building process assumes relevance and importance at this juncture because we do not know what to make of, or what the significance is of, that which has mysteriously appeared and transpired in the

phenomenology of the experiential field, and whose existence we either cannot deny or that we have difficulty in trying to deny.

The fact that at many subsequent experiential junctures the individual might come to confuse or conflate myth and reality or theory and truth or positing and ontology does not alter the legitimacy of conceding existence to aspects of experience that methodologically are prior to whatever might be posited by an individual's theory-building processes. The phenomenology of the experiential field is the thread from which theory-building processes spin their epistemological tapestry. Furthermore, this phenomenology is a thread with an existence that such processes presuppose and not an existence that those processes posit.

If the existence of this thread has to be posited by a theory-building process, then almost by definition, one loses access to the "simplest story" line because one has been forced to invent the existence of something that might not actually exist (except in the context of the theories that the theory-building processes weave by means of it). This kind of invention only can complicate the search for the simplest story line concerning the actual character of various aspects of reality. Such theory-building accomplishes such obstruction by placing in one's way unfathomable infinite regresses that preclude the discovery of a solution(s) to the puzzles of what makes, say, such a theory-building process possible and from whence it derives its character.

Irrespective of whether we can ever get to the bottom of the mysteries encompassed by reality, no purpose is served -- heuristically or otherwise -- by arbitrarily pulling out the ontological rug from beneath our feet before we even begin the hermeneutical quest. Yet, in effect, Quine's idea that "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process" has the potential to accomplish precisely such a rug pulling. Thus, one must be very careful in how one approaches the aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field with respect to which Quine is attempting to establish a case to justify the character which his current positing on theory building is manifesting.

Scientific Method: The Last Arbiter of Truth (?)

As quoted earlier, Quine believes:

"... scientific method, whatever its details, produces theory whose connection with all possible surface irritation consists solely in scientific method itself unsupported by ulterior controls. This is the sense in which it is the last arbiter of truth." (page 23)

In view of the line of argument developed in the last several pages, one might contend, just as well, that the last arbiter of truth is truth itself ... just as truth also represents, as indicated previously, the "simplest story".

"Scientific method, whatever its details" is effective to the extent it is capable of establishing a framework of demarcated understanding. The character of this framework must reflect, be congruent with, or be capable of merging horizons with the phenomenon, particular, event, or condition that is the subject or object of attention of a given exercise of scientific methodology.

The "ulterior controls" that monitor the nature of the theoretical connection between "all possible surface irritation" and scientific methodology is not "scientific method itself unsupported by ulterior controls". Reality itself sets ulterior controls on scientific methodology. Problems, puzzles, mysteries, questions and unknowns arise by virtue of their being expressions of what reality makes possible, and, thereby, they become the focus of hermeneutical methodology -- scientific or otherwise.

Through reality, the phenomenology of the experiential field expresses itself ... that is, the latter is an expression, manifestation, or function of the former. The phenomenology of the experiential field constitutes the means through which individuals encounter those aspects or dimensions of reality that show up or leave traces in our phenomenologies.

Therefore, the phenomenology of the experiential field represents the means by which we participate in, and are aware of, the character of our participation in certain aspects and dimensions of reality. Consequently, the structural or logical character of the

phenomenology of an individual's experiential field tends to set limits or controls or restrictions with which scientific methodology concerns itself.

Moreover, in a sense, the phenomenology of the experiential field becomes a standard against which scientific method must operate. The sense in which this field acts as a standard of sorts concerns the way in which scientific methodology needs to generate, among other things, a theory or understanding whose character is capable of accounting for, and being congruent with, the character of whatever transpires within the focal/horizontal context of the phenomenology of the experiential field. This, after all, is the starting point from which scientific methodology is to proceed in its program of positing, testing and so on.

One should not construe the above as asserting that the phenomenology of the experiential field is the bedrock of reality. At the same time, this phenomenology is, most certainly, at least one of the manifestations made possible by reality. In this respect, it is the medium of mediation between the aspect of reality to which this phenomenology gives expression and the rest of reality that lies at, and beyond, the horizons of any given phenomenological framework or context. Therefore, if one wants to ask what makes that which transpires in the phenomenology of the experiential field itself possible, one, first, has to establish or identify, to some extent, the character of the aspect of the phenomenology one wishes to investigate, explore, analyze and so on.

Once having set, or identified, the character of the experiential parameters within which one is intending to methodologically operate, the substantive nature of those parameters and all they encompass represents an ulterior control on scientific method in the following sense. Whatever that methodology comes up with, this will have to be reconciled with, or considered against the backdrop of, or examined in the light of, the character of those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field that have been singled out by the focal/horizontal character of the parameters one has established for purposes of study or inquiry.

In this respect, scientific methodology is not the last arbiter of truth. Scientific methodology is itself answerable to, and must conform with, the aspects of reality with which it is concerned, according to the

manner in which such reality is mediated by the phenomenology of the experiential field within which scientific method is conducted.

If the theory produced by scientific method were not answerable to, or supported by, something beyond itself, then the standards of control by which one is to assess the accuracy or inadequacies of a given theory become entirely arbitrary, and one seriously would have to question, where possible, the relevance of such a theory in conjunction with a quest for discovery the nature of reality. Theory is not autonomous and self-contained. The fact that a theory is a theory of 'something' within the context of a phenomenology of experience is what constitutes the ontological base line against which the theory pushes and from which the theory derives its themes of focal preoccupation as it attempts to delineate the character of the base line against which it is pushing.

At one point in the waning stages of the argument put forth in the first chapter of *Word and Object*, Quine maintains:

"If there were ... an unknown but unique best total systematization theta of science conformable to the past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind, so that we might define the whole truth as that unknown theta, still we should not thereby have defined truth for actual single sentences. We could not say, derivatively, that any single sentence S is true if it or a translation belongs to theta, for there is in general no sense in equating a sentence of a theory theta with a sentence S given apart from theta. Unless pretty firmly and directly conditioned to sensory stimulation, a sentence S is meaningless except relative to its own theory; meaningless inter-theoretically" (page 24)

In the foregoing quote, one re-encounters a variation of a problem discussed earlier. The problem is that Quine wants to reduce understanding and truth to being functions of sentences mysteriously learned in a certain context of conditioning.

If 'A' constitutes "an unknown but unique best total systematization theta of science conformable to the past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind -- so that we might define the whole truth as that unknown theta", then one cannot refer subsequently, to

'A' as a theory, as Quine does above. In the foregoing context, theta does not constitute a theory of the significance and interrelationships of nerve-hits, one with another, as much as theta represents a delineation of the character of certain aspects of reality. As such, theta extends beyond the tentative and uncertain horizons that characterize the idea of "theory".

Under these circumstances, theta cannot be said to "define the whole truth". Rather, it displays a character that is reflective of the character of those aspects of reality to which "the past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind" are connected through the medium of the phenomenology of the experiential field. This field is that to which those nerve-hits make their various contributions and in which the nerve-hits assume differential phenomenological character according to the nature of the nerve-hits in question.

Truth is not a function of the "best total systematization theta of science conformable to the past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind". Quite the opposite is the case. Theta is true to the extent that the character of its manner of systematization organizes and assigns significance to "past, present and future nerve-hits" in a way that is reflective of the actual character of all such nerve-hits, taken collectively and/or individually, in related sub-groupings. Theta's participation in truth is dependent on its conforming to something independent of theta -- namely, "past, present and future nerve-hits". The only way theta actually can conform to this 'something' is to faithfully reflect various aspects, dimensions, features, themes and characteristics of the structural character through which the nerve-hits in question give expression to this 'something'.

Even when all "past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind" are considered collectively and when they are properly represented, this collective representation does not constitute the "whole truth". At least this is so unless by "whole" one intends to restrict the scope of truth to the experiential contexts encompassed by nerve-hits and whatever these nerve-hits reveal about the character of the reality that makes both the nerve-hits and one's theta-systematization of them possible.

One only can know of reality what one experiences of it and what the character of that experience permits one to infer, intuit or perceive

about the nature of the reality of which the experience is a part. Therefore, truth is not a function of the "past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind". These nerve-hits are the access routes that serve as our sensory interfacing with whatever aspects of reality to which these nerve-hits are connected, tied or related.

As such, the possibilities/limitations inherent in the character of such nerve-hits -- together with the possibilities/limitations inherent in our means and manner of characterizing, organizing and interpreting these nerve-hits -- set upper limits on the extent to which one can probe the character of the reality underlying nerve-hits. In other words, one can know only as much of the truth about the character of the reality that makes nerve-hits and our systematizing of them possible, as is allowed by the character of these nerve-hits and one's modes of systematizing them together with generating correct instances of connecting insight concerning them.

In short, one sees through a window only what the window and the seeing permit one to see. As such, the character of the window and the character of the seeing set objective limits on the sort of experience one could have.

However, those limits cannot define what the nature of reality is that is there on the other side of the window. All these limits can do is modulate or mediate or reflect the nature of how one phenomenologically engages whatever is there, if anything at all.

Just as truth is not defined in terms of a given form of theta-systematization, so too, the "truth for actual single sentences" is not defined in terms of, or derived from, a given theta-systematization. What makes "any single sentence" true is not a matter of whether "it or a translation belongs to theta". What makes a single sentence an expression of truth is precisely the same 'thing' that makes a given theta-systematization an expression of truth -- namely, each has a character that accurately reflects some aspect(s) of the character of the reality to which each identifyingly refers. Quine claims: "unless pretty firmly and directly conditioned to sensory stimulation, a sentence S is meaningless except relative to its own theory; meaningless inter-theoretically". Thus, Quine believes "there is in general no sense in equating a sentence of a theory theta with a sentence given apart from theta".

Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that the sort of theories that Quine is talking about are not self-referential in nature (i.e., they do not have themselves as the main theme of their phenomenological focus). They entail references to the 'world' of nerve-hits, as well as references to the characterizing, organizing and interpreting of such nerve-hits. Consequently, there is absolutely nothing in what Quine says that can rule out the following possibility.

Theory theta (which, in actuality, is not really a theory) and "a sentence S given apart from theta" could -- each in its own way and independently of one another -- be referring to the same aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field. The only difference would be that the character of theta is much more encompassing than the character of any single sentence could be (This is so, given that theta is about all the "past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind", while S is likely to be only about one small sub-set of theta's scope of concern.).

In fact, if theta is really as complete as Quine has described it to be, then the only way in which "a sentence S given apart from theta" could not be either a sentence from theta or an equivalent translation of some sentence that could be generated from within the perspective of theta, is if either of the following possibilities were the case. In one possibility, sentence S would have to be erroneous and not be reflective of the character of the nerve-hits to which it made identifying reference. The other possibility would be if sentence S had a character that was not about nerve-hits, and, as a result, shared nothing in common with the range of the concerns of theta-systematization.

In both of the foregoing cases, one could agree with Quine that "there is in general no sense in equating a sentence of a theory theta with a sentence S given apart from theta". However, this concession does not force one to admit as well that "unless pretty firmly and directly conditioned to necessary stimulation, a sentence S is meaningless except relative to its own theory; meaningless inter-theoretically".

To begin with, Quine has not explicated, in a clear fashion, precisely what he means by, or what he believes is entailed by, the notion of being "firmly and directly conditioned to sensory

stimulation". More importantly, according to Quine's foregoing quote, theta is to be construed as unknown, but still as something that is uniquely tied ("uniquely" in the sense of being the most accurate and complete representation possible) to the area of study that it represents or refers to (i.e., nerve-hits of mankind).

Therefore, theta is to be construed as something that is the "best total systematization" possible (i.e., the "simplest story") of the issues in question. Yet, if the foregoing is the case, then, there seems nothing amiss in contending that any two sentences S_1 and S_2 taken apart from theta might have characters that constitute equivalent expressions of some sub-aspect of the unknown theta-systematization.

In order to understand the sense of what is being said in foregoing paragraph, consider the following. Let us assume that a theta-systematization of the kind to which Quine alludes actually could be achieved when considered from the perspective of absolute reality. Let us also assume that Quine has stipulated such a theta-systematization actually is unknown when considered from the perspective of human epistemology. Nevertheless, despite these suppositions, the fact that such a theta-systematization is not known would not, in and of itself, inhibit, in any way, one's developing a framework of demarcated understanding concerning some limited aspect of the world of nerve-hits. Moreover, the lack of knowledge concerning theta-systematization would not prevent one from using such a demarcated framework to derive "a sentence S given apart from theta" whose character was capable of accurately reflecting some aspect of the world with which it was concerned.

In these instances, sentence S would be equivalent to some, as yet, unknown sentence of theta concerned with the same aspect of reality. This is the case because there seems to be no alternative but to conclude that sentences whose characters bear the same congruency relationship with a certain aspect of reality of the world of nerve-hits are equivalent to one another.

The only thing that prevents one from "equating a sentence of a theory theta with a sentence S given apart from theta" is the 'fact' that theta is presumed to be unknown. Consequently, one would have difficulty producing a sentence from an unknown theta.

However, if the foregoing is what Quine means when he says "there is in general no sense in equating a sentence of a theory theta with a sentence S given apart from theta", then his meaning surely is devoid of significance. As such, it represents nothing more than the logic of an artificial and highly contrived illustration that, by design, has made equivalency between a sentence of theta and "a sentence S given apart from theta" impossible.

On the other hand, if a lethal dose of arbitrariness has not been injected into the context Quine is discussing concerning potential sentences from theta and any given sentence S taken apart from theta, then the character of the situation being considered (although it is clearly contrary to fact given that theta is unknown) would seem to force Quine to concede the following possibility. There is an equivalency between a theta-derived sentence and "a sentence S given apart from theta" when the character of each sentence accurately reflects the character of the same aspect of reality to which both sentences were attempting to give identifying reference. If this concession were not forthcoming, then Quine must specify precisely, and much more clearly than he has done already, why "there is, in general no sense in equating" sentences of the kind in question.

One could imagine instances in which two sentences referred to the same aspect of reality and in which both sentences accurately reflected the character of the aspect of reality to which the sentences gave identifying reference, and yet, the two sentences still might not be equivalent. For example, if, say, a red ball were the object of focus, and one person said: "The object is round," and another individual said: "The object is red," and a third individual said: "The object is a ball," all three sentences have a character that accurately reflects the character of the object in question.

Nevertheless, one might be reluctant to say that the sentences express equivalent characters despite the manner in which they each make identifying reference to the same object. The problem here is that the object has a character that is complex, yet, each of the sentences has a character that singles out only one facet of the object's multi-dimensional nature. Thus, the 'equivalence' of sentences is horizontal, rather than focal, because it depends upon the character of the respective sentences being reflective of different facet(s) of one

and the same object's multifaceted character. The difficulties swirling about Quine's position in the previously cited quote might, to some extent, be the result of Quine's choice of language in certain instances. For example, one wonders exactly what is entailed by the idea of "a sentence S given apart from theta".

Because Quine believes sentences are learned through contextual conditioning, and because, by stipulation, Quine has said theta is unknown, then theta could not have any actual sentences associated with it. This is so because theta signifies only what Quine is asking us to assume, for the sake of argument -- namely, some unknown theta-systematization exists that is unique and constitutes a "best total systematization" of all "past, present and future nerve-hits of mankind". From Quine's perspective on language (at least as outlined in the first chapter of *Word and Object*), sentences could not be generated in relation to theta until theta became known.

Once theta becomes known, sentences would be learned, supposedly, through contextual conditioning. However, "a sentence given apart from theta" that was an accurate reflection of some aspect of the world of nerve-hits to which the sentence made identifying reference would, in effect, be an expression of theta.

This is so, for if we are assuming, with Quine, that theta encompasses the total truth on the matter of all past, present and future nerve-hits, then, in order for "a sentence S given apart from theta" to be correct or accurate, to whatever degree it is, the sentence's character must express something that is encompassed by theta. If this were not the case, one would wonder how such a sentence S could be said to reflect the truth.

That is, one would wonder how S could reflect truth in a way that was not encompassed by theta, given that theta is presumed to represent the total truth on the matter of nerve-hits. Thus, in the light of the foregoing considerations, one has trouble understanding what is meant by the idea of "a sentence S given apart from theta".

Similarly, when Quine asserts that "unless pretty firmly and directly conditioned to sensory stimulation, a sentence S is meaningless except relative to its theory; meaningless inter-theoretically", one also encounters a certain amount of difficulty in understanding just what Quine has in mind. The implication of the

above quote seems to be that a sentence S can have meaning in just two contexts: a) in those instances in which the sentence is "pretty firmly and directly conditioned to sensory stimulation"; and, b) in those instances in which a sentence S is considered "relative to its own theory".

Aside from the obvious point that there appears to be no good reason (other than Quine's saying it is so) for maintaining that every sentence S necessarily presupposes, or is an expression of, some underlying theory, one also might question what is meant by the idea of a theory which is not "pretty firmly and directly conditioned to sensory stimulation".

Because "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process" (page 22 of Quine), then if one accepts the logic of that premise, sentences would appear to be hooked up in some necessary manner to the theory-building process. This is the case since all sentences become a function of the character of the posit generated in any given experiential context through which the theory-building process was being engaged.

A problem arises, however, when one tries to reconcile this assertion with Quine's belief that sentences are learned through contextual conditioning. If the context in question is entirely the product of positing by a theory-building process, then one wonders where, how, and if an individual comes into contact with any reality independent of such theory-building processes.

One wonders as well about the precise nature of that to which the individual is being conditioned. One wonders about this because, seemingly, the individual is becoming conditioned only to a context that has been posited theoretically.

As a result, one wonders how an individual could ever come to understand or learn the meaning of a sentence. After all, unless one was to adopt a solipsistic position, the capacity to generate a sentence and/or its meaning is not a posit of a theory-building process. Rather, a sentence-generating capacity is rooted in the experiential givens that give expression to a structural character that an individual's theory-building process must presuppose during the course of contextual conditioning. Such an admission seems incongruous with Quine's

insistence that "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of theory building process".

If, on the other hand, the context involved in a given instance of contextual conditioning is not entirely the function of the various positings of a theory building process, then, Quine cannot argue, tenably, that "everything to which we concede existence is a posit" - although, quite conceivably, "everything to which we concede existence", the theory building process might make posits about.

In any event, one has difficulty understanding why one should suppose that a child (or anyone, for that matter) who says, "See the ball," when a ball is present must be described as having some theory in mind -- focally or horizontally. To use "theory" in such a manner seems to constitute such a totally abuse of the term in question that one loses all sense of perspective and reference in relation to the notion of 'theory'. As a result, one becomes unable to pinpoint the character of the parameters of reference to which the term supposedly is drawing one's attention -- or to which one wishes to draw someone else's attention -- when that term is used.

If the interanimation of sentences (which marks, for Quine, the way one's theory-building process is "actuated as sensitively as possible by chain stimulations as they reverberate through our theory from present sensory stimulations" -- page 18 of Quine) does not tie into, at some point, that which makes various chain stimulations possible, then just what kind of understanding is one supposed to have concerning the significance of the theory that such an interanimation of sentences supposedly gives expression to? What relevance, if any, does such a theory have to anything beyond itself?

Does the theory reflect the character of some aspect of reality independent of that theory or does the theory merely reflect the reality of its own character? If the latter is the case, then it would be without any reference to anything beyond the theory qua theory, and it becomes a closed, self-referential, somewhat monadic conceptual system. Presumably, any worthwhile theory will manifest a character that, in some way and to some degree, will reflect something of the character either of the aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which it attempts to give identifying reference, or of that aspect of reality that is thought to make a phenomenology of such character

possible, or to both. If a theory cannot do this, and if a theory-building process cannot generate theories that can do this, then what purpose or value does either have? Under these circumstances, one might as well pack up one's philosophical tent and silently steal away into the metaphysical or ontological night because all theory building becomes an arbitrary exercise in futility (theoretically speaking, of course).

In order to avoid becoming entangled in the foregoing difficulties, part of the criterial conditions one might seek to establish in attempting to assess the value of various theoretical networks would be to identify and separate those theories that contained sentences that could be "pretty firmly and directly conditioned to sensory stimulation" from those theories that could not accomplish this or meet this requirement. One might suppose that theories containing sentences that did not seem to be reconcilable with this aspect of experience should be questioned with respect to their tenability and with respect to what point was served by entertaining them ... and we also should remember that sensory stimulation is but one expression of a variety of different experiential dimensions that might be possible (e.g., intellectual, emotional, spiritual, fantasy).

One also might take issue with Quine's idea that "a sentence S is meaningless except relative to its own theory", or that different sentences arising from different theories are "meaningless inter-theoretically". However, one could agree that a correct understanding of any sentence S is tied to an appreciation of, and insight into, the character of the hermeneutical perspective that stands behind S.

Consequently, one needs to determine, to some extent, the nature of the focal/horizontal perspective out of which, or in relation to which, a given sentence is uttered. However, this makes S a function of the character of the focal/horizontal dynamic occurring in relation to the phenomenology of the experiential field of an individual.

This dynamic is what sets the intentional context from which sentence S derives its semantic orientation through means of the character that is conveyed by S having the syntactic/semantic structure it has. Moreover, the character of such a focal/horizontal dynamic might or might not be theoretical in character because "theory" is a term that applies to only a subset of the possibilities encompassed by any given experiential field over the course of time.

If one and the same sentential form means different things to different individuals, then the character of the focal/horizontal orientation from which the sentential form is hermeneutically approached in each instance is different, one from the other. Yet, these differences need not preclude two or more people exploring the differences in the character of the various focal/horizontal orientations in question and coming to understand the way that sources of sentential stimulation that are seemingly held in common by any given group of speakers and hearers can give rise to different hermeneutics.

In short, sentences need not be meaningless when considered inter-theoretically. This is so because the understanding of a sentence is merely a matter of understanding the character of the underlying hermeneutical perspective that establishes the context out of which the sentence emerges.

Where more than one hermeneutic is tied to a common sentential stimulus, one merely notes the character of the various hermeneutical frameworks involved and observes where, how and why those frameworks differ from one another. In the latter case, the character of the hermeneutical focus upon a given sentence might be the same for both speaker and the one who hears. Nonetheless, differences might appear when one takes horizontal considerations into account. These factors might orient or modulate the hermeneutical contexts surrounding the focal aspect of the phenomenology of the experiential field in a differential manner.

We are assuming, for the present, that this focal aspect is shared in common by some speaker/hearer dyad and that both sides of the dyad have characterized or particularized such an aspect in a way that generates, in their respective phenomenological fields, a dimension or feature of agreed upon character. In short, the differences between the theoretical settings might not manifest themselves at the conceptual juncture represented by the sentence in question. Moreover, in the event differences between two theoretical settings do happen to manifest themselves at the conceptual juncture expressed through a given sentence *S*, these differences need not make the sentence "meaningless inter-theoretically".

An individual's mapping out of a conceptual geometry is derived from the experiential co-ordinates that emerge in the particularizing

or identification/re-identification of various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field. This occurs during the course of the individual's hermeneutical interaction with a given sentence, and it establishes a framework of demarcated understanding of a specific character. This framework provides an epistemological/phenomenological base line against which to compare and contrast the character of the other individual's framework of demarcated understanding that has arisen during the course of that individual's hermeneutical processing of the same sentence in question.

Under such circumstances, the sentence S can be meaningful when it is related to the conceptual geometry of someone else's hermeneutical framework, once one grasps what the character of that geometry is. In fact, the recognition that a sentence S can have, potentially, a multiplicity of meanings serves as something of an inducement to begin exploring the character of the various hermeneutical approaches to the sentence in question. Furthermore, once such exploration is under way, one begins to try to determine the extent to which these hermeneutical efforts appear to be tenable in the light of one's own experiences and the reported experiences of others. In other words, one makes use of the multiplicity of meanings that might be associated with a given sentence S in one's quest to seek the truth of things concerning the structural character of one's own phenomenological field.

One does this by analyzing how the structural character that is being expressed through conceptual geometries that are entailed by different meanings compare with one another. One such standard of comparison would be in terms of the ability to reflect accurately the character of the overlapping aspects of the phenomenologies of the experiential fields of human beings taken collectively to which the aforementioned multiplicity of meanings is attempting, to some extent, to make identifying reference. And, here, "collectively" is to be construed either in the context of those who are participating in the current discussion or in the context of those who are willing to acknowledge having had experiences that bear upon, in some way, the issue under discussion.

The communicational interchange between two individuals as they switch roles in the speaker/hearer relationship surrounding their respective hermeneutical explorations of the sentence in question can provide the sentence S with a dimension of phenomenological meaningfulness that is quite apart from any meaning the sentence might have, in and of itself, as an identifying reference to, say, some facet of the world of nerve-hits. Sentences are not just a means of conveying information about some aspects of the world to which they make (or try to make) identifying references. Sentences also are a means of linking, if only somewhat indirectly, the phenomenologies of two or more experiential fields. As a result, sentences can have meaning simply by virtue of their being an expression of the medium through which such intersubjective linking is made possible.

They become objects or particulars that can become the focus of shared experiences in which there is a certain overlapping of at least part of the character of various aspects of the phenomenologies of the experiential individuals involved in any speaker/hearer interchange. In this sense, sentences becoming meaningful inter-theoretically even though the sentence might be differentially construed by the various individuals who, simultaneously, are attending to a given sentence stimulus. Despite these differences, the character of the sentence stimulus can be agreed upon, at least in part, through acknowledging, for example: the syntactic structure of the sentence; the general (and, sometimes, specific) nature of the semantics of the words that are expressed through the syntactic framework; and, perhaps, even, to some degree, the character of those aspects of their respective phenomenologies to which a given sentence is believed to give identifying reference.

These features of: having someone to talk with, of being able to exchange ideas, values, experiences, and so on, give sentences a meaning that extends beyond their purely substantive character. These features make them inter-theoretically meaningful both through their shared dimensions, as well as through their dimensions of conflict and differentiation.

The Problem of Relativity

When considered in terms of the foregoing pages of discussion (as well as in terms of the rest of the present essay's analysis of Quine's position in the first part of *Word and Object*), one might not feel as confident about matters as Quine seems to be when he argues as follows:

"It is ... when we turn back into the midst of an actually present theory, at least hypothetically accepted, that we can and do speak sensibly of this and that sentence as true. Where it makes sense to apply "true" is to a sentence couched in terms of a given theory and seen from within the theory, complete with its posited reality.... Have we now so far lowered our sights as to settle for a relativistic doctrine of truth -- rating the statements of each theory as true for that theory, and brooking no higher criticism? Not so. The saving consideration is that we continue to take seriously our own particular aggregate science, our own particular word theory or loose total fabric of quasi-theories, whatever it may be. Unlike Descartes, we own and use our beliefs of the moment, even in the midst of philosophizing, until by what is vaguely called scientific method we change them here and there for the better." (pages 24- 25)

The 'reality' that a theory posits only has epistemological value if the character of such positing permits or helps one to arrive at an accurate understanding of the structural character of that to which the theory makes identifying references. Such assistance would be made possible if the positing in question were able to produce a framework that either: a) reflected, or was congruent with, the structural character of the focal objects being referred to through the phenomenology of the individual's experiential field; or, b) allowed the individual to see the disparities between the structural character of his or her theory in relation to the character of that to which he or she makes reference, as the structural character of the latter is mediated by the phenomenology of the experiential field (both that of the individual as well as that of the experiential fields of others).

A sentence that is said to be true is not true because of a theory qua theory (although, obviously, there is a sense in which a sentence might give accurate expression to what a given theory maintains, but significant or ontological truth extends beyond this self-referential dimension of the way sentences relate to a theory). A sentence is true to the extent that the structural character of the hermeneutical framework in which the sentence's underlying intentionality is rooted is capable of accurately reflecting the structural character of that aspect(s) of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which the sentence is making identifying reference.

This reference could be in terms of some phenomenological aspect being considered strictly within the context of the phenomenology taken in, and of, itself. On the other hand, the reference could be in terms of that phenomenological aspect that is being considered from the point of view of trying to establish the ontological nature of what makes a phenomenological aspect of such hermeneutical character possible.

If, at some point in one's proceedings, one does not discover a certain base line of non-theoretical, experiential data against which to compare theoretical positings with respect to the degree of congruency that the latter manifested in relation to the aforementioned evidential base line, then "truth" becomes a rather amorphous term. As a result, under these circumstances, one has great difficulty in understanding what the structural character of the connection is between truth and theory.

One encounters difficulty, as well, with respect to being able to understand how a sentence derived from a theory could be said to be true in any non-trivial sense. The application of the term "true" to a sentence seems to carry with it more than just the determination that the structural character of the sentence in question is congruent with the structural character of a certain facet of given theory.

Truth is not about what one believes to be true unless what one believes to be true is an accurate reflection of what is the case vis-à-vis the focal/horizontal character of that to which one is making identifying reference in the context of the belief's structural character. In seeking the truth, one is not asking if a given sentence truly represents what a given theory holds. One is asking whether what the

sentence says the given theory holds is truly reflective of, or congruent with, that to which the theory, via the sentence in question, supposedly is making reference by virtue of its identifying character, structure, or logic.

Without this extra-theoretical dimension of the phenomenology of the experiential field in which at least some of the components of the phenomenology are not a function of theoretical positing, and, thereby, can be considered somewhat 'independently' from any specific set of theoretical positings, then one has considerable difficulty in understanding what Quine means when he says: "we can and do speak sensibly [my emphasis] of this and that sentence as true" when that is "couched in terms of a given theory and seen from within the theory" ... and the use of "independently" in the previous sentence gives implicit reference to that aspect of phenomenology -- or that aspect of reality that makes phenomenology of such character possible -- about which one theoretically posits.

Quine's position, at this point, seems to reduce down to treating 'theory as belief'. As such, it provides no means for identifying whether, or not, a theory says anything accurate about, or reflective of, or congruent with, the character of ontology or metaphysics or reality.

In fact, Quine's above position does not provide even a means of determining if there is any reality other than the belief system being given expression through a given theory. Indeed, despite his protestations to the contrary, Quine's position here appears to be inextricably mired in a relativistic quagmire.

According to Quine, the consideration that saves him from the charges of relativism "is that we continue to take seriously our own particular aggregate science, our own particular world theory or loose total fabric of quasi-theories, whatever it might be". However, no matter how seriously we might take "our own particular aggregate science", nevertheless, 'seriousness' -- in and of itself -- is not going to remove one from the presence of relativism's haunting specter. What one needs is a means of critically investigating, analyzing, questioning and assessing such aggregate science that is not dependent on, or a function of, the theories of such science that are being investigated, analyzed, questioned or assessed.

There are a number of distinctions that need to be made in relation to the idea of science - -aggregate or otherwise. The term "science" can be used to refer to the purely methodological dimensions of inquiry, irrespective of what is yielded by the application of such methodological considerations. The term "science" also can be used to encompass the "findings" of the application of scientific method in any given set or sequence of circumstances. In addition, the notion of "science" can be used in reference to the processes that are involved in the generation of theoretical posits concerning various aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field, and, finally, the term "science" also can be used to refer to some composite structure of methodology plus "findings" plus theoretical organization or systematization of such methodology and findings.

In instances where one wishes to assess or evaluate the tenability, soundness, weaknesses or reliability of the findings that have been woven into a theoretical framework, one cannot use the theory in question to evaluate itself without running the risk of being charged with a conflict of interest that taints the credibility of the assessment or evaluation processes one uses to judge the tenability of the theory. There must be a clear line of demarcation between the methodological dimension of science and the dimension of science concerning theoretical positing.

One needs something independent of such specific theories that can serve as a means of conceptually cross-referencing or crosschecking one's hermeneutical investigation in relation to more than one set of conceptual co-ordinates. This technique of crosschecking could be in the form of analyzing the reported experiences of other individuals that bear upon the issues in question, but that might, or might not, arise out of the same -- or even similar -- theoretical background as the one being investigated by the individual in question. A technique of cross-checking also could be in the form of questions that are manifested through the phenomenology of the interrogative imperative that gives expression to pointing our problems or difficulties or that points out apparent short-comings, inadequacies or lacunae of the theories being considered as measured against a variety of intersubjective or inter-phenomenological experiential data sets.

In whatever way the cross-checking or cross-referencing process is accomplished, it is intended as a means of bringing independent experiential data to bear upon the evaluation of a given theory in order to get a better conceptual fix on, or appreciation of, the structural character of both the given theory in question, as well as of those aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field to which such theoretical considerations are attempting to make congruent or accurately reflective identifying references. In this way one can use various methodological considerations as a means of trying to assess a given theoretical positing of specified character.

Alternatively, one might use a wide variety of non-theoretical experiential data to assess the tenability of a given theory. Finally, one could use certain theoretical positings as a means of organizing or interpreting or characterizing various aspects of the phenomenology of a given experiential field or set of such fields.

However, one need not restrict oneself to only one facet of such a cross-referencing or cross-checking process. Instead, one could combine them all in a continuous process of checking and rechecking across the spectrum of theoretical, methodological and experiential dimensions of the phenomenology of the experiential field. The foregoing complex of hermeneutical, investigatory considerations might or might not be related to what Quine, ultimately, had in mind when he spoke of "our own aggregate science, our own particular world theory or loose total fabric of quasi-theories". On the other hand, the fact of the matter is that, up until and including the present juncture, Quine has not provided a tenable basis for permitting one to conceptually travel, in an unhindered manner, from the point at which Quine began his investigation into the relation of *Word and Object*, to the sorts of assertions he now seems to be making.

After all, if sentences are, from Quine's perspective, "meaningless inter-theoretically", then just how does one go about approaching or conceptualizing the notions of an "aggregate science" or of a "loose total fabric of quasi-theories"? There would seem to be, in Quine's view, no common denominator through which one could establish inter-theoretical meaningfulness for either the same sentence or difference sentences with which any given speaker/hearer dyad might be concerned.

In other words, Quine's position, at this point, appears to make all theoretical considerations totally insular. Such considerations are rendered insular in the sense of being methodologically cut off from developing a means of determining whether, or not, one's theoretical positing have any congruence with the reality that makes that positing (and that which it is about) possible. Such theoretical considerations are rendered insular, as well, in the sense of being isolated from any sort of meaningful exchange of perspectives, values, ideas, understandings, analyses or inquiries between, or among, diverse theoretical/experiential frameworks.

Consequently, Quine has not provided any clear indication of just what is meant or entailed by his notion that "by what is vaguely called scientific method we change them [i.e., "our beliefs of the moment"] here and there for the better", nor has Quine really provided any defensible criteria by means of which one could establish what makes one belief of the moment "better" than some other belief of the moment.

By "better", Quine might mean "simpler" in some sense. However, his whole concept of "simpler" remains quite obscure so long as 'something other than' the truth of reality itself serves, mysteriously, as the final arbiter of what counts as being simpler in this regard -- especially in view of the fact that, for Quine, the "something other than" is scientific method that remains unclear, if not obscure.

Furthermore as long as Quine maintains that "everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory building process", Quine has made something other than the truth or reality as the final arbiter of the experiential process. This is the case for, in effect, Quine has made the theory-building process as the final arbiter of ontological/metaphysical matters.

Yet, he has provided no means of escape from the theoretical mazes that are generated. Therefore, if one follows Quine's prospectus, one has no way to distinguish between myth and reality in any given instance of the theory building process.

Conclusion

A number of important themes have emerged in the context of the previous discussion of various aspects of Quine's position in Chapter One of *Word and Object*. To begin with -- and in the most general of terms -- model/theory building has been depicted in the present essay as a process that involves the generation and development of certain dimensions of understanding concerning either some facet of the phenomenology of the experiential field, or some facet of that (i.e., reality) that makes a field of such character possible.

Not all of the dimensions of understanding that could be generated and developed during the model/theory building process have been discussed in the present essay. Nonetheless, among those dimensions that have been explored, there are several that have been shown to play fairly important roles.

For example, a key ingredient in the model/theory building process is a function of the tensions that surround the conflicts that exist in any given model/theory building process. These are between, on the one hand, the requirements of simplicity and, on the other hand, the demands for accuracy.

When developing a theoretical network, one wants, for a variety of heuristic, practical and aesthetic reasons, a network that will express the simplest story line with respect to the available data. Yet, at the same time, one wants something more in a story line than simplicity.

One wants, as well, a story line that accurately reflects the structural character of the data it intends to describe or explain. In short, one wants a story line that is the simplest possible schematization of that to which it refers, while simultaneously being a story line that maximizes accuracy and minimizes distortion.

The tensions between simplicity and accuracy often manifest themselves in the form of problems, puzzles, difficulties and so on that challenge the tenability of the model being developed. Thus, simply story lines aren't always accurate, and what appear to be accurate story lines aren't always simple.

As a result, the interrogative imperative tends to emerge in the midst of such conflicts, probing for incongruencies, seeking clarification, inquiring about evidential and conceptual lacunae, and so

on. In effect, the interrogative imperative raises questions about, among other things, the tenability of the tension or balance that exists between the dual features of simplicity and accuracy that characterize any given model or theory network.

In an attempt to meet the queries and probing of the interrogative imperative, the individual who is generating and/or developing a theory makes use of the mechanism of hypothetical positing. As pointed out in this essay, there are at least two broad kinds of positing processes.

In one kind, the individual hypothetically posits the existence of, say, an object, process, state, condition, etc. that actually might, or might not, exist. The purpose of this sort of positing is to try to account for a certain range of available data.

For instance, if one noted perturbations in the orbit of a planet, one might posit the existence of an, heretofore, unknown celestial body to account for such perturbations. In actuality, the reasons for the perturbations in the orbit of the planet might be due to some other cause or influence. However, the effect of the kind of positing process is to organize and structure the available data in a way that makes surface sense even though such a suggested structuring arrangement might turn out to be untenable.

In the second kind of positing alluded to above, the individual starts with the acknowledgment of the existence or reality of some given phenomenon. The individual, then, proceeds to try to determine the structural character of that phenomenon.

One does not hypothesize the phenomenon in question. Instead, one uses it as a starting point from which one begins to seek insight into the character or nature of that phenomenon.

Thus, if one observes that volcanoes behave in a certain way, one doesn't posit the behavior. One accepts the behavior, *per se*, and proceeds to inquire why that behavior has the structural character it does and whether that behavior varies under different circumstances and conditions. In the case of this kind of positing, one also seeks to organize and structure the available data in a manner that renders the data intelligible.

However, in this second sense of positing, one does not necessarily posit the possible existence of some, heretofore, unknown entity, force, etc. to account for such behavior. One simply takes what is observable and attempts to determine how those factors interact to give expression to the character of the behavior in question. That is, one is seeking to posit the nature of the relationship among givens or observables without necessarily resorting to unseen entities, forces, or processes.

Yet, as is the case with the other kind of positing, to contend that the mode of structuring the data renders such data to be intelligible is not enough. The mode of structuring must be defensible or tenable as well.

In terms of the foregoing considerations, the structural character of the model/theory building process is shaped by: a) the tensions between simplicity and accuracy (together with concomitant issues of characterization and congruency); b) probing activity through the interrogative imperative; and, c) the organizing and orienting capabilities of the two kinds of hypothetical positing. All of these factors bounce off against one another -- as well as against other aspects of the phenomenology of the experiential field -- to create a dynamic interaction of focal and horizontal features that help generate the structures and structuring process of understanding.

Irrespective of whether one is talking about the model/theory building process that occurs during the course of learning a language, or one is discussing the model building process in the context of developing a scientific theory, the essential features of that process remain the same. Moreover, in both kinds of model/theory building, the methodological starting point is the phenomenology of the experiential field.

The various ways in which that field manifests itself over time set limits or boundaries on the set of structures and structuring processes that can be generated, tenably, by the model/theory building process. In this sense, the phenomenology of the experiential field is an expression of reality, and, consequently, it represents something of a base line arbiter concerning the way in which the model/theory process can proceed in a defensible manner. After all, two of the central themes that have set the model/theory building process in

motion concern the fact that: a) there exists a phenomenology of the experiential field of given character to which attention has been, or is now being, focused; and, b) one desires to know what it is that makes a field of such character possible.

Therefore, whatever structures are generated by the model/theory building process will have to reconcile themselves, eventually, with the realities of both of the above mentioned themes. In this respect, the character of the phenomenology of the experiential field and that which makes a field of such character possible both act as ulterior controls or limits that act as the final arbiters in determining the appropriateness of any suggested theoretical relationship between simplicity and accuracy.

The foregoing brief overview of the character of the model/theory building process that has been developed in this essay is at odds with any number of facets of Quine's position that has been advanced in Chapter One of *Word and Object*. For example, the nature of language, the significance of simplicity, the role of hypothetical positing, the relationship between language and theory, as well as the importance of scientific methodology, are some of the recurring themes of contention out of which emerge considerable differences concerning the way in which Quine and this essay I characterize the model/theory building process.

As a result, I have argued throughout this essay that, due to Quine's failure to grasp the character of the foregoing processes, his understanding of the relationship between 'word' and 'object' has been skewed in an untenable structural direction during the presentation of his views in chapter 1 of *Word and Object*. Presumably, if my contention is correct that chapter 1 represents a miniature representation of the sort of issues with which Quine is concerned in the remainder of his book, then one fully can anticipate that the problems and flaws that showed up in the first chapter will affect, adversely, the structural character of the rest of his more detailed exploration of the relationships between word and object.

Chapter 9: Freud, Jung, and Myths

As I was reflecting on these matters, I suddenly realized someone had approached and was standing in front of me. The individual was a short, bearded man who looked to be in his early-to mid-thirties.

He smiled and gestured vaguely over his shoulder with his left hand in the general direction of the group behind him. "We saw you from across the room and decided to ask if you would like to join us," he informed me.

My initial reaction was to decline the invitation. I didn't know if I was up to a discussion, especially if it concerned issues in which I might have little, or no, interest.

However, remembering that just a day ago I had been wondering how to go about getting myself into circulation and, thereby, be in a position to make contact with more people, I resisted my inclination to stay removed from the group. Assenting to the invitation with a nod, a smile and the verbal confirmation: "Sure, why not," I arose from the couch and accompanied the man to the lounge area in the corner across from my former place of repose.

Having exchanged introductions on the way over to the group, the man who had extended the invitation, and whose name was Vince Ardello, said to the others who had been waiting for our arrival: "Everyone, this is David Phelps from Boston." Vince proceeded to quickly go around the circle and mention the names of each of the members of the group.

I remembered a few names and was able to match them with the right face. Three or four of the names, however, had failed to register in anything beyond short-term memory -- my usual eidetic memory was being undermined through the presence of countervailing forces such as, perhaps, the first stages of senility.

Fortunately, with the exception of one of the participants, the people were wearing name tags. Unfortunately, the person without the name tag was also one of the individuals whose name had escaped me. Hopefully, someone would mention her name during the course of the discussion. If this didn't happen, then if required to do so, I would have to figure out some way to address her without embarrassing either of us.

Once Vince and I were settled, the woman without the name tag said to me: "David, we've been having a fairly free -form discussion about a variety of issues concerning spirituality and secularism. Just before you came we had begun to explore Joseph Campbell's approach to myths and mythology and what, if anything, he has to say about the nature of spirituality."

"Well," I said, "I know a little about Jung's treatment or understanding of myth, but I know very little about Joseph Campbell except the bits and pieces I happened to catch on one or two of the shows in Bill Moyers' PBS series. I'm afraid I didn't learn enough from my limited exposure to really figure out what Professor Campbell was all about."

"You're in good company," she replied. "There is considerable debate about whether he was a mystic, a romantic, a philosopher, a psychologist, or something else."

"Certainly, more than a few people have categorized him as some sort of Jungian. Maybe, you would care to share with us something of your understanding of Jung's conception of myth."

"I've only been sitting for sixty seconds," I observed, somewhat nervous about the prospect of having to sound intelligent, "and, already, my seat seems rather hot."

"I'm sorry," she said, "I didn't mean to put you on the spot."

"You didn't," I responded, "I'm just trying to figure out how to jump into the conversational waters when my normal style is to let the waves of the discussion wash over my feet for a while before I wade in further. Furthermore, you probably all know much more about this than I do."

"Maybe, but I doubt it," she suggested. "We all have our strengths, I'm sure, but we are, by and large, just interested amateurs in most of the things we have been discussing up to this point."

"If you promise not to quote me," I stated, "I suppose there are a few things about myth and Jungian psychology that I could say that, if nothing else, might be slightly better than dead air-space. Although I hope you won't throw this claim back in my face if it turns out that after I'm done, you would have preferred dead airspace."

"David," Vince assured me, "you should treat us as people who have just come out of a long session in a sensory deprivation tank and are starved for stimulation. We are thirsty for whatever you might have to offer us."

Taking a few seconds to chart a general course before plunging in, I started somewhat hesitatingly. I hadn't thought about this particular aspect of Jungian theory for some time.

"Maybe, the place to begin is with Jung's belief that, broadly speaking, in order for an individual's personality to develop properly one must deal with certain kinds of psychological challenge during the course of one's life. Moreover, according to Jung, the challenges with which the individual is confronted during the first part of life ... say, up until about young adulthood ... are quite different from the sort of challenges faced by a person during the second half of life.

"In many ways, Jung agreed with Freud that the task of the first half of life was to establish the sort of strong sense of ego identity and self-sufficiency that would permit an individual to operate independently and which would equip that person to find a productive place in society. In order to accomplish this, a person had to break free of, and make peace with, the instinctually charged character of the relationships that arise in conjunction with one's parents and that shape many, if not most, of the events of the first half of life.

"For Jung, however -- and unlike Freud -- an individual's psychological work did not end with a successful, neurosis-free navigation of the troubled waters of early development. To be a fully functioning person, one also had to revisit the unconscious during the second half of life in order to bring into balance and integrate certain aspects of personality that had been, for whatever reasons, not properly attended to or separated off from conscious functioning while dealing with the earlier psychological crises of life.

"On the basis of his own harrowing encounters with the tremendous forces of the unconscious ... encounters that almost overwhelmed and destroyed him, Jung believed that, at a minimum, two conditions were necessary to undertake the psychologically perilous journey of the second half of life. The first requirement, outlined earlier, was for an individual to have achieved healthy ego

functioning unencumbered by lingering residues of the problems characteristic of the first half of life.

"The second condition was that an individual should not undertake the process of revisiting the unconscious without help ... and, preferably, according to Jung, this assistance should come in the form of a therapist who was familiar with the territory. Although therapy sessions could be used to help individuals to negotiate unresolved issues left over from the first half of life, Jungian therapy really tends to come into its own with respect to assisting people to meet the psychological challenges associated with the journey back to the unconscious that characterizes the second half of life.

"One needed a strong ego in order to resist the temptation to surrender to, become lost in, and be overwhelmed by, the forces of the unconscious. Similarly, one needed an enlightened guide or therapist to help one learn how to enter into dialogue with, as well as interpret the symbols of, the unconscious so that the situation, if properly handled, would allow the individual to take advantage of the benefits that the unconscious had to offer in the way of an expanded, more balanced, more integrated sense of self than could be accomplished by the establishment of a strong, healthy ego as a result of successfully meeting the psychological challenges of the early stages of development.

"Jung looked at the unconscious in a very different manner than did Freud. The latter conceived of the unconscious as the well - spring of instinctual, primary processes, as well as the repository of repressed material that was produced while trying to contain instinctual energies from being expressed directly. Jung, on the other hand, considered the unconscious to be a door-way, of sorts, that linked human beings to a realm far beyond instincts and primary processes.

For Jung, the unconscious was a treasure-house of psychological wisdom that, among other things could help an individual resolve many of the problems that arose during the process of psychological development. Jung claimed this store-house of knowledge and wisdom had been accumulating since the times of primitive man ... maybe even earlier.

"According to Freud, the unconscious was in many, but not in all, ways an entity created by the individual through repression of experiential components drawn from everyday life. At the same time, Freud believed the ego, that was the home of the reality principle and secondary processes of rationality, must become the master regulator of the ways, and to what extent, various irrational processes and contents of the unconscious were to be given expression in any given set of social circumstances. Thus, his famous dictum: 'Where id is, there shall ego be'.

"For Jung, however, everyday experiences were merely the stimuli for eliciting various dimensions of an inherited, not created, unconscious that contains much more than repressed material. Furthermore, although Jung believed the unconscious could never be mastered or even tamed, he maintained that an individual could derive psychological benefit through limited, controlled excursions into the super-rational realm of the unconscious.

"Nonetheless, because the unconscious had the capacity to mislead an individual, as well as destroy an individual, the process of bringing certain facets of the unconscious to some degree of conscious realization was a tricky business. The task had to be undertaken in measured, carefully analyzed, and properly interpreted steps, or the individual risked having his or her sense of self become fused with, and dissolved by, the forces of the unconscious.

"By venturing into the realm of the unconscious through a series of limited excursions, an individual comes to realize that the everyday world is not the only reality. Rather, the objects of the everyday world are understood as 'a' reality instead of 'the' reality.

"In fact, the objects of the everyday world were able to assume symbolic significance by pointing in the direction of unconscious processes, as well as to serve as loci of projection for these same unconscious forces. This is where myths enter the picture."

Shortly after I had sat down and been asked to talk about Jung, one of the members of the group, whose name tag read 'Art Carmichael', had excused himself and disappeared somewhere. Presumably, he needed to attend to personal business of one sort or another.

Now, he had returned, bearing a tray filled with an assortment of soft drinks and juices for the members of the group. While he quietly busied himself with distributing the drinks, I continued to speak.

"Returning, once again to Freud for purposes of comparison, he construed myth to be an externalized symptom of the repressed contents of various kinds of libidinous striving, especially those associated with the incest wishes of children concerning their opposite sexed parent. Indeed, all of civilization was a sublimated containment response to the attempt of the forbidden inclinations of the id to seek public expression, and, considered from this perspective, myths constituted just one aspect of this process of sublimation.

"Jung, on the other hand, didn't consider myths to be public signs of an underlying pathological trade-off with the unconscious. He maintained that myths ... along with dreams, art, and the active imagination ... were clues or tools that could be used to unlock different secrets of the unconscious during the constructive, life-affirming process of individuation through which an individual sought to become whole, integrated, and balanced.

"Myths, dreams, the active imagination, and art formed part of the running dialogue with the unconscious that Jung believed was essential to the process of working toward a healthy resolution of the psychological challenges of the second half of life. Simply stated, myths were concrete, symbolic encapsulations of the unconscious wisdom and powers that were beckoning us to return to the hidden dimensions of the inner life in order to have a shot at winning the ultimate prize: a deeper, richer, more harmonious and integrated sense of the meaning of the self as a distinct individual identity and personality formed against the backdrop of both society and the history of the species.

"According to Jung, running through the myths of different societies were a set of commonalities that he considered to be a reflection of the underlying archetypes that formed the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious was the inherited repository of psychological forms, dynamics, themes, and meanings that constituted a deep reservoir of wisdom, although largely unconscious, from which we could draw to complete the process of self individuation.

"As far as Freud was concerned, the similarities among the myths of different societies were a reflection of the libidinous drives that were part of our common biological inheritance that differentially manifested themselves through a set of biological and psychological stages of development. Yet, each person underwent this encounter and struggle with the species-wide biological inheritance of libidinous drives in a fashion that uniquely reflected the individual's interaction with his or her family and the surrounding community.

"Jung believed myths came into being when a given society created a symbol-laden story that was anchored in, and animated by, different archetypal motifs of the collective unconscious. The symbols of the myth were intended to elicit the active participation of those who heard or read the myth by helping to remind people of the forceful shaping presence of archetypes in our lives and, through this means, entice individuals to follow the symbolic clues of the myth back to their source through the process of therapy.

"The thematic contents, or archetypal forms, of myths came with the psychological inheritance that accompanied but, unlike Freud, were not reducible to our biological inheritance. As such, the thematic contents of myths rather than their particular symbols were psychological givens in the lives of all individuals.

"The particularized details of any given myth were drawn, according to Jung, from the social, cultural and historical character of the lived experience of a people. Therefore, the way in which these particularized details symbolize, and give expression to, the underlying archetypal themes is peculiar to the circumstances of the people out of which a certain myth arises, and, for this reason, Jung disapproved of the tendency of some people in the West to adopt the myths of various Eastern cultures and try to incorporate the symbols of those myths into a Western context.

"For Freud, the purpose of myth is to serve as a sublimated, disguised medium for emotional release that is intended to serve as compensation -- albeit inadequate -- for the direct expression of libidinous energies and drives. An individual inherits a set of biologically-rooted, libidinous drives instead of experiential themes.

"For Jung, the purpose of myth is to provide the individual with an opportunity, through a return to the unconscious, to seek a deeper

understanding of the nature of self, personality, meaning and identity. The individual inherits a common set of psychological themes that are a crystallization of certain aspects of the experiences of one's ancestors carrying ramifications for the process of self-fulfillment and self-realization.

"The Freudian approach to myth is to consider the myth as a symbol of something that is hidden and, in reality, different from the character of a myth. If a myth were not substantially different from that which remains hidden, it would not have been permitted to be given public expression.

"With Jung, the myth is not something different from the underlying archetype. The symbols of the myth are intended to lead toward, or elicit, the reality of the archetypes giving expression to different facets of the collective unconscious. However, once the archetype or archetypes that are present in a myth have been properly identified, one must undergo a further process of interpretation by means of therapeutic guidance.

"Jung distinguishes between mythology and myth by pointing out that, unlike a complete mythology such as a religious tradition, no one myth can contain all of the archetypal themes that exist in the collective unconscious of human beings. Therefore, no one myth -- again, unlike a mythology -- provides all of the material that is necessary for working toward either a proper balancing of one's personality or a realization of the deep riches that are inherent, at least potentially, in the nature of the self.

"Individual myths call one to particular aspects of identity, meaning, self and personality through the specific archetypes to which our attention is being drawn by the symbols of the myth. A mythology, on the other hand, calls one to the full spectrum of psychological possibilities that are inherent in the archetypes of the collective unconscious to which one's attention is being directed through the complex symbolism of such a mythology.

"When individuals concentrated on only certain myths ... rather than the dynamic intricacies of a fully elaborated mythology ... Jung believed such people cannot help but leave substantial dimensions of their selves unexplored, undeveloped, unbalanced, and unintegrated. Consequently, at best, the process of individuation will be woefully

incomplete, and, at worst, such people risk becoming overly-identified with the archetypal underpinnings of particular myths. When this occurred, according to Jung, such people rendered themselves vulnerable to a mental breakdown through loss of identity and sense of self as individuals with a potential that carries beyond any given archetype."

I sort of shrugged my shoulders and raised my hands in a way that indicated this was all I had to say. I had held center court for long enough and now was the time, I hoped, for me to slip into my preferred place amongst the peripheral shadows of a discussion.

There was no immediate response to what had been said. Thankfully, no one had drifted off to sleep ... at the same time, no one seemed to have been transported into a state of ecstatic reverie by my words either.

Finally, Vince said: "Lest you have any concerns in this regard, David, I think one can safely say that your précis on Jung's approach to myth was, by quite a few orders of magnitude, better than dead airspace."

"Speak for yourself, Vince," said the woman with no name tag but wearing a mischievous smile. Although her gray hair and wrinkles testified to her apparent age, her manner and comportment gave expression to a youthful energy and an enchanting, yet, hard-to-pin-down, spiritual quality that was very appealing.

"On occasion," she intimated, "I like dead air -space. Consequently, I feel duty bound in these times of endless searches for constant sources of sensory stimulation to come to the defense of those beleaguered individuals who might be inclined to meditation and contemplative reflection. However, if you wished to express the same sentiments in some way that did not denigrate that which remains silent in its own defense, then I believe I would support the general tenor of your position."

She seemed to reflect for a few seconds on what she had said and, then, added: "For someone who professes to appreciate silence, I don't seem to have much trouble destroying it, do I?"

The two comments were followed by a further brief silence. After a few moments had passed in this fashion, one of the people, Ben

Blake, whose name I remembered remarked: "For some reason, I've always had a problem with treating the unconscious as an actual thing. Or, maybe, the right way for me to try to convey what I mean is to stipulate that for some kinds of processes and issues I'm quite prepared to accept the existence of a realm referred to as the 'unconscious' which is, in some way, attached to, or a part of, one's being, but there are many other aspects of life that often are relegated to the unconscious, or forces of the unconscious, but about which I have my doubts as to whether or not this is a correct characterization of the situation."

"I'm not sure I understand what you are getting at," said a woman whose name tag read 'Melanie Teasdale'.

My initial impression of her -- perhaps aided and abetted by her Bride-of-Frankenstein-like hair, as well as the reading glasses that hung about her neck seemingly ready to examine whatever curiosity she might happen upon -- was that Melanie was an individual who had spent many of the hours of her life pre-occupied with exploring quite a few of the uncharted nooks and crannies of existence.

"Could you give some examples, Ben, of what you have in mind?" she requested.

I found myself mentally referring to him as 'Uncle Ben' ... due, no doubt, to his friendly, familiar, and, generally, avuncular style of relating to the people in the circle. The unlit pipe with which he gestured and, from time to time, that he placed, unlit, in his mouth, seemed to enhance this effect.

"Well," Ben began, "although I find myself conceptually going back and forth on these issues, I guess the obvious examples that involve instances where the existence of an unconscious dimension to human affairs seems apparent would concern various aspects of personal memory and motivation. For instance, there is the name or fact or piece of information that one knows but, for some reason, one can't produce or retrieve it on a given occasion.

"Presumably, this data that remains out of the reach of our consciousness could be said to be residing in the unconscious. Of course, there might be some individuals who would wish to say such

material is not really in something called the unconscious as much as it merely remains inaccessible to conscious recall.

"In other words, being out of consciousness is not necessarily the same thing as being in a realm of the unconscious. For example, what is going on in some country on the other side of the Earth might be out of our current state of consciousness, but this doesn't, as a result, automatically qualify that unknown data to be a part of someone's unconscious regions, nor does it necessarily create, in and of itself, an unconscious realm in which such data can be said to exist.

"Moreover, there are many facets of a computer's data base or memory banks that might not be in use at any given time. However, I'm not sure one would want to claim, therefore, that a computer can be said to possess an unconscious realm.

"Alternatively, someone might wish to reverse the argument. If one does not wish to attribute an unconscious realm to computers when their current programming state or operating mode does not permit them to have access to certain aspects of stored data, then perhaps, the same is true of human beings as well.

"Another, possibly better, example that might indicate the existence of an entity called the 'unconscious' involves various non-conscious emotional or motivational patterns that are operating within us on an ongoing basis. More specifically, these motivational and emotional patterns or processes might be the real forces shaping our behaviors, yet we are not aware of them because they are hidden beneath, say, psychological defenses that permit us to attribute more acceptable or flattering reasons to the behaviors that are rooted in this veiled network of emotion and motivation.

"Although the idea of the unconscious existed before Freud came along, he was able to place it, to some extent, in a more scientifically acceptable light. For, in addition to dreams, hysteria and so on, Freud also took phenomena that he referred to as the psychopathology of everyday life -- like slips of the tongue -- as commonplace sorts of example that served as empirical evidence for the existence of the unconscious.

"Hidden emotions and motivations, along with instinctual drives, played a very important part in disclosing the presence of the

unconscious realm as far as Freud and a variety of other psychological investigators were concerned. This data does not prove the existence of a region, state, realm, place or entity known as the unconscious, but, at least, such data lend some degree of plausibility to the idea.

"Nevertheless, there are other cases -- and Jung's notion of the collective unconscious is, at least for me, one candidate for what I have in mind -- in which we might use the term 'unconscious' as a way of talking about forces, processes and phenomena that we don't really understand and that, in point of fact, might have nothing necessarily to do with a psychological or biological realm of the unconscious. Instead, these processes and phenomena might be impinging on us from some other realm, through a dynamic we are not aware of, and we merely attribute our experiences to the unconscious because, for a variety of cultural and historical reasons, we are more prepared to accept this kind of ontological or metaphysical interpretation for such events than if someone were to try to argue for an other-worldly or spiritual account of these sorts of phenomenon or process."

An individual whose name I remembered was 'Andrea Myers'... a recollection that was confirmed when I checked the name written on the tag pinned to her blouse ... spoke up at this point. She looked and talked like a business executive that had stopped into the 'club' for a lunchtime chat about what the non-business world was up to.

"If I correctly understand the last part of what you are saying, Ben," Andrea indicated by way of preface, "your idea might have something to do with the changing character of the philosophical and cultural conceptions of the nature of the individual with respect to one's relation with reality.

"At certain points in history," she continued, "people were prepared to accept, as true, ideas such as visitations by a creative muse, or demonic possession, or satanic influences, or dreams as messages from some other world. Now, however, as a result of various kinds of scientific, psychological, and philosophical influence, many people accept as true, ideas such as, for example, that dreams are due to certain kinds of brain activity during REM sleep, or these people contend that creativity is the result of a free play of concepts that is generated through various modalities of brain chemistry, together with K-complex electrical rhythms, or such people argue that demonic

possession is really a residual, delusional effect of some kind of breakdown in the metabolic pathways of, say, serotonin and/or dopamine.

"Yet, in point of fact, we are not necessarily any closer to understanding what is going on now than when people were attributing these phenomena and processes to other-worldly agents. Currently, terms such as neurotransmitters, brain chemistry and electrical activity are used to give descriptive expression to the realm of the unconscious, but all we really have with respect to such terms are certain patterns of correlation rather than a solid case of causation ... although we 'moderns' like to feel somewhat smugly superior, relative to the so-called primitive myths of yesteryear, simply because we are able to couch our ignorance in very impressive-sounding technical language."

Colby Shaw, another of the individuals whose name I remembered from Vince's round of introductions, joined in the discussion at this juncture. He reminded me of what I envisioned a twenty-something Tom Sawyer might have looked like ... although I do not know exactly on what this sense of the young man actually was based.

Somehow, Colby's tanned and freckled face, his general demeanor, together with his laconic way of expressing himself, seemed like they might have been the product of having experienced adventures, of one sort or another, near the banks of a river in the South. Yet, this down-home boy impression was in counterpoint to the kinds of thought being voiced by him.

"Seemingly," suggested Colby, "Carl Jung represents an interesting sort of transitional figure in all of this. In certain respects he is an important part of the conceptual revolution that has been taking place during the last hundred years, or so, in which psychological accounts have gained ascendancy, at least in some quarters, over spiritual or religious accounts, as the repository of 'true', down-to-earth explanations for the events of our lives. Yet, at the same time, his notion of the collective unconscious seems to be part of a metaphysical framework that transcends, and, therefore, cannot be reduced to, the brain functioning of any given individual."

The gray-haired woman with no name tag said: "I've often found Jung very confusing in this respect. Frequently, one finds him speaking

about the soul, spirituality, the importance of religious symbols, and so on, but he appears to make spirituality a function of purely psychological processes.

"For him, spirituality or religion appears to be little more than one of the forms generated by processes of a mythological nature. As is true with psychology, these mythologies are significant in as much as they contain the symbols that are able to help the individual make contact with the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Consequently spiritual themes provide a person with psychological material through which she or he can work toward resolution of the problems and challenges of identity, the self, and personality that Jung believes are necessary for a successful completion of the developmental processes that characterize the second half of life.

"I find Jung interesting in as much as he is willing to allow for dimensions of reality and meaning – such as, the self, identity and personality -- which extend beyond the overly simplistic world of the libidinous energies and instinctual drives of Freud and biology. Nevertheless, even if one agreed with Jung concerning the need to reclaim, balance, and integrate aspects of personality and self by revisiting the unconscious, I don't feel a purely psychological approach is capable of doing justice to that which spirituality is, in essence, attempting to direct our attention.

"In a sense, just as Jung's theories add very important dimensions to, as well as complement, the work of people like Freud, something needs to be added to Jung's framework in order to reflect the richness and depth of being that transcends the realm of the psychological. In many respects, I find Jung to be just as reductionistic, in his own way, as he seemed to find Freud to be ... even though Jung certainly is offering a far more complex picture of the nature of the human being than did Freud."

"But, Tammy," said Art Carmichael, the recent bearer of liquid gifts, "on more than one occasion I believe Jung spoke in quite approving terms of such things as religious discipline. At least he wasn't saying, like Marx, that religion was the opiate of the masses ... or, like Freud, that religion was merely an illusory projection of an overly moralistic superego trying to cope with the many problems presented by a very resourceful and devious set of instinctual urgings."

For some reason that I could not identify, and that was more of a feeling than it was a reasoned analysis of any kind, Art seemed somewhat lost in the group. While there was nothing odd in what he said, his psychological and emotional rhythms seemed to be out of phase with what appeared to be the ambience of the rest of the members of our impromptu gathering. Perhaps, like me, he had been drafted into a situation with which he was attempting to deal as best he could.

"I'm not so sure, I agree with you, Art," said the previously unnamed woman, Tammy, whose last name I later learned was Winthrop. "I tend to get the impression Jung was, to some extent, favorably disposed toward religion for several reasons that had nothing to do with Divinity or our relationship with Divinity.

"On the one hand, as I suggested previously, for Jung, religion was a fully adequate mythological medium that provided the individual with a means of making contact with the archetypes of the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious represents the collected wisdom of human experience concerning the completion of personality and development rather than a repository of Divine wisdom.

"Consequently, one's contact with the archetypes of the collective unconscious is not necessarily a process of reaching out to, or for, Divinity, nor does one enter into dialogue with the archetypes for the purposes of coming to know, love, worship or serve God. Instead, one makes contact with the archetypes of the collective unconscious with the intention of coming to know, enrich, balance, and integrate one's sense of self, identity and personality in order to complete a process of psychological, not spiritual, development ... although Jungians -- including the master, himself -- sometimes seem inclined to use a spiritual-like vocabulary as a way of speaking about such a psychological project.

"One might argue, I suppose, that part of the wisdom we psychologically inherited through the archetypes of the collective unconscious might involve the thoughts and emotions of previous peoples concerning the properties that they believed a relationship with some transcendental, Divine Being should have if an individual were successfully to bring to completion the psychological project of

creating a balanced and integrated personality and identity. However, these kinds of beliefs are not at all the same sort of thing as saying that such a Divine Being exists and that our attention and efforts should be directed toward making some kind of realized contact with this Being rather than the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

"Another reason behind Jung's praising of religion and its framework of discipline might have been connected with his very healthy respect for, and wariness concerning, the tremendous powers he believed to be inherent in the realm of the collective unconscious. As David pointed out earlier, Jung had witnessed the overwhelming character of such forces and had experienced, first hand, this dimension's capacity to confuse, if not mislead, individuals who, either intentionally or accidentally, wandered into it.

"Conceivably, for Jung, the rituals, practices, discipline and regimen of religion served as so many psychological buffers between the individual and the forces of the collective unconscious. By exerting control over the individual's interior life, religions were, in effect, helping to protect individuals from potentially disastrous and destructive encounters with the collective unconscious.

"If religious adherents were not prepared to undertake a serious journey into the realm of the unconscious, then better for them to be surrounded with a set of religious constraints and restraints that were likely to keep them out of harm's way. In other words, the practices, beliefs, rituals, art, and so on, of their religious tradition would provide the less venturesome of these people with a limited, gradual, somewhat superficial method for making contact with at least some of the archetypes of the collective unconscious through the symbols inherent in their tradition.

"On the other hand, these same symbols of a given religious tradition would serve as hints for the faithful with respect to the psychological wisdom that could be found by anyone bold enough to journey inwardly in a rigorous, sincere fashion. Moreover, until such time as an individual was ready for -- from Jung's perspective -- a serious, inward journey, then the symbols, myths and other aspects of a given religious mythology still could offer its adherents some of the materials necessary for working toward completion of some facets of

the psychological tasks involving the self, identity, personality, and so on.

"As far as the developmental challenges of the second half of life are concerned, Jungian therapy is intended to take an individual on a guided encounter with the forces and wisdom of the collective unconscious in a way that is both different from, as well as similar to, the modalities used in the mythological processes of religion. As such, not only did Jungian therapy provide an avenue for helping non-religious people to address the unfinished psychological business of developing the self, identity and personality in a complete and proper fashion, but his modality of therapy also could be held out to religious believers who didn't seem to be able to obtain, within their religious tradition, the help they needed for tackling the problems surrounding the completion of the tasks entailed by psychological development.

"Sometimes, when reading Jung, I even get the distinct impression he might have felt his brand of therapy was a much more efficacious way of gaining access to, and deriving benefit from, the archetypes of the collective unconscious than was religion. In any event, Jung, within certain limits, might have been tolerant of, and somewhat positively disposed toward, religion simply because he felt religion was trying, in its own way, to help individuals accomplish some of the same kinds of goal concerning meaning, self, identity, personality, harmony, balance, integration and enrichment of the psychological soul, as he himself was attempting to do through his own therapeutic methodology."

Melanie Teasdale jumped in at this point with an observation for our consideration. "What I'm about to say might sound strange, but I've found myself wondering, from time to time, whether what we call normal, waking consciousness, is, in reality, the unconscious realm.

"Many of us, including myself, seem to want to take the modality of consciousness we use in everyday life or the modalities of consciousness that we tend to associate with abilities -- such as creativity, language, insight, and reasoning -- that we believe set human beings aside from the rest of animal and plant life, and we place these forms of consciousness at the very apex of a chart of evolutionary or cosmic accomplishment. Yet, I think few, if any of us, really understand how creativity, or insight, or reasoning, or language actually operates.

"Consciousness ... the everyday-waking-variety kind of consciousness, does not so much appear to generate these kinds of ability as much as it seems to be a recipient or beneficiary of talents and abilities that are transpiring in some other realm or dimension. In reality, our work-a-day consciousness is the last to know what is going on within us, and whatever it is that our everyday consciousness comes to an awareness of, such awareness really only seems to have a very partial, fragmented, shallow, and indirect sort of relationship with the centers of awareness that actually have the responsibility for regulating and governing a whole variety of complex operations and processes involving so-called 'higher' human functions and functioning.

"The productions of language, or creativity, or insight, or reasoning are so fantastically complex, intricate, and innovative that I have difficulty with the idea they are a function of unconscious processes. In fact, I find far more believable the possibility that the everyday consciousness in which we like to take so much pride is actually, relatively speaking, quite dumb and unconscious with respect to most of what is going on in reality.

"Only the human ego's inclination to appropriate these capacities and abilities as its own prevents us from realizing the absurdities inherent in our attempting to lay claim to those processes and functions that, for the most part, take place beyond the horizons of our everyday, waking consciousness. We seem to be zombies who operate from within a firmly entrenched delusional system that portrays our normal modalities of awareness as being the cat's meow of consciousness.

"I wouldn't be surprised to find out someday that our everyday consciousness is really just a residual, trickledown effect of far more advanced activities going on beyond the horizons of our so-called normal, waking consciousness. In other words, our work-a-day form of consciousness is not so much an instance of emergent properties as it is an expression of divergent properties of some sort that have become separated off, like a dissociative mental condition or fugue state, from its original source or context.

"In some ways, the relationship of our everyday modes of awareness to the real consciousness that seems to be going on in some

other realm or dimension of being is sort of reminiscent of certain science fiction movies or novels. You know, the ones where Earth gets visited by beings who are so far more advanced than humans are that the aliens either have great compassion for our pathetic condition and keep sending us anonymous gifts of consolation so we won't get too depressed about the rather abysmal condition of our waking consciousness, or, they adopt us as dumb but, on occasion, lovable pets and give us trinkets every so often with which we can amuse ourselves like so many kittens with a ball of string, or, they consider us to be only slightly different than the insect life on this planet, but their moral values will not permit them to exterminate us and put us out of our misery."

"Thank you, Melanie, for gracing us with these thoughts," Vince Ardello said with mock gratitude. "I'm sure everyone else found them as uplifting and inspiring as I did ... especially the part alluding to the aliens.

"All kidding aside," Vince added, "what you say strikes some sort of sympathetic chord within me. I have often felt we humans have got this consciousness and unconsciousness distinction all inverted and twisted around.

"If one considers how impoverished our waking consciousness tends to become -- with all of our routines, habits, biases, prejudices, psychological defenses, emotional blindness, preoccupations with our fantasy life and so on -- I really am surprised any of us can do much more than walk and chew gum simultaneously. Given the wretched condition of the waking consciousness in which we spend so much of our time, the miserable state of the world is not all that hard to understand."

"I would like to get back to Jung, for just a moment," indicated Colby Shaw. "Maybe, some of you can answer a few questions I've been carrying around with me for awhile.

"Ever since college days, I've been trying to figure out the logistics of certain aspects of Jungian theory. For instance, I've always wondered where the collective unconscious was located.

"If one says it is located in psychological space, whatever that is, then the question just resurfaces in slightly different forms. Where is

psychological space and where can one find the collective unconscious in such space?

"I guess this gets back to the sorts of thing that Ben and Andrea were talking about earlier. We have a hard enough time trying to speak of the nature and location of just the plain old unconscious without complicating matters and bringing the collective unconscious into the discussion.

"Even if one were to argue, for example, that the regular unconscious is a function of certain kinds of brain activity, this option seems not to be available to Jung, at least as far as the collective unconscious is concerned, since he seemed to want to distinguish between the mechanisms of biological and psychological inheritance. So, one returns to questions such as: where is the collective unconscious, and how did it originate, and why, apparently, did only certain kinds of archetypal forms, rather than others, get deposited there, and what was the mechanism of the formation process of archetypes in which the particularized experiences of individuals got transformed into a generalized categorical form, and why should one suppose the potential of the self is limited to the possibilities inherent in the archetypes, and why is there so much power and force associated with archetypes, and what precisely is the character and nature of such power or force, and how do we know that Jung's interpretations of the significance, meaning and function of the archetypes is what he claims to be the case?"

"Whoa, Colby," responded Vince, "slow down. You've asked enough questions to keep scholars busy for the next several centuries."

Colby displayed a sheepish smile. "I told you these concerns have been with me for awhile."

Vince and Colby both looked in my direction as if I were the resident expert on Jung. Shaking my head, I rebuffed whatever expectations they might have had with: "Don't look at me fellows, I'm just trying to be sociable and hold up my end of the conversation when you asked me to talk about Jung's approach to myths.

"I don't know how Jungians would answer any of your questions Colby," I added, "although I'm sure they have thought about such matters. Quite frankly, more than a few of the questions mentioned by

you have been ricocheting about in my mind for quite some time as well."

Tammy Winthrop sort of came to my rescue by diverting attention elsewhere when she said: "There are some spiritual traditions that speak of a realm or world of symbols and similitudes that, on the one hand, addresses human beings through the language of dreams, and, on the other hand, constitutes a dimension apart from the physical/material world that functions as a way station, of sorts, with a potential for offering the individual exposure to many different kinds of spiritual or mystical experience.

"These traditions suggest one can commune with the spirits of prophets and saints in this world of symbols and similitudes and, as a result, be in a position to acquire, at least potentially, a great deal of spiritual wisdom and understanding through such encounters. However, these same spiritual traditions also indicate that individuals can meet up with other kinds of very powerful entities in this world or realm of symbols and similitudes -- entities that are capable of leading one into spiritual confusion and error.

"When I compare some of what Jung says about the collective unconscious -- especially in the context of his own harrowing experiences -- with what various spiritual traditions relate concerning the nature of the world of symbols and similitudes, I can't help but wonder if Jung might have tried to impose the structure of his own psychological theory onto a dimension of reality that has nothing to do with the collective unconscious or archetypes or completion of the personality and self, at least in Jung's sense of these ideas. In a very fundamental way, Jung might have found himself in the middle of something he really didn't understand and, like most of us, simply tried to make coherent sense of his experiences and those of his patients in a way that was consistent with his philosophical predilections."

"Couldn't one," asked Art Carmichael, "raise all of the same kind of questions concerning this world of symbols and similitudes to which Tammy is referring that Colby raised in relation to Jung's theory? For instance, where is this world of symbols and similitudes if it is not physical or material in nature? Or, how did it come into being? Or, how does one gain access to it and under what circumstances? Or, why

should one feel compelled to accept a spiritual interpretation of such a realm, any more than one should feel compelled to accept Jung's psychological interpretation of his encounter with what he claimed was the realm of the collective unconscious?"

"What I'm about to say might not satisfy Art," suggested Ben Blake, "but a partial, albeit general, way of responding to your questions might be along the following lines. Just as Jung's psychological theories, when compared to those of Freud, provided a much richer, more complex and nuanced way of looking at the nature of the relationship between human experience and the character of the reality or realities that helped make such experiences possible, so too, the realm of spirituality might offer, relative to Jung's perspective, a much richer, more complex and nuanced way of looking at the relationship between the spectrum of human experiences and the nature of the reality out of which these experiences arise.

"Whether we are psychologists or philosophers or mystics or scientists, we all are involved, more or less, in the same kind of quest. We all are trying to find out what the relationship is between our experiences and the structural character of the dynamics, processes, events and so on of the dimensions of reality that help make our experiences possible and help lend to those experiences certain kinds of differential character under various circumstances.

"Deep down, I believe few, if any, of us wants to read something into experience or reality that doesn't belong there. On the other hand, I also feel few people have a desire to exclude anything from, or read something out of, the book of reality when such things do belong there.

"All of our methodologies, techniques, instruments, procedures, tests, questions and critical analyses are intended to try to discover whether our theories, hypotheses, conjectures, speculations, ideas, and so on, give accurate expression to, or are reflective of, our experiences, both individual and collectively. Moreover, whether we are professional investigators or amateur sleuths, we tend to critically reflect on the ways in which other people describe and explain their experiences as measured against our own experiences and understanding of those experiences.

"When discrepancies arise in this process of comparison, we tend to be confronted with a variety of possibilities and options. The other

person's description or explanation might be problematic in some way, or our own description and/or explanation might be flawed, or both of our approaches suffer from certain kinds of difficulties that might be either of a peripheral or essential nature, or each of our accounts is right in its own way but we are viewing different aspects of the same phenomenon.

"Jung agreed with Freud on some issues -- especially in relation to the nature of the problems, challenges and tasks of the first half of the developmental process. However, there were many aspects of Freudian theory that did not match up well with Jung's own experiences or the experiences of many of the people Jung was seeing in therapy.

"As a result, Jung went in search of a set of descriptions and explanations that, hopefully, would prove to be more satisfying to him -- both conceptually and experientially -- than either a purely Freudian and/or biological account of psychological processes, dynamics and human possibilities. The collected works of Jung are his response to the questions and issues that bubbled about inside of him while he struggled to come to grips with what he believed to be the relationship between the character of human experience and the nature of the reality in which such experience is rooted and out of which it develops.

"Others have come along since Jung, and they have undergone a journey of inquiry with respect to Jung that was similar, in some respects, to the kind of exploration that Jung had undergone in relation to Freud and other theoreticians or clinicians of Jung's day. Some of these new kids on the block have operated, to some extent, within a broadly Jungian framework, but they have seen fit to adjust, modify, alter, eliminate, and de-emphasize various facets of the original ideas or theories of Jung in order to try to establish a better fit between their own experiences and the descriptive and explanatory system of understanding that they use to interpret the possible relationship between one's experiences and the nature of reality through which those experiences are given expression.

"Some of us, on the other hand, feel that Jung does not really speak to various dimensions of our experience and/or understanding of reality. As Tammy suggested, we might be intrigued with this or that aspect of Jung's framework, and, as a result, we might experience a

certain amount of resonance with many of the things that he has to say about the implications and ramifications that the search for meaning carries for issues of identity, the self, human fulfillment, completion of personality, and individual development.

"Nonetheless, we also might feel the full potential of human meaning cannot be discovered either through purely psychological processes, in general, or a Jungian approach to things in particular. Consequently, we go in search of something that might constitute a better fit between, on the one hand, our experiences, and, on the other hand, the kind of reality that could have made such experiences possible.

"Like David pointed out earlier, Jung was quite opposed to the desires of some people who wished to borrow the symbols of another culture or mythology and try to import those symbols into a different mythological tradition or set of social/historical conditions. According to Jung, this act of transposing symbols constituted a potential source for considerable distortion, error, and confusion.

"Somewhat ironically, however, Jung himself might have been guilty of such a process of transposition by taking spiritual issues out of context and placing them in a purely psychological framework. In doing this, he might have opened the gates for a great deal of error, distortion and confusion concerning the nature of the reality or realities to which his psychological theory of archetypes attempted to make descriptive and explanatory reference.

"Although an individual starts out on her or his spiritual journey in the world of forms, ultimately, spirituality or mysticism points in a direction that transcends the realm of forms. Therefore, even if one were to grant the existence of Jung's archetypes, they might be a purely formal manifestation of some further dimension of reality and, as such, they might not adequately address that which lies beyond the mode of communication and understanding that is capable of being given expression through one's entering into dialogue with these archetypes.

"As someone once said ... "The Tao that can be described is not the Tao." This principle holds, I believe, for all mystical journeys.

"The only real answer, Art, to the extent your questions can be answered in any formal sense, is to say that one must undertake the spiritual journey and follow it to its logical and ultimate conclusion. There is no way one can sit back in a rocking chair and think one's way to an understanding of how, and under what circumstances, one can encounter a world that is neither of a physical nor material nature, and there is no way one can reason one's way through what is meant by a realm that transcends forms since reason and logic, as is true also of concepts and language, are themselves forms that are tied to the parameters of possibility served by the structural character and properties of such forms.

"Jung advised those individuals who wanted to encounter the realm of archetypes that such people must do so under the guidance of someone who knew the landscape, potential problems, and ways of moving about in the regions of the collective unconscious and who could do so without becoming lost, confused or overwhelmed. The language used by mystics seems to say something very similar, except they are speaking about dimensions of reality that are quite different from the psychological realms for which Jung's theoretical framework is attempting to provide a map.

"One cannot replicate an experiment from the sidelines. If one wishes to seek to verify whether, or that parts of, Jung's understanding of things is correct, true, accurate, or tenable, one must follow, to some extent, in his footsteps. Furthermore, if one wishes to test the veracity of a mystic's understanding of the relationship between experience and reality, one must follow in the footsteps of a mystic.

"Unfortunately, there is not enough time, energy, or resources that are available and that would permit us to go about trying to replicate everyone's understanding of their experiences. So, we are faced with choices about which paths of replication and testing we will pursue.

"Our conception of self, identity, meaning, purpose, fulfillment, harmony, human potential, truth, and reality become a complex function of the choices that we make concerning what we attempt to replicate or test or validate. Trying to figure out whether we have chosen wisely or correctly in this regard is what keeps many of us up at night."

A silence came over the group at this point, as if we were all meditating on what had been said. Finally, Art suggested that, perhaps, we should take a short break to make phone calls, run brief errands, get a snack, and/or go to the washroom in whatever order seemed indicated. We could meet back in the lounge area in, say, twenty or thirty minutes.

The suggestion was well received by everyone. As a result, we all went off in various directions.

Chapter 10: Return of the Hero

During the break, I wandered about the several floors on which the different facets of the symposium were being held and reflected on some of the problems with which I was confronted in the world beyond the horizons of the present symposium. For whatever reasons, the prospect of getting a snack didn't seem all that appealing, and although I had no errands to run, phone calls to make, or calls of nature to answer, I was feeling restless.

I checked my watch and decided to head back to the lounge area. Somehow, the questions and problems surrounding the unconscious or mythology -- however difficult they might be in some respects -- seemed a lot more tractable than some of the problems and questions upon which I just had been reflecting in relation to my everyday life.

When all the members of the group had reconvened and settled down, we began the session in the same way we had ended with the last session. There was silence for a short period of time.

Finally, Vince Ardello broke the quietude with: "I might be premature on this, but I believe we have reached a closure, of sorts, in the facet of our discussion concerning Jung. If my perceptions in this regard are correct, I'm wondering if we might get back to the topic of Joseph Campbell's approach to myths that, if you all will remember, we were beginning to explore before David barged in and distracted us with all this Jungian nonsense."

"Don't listen to him, David," advised Tammy Winthrop, "Vince is known far and wide for the rapidly deteriorating condition of his character due to the ravages of the acute, early-onset, manners-deficit disorder with which he is afflicted from time to time."

Vince managed a rather convincing expression of wounded innocence in response to Tammy's words. His eyes seemed to beg for a sympathetic understanding of his troubled world.

Continuing on, Tammy suggested: "However, we all know that if we do not cater to Vince's wishes, there is bound to be all manner of unpleasantness that will create considerable embarrassment for everyone except him. I think we better indulge Vince on this, so, Andrea, as our ranking, amateur expert on Campbell, perhaps, you could get the ball rolling a little with your usual, insightful eloquence."

"I fear Tammy is promising far more than I can deliver," Andrea fretted, "but with an introduction like that I feel duty-bound to, at least, say something." She was about to speak when she checked herself, and turning to Vince, she inquired with feigned solicitousness: "Would this meet with your approval?"

Beaming with the contentedness of someone who is getting his way, Vince gave an imperious gesture of magnanimity with his hand. The royal assent had been bestowed.

"Given our previous discussion of Jung," Andrea indicated, "perhaps the best place to start taking a look at some of what Campbell believed is by addressing some of the ways in which he might have differed from Jung. I say: 'might have differed', because there are some people, as Tammy pointed out prior to asking David to speak about Jung, who consider Campbell to be sort of a neo-Jungian.

"I agree that there seem to be a certain number of commonalities shared by the theoretical frameworks of both Campbell and Jung. Nevertheless -- and you will have to decide for yourselves whether this is for the better or worse -- I believe Campbell had introduced his own, unique set of twists to the idea of myths that suggest his position was not merely a derivative of Jungian theory.

"Campbell himself indicated that although he held Jung in great esteem, nonetheless, Campbell did not consider himself to be a Jungian.

He respected Jung without feeling compelled to defer to the latter's theoretical judgments.

"There are other considerations beside Campbell's disavowals, however, that tend to substantiate his claims. One of the factors that lend support to his contention in this regard is the manner in which Campbell, unlike Jung, maintained that myths had a metaphysical reality and significance, not merely a psychological reality and significance.

"For Campbell, myths spoke to the actual nature of reality. They were not just a function of therapeutic ventures into, or interpretations of, some aspect of psychological space.

"In fact, Campbell seemed to feel therapy, at least of the Jungian variety -- and, maybe, other kinds as well -- was sought out only by

those who possessed no myth of their own. In a sense, I guess, one might even contend Campbell might have believed the absence of myth in a person's life had a causal role to play in the development of various kinds of emotional or psychological problems that created a need for therapeutic assistance of some sort.

"There is little doubt Campbell considered myth to be absolutely essential in the life of an individual. For him, myth was the key to understanding oneself and the nature of reality.

"By contrast, Jung believed that what was essential in one's contact with the realm of the unconscious was therapy rather than myth. Myth was just one means, along with dreams, art and the active imagination, which could be used as a therapeutic vehicle for helping to transport one toward a healthy engagement with the realm of archetypes.

"In brief, consequently, the role of myths for Jung was an option or possibility that could be pursued if desirable, but was not essential, or even necessary, to the process of therapy. For Campbell, therapy was not only unnecessary but clear evidence pointing to the absence of myth in an individual's life, whereas myth was the sine qua non of the human journey toward fulfillment of the self.

"Moreover, unlike Jung, Campbell was quite hostile to organized religion. Among other things, he felt that giving emphasis to the authority of an institution over the freedom of an individual placed entirely unnecessary obstacles in the way of those who were seeking to realize the purpose and function of myth in their lives.

"According to Campbell, the church, temple, sweat lodge, synagogue, or mosque did not lead to realization of the self. Myth alone made such self-fulfillment possible since in myth one found the only wisdom that really mattered to issues of self-realization and self-fulfillment.

"Furthermore, Campbell did not appear to believe any kind of mystical or spiritual practices -- such as chanting, meditation, fasting, or the like -- were required to be used in conjunction with myth in order for an individual to be able to pursue, or benefit from, the treasury of wisdom that allegedly was hidden beneath the surface of myth. If a myth was presented, or introduced, by the right kind of sage

who helped one correctly interpret the meaning, significance, value and purpose of a given myth, then the individual seeker had everything he or she needed in order to gain access to, and unlock the nature of, the unconscious realms to which myth was calling one.

"As David informed us earlier, Jung tried to discourage people from getting too entangled with individual myths because of, in Jung's opinion, the inability of myths, when considered in isolation from a proper mythology, to help an individual bring to fruition a complete, balanced personality. Campbell, on the other hand, encouraged individuals to give themselves -- mind, heart and soul -- over to, and completely identify with, a myth, because only myth had the capacity to open one to the unconscious self.

"In some ways, Campbell seemed to feel humans were, to a degree, hard-wired with the potential for responding to the way myths called us to the realm of the unconscious. In fact, he borrowed from the work of Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen in order to suggest how this might be possible.

"Both of these latter researchers spoke about the notion of 'innate releasing mechanisms'. These hypothetical systems were considered to be capable of generating species-specific behaviors when animals in which this mechanism were operative were presented with a particular stimulus capable of triggering the firing of such an innate releasing mechanism.

"Sometimes the stimulus that served as the triggering device for the activation of the behavior controlled by an innate releasing mechanism was also innate. For instance, baby chickens will display a stereotypical flight/panic response whenever an object that casts a shadow shaped like a hawk is flown above or over baby chickens, even if the object in question is not actually a hawk but only hawk-like in shape. Yet, if the shape of some other kind of non-predator, such as a pigeon or duck, is flown over the baby chickens, the same kind of flight/panic response is not elicited.

"Apparently, in this particular case, there is nothing being learned through experience that shapes either the triggering stimulus or the character of the behavior being manifested through the firing of the innate releasing mechanism that regulates such behavior. The whole

stimulus-release/response package is part of the biological equipment inherited by baby chickens.

"There are other cases, however, in which a special kind of learning process, known as imprinting, occurs. Apparently, this kind of learning can take place only within a critical period of development that seems to vary in temporal length with the species being considered.

"Yet, if one works within the constraints imposed by this critical period for imprinting, one discovers that one can establish different kinds of stimulus triggering relationships with some of the innate releasing mechanism operating in a given species. For instance, under normal conditions, certain relatively young birds exhibit what might be called a 'following response' when presented with the stimulus of the mother's presence such that wherever the mother goes, the offspring will follow.

"Nonetheless, if one substitutes a human being for the normal, species-appropriate mother during the critical period in which the imprinting of the following response takes place for that species, the young birds will follow only that human being. The stimulus of such a human image has been substituted for the stimulus of the species-appropriate mother, and, as a result, it is the human image rather than the normal mother's image that has been linked up with the neural, innate, releasing mechanism responsible for the following-response during the critical period for imprinting such stimulus information.

"According to Campbell, human beings also have at least some innate releasing mechanisms within them. Moreover, humans can undergo an imprinting process in which a certain kind of stimulus can be hooked up with a particular innate releasing mechanism.

"More specifically, the symbols inherent in a given myth are the stimuli that trigger the firing of an innate releasing mechanism within us. These innate releasing mechanisms are the archetypes, and the behavior that these archetypes regulate concerns all of the emotions and actions that are appropriate to the journey inward to the unconscious and realization of the self.

"Campbell believes the people who create myth understand the nature of the relationship between the symbols that are implanted in a

myth and the character of the underlying archetypes. Therefore, when people encounter the symbols inherent in a myth that has been constructed by people with knowledge of the self and the unconscious, the archetypes within us will automatically release the appropriate sorts of emotions and behavior that are conducive to working toward realizing the unconscious wisdom with which the archetypes are associated and to which they give expression.

"The archetypes -- such as birth, old age, the masculine and feminine, suffering, light and dark, as well as a variety of other themes of development and life -- are innate. On the other hand, the symbols in myths that trigger an archetype's capacity to release appropriate kinds of emotion and action can be variable and introduced through experience.

"Presumably, different stages of development constitute so many critical periods in our lives. As such, we become open to the imprinting of certain forms of experience during different stages in which we are sensitized to the problems, challenges and possibilities of these way stations of development.

"The symbols of myths are specifically designed, according to Campbell, to tie in with the learning that takes place during those critical periods involving themes related to archetypal patterns. Thus, when we encounter a myth, the symbols of the myth resonate both with our lived experience as well as the underlying archetypes that are relevant to such experience.

"Part of the problem with Campbell's theoretical framework at this point is that some of his discussion of archetypes is couched in ambiguity. One is never quite sure whether archetypes are inherited or acquired since, from time to time, he appears to speak in terms that allow for both possibilities.

"Yet, if archetypes are acquired anew by each generation, as he sometimes seems to suggest is the case, one has difficulty understanding how these archetypes are connected to the great wisdom of the unconscious to which archetypes are supposed to give expression and to which they are intended to call us back. If archetypes are acquired anew by each generation, one wonders why we should feel compelled, as Campbell insists we must, to consider

archetype-driven myths as worthy of completely giving ourselves over to and identifying with mind, heart and soul.

"If archetypes are acquired anew with each passing generation, a certain amount of confusion is generated. This is because one is unclear as to why one should suppose that myths are completely sufficient unto themselves as the only means of helping a person to obtain self-realization and self-fulfillment.

"In my opinion, Campbell's theoretical framework becomes much more consistent when archetypes remain as givens or constants, and symbols are what can be acquired anew with each passing generation. The task of the creators of myth for any given generation, then, would become one of ensuring that the symbolic seeds planted in these myths are capable of triggering the archetypal innate releasing mechanisms that supposedly govern the emotions and actions crucial to an individual's inward journey toward the unconscious."

"Andrea," interjected Ben Blake, "I wonder if I might interrupt you at this point and raise some concerns I have with Campbell's approach to the issue of self-realization. I hope you'll forgive me if I am about to preempt anything that you were intending to discuss."

"By all means, Ben, go ahead," Andrea assured him.

"Well, I've often wondered about the following problem. If things are as automatic as Campbell seems to suppose is the case by his discussion of innate releasing mechanisms, why aren't more people self-realized and self-fulfilled?

"In other words, presumably, when we encounter the symbols that have been planted in myths that have been designed specifically by various sages to serve as triggers for the firing of the archetypal innate releasing mechanisms, this symbolic encounter should set in motion a series of steps ending with the release of the emotions and actions that are necessary for undertaking the journey inward. Yet, despite the presence of these myths and their wide dissemination through various kinds of mass media, many – perhaps most -- of the people who come into contact with such symbols don't seem to get swept along by a tide of emotions and actions that culminates in a successful completion of a journey of self-realization and self-fulfillment.

"All of this seems to suggest several things. First, maybe human beings aren't as hardwired as Campbell would have us believe through his use of Tinbergen's and Lorenz' notion of innate releasing mechanism in conjunction with archetypes.

Secondly, perhaps the journey inward is not as automatic as Campbell sometimes appears to maintain is the case. Moreover, there might be many factors of experience, personality and life-circumstances that can interfere with the way, and the extent to which, someone might respond to the symbols inherent in a myth.

"In addition, and following from the foregoing considerations, I feel Campbell is on somewhat shaky and contentious grounds when he attempts to contend that learning how to properly interpret the symbols of myth through contact with people who are capable of imparting such understanding is sufficient for the process of self-realization and self-fulfillment to occur. After all, Campbell likely considers himself to be a person who understands the proper interpretation of myth, and, yet, despite his guidance to students, to readers of his books, and to viewers of the multi-part PBS television series that delineated his perspective in some detail, many of the individuals who have been exposed to his guidance over a significant period of time haven't necessarily become self-realized and self-fulfilled.

"None of what I'm saying is intended to denigrate Joseph Campbell as a teacher or scholar. He appears to have been quite gifted in both areas.

Nevertheless, one is left wondering about whether, or not, innate releasing mechanisms actually are involved in any of this ... and, whether, or not, the journey inward is as automatic as Campbell sometimes seems to suppose ... and, whether, or not, having a correct interpretation, along with rational reflection are sufficient tools for permitting an individual to successfully complete the inward journey?"

"You've raised some interesting points," acknowledged Andrea, "some of which I was intending to cover and some that are new to me. I don't know if you will think the following relevant to your musings, Ben, and I certainly have no desire to serve as an apologist for Campbell, but he did go on record saying he considered such things as

institutionalized religion to be obstacles that encroached on people's ability to be free to pursue and respond to the teachings of myth.

"Furthermore, he advised people to surrender to, and completely identify with, the dynamic of a myth and its potential for leading one to the unconscious and realization of the self. Conceivably, an individual's failure to heed this advice prevented such a person from benefitting by that which myth, and Campbell's interpretation of myth, had to offer."

"Andrea, I realize you're an interested student in, rather than a proponent of, Campbell's work," stated Ben, "so what I have to say is really being thrown out for general consideration, but what, exactly, does completely surrendering to, and identifying with, a myth involve? Is this just a matter of believing in, and accepting as true, what someone's interpretation claims is the truth concerning such a myth? Or, is something necessary beyond mere belief in, or acceptance of, the interpretation of a myth?"

"Should one become obsessed with a myth in order to properly identify with it? Should one become fanatical about the myth in order to surrender oneself to it completely?"

"I suspect Joseph Campbell would say no to both possibilities. Yet, one is not at all clear about what one should be doing that has some sort of practical or reasonable demeanor to it rather than possessing an obsessive or fanatical quality.

"When Campbell speaks about the emotions that are released through the process in which a myth's symbol elicits human response, is this merely a matter of having emotions of a certain level of intensity? And, if so, what level of intensity is this, and why is such a level of intensity considered to be appropriate?"

"Should the emotional intensity be just high enough to help motivate or inspire an individual to carry through in the realm of action? And, if one does not have this level of emotional intensity, then to what is one to attribute the problem?"

"Is the reason for such an inadequate emotional response due to an improper construction of the myth or an error in the nature of the symbols that were implanted there? Or, does the fault lie wholly with the individual who is encountering the myth? Or, should we consider

the possibility that Campbell's description of the nature, potential and power of myth is not what he claims is the case?

"Should the actions in which an individual engages be limited to the sorts of thing that Campbell did, such as reading about, interpreting and reflecting on myths? Or, was Campbell mistaken in all of this and, in point of fact, other kinds of action are required, and, if so, what are these actions?"

"Moreover, I'm sure there were millions of people among Campbell's students, readers and viewers who felt about organized religion in the same way that Campbell did. Why haven't all these people become self-realized and self-fulfilled ... as I presume is not the case or else we would be living, I think, in a much different, hopefully much improved, society than the one we find around us?"

"Ben, I share some of your concerns in relation to Campbell's work," asserted Vince, "but I have a feeling Andrea had a few more things to say that might have some bearing on our questions. Why don't we let her finish and see how these issues fare when she is finished?"

Nodding in agreement with Vince's words, Ben apologized to Andrea. "I'm sorry for interrupting. I think your discussion must have triggered some sort of innate releasing mechanism in me," he said with a smile.

"No apologies are necessary, Ben," she replied. "I do have a few more things to say, but I'm not certain any of it will address your concerns in a way that will satisfy either you or Vince.

"On the other hand, the new material might provide a bit fuller outline of Campbell's general perspective than presently is the case. If you bear with me, I should be able to finish things off in fairly short order, and, then, in line with Vince's suggestion, we can see how things stand."

Ben gave a sign requesting her to resume. Upon seeing Ben's gesture, Andrea said: "There is another important difference between Campbell and Jung that I forgot to mention earlier, and this has to do with how they viewed the unconscious.

"For Jung, the unconscious was always unconscious and remained so even after one's encounters with it. As David had pointed out

earlier, one of the differences between Freud and Jung is that the former believed much of the contents of the unconscious were filled with repressed materials, whereas Jung considered the unconscious to contain archetypes that had never been conscious and really were not capable of being made conscious, although the archetypes certainly could shape, direct and modulate the structural character of consciousness.

"If we leave aside, for the moment, the question of whether or not the psychological material of primitive humans -- out of which archetypes, somehow, supposedly were constructed -- gave expression to conscious or unconscious forces, then one can say Jung believed that archetypes did not consist of formerly conscious material that had been deposited in the unconscious. Campbell, on the other hand, maintained the unconscious consisted of materials that once had been conscious but, for reasons he never made very clear, were, now, removed from, or lost from, or separated off from our normal modalities of consciousness.

"Indeed, Campbell's book: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, that he is reported to have considered his most important work, has, as one of its central motifs, an exploration of the hero's quest in relation to this lost dimension of being fully human. According to Campbell, the task of the hero is to reclaim, repossess, or rediscover that which human beings once consciously knew and understood.

"In fact, the sages who are responsible for constructing myths are examples of the hero who have regained the lost wisdom. After having completed the first part of the mission, these heroes have set about consciously planting various metaphysical seeds, in the form of symbols within a given myth, with the intention of inducing others to take the inward journey to the unconscious and also make conscious what is now hidden.

"The basic story line in all hero myths is, for Campbell, essentially the same. As one moves from one culture to the next, whatever differences occur in various hero myths are considered by Campbell to be unimportant to the basic teaching, purpose and function of these myths, and, as such, these differences are part and parcel of Campbell's claim there is only one hero who is manifested in the form of a thousand different faces, both literally and symbolically.

"The once and future hero -- who is always a male figure -- is, through one means or another, induced to leave behind the so-called normal world of everyday life and journey to another kind of realm, world, or dimension of being. In this new world, the hero encounters, and is exposed to, all manner of incredible, non-ordinary forces, powers and wonders.

"The hero is challenged, in some fashion, by one, or more, facets of this wondrous, mysterious realm. Yet, following a struggle and, eventually, a triumph over that by which this individual is being challenged, the hero returns to the world of everyday, normal life as an enlightened being with gifts to bestow on those who had been left behind at the beginning of the journey.

"The wisdom that the hero brings back from the journey is of two broad kinds. First of all, the hero comes to understand there is much more to both the world and himself than he previously believed or understood to be possible. Secondly, the individual gains insight into the fundamental or essential nature of the world and being human.

"Each dimension of essential reality, whether concerning the world or the individual, is, in a sense, a flip side of the same metaphysical coin. Within each of us, as well as within the world, a Divine principle is operative that is responsible for the identity and nature of, respectively, human beings and the physical/material world.

"The hero returns from his journey with the knowledge that one does not have to travel to some other mysterious realm or world in order to be able to encounter the ultimate animating principle of Divinity. For the enlightened individual, Divine, or ultimate, reality can be experienced in the midst of the material, physical world.

"Consequently, the material/physical world is not -- at least as far as gaining access to essential or ultimate reality is concerned -- the barrier we often tend to suppose it to be. When properly understood, this material world is one of the modalities through which ultimate reality reveals itself.

"Be this as it might, nonetheless, Campbell indicates one only comes to this realization after journeying to, and gaining insight into, the contents of the unconscious. One doesn't start with the external world, and through that encounter, one brings enlightenment to the

internal world. Rather, one starts with the internal world, and through that encounter, one gains insight into the real and essential nature of the external world.

"To be sure, one first comes into contact with the echoes of the ultimate nature of things when one hears of, or reads about, the myths in the physical/material world since these myths contain the symbols that are capable of summoning one to the inward journey. However, these symbolic seeds only point to such a possibility and must be properly interpreted before, according to Campbell, one can realize their meaning, value, and significance.

"During the hero's journey inward to the unconscious realms of the mind, the individual must face, and triumph over, the personal ego of the everyday, normal world. When the foregoing, indicated transformation takes place, this transformed individual surfaces again with a new sense of self that is described as being egoless."

"Campbell considers the personal ego to be the source of all delusions, distortions, desires and problems to which human beings are vulnerable. Only by becoming removed, or detached, from one's own sense of a personal ego did Campbell believe an individual could obtain ultimate enlightenment and, consequently, gain insight into the true nature of the self and the world.

"By arguing in this fashion, Campbell aligns himself with the essential perspective of certain aspects of Eastern religious traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. He tended to express, at least up to a certain transitional point in his thinking, a great deal of admiration for this dimension of the teaching of these traditions.

"There was no individual as such. All that existed was the one essential, ultimate principle of Divinity that was clothed in the guise of a thousand different outer faces of the hero.

"This brings us to, yet, another essential difference between the orientations of Campbell and Jung, if not, as well, almost all of modern psychotherapy. One of the primary functions of psychotherapeutic intervention is to restore the individual to a state of healthy, ego functioning and consciousness.

"For Campbell, that goal was an oxymoron. Since the ego was the source of all our problems, by restoring the individual to such consciousness, one could not possibly produce a healthy person.

"True health lay in the direction of the egoless self of the enlightened individual. Therapy, of whatever sort, could not accomplish this.

"This task could be achieved only through myth. This is the reason why he considered myth was indispensable to the life of the individual, since without myth, Campbell believed the individual had no access to ultimate nature, identity, the self, or fulfillment.

"This also is related to Campbell's firm belief that modern civilization really can make no contribution that is capable of adding to, or improving upon, the insights of ancient wisdom. Since the fundamental insight of this wisdom concerns understanding why the condition of egolessness is to be preferred to a personal ego, all modern peoples can do is agree with this wisdom and set about trying to realize such a condition.

"The hero of myth and real life is considered a hero for several reasons. On the one hand, the hero is prepared to venture forth on a hazardous, difficult journey or quest that most others in normal society are not prepared to undertake.

"In addition, the motivation that underlies a hero's quest is a selfless one. The hero wishes to share such wisdom with all of humanity.

"According to Campbell, the hero is tempted to remain in the new world of enlightenment. Apparently, there exists within the hero an inclination to completely surrender to this essential reality and, in the process, avoid having to be confronted by the duties and obligations that populate the world of individuality.

"Consequently, the final stage of the hero's journey is to disengage the self from the new world to which one has traveled. This is not easy since the hero has begun to feel he has finally arrived at his real home in the universe."

Andrea picked up her soft drink can and finished off its contents. Settling a little more deeply into her chair, she signaled that her Campbell retrospective had finished as well.

"Personally," stated Melanie Teasdale, "there are quite a few aspects of Campbell's excursion into the realm of the hero myth that I find problematic. First of all, I think a lot of the analysis involves 20-20 hindsight.

"For example, I don't really understand how the hero should know before-the-fact of the journey that it is going to be hazardous or difficult. For all we know, the guy has wanderlust or is bored and, therefore, is looking for some kind of excitement or stimulation.

"In many, if not most, ways, the hero has no real conception of what he is going to encounter or find. As a result, at this point in the story, I have difficulty in understanding how to construe this as being the stuff of heroism.

"Secondly, since the so-called hero doesn't know what lies in store for him, he hardly can be said to be undertaking the journey for the benefit of the rest of humanity. If anything, the quality of heroism only arises after the individual is confronted by the desire to stay in the new world, and, consequently, he has to struggle to overcome this inclination in order to return to the normal world and share his wisdom with the rest of his fellow human beings.

"Moreover, once an individual returns to the everyday, normal world, he, supposedly, realizes the principle of Divinity is active in the normal world. Therefore, in reality, the individual has lost nothing by returning to the normal world since he brings the new world with him in the form of his enlightened condition.

"This raises several other problems for me. If an individual truly had become enlightened in the new world to which he journeyed, why didn't he understand that nothing would be lost by returning to the normal, everyday world from which he originally had set out?

"Just as importantly, one wonders what 'desire' -- in the form of wanting to stay in the new world -- is doing in a supposedly egoless individual. If the individual is detached from everything, would this not include desire in all its hydra-headed modes of being?

"Similarly, why would a, now, egoless individual--who allegedly had set out originally with the heroic intention of benefitting humanity -- wish to avoid the responsibilities and obligations inherent in the normal world? If anything, one might suppose the egoless individual is

in a better position to carry out those duties without having to try to do so through the problematic qualities of selfishness, egotism, greed, and other debilitating manifestations of a personal ego.

"Furthermore, until one reaches the fourth volume of his *The Masks of God* series -- namely, *Creative Mythology* -- Campbell is consistently a critic of western individualism and an advocate of the egoless communalism he believes is being proposed by eastern traditions. Yet, when considered from Campbell's perspective, the qualities of a true individual have carried the day.

"Someone who already is enlightened does not go on a journey seeking some missing aspect of oneself. This is so because this kind of individual realizes -- as part of the wisdom of the condition of enlightenment -- that there really is no other truth or missing element to discover since the enlightened state is described as being complete unto itself.

"Moreover, one might suppose that someone who is egoless might not have to struggle with human weakness, ignorance, fear and desire. One assumes this battle already would have been won during the journey to an egoless condition and constitutes one of the many benefits that ensue from enlightenment.

"Presumably, the egoless being has no sense of sacrificing anything since what is most precious is carried within this individual. This would be true, even if, in contrast to Campbell's hero, the normal world to which such a being returned was devoid of the principle of Divinity.

"Ignorance, desire, and delusions are all qualities of an individual prior to enlightenment. However, so are the qualities of courage, struggle, and self-sacrifice that are necessary equipment for the difficult journey to egolessness.

"A person might start out with little or no understanding of the meaning, significance, value, or possibilities inherent in the journey inward, and, as a result, one cannot really call this kind of journey heroic. The nobility and integrity of heroism only begin to surface when the individual starts to encounter danger and difficulty on the journey and does not turn back, and when, in spite of such danger and difficulty, the individual sees, however dimly, the potential -- but, by

no means, assured -- benefit for oneself and all of humanity that is possible if one is prepared to struggle on and sacrifice oneself during a journey of hardships and hazards.

"Furthermore, I believe an enlightened person knows that people, in general, probably will not be inclined to undertake the journey to realized selfhood after the hero has returned from successful completion of the quest, any more than they might have undertaken such a quest prior to his journey. The enlightened individual also realizes, I feel, that each individual has to decide, for himself or herself, whether to respond to the symbols of the myth or the entreaties of the returned hero and step into the unknown in order to undertake the trip.

"If anything, one might assume that since the hero knows the normal condition of human beings, he returns to the everyday world in order to serve as, among other things, a beacon of compassion, justice, love, and service ... not only for all of humanity but for all of being, whether animate or not. If people will not, or cannot, undertake the journey to self-realization, an enlightened individual owes a duty of care to them as a result of, among other things, the hero's recognition of the gratitude he feels for having had enlightenment bestowed on his being.

"Nevertheless, while attending to the needs of humanity and creation, the enlightened person still could search for those individuals who might be induced to undertake the journey of discovery. If, and when, such individuals are located, an enlightened individual would attempt to encourage, assist and support that undertaking in whatever way is possible.

"Campbell maintains the meaning of the hero myth is about the process of reclaiming or rediscovering the realm of the unconscious. Yet, in line with our previous discussion of Jung, I'm disinclined to believe that a recovery of the unconscious is the actual goal of the hero's project of rediscovery.

"The individual might find enlightenment, the self, identity and the true nature of the world after completing the journey of realization, but these are not found in something called the unconscious. The journey can be nowhere but from Divinity to Divinity ... the only difference being that at the end of the journey one understands this,

whereas at the beginning of the journey one did not possess this insight.

"I feel people such as Campbell and Jung use the term: 'the unconscious', as a conceptual place holder for purposes of having a non-religious sort of 'something' to which they can make reference when talking about the journey to selfhood ... in whatever way this journey might be conceived. In reality, however, I don't feel they knew what they were referring to by this term since it actually gives expression to everything about which they were ignorant and toward which their efforts all were expended in trying to probe the inner nature of this mystery."

Picking up where Melanie had left off, Colby Shaw began to speak. "When Campbell traveled to India in 1954, he was completely revolted by, and disgusted with, what he observed there. In addition to the oppressiveness of the omnipresent poverty and caste system in India, Campbell was horrified by what he considered to be that society's lack of respect for the individual.

"Apparently, Campbell had been so ensconced in the rarefied and idealized world of books that he didn't seem to have much awareness of what was going on around him in the everyday world. Why he should have been shocked by what he found in India is itself somewhat startling given that the history of the world almost everywhere, and pretty much most of the time, is replete with deep-rooted poverty, oppression, of one sort or another, and, as well, a rampant disregard for the individual.

"This was so even in the America of the mid-1950s. Apparently, Campbell hadn't bothered to take a look at what was going on around him in those days in relation to Native peoples, blacks, women and other groups of impoverished and/or disenfranchised people living in America.

"Whatever Campbell might have written in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, as far as I am concerned his response to the plight of people in India hardly seemed to be that of an enlightened person who understood the Divine principle was present in the material/physical world and operating in accordance with its own essential reality and not the expectations of Joseph Campbell. Presumably, an enlightened person might have understood that poverty, oppression and disregard

for the individual are the inevitable result of the activities and understanding of people who were still very much attached to their personal egos.

"Rather than permit those conditions to revolt and disgust him, he should have seen them as evidence in support of everything to which he was making reference in his books concerning the difference between realized and unrealized human beings and why there was a desperate need for the hero's quest. Rather than running away horrified and disgusted, he should have exercised some compassion and tried to bring about changes, however small, in such conditions.

"Unlike Jung -- who was prepared to risk himself by venturing forth emotionally and psychologically into what were, for him, uncharted territories -- Campbell never actually took the journey into the unknown to meet, face to face, the tremendous forces that are present in the unknown. He was a brilliant scholar, but I have my doubts as to whether he ever bothered -- except in a broad conceptual manner -- to follow in the footsteps of the hero about whom he spoke in such glowing and admiring terms in many of his books.

"Jung's works have the ring of an authentic explorer who, on the basis of personal experience, is trying to map out the new frontier. The fact he might have misunderstood some of what he saw or encountered doesn't detract from the boldness, courageousness, and even, at times, the remarkable insight of his efforts.

"Campbell's work, on the other hand, seems more like so many travelogues in which the author is writing about places that are the subject of stories spun by other people who might have visited such locations but to which the author has never really traveled. The descriptions in these travelogues might, or might not, be correct -- depending on the accuracy of the original accounts on which they are based -- but they are purely secondhand and not rooted in direct experience.

"Reflecting on such stories, exotic places, and travelers can never be used as a substitute for the actual experiences that are derived from an authentic journey. Yet, in essence, Campbell seems to be trying to argue that thinking about doing these things is the same as having done them.

"I think many people are attracted to Campbell's teachings because he appears to be offering something that we all desire. We want a way to become enlightened and realized that is purely conceptual and that can be accomplished without much struggle or any real sacrifice on our parts.

"We want to be transformed, but we also are afraid of changing. We become intimidated by, and are afraid of, anything that promises real, essential change in our lives.

"We claim to long for egolessness. Yet, at the same time, we desperately are hoping we can bring along our ego and that we won't be asked to check it at the threshold to enlightenment."

Ben Blake contributed to the running commentary at this point by remarking: "Irrespective of whatever other reservations I might have concerning Jung's perspective, one of the differences between him and Campbell that I've always appreciated was the healthy respect that Jung had for the complexity of forces at work in the unknown realms in which he was interested. I find far less of this kind of respect in Campbell ... although there can be little doubt Campbell had great respect for the wisdom that he believed could be obtained by venturing into the unknown worlds beneath the surface of myth.

"Jung never believed the forces inherent in the world of archetypes could be tamed. There were dimensions transcendent even to the world of archetypes ... a world that he believed was beyond human abilities to master or comprehend.

"Campbell, on the other hand, often seems to give the impression that the hero is one who conquers and tames the forces encountered during the inward journey. While this might be true as far as one's struggle with one's own personal ego is concerned, the same cannot be said of the principle of Divinity that is realized during the egoless state.

"This principle of Divinity is not something that one masters or tames. In fact, one would be more accurate if one were to contend this principle of Divinity has helped one to master and tame the unruliness and rebellious ignorance of the personal ego.

"The hero's victory has been won while venturing forth in an unknown world. Yet, the victory is really over the enemy -- in other

words, the personal ego -- that the hero has brought with him from the everyday world into the regions of the new world.

"Nothing of the new world has been tamed or conquered. The hero is a hero for facing himself and choosing Divinity over his own ego, even though when all of this is looked at from the egoless side of things, I'm sure this decision process is seen as a no-brainer.

"Campbell calls on us to surrender completely to the forces of the new world. Jung, however, advises caution.

"To be sure, Jung is warning us in this fashion because he feels the ego must be protected from identifying too deeply with the realm of archetypes and, as a result, runs a risk of the dissolution of identity and healthy ego functioning. Nevertheless, Jung also is warning us in this fashion because he knows, based on personal experience, that one is capable of being misled, confused and destroyed by some of the forces associated with the world of archetypes.

"In a sense, Jung is counseling us to look before we leap, and if we do leap, we should take care not to leap too far. Campbell, on the other hand, seems to be advising us that in the context of responding to the symbols of myth, he who hesitates is lost, and, moreover, there is no such thing as leaping too far.

"As Colby has indicated, however, Jung's counsel is rooted in actual experience. Campbell's advice is based on little more than armchair musings on these issues.

"Consequently, Jung's cautionary note is nuanced in a way that only comes from the benefit of lived experience, while Campbell's theoretical encouragement lacks the tempering quality that is derived from having seen, in a direct fashion, that there are aspects of the journey, or facets of the forces encountered on this quest, that are quite independent of the ego, yet, nonetheless, are capable of leading one away from the condition of enlightenment. In other words, there might be good reasons why one ought not surrender to -- in an indiscriminate fashion -- certain forces and dimensions encountered during the inward journey.

"Not only does one's relationship with the external world have a potential for generating illusion and delusion, one's relationship with the internal world has this potential as well. As a result, one would be

well advised to exercise some degree of discretion before surrendering to the forces, powers and wonders that one might run into during one's journey.

"These considerations lead to another issue with respect to Campbell. This involves what appears to me to be an inconsistency in his view of the status of the world.

"Sometimes, one finds Campbell talking about the worthless nature of the normal, everyday world. At other times, Campbell characterizes this world as, ultimately, not being essentially different from the reality the enlightened hero discovers in the new world to which the hero has journeyed during his quest.

"Surely, in all of this, the real nature of the world remains constant. What varies is the person's relationship to, and understanding of, that world's nature.

"The everyday world is not what is worthless. What is worthless is our attitudes toward, and our ways of interacting with, that world.

"Our ignorance and lack of enlightenment are what create the illusion of a worthless world. Therefore, part of the wisdom that a returning hero has to share with humanity concerns the fact of our having devalued the true nature of the world through the faulty understandings that we are imposing on that world.

"Campbell was right, I feel, to criticize, among others, Jung when these people sought to get their clients to hold on to ego consciousness and to strengthen the role of the ego in everyday functioning. Yet, Jung might have been right -- although, perhaps, for the wrong reasons -- to treat the everyday world as real rather than illusory and worthless as Campbell sometimes is inclined to do ... at least prior to the fourth volume of *The Masks of God*.

"On the other hand, Campbell was right, I believe, to argue that the principle of Divinity is actively present in the everyday world. The nearest that Jung comes to any of this, which is not really near at all, is to allow for the possibility that the individual might project archetypal elements from the realm of the collective unconscious onto different facets of the external world.

"Nonetheless, in my opinion, and I agree with Colby on this, one of Campbell's shortcomings was that Campbell didn't necessarily

understand what he was saying. As Colby has suggested, perhaps the reason for this is that his theory might have been uninformed by actual mystical or spiritual experiences.

"In any event, one finds, I think, some signs of the inconsistent status of the world within Campbell's framework when one reflects, somewhat, on his reaction to his experiences in India. If Campbell really understood what he was saying about the true nature of the world, he would have put his trip to India in proper perspective.

"When people devalue the true nature of the world, they automatically are prepared to devalue the people who live in that world. Alternatively, when people devalue their own true nature and, instead, become entangled in the machinations of their personal egos, then such individuals also will devalue the true nature of both the world as well as the true nature of other human beings.

"Furthermore, professing to believe in the teachings of a religious or spiritual tradition is not the same thing as sincerely living in accordance with those teachings. Campbell, however, often seems to feel the former realm of mere belief will somehow guarantee the realization and implementation of what is being professed."

"I've been listening quite intently," intervened Tammy Winthrop, "to what Andrea, Colby, and Ben have been saying. Suddenly, an idea came to me. This idea might or might not be correct, but it makes a lot of sense, at least to me, when one considers it in the context of what appears to be a major shift in Campbell's thinking that, to the best of my knowledge, he never explained ... or, at least, never explained to my satisfaction.

"In any case, the idea is this. When Campbell went to India and saw that true, sincere action did not necessarily follow from belief, maybe he was shaken concerning his own understanding of things. After all, if everything worked the way his theory said it did, he should have wondered how these sort of oppressive, impoverished and individual-devaluing conditions could be possible in a land that, supposedly, was the origin for the notion of egoless enlightenment that played such an important role in his book: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

"These experiences would have carried, I believe, a very problematic implication for his teachings. If he wished to continue to maintain that all one needed in order to gain access to enlightenment was to obtain, with the help of a sage, a true interpretation of the symbols inherent in a myth, then how does he explain the social conditions he discovered in India where there was a wealth of symbol-laden mythic material as well as, presumably, the sages necessary to provide correct interpretations of, and guidance concerning, the significance, meaning and value of such material?

"His time in India proved to him that a basic operating principle of his theoretical approach to myth was contra-indicated by actual experience. Ironically, rather than understand the symbolic significance of his experiences in India, Campbell seemed to hold the East's teachings at fault rather than the individuals with personal egos who were the ones with the responsibility for taking up the quest of the hero and, then, after successfully completing the inward journey, living in accordance with the unitive understanding brought forth through the condition of enlightenment.

"Supposedly, for Campbell, the ultimate significance and message of the hero myth was the 'oneness' of reality. On the one hand, enlightenment joined the visible and invisible worlds together and showed them to be different aspects of one and the same active principle of Divinity. Moreover, self-realization provided the insight that fused the world of consciousness with the unconscious realms and demonstrated them to be so many expressions of the same underlying reality.

"Yet, ostensibly, Campbell was not able to reconcile the facts he learned on his trip to India with the principle of unity that he alleged to be at the heart of the meaning of the hero myth. This left him with a huge theoretical problem ... after all, if the hero myths were not about the unity of being -- as his trip to India seemed to lead him to believe might be the case -- what did the hero myth mean?

"Andrea earlier indicated there is a dimension in the teachings of Campbell that is not necessarily in Jung's theoretical framework. More specifically, for Campbell, symbols do not have just a psychological meaning as is, by and large, the case for Jung ... symbols also have metaphysical meaning for Campbell.

"Campbell is not interested in just putting forth a correct theory of the nature of myth. Campbell believes his theory of myth correctly reflects the structural character of the reality or ontology of the universe and human beings.

"Therefore, symbols are rooted in something more than the realm of psychology. Symbols are rooted in ontology as well.

"In this respect, and as I suggested previously, one of the major problems for Campbell is how to demonstrate that his experiences in India are consistent with a theory of myth that, seemingly, Campbell believes does not, cannot, or should not, allow for the sort of social conditions that he had witnessed during his trip. If Campbell were not thinking along these lines, one might hypothesize that he would not have responded in as negative a fashion as he did following his trip there.

"As far as psychological symbolism is concerned, Campbell can continue to construe the meaning of the hero myth, along with other varieties of myth, as being one of unity. However, he seemed to have difficulty continuing to do this -- at least, perhaps, in the privacy of his own thoughts -- with respect to the meaning of the metaphysical or ontological symbolism inherent in myth.

"Following his trip to India, Campbell, at least in his conversations, had begun to extol the virtues of individuality, whereas prior to his trip he heaped scorn upon both individuality and the Western way of life that encouraged it. Yet, this transition in his feelings and attitudes was not reflected in his writings since, for example, in the first three volumes of *The Masks of God* -- which were published about a decade, or more, after his trip -- he not only continued to champion the Eastern model in which the individual seeks to realize her or his essential unity with the cosmos and the Divine principle that animates the cosmos, Campbell also continued to castigate the West for its childish preoccupations with the self-centered world of individuality.

"Up until the fourth volume of his *The Masks of God* series, Campbell was able to give the public impression of theoretical consistency throughout his perspective by pushing a psychological interpretation concerning the significance of all myths, in general, and the hero myth, in particular. In other words, Campbell still believed the psychological meaning of myths was, and is, the underlying unity of all

of reality, but ontologically, the role of individuality -- as the heart and soul of the human condition -- had begun, since 1954, to assume more importance in his thinking than that of egolessness.

"Campbell's writings in the *Creative Mythology* volume of *The Masks of God* introduced a major shift, that he never explained, in the ontological side of his theory. In this final volume of the series, the character of the hero changed in certain fundamental respects and departed significantly from the Eastern model of the hero that Campbell had been psychologically, but not ontologically, championing since his return from his trip to India.

"In point of fact, this volume of the series provided Campbell with an opportunity to heal an ontological wound that had been festering for the thirteen or fourteen years that had passed between his trip to India and the publication of the fourth volume of *The Masks of God*. One might even speculate the four-volume series was conceived, and undertaken, by Campbell with the implicit intention of providing a progressive, if not evolutionary, conception of the transition from, on the one hand, primitive, oriental and occidental traditions of myth, to, on the other hand, the modern world in which creative individuals, rather than mystic sages, were responsible for generating new myths capable of calling people to discover the wisdom of the unconscious.

"In doing so, the nature of modern wisdom, the modern meaning of unity, and the character of the modern hero would have changed considerably from that of the other three kinds of myth-driven cultures that had been explored in the first three volumes of *The Masks of God*. Nevertheless, at the same time, an ontological dimension would have been re-introduced into the theoretical framework that could have permitted Campbell to not only forget, if he wished, about his experiences in India, but actually would have validated those experiences as necessarily pointing in the direction of the importance of the individual over that of an oppressive, marginalizing and impoverished communalism of the ancient worlds, whether primitive, oriental or occidental.

"In the context of the modern myth, wisdom is no longer a matter of the Divine enlightenment and concomitant self-realization that becomes possible through an egoless individual. Wisdom has become the province of those individuals who can create the kind of symbols

and myths that are capable of engaging the emotions, understandings and actions of modern humans and, thereby, induce us to explore and realize all of the life-potentialities that are within us but that, up to this point in our lives, have not been reclaimed from the unconscious.

"The ontological unity proposed by the modern creator of myths is that of becoming reintegrated with our psychological and biological nature and, among other things, the inherent capacity of this nature for loving others. The love being referred to by Campbell is neither the libidinous desire of Eros, nor the brotherly/sisterly love of agape, but the courtly form of love, amor, that he considers to be a dynamic combination of both Eros and agape and, yet, also involves something more.

"For Campbell, amor is to be considered an end in itself. In addition, Campbell believes, amor ennobles, if not redeems, individual character through its qualities of courage, temperance, courtesy, loyalty, aesthetic sensitivities, conscience, as well as conscientiousness.

"In the mythic worlds of primitives, Orientals and Occidentals, the journey toward the death of the ego and, therefore, the death of that which drives the individual excesses through which the world's problems are brought into being, is the path to enlightenment. In the modern world of *Creative Mythology*, one's willingness to risk physical death -- which is the price an individual, frequently, must pay for realizing, and acting on, amor -- becomes the path to enlightenment.

"According to Campbell, amor brings a balance to life that combines properties of other-worldliness and this-worldliness. As such, amor is said to allow one to realize the immanence of the Divine in the physical/material world because those who have surrendered to this dimension of their life-potential come to understand the true nature of both themselves and the world, not as a function of what some institution, like the Church, assumes one should be, but as a function of what we are in reality.

"Consequently, Campbell believes, and/or affirms, the value and reality of the physical world in a way that is absent from, if not denied by, the other kinds of mythic world that are explored in the first three volumes of *The Masks of God*. Accordingly, in the realm of *Creative Mythology*, one finds enlightenment and self-fulfillment by

undertaking one's journey in the material world rather than by traveling to some other non-material realm.

"The hero of the modern myth is no longer the one who goes to a wondrous, mysterious world and gains Divine enlightenment that permits the hero to become absorbed into the whole and in the process reveals the everyday world to be worthless and illusory. The hero of the modern myth is the artist, the creator, and the innovator who strives for individual attainment and who is willing to believe in the authenticity and legitimacy of her or his own, unique experiences and understandings, rather than in the arguments of authority issued from religious, political, or cultural institutions.

"The individuality and originality of the modern hero are contrasted with the inflexibility and conformity of the three other mythic worlds. The modern hero is a liberator who is seeking to place faith in oneself and one's own creative understanding of personal experience, in order to fill the vacuum left by, according to Campbell, the failing and oppressive orthodoxies of the primitive, oriental and occidental worlds to which individuals were subordinated previously.

"By the end of *Creative Mythology*, Campbell believes he has returned to, and restored to prominence, all of the most important themes of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* ... themes such as: universality, the mystical, selfless sacrifice, and a hazardous or dangerous journey inward. In reality, however, I feel Campbell has succeeded only in resurrecting and entrenching the very same personal ego that the latter book was dedicated to counseling us to eliminate from our lives.

"Campbell has universalized the false self at the expense of the true self. Moreover, the selflessness that Campbell believes he has introduced into the realm of *Creative Mythology* is nothing but the delusions of the false self trying to rationalize what are the largely self-serving, selfish and self-centered activities of the ego.

"Amor is the ego manifesting itself through a new mask. Amor is the ego with a thousand faces.

"Moreover, by drawing attention to the realm of magical enchantment that is an important theme in his notion of *Creative Mythology*, Campbell feels he has revitalized myth with the mystical

dimension that was present in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Unfortunately, he apparently fails to understand there is such a huge difference between the mystical and the magical that the two realms really have nothing to do with one another.

"The magical covers a spectrum of possibilities. At one end of this spectrum are all of the strange, weird, mysterious, phantasmal creations of poets, novelists, artists and musicians that invite the audience to explore all manner of possibilities that can be constructed through the magical nature of conceptual, experiential and emotional combinatorics.

"At the other end of the spectrum of the magical is magic when broadly construed. This not only encompasses the tricks and illusions of those who today are passed off as magicians, but also involves those who actually have the capacity to draw upon a realm of reality in which there are certain, limited powers capable of generating non-ordinary physical phenomena.

"Mysticism has nothing to do with the magical in any of the foregoing senses. Mysticism is now and always has been concerned with helping an individual to know one's essential relatedness to Divinity, as well as to realize one's unique capacity to give expression to that essential relatedness.

"Mysticism is not about the phantasmal or conceptual exploration of that which is phenomenologically alluring, inexplicable or mysterious. Mysticism is not about magical powers or the creation of illusions or the learning of tricks.

"Mysticism beckons us to our essential nature and identity. Mysticism offers the possibility, for those willing to undertake the journey and stay with it until the end of the line, of coming into as close a contact and understanding of ultimate reality as human beings are capable of accomplishing.

"Campbell tries to contend the hero of *Creative Mythology* is someone who, like the main focus of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, goes on a journey of self-discovery and self-realization involving various kinds of hazard. For instance, by resisting the authority of religious and political institutions, the modern hero opens himself or herself up to the possibility of encountering different kinds of danger -

- physical, emotional, financial, and social -- created by the forces to which the creative individual stands in opposition.

"Apparently, Campbell has forgotten that in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the individual who undertook the inward journey encountered no greater danger than his own ignorance, selfishness and oppressiveness. Indeed, the dictatorship of the ego or false self is far more elusive, tricky, ruthless and difficult to overcome than is any external dictatorship.

"Furthermore, defiance, in and of itself, does not guarantee that either truth or justice is being served through such resistance. Defiance becomes a heroic act only if truth and justice are being served. And this must be done in a context that furthers essential interests such as: individual, family, community, and all of creation.

"All too frequently, defiance is an act of the ego or false self. More often than not, rebellion is merely a sign of the ego looking after its limited, non-essential, vested interests, and such rebellion is directed against those who are doing likewise but who have the advantage of being in power.

"Among other things, one of the characteristics of the false self is to attribute to itself what, in reality, does not belong to it. In the mythic world of the modern hero, the artist considers herself or himself to be the creator, and, yet, the artist has absolutely no idea of where the creations come from or how they come into being or what they really mean.

"All the false self knows is that it was present, in some fashion, when the creative or innovative impulse came. Like a country that flies its flag over unknown, but desirable, territory, or like a squatter who lays claim to property simply because the individual is too lazy to make the effort necessary to discover whether there is another person who owns the property being claimed, the false self grabs hold of the products of creativity as if they were its very own possessions.

"In *Creative Mythology* Campbell has come up with a framework in which he meets all the criteria for what he considers to be characteristics of a modern hero. Explicitly, he admires Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival, and Gottfried von Strasburg's Tristan.

"Implicitly, Campbell, I feel, admires himself, because, like these other modern heroes, he has succeeded in creating, and giving expression to, the myth of the modern hero as the consummate individualist. The modern hero is someone who thinks for oneself on the basis of one's own evaluation and authentication of one's experience and is, as a result, willing to stand up to, and defy, the authority of the institutions that seeks to prevent the free exercise of that individuality.

"The modern hero is one who is prepared to explore the depths of amor against all opposition to such a project, and this modern hero is, if necessary, even ready to risk physical death in order to live in accordance with amor. In reality, the modern hero -- in an inversion of the direction of transformation undergone by the hero of a thousand faces -- is willing to exchange the infinite domain of Divine wisdom for the limited domain of purely human experience, and, then, the modern hero feels duty-bound to proselytize this inversion through the creation of myths that attempt to justify the exchange as a good bargain.

"As a result, the whole character of metaphysics and ontology changes from what had been the case in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In modern metaphysics, the Divine principle -- which, for the hero-of-old, animated and unified the individual and the cosmos -- has been supplanted by, if not sacrificed to, the anthropomorphic principle in which everything becomes a function of, and reduced to, the modern hero's interpretive ignorance and arrogance concerning Divinity, the nature of the universe and the essential character of the human being.

"Everything created by the modern hero might carry the signature of individual uniqueness. Yet, there is no guarantee that any of this creative uniqueness reflects aspects of reality or truth beyond the individual's own description and interpretation of his or her experience.

"In the modern myth, truth becomes a tautology in which conclusions concerning reality merely reflect the assumptions of the creator of a given myth. Ontology becomes a function of the biases and prejudices that color our creative understanding ... biases and prejudices that give expression to the limited, but endlessly changing, horizons of conceptual and emotional moods.

"This creative process might lead to a correct or accurate rendering of individual perceptions. However, there is nothing that necessitates that such perceptions constitute an accurate or correct reflection of what the ultimate or essential nature of the cosmos or the human being entails.

"Instead of aspiring to the infinite heights to which an egoless enlightenment and absorption in Divinity invites us, the modern hero insists not only on individualistic separation from Divinity, but wishes to limit the Divine to what we create in our own image within very finite psychological, emotional, sensory and material realms. Whereas the hero of a thousand faces found Self-sufficiency through being unified with the Divine principle, the ego of a thousand faces finds self-sufficiency in its own creative musings.

"In *Creative Mythology*, Campbell does retain many of the general themes of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, but he does so at a great cost. He has jettisoned the substantive heart, soul, and spirit of the latter work merely to save the appearances of an outer, superficial, and theoretical consistency in thought concerning the psychological and ontological meaning of myth and its symbols."

When Tammy Winthrop finished speaking, we all seemed to become lost in our individual reflections on, and feelings about, not only what she had been discussing, but also the contributions of Melanie, Ben, Andrea and Colby. I had found the explorations of both Jung and Campbell to be quite informative and interesting, but I also sort of felt a bit like a kind of social or group parasite for not having contributed more to the conversation.

Vince broke the silence. "I've got some errands to run, so I'm going to have to leave, but I was wondering if everybody would like to meet for another session this evening ... after dinner some time?"

Externally, everyone sort of looked around at one another trying to get some sense of how others felt about the prospect of getting together again. Internally, I'm sure, people were mentally checking their appointment calendars for possible schedule conflicts.

Very little time transpired before we all seemed to agree that we would like to get together again. Although the people in the circle might have agreed to a later meeting because they were conforming to

some sort of social expectation about such things, I had a good feeling about what I perceived to be the genuine and sincere desire of all the participants to enjoy one another's company for, at least, a little longer.

Although Vince tried to convince us that the discussion should not come to end just because he was leaving, we all decided that perhaps this portion of the discussion had reached a natural point of termination. After arranging a time for meeting back at this lounge area, we all went off to our respective short-term destinies.

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Chapter 11: Ma and Pa T. Riarchy Lose Their Minds

When I had finished washing up and dressing, I checked my watch and noted that the time to rejoin the group for the evening session had nearly arrived. Upon arriving in the lounge area, I found Vince Ardello, Melanie Teasdale and Tammy Winthrop already seated in the area that the group had occupied in the afternoon. Aside from the four of us, the lounge was empty.

No sooner had I greeted everyone and sat down, Ben Blake and Colby Shaw entered the area and slowly made their way over to us while engaged in conversation with one another. Approximately five minutes later, Andrea Myers arrived.

As we waited for Art Carmichael to show up, we began exchanging general sorts of biographical data with each other. Following roughly ten to fifteen minutes of this sort of interaction, Art still had not made an appearance.

After discussing the situation for a few moments, we decided to proceed without Art. Hopefully, somewhere along the line, he would join us.

Melanie Teasdale started things off by wanting to return, if only briefly, to the subject of Joseph Campbell's approach to mythology in order to address what she felt was some unfinished business in our earlier conversation. The issue concerned certain aspects of Campbell's treatment of the roles of matriarchy and patriarchy in mythology.

"One of the things that always bothered me about *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*," observed Melanie, "is its preoccupation with the quest of the hero at the expense of any discussion about the journey of the heroine. Moreover, this marginalization of the heroine seems rather inexplicable given that Campbell supposedly is operating out of, and giving expression to, an Eastern perspective in his book that, unlike Occidental mythology, has a strong matriarchal orientation.

"If one takes a look at Bachofen's work in the 19th century, a historical account, of sorts, is given with respect to the origins and influence of matriarchal and patriarchal traditions. Bachofen believed the observance of matriarchy or the honoring of the right of the mother was predominant in Greece, Africa, the Near East, and Asia

prior to the ascendancy of patriarchy or the right of the father in Israel and classical Greece, especially Athens.

"According to Bachofen, following the emergence of patriarchy in classical Greece and Israel, this tradition really took root during Rome's rule. Patriarchy marched and spread with the armies of the Roman emperors.

"As far as Campbell is concerned, what I find interesting in all this is that, unlike Bachofen, Campbell seemed to want to restrict his interest to the psychological significance of matriarchy and patriarchy and leave their political implications aside. One of the reasons I find this interesting is because, as was noted in our previous discussion, Campbell seemed to indicate elsewhere in his writing that mythology was not just about psychology but about ontology as well, so his desire to pursue an exclusively psychological approach to the matriarchy/patriarchy issue seems somewhat inconsistent to me."

"Perhaps," Vince Ardello replied, "Campbell felt the political aspect or implications of myths would take him too far afield from his primary interest of delineating their symbolic meaning and significance. Furthermore, didn't he devote a fair amount of time in the first two volumes of *The Masks of God* praising, and showing a preference for, the values of matriarchy relative to those of patriarchy?"

"Besides," Vince added, "aren't most of the qualities of the hero -- such as selflessness, sacrifice, sharing and egalitarianism -- aren't these qualities really more reflective of what are considered, traditionally, to be expressions of a matriarchal approach to things rather than properties normally associated with patriarchy? Moreover, isn't the idea of union with the Divine also in keeping with the perspective of matriarchy, and in opposition to the supposed tendency of patriarchy to insist on a hierarchical separation between Divinity and the human realm?"

"If what you say is true, Vince," responded Melanie, "why not give symbolic expression to this by talking about a heroine rather than a hero? If the model being extolled in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is an Eastern one and if, as Campbell states explicitly in many places in his writings, that Oriental mythology reflects a matriarchal orientation, I'm puzzled why the exploits of the hero are being explored to the exclusion of the exploits of the heroine.

"I'm not sure if the problem lies with Campbell or with a possible alteration of some of the myths about heroism that occurred down through the ages in order to be consistent with the burgeoning influence of patriarchy or with something else. Nevertheless, whatever the explanation, I find the trend troublesome."

"What I find troublesome in Campbell," said Andrea Myers, "is what appears, at least to me, to be the forced character of the logic that Campbell sometimes employed in developing his position. I'll try to outline what I mean by this."

"In volume one of *The Masks of God*, that deals with primitive mythology, Campbell goes through what are, in my opinion, some rather intricate conceptual contortions. More specifically, on the one hand, hunter and planter societies are very much distinguished, respectively, by their patriarchal and matriarchal orientations, and, yet, on the other hand, these societies also are considered by him to be masked expressions of one another since they both, purportedly, are rooted, each in its own way, in beliefs of mystical union, immortality and self-sacrifice."

"However, what mystical union, immortality, and self-sacrifice mean in these two societies might not be the same sort of thing at all. So what is, ultimately, a superficial similarity really disguises a fundamentally different approach to themes of existence that is a reflection of the divergent values of matriarchal and patriarchal societies."

"One of the central motifs throughout the four volumes of *The Masks of God* is that despite the differences of the story lines in primitive, oriental, occidental, and *Creative Mythology*, underlying them all is a belief in, or an acceptance of, the mystical oneness of all things. Although there be a general sense in which Campbell could be quite correct in this contention, the argument also is quite misleading because one is talking about very different ideas concerning theories on, and conceptions of, just what the nature of the mystical is, or what sacrifice involves, or what immortality entails."

"Freud, Jung and Campbell all talked about the unconscious, so one can say, correctly, that underlying all of their theories is a belief in the unconscious. Yet, all three of these individuals are engaged in very,

very different kinds of hermeneutical activities with respect to the uses to which they put the notion of the unconscious.

"Consequently, just as one is not necessarily saying anything very interesting or important when one suggests these three individuals are bound together by their common interest in the unconscious, so too, one may not be saying very much that is useful when one argues that all forms of mythology are, at heart, or in essence, about the mystical oneness of all manner of being. If anything, one is obscuring the fact that these various modalities of mythology actually are giving expression to competing theories of symbolism, metaphysics and ontology.

"Matriarchy and patriarchy are not disguised versions of one another unless one can demonstrate that matriarchy and patriarchy, ultimately, are describing, explaining and engaging reality in, more or less, the same way. I don't think Campbell accomplishes such a demonstration in a very plausible fashion.

"These are competing mythologies that are not so many masks that give differing expression to the same underlying Divine reality. They are conceptual glass slippers in search of some ontological foot capable of snuggling nicely into the structural parameters of the proffered wearing apparel.

"Furthermore, which -- if any, -- of these slippers constitute a proper fit with respect to the Reality on which human beings are trying to hang them is a separate issue. Not only are we unsure whether, or not, the respective mythologies are being offered to the ontological counterpart to the fair Cinderella, rather than her ugly stepsisters, we are not even sure if the slipper might be, after all, merely a figment of our imagination with no ontological referent to which it actually applies.

"Interestingly enough, in the volume on Oriental mythology, Campbell, at least in certain places, gets away from the idea of trying to treat matriarchy and patriarchy as disguised or masked versions of one another. Instead, he suggests there is a fundamental dichotomy between, on the one hand, those peoples, such as in the East, who advocate the unity of the human and the Divine, and, on the other hand, those peoples, such as in the West, who tend to insist on a separation between the human and the Divine.

"Campbell argues that this essential psychological and metaphysical orientation concerning the issue of accepting or rejecting distinctions between the human and the Divine is a fundamental shaping factor in the structural character of the mythology that arises out of any given people. He believes all other distinctions and differences, including those between matriarchy and patriarchy, are secondary to, and derivative from this inclination to make, or reject, distinctions involving the human and the Divine.

"What is not clear to me is why there seems to be a tendency in cultures influenced by patriarchy to accept such distinctions, whereas amongst peoples under the sway of matriarchy, there often appears to be a tendency to reject such distinctions. One possibility is that, somehow, the original decision concerning the acceptance or rejection of distinctions between the Divine and the human is, perhaps, biologically driven, but this doesn't necessarily explain why men would be willing to accept a matriarchal orientation or why women would be willing to accept a patriarchal orientation.

"Another possibility is that the original decision to accept or reject such distinctions was purely a matter of metaphysical preference concerning what various people believed to be the true character of ontology or reality. However, the further choice of patriarchy or matriarchy could have been a function of considering that of the two underlying metaphysical possibilities was most conducive to supporting a certain kind of psychological and social life-style -- i.e., patriarchy or matriarchy.

"If the latter possibility is the case, each kind of psychological/social orientation would have gravitated toward the metaphysical system that best reflected its way of looking at, or responding to, the themes of existence. Yet, once again, there is still the problem of why some men would be inclined to matriarchy or why some women would be inclined to patriarchy.

"One could, I suppose, make everything just a matter of the socialization process that occurs in the kind of society into which one happens to be born. However, I'm not sure this really would account for how matriarchy or patriarchy came into being either.

"If, as many believe is the case, planter societies tend to exhibit qualities of matriarchy, whereas hunter societies tend to be

characterized by properties of patriarchy, then the values of matriarchy and patriarchy don't necessarily reflect biology so much as they might reflect the social arrangements that, to some extent, are forced upon a people by the contingencies associated with survival. On the other hand, I'm not really certain there is anything inherently contradictory about having a patriarchal planting society or a matriarchal hunter society, so once again, we face the problem of origins in relation to matriarchy and patriarchy and why different people become influenced by these orientations."

"I don't know, Andrea, if what I'm about to say fits in with the issues you are raising," Ben stated, "but maybe the whole discussion about the qualitative differences between matriarchy and patriarchy is really a false dichotomy. Maybe, neither of these orientations is good or bad in and of themselves, but, instead, perhaps we need to take a look at whether an individual or society is approaching patriarchy and matriarchy through the essential, spiritual self, or the false, worldly self.

"For example, traditionally -- possibly stemming from Bachofen's work -- there are various stereotypic qualities associated with matriarchy and patriarchy. More specifically, among other things, the values of matriarchy are said to involve: egalitarianism; selfless immersion in a greater whole -- both cosmically and socially; sharing; peacefulness; a sense of changelessness or timelessness; as well as an awareness of and cooperation with the cycles of nature. On the other hand, the values of patriarchy are said to consist of: hierarchical religion; family and social arrangements; ambition; self-centeredness; a lack of respect for, and a tendency to disrupt, the cycles of nature; a sense of temporality, along with a concomitant notion of progress, and, finally, a proclivity for activity and fighting.

"Spiritually speaking, what these values actually mean will depend on whether they are being interpreted through the eye of our true selves or our false selves. As such, these qualities have the potential for being either assets to, and expressions of, realization of the true self, or these same values could be antithetical to this sort of realization and, therefore, an ally of the pursuits and interests of the false self.

"Consider, for example, the matriarchal quality or value of a sense of changelessness. Viewed from the perspective of the true self, this

quality reflects the constancy of eternal spiritual verities concerning what we are in essence and what our relationship with the rest of being is. Yet, considered from the perspective of the false self, changelessness becomes a function of dogma, inertia, self-satisfaction, rigidity, and resistance to necessary changes in our lives.

"On the other hand, if we take a similar look at the value or quality in patriarchy that might be considered to be the corresponding counterpart to matriarchal changelessness -- namely, activity or, perhaps, change -- we get something along the following lines. More specifically, from the vantage point of the true self, change becomes the medium of transformation through which we overcome our tendencies to remain entangled in the world and, by this means, move toward the realization of our spiritual potential. Alternatively, through the eyes of the false self, change becomes the means of serving the desires, whims and interests of our worldly inclinations.

"Let's run another set of corresponding matriarchal and patriarchal values or qualities through the manner of understanding things that is being suggested. Maybe, a good test case for this might involve taking a look at the egalitarianism/hierarchy pairing.

"Viewed from the perspective of the true self, the matriarchal value of egalitarianism reflects a belief in the essential equality and oneness of all people, if not of all being, as so many manifestations of the Universal Soul. Considered in this way, everything has a sacred dimension to it and must be accorded an appropriate modality of etiquette that is in concert with any given thing's reflection of, and role in, the cosmic scheme of universal being.

"When, however, one looks at the idea of equality from the orientation of the false self, this value assumes an aura of relativism in which all ideas, values, beliefs, goals, purposes, desires and agendas are, more or less, the same. If things are considered from such a view, one has no right or basis to make any distinctions about the superiority of some points of view over that of others ... indeed, the perspective of the false self is judged to be as legitimate as the perspective of the true self.

"Another possibility in this regard is that when the notion of egalitarianism is engaged through the false self, all individuality must be extinguished or denied as contrary to the alleged priority of the

collective spirit over that of the individual. This is one of the things Campbell had been horrified by, and sought to rebel against, following his journey to India.

"Hierarchy, as viewed by the true self, is, on the one hand, a recognition and acceptance of the fact that, among other things, there is a difference between illusion and reality, and there is also a difference between truth and falsehood. On the other hand, there is an understanding that we did not create ourselves or our abilities, but, rather, these were gifts bestowed upon us through the Ground of Being that has priority over us.

"Engaged from this perspective, life entails the opportunity to participate in, and come to realize our rootedness in, this Ground through the largesse of that Ground and not through any virtue of our own independent of such a Ground. There is a logical and ontological priority possessed by that Ground that we do not control and, as such, whatever hierarchy that exists derives from this metaphysical fact.

"Humans are the ones who are caught up in illusion, not the Ground. The Ground has merely made illusion a possibility, like a spider spinning a web in preparation for the possibility of the hapless victim who makes a bad life-choice.

"Human beings are the ones who have to struggle to make the journey inward in order to realize our essential oneness with Reality or Divinity. Divinity already knows what we have not yet come to understand.

"The foregoing several points attest to nothing except the following. On a certain level, and from a certain perspective, we need to acknowledge that legitimate, hierarchical distinctions can be drawn between the One who makes our origin possible and we who are the originated and who must struggle to dispel the illusions generated through the agency of the false self.

"Nevertheless, to appreciate the nature and significance of metaphysical hierarchical relationships does not, in and of itself, automatically preclude the possibility of speaking about our essential identity with, and rootedness in, Divine reality. The issue need not be restricted to an either/or choice but could involve a much more

complex arrangement than the logic of the sort of choices outlined earlier permits us to consider.

"Viewed from the perspective of the false self, hierarchy tends to be colored by that self's presumed, but unverifiable and unjustifiable, right to dictate to others concerning the nature of metaphysical, social, political, cultural, family and personal relationships. In such a case, the false self arrogates to itself the role of Divinity and, consequently, inverts the true metaphysical order of things.

"If one explores the allegedly contrary pairings of matriarchy's supposed tendency to cooperate with the cycles of nature versus patriarchy's so-called inclination to ignore, if not disrupt, the cycles of nature, then one also can treat this pairing in a way that is consistent with the foregoing analysis. In other words, once again, the difference is not in matriarchy or patriarchy, per se, but in the nature of the self -- i.e., whether in the form of the 'true' or 'false' self -- through which one engages such pairings.

"Thus, when the notion of cooperation with the cycles of nature is approached through the understanding of the true self, the individual recognizes one has a duty of care to live in harmony with the manner by means of which the Truth or Reality that underlies nature is being manifested, or reflected in, the principles, laws, and etiquette inherent in the structural character of nature. To neglect or deny these duties of care is done at one's own peril.

"At the same time, one cannot suppose the cycles of nature are restricted merely to the physical, material, and biological world. There might be an array of psychological, emotional, and spiritual cycles of nature to which one owes continuous duties of care as well.

"On the other hand, although the false self also recognizes the idea of a duty of care to the cycles of nature, these cycles are all a manifestation of the desires, whims, interests, goals, purposes, and fantasies of the nature of the false self. As far as the false self is concerned, all other cycles of nature have value only as a function of the manner in which they can be made subservient to its own cycles.

"Alternatively, the false self is quite prepared to acknowledge the existence of, and live in harmony with, the cycles of nature, but this appreciation is restricted to biological, material and/or intellectual

realms. This sort of cooperation is a function of the false self's desire for a healthy, sustainable existence and the continued high quality of life that sound ecological surroundings make possible.

"The notion of a disruption of the cycles of nature, that is said to be stereotypically characteristic of the patriarchal orientation to things, also can be viewed in terms of its potential for either constructive or destructive ramifications. As before, the difference is a matter of which self is in control of the situation.

"When the aspect of nature being considered is the true self, then spiritually speaking, an individual has an obligation to disrupt the cycles of nature operating through the false self. One does not have a duty of care to live in harmony with the false self, but rather, one has a duty of care to oppose and resist the inherent tendencies of the false self to wreck havoc on, and exploit, all other cycles of nature.

"Nonetheless, the rest of nature does not have priority over us, any more than we have priority over it except, maybe, to the extent we have been given the spiritual capacity, and concomitant duty of care, to minister to the needs of the cycles of nature and, therefore, establish harmonious relationships with and through created being. Just as creation serves us, so too, we must serve creation and help to keep things as balanced as possible across all cycles of nature.

"In one sense there always will be a certain tendency of various aspects of nature to encroach upon the lives of human beings, just as there is a reciprocal tendency of human beings to encroach upon the different facets of nature. Our job -- and this is a duty of care that nature is not obligated to observe except through Divine permission -- is to do justice in maintaining a proper ... that is, spiritual balance ... between these two modalities of encroachment.

"One also can consider disruption of the cycles of nature from the perspective of the false self. This self does not think twice about its absolute, automatic, and completely presumed right to interfere with, and disrupt, nature in any way it chooses and for whatever reasons it desires.

"The false self recognizes no duties of care with respect to the cycles of nature. Instead, nature must be subdued and made to serve the goals, purposes and projects of the false self.

"Finally, let's take a look at the pairing of the values of selflessness and self-centeredness that is said to reflect, respectively, qualities of matriarchy and patriarchy. As before, the issue is not straightforward.

"Engaged through the understanding of the true self, selflessness gives expression to the desire for, and realization of, a disappearance of the pettiness, greed, anger, lust, jealousy, hostility, pride, envy, desires, and insensitivity of the false self. As if obeying some spiritual version of a Pauli-like exclusion principle, the false self and the true self cannot simultaneously occupy the same realm of consciousness, and, consequently, one dimension of the true self is to work toward the dissolution of the false self's reign over the affairs of the individual.

"With the ascendancy of the true self comes the understanding that only the real Self, that is manifestation of Divine possibility, has the right to say 'I'. The condition of selflessness is an acknowledgment of this Reality.

"Yet, in the hands of the false self, selflessness becomes a denial of both the Divine Self as well as the capacity of one's own true, essential, spiritual identity to reflect and, in a sense, be aware of and know the nature of that Divine Self. Moreover, since the false self has no essential reality, its endlessly changing states, moods, desires, whims, goals, purposes, interpretations, beliefs, values, motivations and interests all give expression to a selflessness that is the exact opposite of the sort of selflessness that is sought after spiritually.

"If one considers the quality of self-centeredness, that is thought to be a feature of patriarchy, from the perspective of the true self, this merely points to a basic truth concerning our metaphysical nature. If we are to function properly and harmoniously in relationship to the cosmos, the ecology, our communities, families and ourselves, everything must be centered on the Self of Divinity that is reflected in our own true selves.

"The foregoing sort of Self-centeredness, is, of course, very different from the self-centeredness that is characteristic of the false self. The latter is deserving of our condemnation and needs to be opposed.

"So, if the foregoing outline is correct, one is, in a sense, barking up the wrong tree when one tries to use the matriarchy/patriarchy axis as

one's framework for analyzing metaphysical, social, political, cultural or educational issues. The deeper framework concerns the dichotomy between the false self and the true self.

"Both matriarchy and patriarchy have multiple dimensions for accommodating either the false self or the true self. To label some perspective as patriarchal or matriarchal is not enough to understand what is going on. One must see that dimension -- the true self or the false self -- is operative. When one has done this, the qualities or values associated with matriarchy and patriarchy begin, I think, to make more sense as far as being able to identify the character of the dynamics being given expression through those values or qualities is concerned.

"Furthermore, I believe the foregoing analytical framework allows one, if one wishes, to dispense with the idea that part of our spiritual task is to try to balance masculine and feminine components within us. Rather, the true self of both women and men entails a variety of capacities, dimensions, and facets that are able to be active relative to certain levels of reality while, simultaneously, being receptive relative to other levels of reality.

"The issue no longer is a matter of when, or under what circumstances, we should exercise our masculine sides or feminine sides, nor would one necessarily even have to struggle with trying to understand what is meant, metaphysically, by masculinity or femininity. The task, for both women and men, becomes a matter of knowing when, and in what way, to be in a properly spiritual active mode, and when, as well as how, to be in an a spiritually appropriate receptive condition."

"Ben, the general tenor of the thinking that you have just outlined," indicated Tammy Winthrop, "and in which you make the meaning or significance of the qualities of matriarchy and patriarchy a function of the activities of the false and true selves, reminds me of an aspect in Campbell's theoretical framework with which I disagreed. The point I have in mind is related to something that Campbell said in the *Occidental Mythology* volume of *The Masks of God*, and I think the issue it raises may be complementary to some of what you have been saying.

"During one section of *Occidental Mythology*, he makes reference to the Biblical passage concerning God's creation of males and females in the image of Divinity. Campbell deduces from these verses that God is both male and female.

"Campbell, consequently, considers Divinity to be androgynous in nature. Subsequently -- and this might be another instance of Campbell's tendency, sometimes, to rely on the kind of forced logic that Andrea mentioned earlier -- Campbell maintains androgyny is actually an alternative form of matriarchy.

"One of the difficulties that I have with Campbell's interpretation of things at this point is that he never seems to consider the possibility there might be a difference between Divinity and the image of Divinity. For example, just as one would not consider the image in a mirror to be the same as the reality that is being reflected, so too, one cannot suppose Divinity and the image of Divinity are necessarily the same ... although, obviously, in each case there is a relationship between image, or reflection, and reality.

"Some mystical traditions distinguish between Divine Essence and Divine manifestations such that although the former makes the latter possible, one cannot use the structural character of the manifestations as a basis for drawing conclusions about the nature of Essence, except in a very limited sense. According to this perspective, manifestations don't say anything about Essence, per se, except that the latter has the capacity to bring these sorts of manifestation forth.

"Therefore, for example, from the fact there are male and female forms in the realm of manifestation, one might not conclude, automatically, that the nature of Divine Essence also is male and female in character. All one really can say is Divine Essence has the capacity to generate such forms.

"The precise nature of the relationship between manifestation and Essence remains a mystery even though, quite clearly, the two are related since manifestation would not be if not for Essence. Nevertheless, Essence could continue to be Essence even if manifestation never saw the light of day.

"We know about Divinity only by means of what is revealed through relationships of manifestation. In other words, we attribute

certain qualities to Divinity on the basis of the kinds of relationship that seem to be given expression through manifestation.

"We say, for instance, Divinity is compassionate, loving, aware, forgiving, kind, merciful, patient, just, wrathful, generous, independent, imminent, transcendent, knowing, rich, and so on, because we believe we have experienced these relationships ourselves, or we are told about them through the experiences of others. If we speak collectively, these attributions constitute a conceptual image we have of Divinity.

"On the other hand, through various books of sacred scriptures or revelation, God also is said to speak about a spectrum of attributive qualities of Divinity that describe different dimensions of the relationship between, on the one hand, creation in general, and human beings in particular, and, on the other hand, Divinity. This time, however, the perspective concerning the nature of the Divine image is that of Divinity not humanity.

"If one accepts these books as Divinely-given, then Divinity is describing Divinity for the purposes of disclosing to human beings certain dimensions of the relationship between manifestation and Divinity. Among other things, Divinity is pointing to the nature of the Source as That which is responsible for, among other things, the creating, originating, and generating of the manifestations that assume variable forms or modalities of expression in the realm of phenomenal being.

"As such, the connection between Divine Essence and creation is described in terms of the context of the Divine attributes that establish the parameters of human existence and that have been made possible by Essence. In other words, Divinity is not describing Essence per se, so much as Divinity is describing what Essence can do, and has done, in the realm of created manifestation.

"In Divinely revealed scriptures, when God is said to speak of creating human beings in the image of Divinity, this means human beings came forth as a function of the attributes or capacities that God has exercised in order to relate Essence and manifestation. Just as the conceptual image that human beings have of Divinity is based on their interpretation of the character of the complex network of attributive relationships that they believe links Divinity and humanity, in a similar fashion, one might say some of the images of possibility contained in

Essence are given expression through what God discloses about Divinity by means of books of revelation, prophetic missions, the teachings of saints, veridical dreams, together with certain kinds of mystical or spiritual experience, that concern the spectrum of qualitative attributes through which Essence links creation to Divinity.

"Consequently, there actually is, at a minimum, a double sense to the notion of human beings having been created in the image of Divinity. On the one hand, our created origins arise out of, by means of, and through the expression of, such Divine attributes or capacities.

"Here the emphasis is being given to 'in'. Our origins are in the Divine image formed by the dynamic of the attributes that God uses to bring forth the cosmic manifestation.

"On the other hand, and in conjunction with the nature of our created origins, we have within us all the Divine attributes that Essence uses to link manifestation to Essence. Here, the emphasis is being given to the structural character of human nature as an image that reflects the Divine attributes being used to give expression to the manifested nature of a human being.

"Furthermore, when the image that human beings have of Divine attributes matches or reflects the actual character of the image of 'attributive-Divinity' that the Divine Essence has disclosed through revelation, prophets, saints, dreams and spiritual experiences, then the two images reflect one another. Mystics have said that when one understands the reality of these reflective images, one comes to realize the nature of the human being.

"Maleness and femaleness are qualities rooted in the attributive relationships God uses to link Essence and human beings. As such, these qualities reflect properties of the realm of Divine attributes or capacities rather than properties of Essence.

"There are males and females because Essence has the capacity of establishing these qualities within the context of the Divine exercise of attributive capacities through which manifestation makes its appearance. Therefore, in point of fact, on the basis of manifested qualities, one can say nothing about the actual nature of Essence except that Essence gives evidence in the realm of created being of having the capacity to bring forth manifestation with the variable

qualitative forms, properties, attributes and so on which are characteristic, in the present case, of females and males."

"Tammy, if you are saying what I think you are saying, I tend to agree pretty much with everything you have said," stated Melanie Teasdale, "but there is one concern that I have with the perspective you are delineating ... although, perhaps, you did not wish to create this impression. More specifically, when you first began to talk about the notion of image, you seemed to suggest that as far as human beings are concerned the Divine image is limited to a conceptual realm.

"Later, you spoke about the manner in which the image of Divinity within the human being might come to reflect the Divine image that Essence is, in a sense, projecting through the total set of attributive relationships linking manifested creation to Essence. Moreover, you seemed to indicate that if, or when, this occurs, the individual will come to understand the real nature of the human being by realizing the character of the Divine attributes that form who, why, and what we are.

"My concern is this. There are a lot of people today who wish to reduce mysticism to being some sort of emergent property of brain or mental functioning.

"In other words, techniques involving chanting, meditation, breathing, contemplation, fasting, focusing, various methods of mind control, self-hypnosis, use of imagery, different kinds of body-energy systems, sensory deprivation, and so on, are often recommended, or undertaken, for the purposes of altering: brain chemistry; and/or, brain electrical activity; and/or, alleged right brain/left brain lateralization capabilities; and/or the flow of certain kinds of energy through the brain. Unfortunately, in the process, some, if not many, of these people -- both among the ones who recommended, as well as the ones who do the undertaking of such practices -- confuse the notions of correlation and causation.

"They tend to assume that whatever changes might come about on various levels of brain activity means such changes are necessarily the primary target of the techniques that are being used. Furthermore, such people tend to assume that any altered states of consciousness that arise in conjunction with these techniques serve as evidence that altered states of consciousness are a function of altered brain activity.

"Apparently, many people never stop to consider the following possibility. Whatever changes in brain activity that occur -- subsequent to implementation of one, or more, of the foregoing kinds of technique -- such changes not only might be just a residual, peripheral, or secondary effect of those techniques, but that as well, those changes in brain activity do not necessarily cause those altered states but, at best, might only be correlated with such changes.

"A further problem here is due to a failure, on the part of some people, to differentiate between techniques whose effects might be limited to the realm of the brain or the mind and techniques that entail dimensions of the individual extending beyond or transcending the spheres of influence of either the body, the brain, or the mind. Unfortunately, as we discussed this afternoon in conjunction with Jung, just as many people want to attribute everything to the unconscious without any appreciation of the nature of either the unconscious or the reality of that which is being attributed to the realm of the unconscious, so too, many people want to restrict mysticism to the realm of the brain or the mind, despite the absence of any real understanding of what either the mind or mysticism are actually about.

"In my opinion, this tendency to psychologize mysticism has led to a great deal of misunderstanding and confusion concerning the nature not only of the mystical path but of the nature of the human being as well. Although the discipline of transpersonal psychology might have broadened the horizons of the traditional approaches to psychology, at the same time, this discipline is trying to appropriate or incorporate a reality -- namely, mysticism -- which, at least, according to my understanding of the teachings of the mystics, has very little to do with psychology, brain, or mind -- however these might be construed -- except to the extent there might be a trickledown effect ensuing from mystical practices and realization that help orient various aspects of brain or mind functioning.

"I suppose one of the reasons for conflating the mystical and the psychological concerns modern ideas about the source and character of consciousness or awareness. For example, many people want to make consciousness a function of, or expression of, the activities of the

brain or mind and, therefore, these individuals tend to believe any change in awareness is necessarily tied to brain or mental activity.

"Apparently, these people have not considered the possibility that awareness or consciousness is something quite apart from mental or brain activity or that the latter kinds of activity might participate in consciousness only according to the nature of their capacity or modality for doing so. Altered states of consciousness or consciousness-raising are not so much a matter of a change in consciousness as they are transformations in the manner through which we engage consciousness.

"As individuals are brought under influences that arise from different ways of accessing various dimensions of consciousness, then the nature of that person's phenomenology changes. Consciousness, nevertheless, remains what it always was and is.

"Considered from the foregoing perspective, the idea of mindfulness is really a misnomer. The appropriate term would be 'aware-fullness', and focusing the capacities of the mind provides only one modality of aware-fullness.

"The mystical path really consists, among other things, of a journey to, and through, various realms of aware-fullness. Each kind of aware-fullness gives expression to a qualitatively different kind of engagement of, and understanding of, the nature of the relationship between Divinity and the human being.

"In this regard, one of the places where I do agree with Campbell is when he said, at least in his earlier works, that modern people have nothing to teach the ancient sages with respect to having knowledge of, or understanding, the mystical nature of existence, in general, and the human being, in particular. I don't consider mysticism or spirituality to be something that evolves over time and that we are only now on the verge of truly coming to understand for the first time of history due to either a Divinely 'intended', or fortuitous, but chance, acceleration in the rate of evolution in our mental capacities, brains, consciousness or so-called spiritual technologies.

"Consequently, I worry about people getting the idea into their heads that mysticism is merely a function of brain or conceptual activity. So, I guess, the question that I'm asking, Tammy, is whether

you are saying that the nature of the image that needs to be understood, if human beings are to realize the nature of their own spiritual identity and essential capacity, is purely a matter of the brain or the mind or concepts?"

"You have raised some very important issues, Melanie," acknowledged Tammy Winthrop. In retrospect, I think, maybe, I was a little sloppy in my way of introducing and developing the image topic.

"You're quite right, however, in pointing out that the image of Divinity should not be restricted to, or made a function only, of mental or brain or conceptual activity. In fact -- and, perhaps, Melanie you have been alluding to this -- mystical ideas of Divinity are a complex function of different modalities of, to use your term, aware-fullness, each of which engages the infinite nature of Divinity in an entirely different, but complementary, manner.

"The mind, the heart, the spirit, together with other kinds of interior modalities of aware-fullness, all must be realized in an appropriate fashion in order to have an image of Divinity that is able to reflect, accurately, the image of Divinity being given expression through all the Divine attributes or capacities, collectively considered, that create, generate, shape, modulate, control, color and orient different realms and levels of manifestation. In addition, eventually, these modalities of aware-fullness occur in a context of -- to use Ben's terms, namely, one's true self or true self-identity -- such that when an individual becomes Self-realized, that person comes to understand there is only one real Self Who is engaging the multiplicity of attributes being given expression through the image of manifested Divinity in accordance with the unique, reflections of as many different modalities of, and capacities for, aware-fullness as there are human beings, irrespective of whether these individuals are realized or not.

"From the Divine Essence side of things, so to speak, whether or not human beings become self-realized makes no difference to the purpose for which manifestations were brought into being and given expression. All conditions of aware-fullness through which Essence and manifestations are related are unique in the manner in which they engage and reflect the image of Divinity, and there is nothing that human beings can do that would undermine the spectrum or array of modalities and capacities of aware-fullness being exhibited.

"From the human side of things, nonetheless, the issue of self-realization makes all the difference in the universe. We can spend our existence stuck in some limiting, incomplete, and, therefore, distorted and illusory modality of aware-fullness ... such as a purely material or sensory or biological or conceptual condition ... or we can spend our existence in struggling toward, and God willing, realizing the full extent of the human potential for uniquely reflecting the image of Divinity, made manifest through Essence, by seeking to have all our spiritual modalities for aware-fullness brought on line.

"Divinity provides the metaphysical opportunity and sets the ontological stage through which the human drama is to unfold. We make our choices concerning the kinds of aware-fullness and extent of our spiritual capacities that are to be realized.

"The goal is not so much a matter of raising consciousness, but to change the character of the kind of internal modalities of awareness concerning the Self to which we have access, and, therefore, both to alter, as well as to complete, the ways in which the Self is engaged, experienced, known and so on. Becoming aware of awareness -- that is, becoming mindful -- is not enough because the Self is much, much more -- indeed, is infinitely more -- than either: awareness of awareness, or the mind ... although, naturally, such awareness and the mind are partial expressions of what is made possible through the reality of the Self."

"I'm way out of my depth in relation to many aspects of this discussion on mysticism," I confessed, "but there is something that occurred to me a little bit earlier that might fit in with some of what you are saying. In any case, I find the matter raises a lot of interesting questions for me.

"A number of years ago, a medical clinician by the name of John Lorber did some work in England with hydrocephalics. For those of you who might not be familiar with this condition, it is created when, for whatever reason, the flow of cerebral-spinal fluid is blocked in such a way that the fluid begins to become trapped in one or more of the ventricles or cavities within the brain.

"Generally speaking, if the cerebral-spinal fluid accumulates in the brain, it begins to exert pressure from the interior of the brain, where the cavities or ventricles exist, in an outward direction toward the

skull. Eventually, if allowed to continue, the brain literally gets squeezed almost out of existence and, as a result, becomes compressed to just a few millimeters, or so, in size, around the inside of the skull.

"Usually, the end result of this process is a severe form of irreversible retardation known as hydrocephaly. Lorber, however, stumbled onto some exceptions to this general rule.

"After doing some brain scans of some of his patients, he found these people's brains had been compressed, as one would expect, to an extremely thin layer along certain interior portions of the skull. Yet, amazingly, these patients were not severely retarded but were fully functioning, intelligent human beings ... and at least one of whom was an honors graduate in mathematics from Cambridge.

"This meant one of two things. Either having a brain gets in the way of doing mathematics -- which might be why so many of us have difficulty with mathematics -- or one might not need a brain to exhibit intelligence.

"Why some people who exist more or less without a brain are severely retarded, while others who appear to be in the same condition are not similarly retarded, no one knows. Some people have speculated the difference might be a matter of how quickly or slowly the damage is done, with the latter process allowing time, perhaps, for some sort of transfer of functioning that is not possible with a relatively quick compression of the brain.

"Whatever the explanation turns out to be, one has difficulty looking at the significance of brain functioning in the same way after learning about Lorber's findings. The relationship between, on the one hand, intelligence and consciousness, and, on the other hand, neurotransmitter chemistry, neuronal functioning, and the brain's electrical activity, might not be quite as neat as some psychologists and neurophysiologists would have us suppose is the case.

"In addition, in the light of Lorber's findings, one has trouble, I think, trying to maintain that consciousness is merely an emergent property of the activity of billions of neurons and/or their synaptic connections. When most of these synaptic pathways have been destroyed and when neuronal functioning has been severely disrupted, if not entirely compromised, and, yet, consciousness or

awareness remains intact, at least in the fully-functioning hydrocephalics, then the idea of treating consciousness as an emergent property of a certain level of complexity in brain activity seems to lose much of its appeal, if not, logical force."

Although no one said anything in response to my comments, I could tell from their facial expressions and body language that they were quite intrigued by the information being presented to them. I guess just as I had been very enveloped by what the others had been saying about mysticism, aware-fullness, and so on, without having said anything, until now, in response, the absence of verbal participation from, or feedback by, an individual didn't necessarily signify the person was not interested in what was taking place.

In any event, I no longer felt so much like a useless cog in the visible aspects of our group dynamics. If necessary, I could be silent for the remainder of the discussion and still feel I had been holding up, in some minimal fashion, my end of things within the group.

Colby Shaw's voice interrupted my internal musings. "Earlier, Melanie had voiced her concern about the tendency of a variety of people to reduce the spiritual or mystical realms to being a function of purely mental or psychological or brain activity.

"I have a related concern. There is a very strong parallel trend to isolate or remove various practices from their original, spiritual environments.

"Quite frequently, individuals seem to have no sense of the ecological character of spirituality or mysticism. They seem to suppose they can venture into a variety of different mystical ecologies and extract different practices from those ecologies and transfer them as techniques back to a completely artificial and rationally fabricated ecology of modern mysticism.

"Many years ago Jacques Ellul had warned us -- although not necessarily in the context of mysticism -- about the tendency of modern, technological societies to try to make a technique of everything or to reduce everything to a technique. In the process, individuals who are exposed to, and become entangled with, this world of techniques and its concomitant thinking become

impoverished in a variety of ways because the humanity of these individuals becomes limited to, and a function of, the logic of machines.

"When we come under the sphere of influence of 'technique', our political, economic, educational and social forms of organization all are affected adversely by this. This same sort of thinking seems to become increasingly evident in a great deal of modern literature and movements dealing with altered states of consciousness, mysticism, spirituality, transpersonal psychology, and the so-called expansion of consciousness.

"Inherent in the logic of machines is the idea one can substitute, in an endless fashion, machine parts without adversely affecting the functioning of the machine in which the substitutions are made. Also inherent in the logic of machines is the idea that one can cannibalize machines as required and take from those machines whatever one likes and use the parts in another context and for other purposes than was the case with the machine or machines from which the parts were cannibalized.

"The logic of machines involves the belief one can move machines anywhere, and they will operate in the same fashion as they did in the original setting with, at most, only minor adjustments having to be made. The logic of machines has little regard for the subtleties, richness and complexities of ecology.

"Today, we find all manner of so-called psycho-technologies that purport to have the ability to deliver us to self-realization, wholeness, ultimate reality and so on. Many people report having derived benefit, insights and intense kinds of experience through the techniques that are employed by the psycho-technologies.

"What these people might not understand is that deriving benefits, gaining insights, or having experiences is not necessarily the same thing as realizing the true nature of our identity or activating all of the potential of our essential capacities for the different spiritual modalities of aware-fullness that Melanie and Tammy were discussing. If one does not know who or what or why one is, and if one has not realized the full spiritual potential of the human being, how can one assign a meaning to the significance of the benefits, insights or experiences that have accrued to one through following some set of techniques?

"When one has had a powerful insight or experience, all one can say is that it was unlike anything one has had previously. Where those insights or experiences actually weigh-in when measured by the exacting standards of the grand scale of Reality or Divinity is a question that ought to be asked but often is not.

"Instead, people tend to treat these powerful, never-before-encountered experiences or insights as if they are all that Reality has to offer. These people often seem to assume that, surely, there couldn't possibly be any more than what has been experienced or understood, or thought to be experienced or understood, following the use of the techniques associated with a given psycho-technology.

"For years now, the field of biological ecology has steadily been revealing the damage we do to the environment by applying all manner of techniques to our physical/living surroundings without having any understanding of what we are doing or the nature of the destructive effects that will be entailed by what we do. Truly, we are those who need to be forgiven, for we know not what we do to, among other realities, the ecologies of the Earth and the residents of these ecologies, including ourselves.

"What many individuals do not appreciate is that in the realm of spiritual ecology things are even more complex, subtle, rich and interconnected than they are on the level of material/biological manifestations and phenomena. Yet, people are so preoccupied with technique and psycho-technologies that they fail to understand the damage they are doing to themselves and their surroundings.

"In legal circles there is a well-known saying to the effect that the non-lawyer who tries to serve as his or her own counsel in matters of law has a fool for a client. Similarly, in the realm of mysticism, anyone who tries to serve as her or his own spiritual guide has a seriously deluded idiot for a disciple.

"In fact, one of the most important ecological principles of the spiritual realm is to get a guide who is an accomplished and realized veteran of the territory into which one wishes to venture and who will be able to help one avoid harming oneself or doing damage to other aspects of that ecology. This is considerably easier to say than to do

since there are a lot of counterfeit guides who are running about in the countryside.

"The ecological character of the guide herself or himself is underlined by the following point. Techniques by themselves have an extremely limited efficacy, and can have detrimental ramifications, unless done in the context of a sincere and loving relationship of reciprocity between guide and the spiritual seeker.

"Among other things, the guide is sort of a catalytic agent with respect to the kind of impact that various practices have upon the individual. As is the case in biochemistry or chemistry in which reactions either would not take place at all, or would do so extremely slowly and probably not to completion, in the absence of catalytic assistance, so too in the spiritual realm. In the absence of the catalytic influence of an authentic guide, a person is not likely to get very far on the mystical path, irrespective of the amount of time such an individual might invest in the performance of different mystical practices.

"Spiritual techniques, in and of themselves, have very little to offer. Techniques only become proper mystical practices when embedded in an appropriate spiritual ecology.

"Those who employ mystical practices that have been extracted from a proper spiritual ecology -- including the presence of a true, authentic guide -- might undergo various states of non-ordinary experience and, subsequently, conclude the technique has retained its efficacy. What these people might not understand is there is a difference between, on the one hand, having experiences and, on the other hand, becoming transformed in a permanent fashion such that one comes to realize the nature of one's true identity and so that all one's modalities for aware-fullness, in relation to one's relationship with Divinity, become active.

"Divorced from an appropriate spiritual ecology, techniques become so many toys in the hands of those who play around with them. Like children, these people can incorporate the use of spiritual toys into a world of imagination that entails various kinds of fantasies about the sort of activity in which they are engaged, but in the end, the whole thing is still a matter of make-believe."

"Since we seem to be engaged, to some extent, in a session of venting our worries about the way some people are using or abusing spirituality and mysticism," remarked Andrea Myers, "I might as well mention one of my concerns. Just as lots of people have a tendency to reduce the mystical path to being a function of either the unconscious, or mind/brain activity, or some combination of the two, there also are any number of individuals who try to limit the mystical realm to an array of processes that involve the generation, transmission, accumulation, focusing, and control of energy of one kind or another.

"Although we might have difficulty understanding how there could be realms of Being that are entirely independent of considerations of energy of whatever kind, nonetheless, I believe if one listens carefully to what the mystics are saying about the nature of the Self or different modalities of knowing, experiencing and engaging the Self, one begins to appreciate the fact that one cannot suppose all references to subtle realities or essences are necessarily alternative ways of speaking about different forms of energies.

"In any number of ways, I believe the realized masters have indicated there are tremendous, qualitative differences between the levels in which energies, of one kind or another, are operative, and the levels of spirituality that are closest to our true Selves and essential capacities. This is not intended to deny the reality of various species of subtle forms of energy beyond the physical realm, but is intended, instead, to give emphasis to a major principle of the mystical path which stipulates that even in conjunction with the most subtle forms of energy, there are distinct metaphysical boundaries within which such energies are operative and beyond that other modalities of Being come into play that are not a function of energies of whatever description.

"Whether one is talking about: the carriers of force, or bosons, of quantum physics; dissipative structures in the context of the brain's electrical fields; the 'boiling energy' or Num of the !Kung in the Kalahari; ch'i; prana; psi; the property of nefish described in the tradition of the Kabbalah; the 'serpent fire' of kundalini yoga; or auras of whatever variety, these manifestations of energy -- however related to, or separate from, one another, they might be, and however powerful they might be in their own spheres of relevance -- they are

functions of realms of Being that cannot be reduced to, or be made functions of, this spectrum of energies. The masters of the mystical path have been very clear, I feel, in warning us not to use the lesser to explain the greater, and, in point of fact, all manner of energies are very much limited manifestations that are made possible by a Reality that is both immanent within, as well as that which totally transcends, and, therefore, is completely unlike, such phenomena.

"Thus, when the realized masters of a mystical path speak of the 'glance' of spiritual Grace that transforms the spiritual condition of a disciple, they are not referring to a form of energy -- whether of a gross or subtle nature. Moreover, the Self or one's essential identity is not the most subtle energy field in a series of ethereal fields ... with the physical, biological body being the most dense, visible modality in such a series.

"Similarly, spiritual light is not a manifestation of certain kinds of subtle energy. Although spiritual light -- like the physical light that is generated through electromagnetic phenomena -- has the capacity to illuminate and, in the process, make certain facets of reality visible to the appropriate modality or instrument of spirituality that is sensitive or receptive to the nature of its illuminating qualities, nevertheless, the capacity of spiritual light to illuminate is not based upon the field properties of some kind of mystical counterpart to the exchange of photons that is said to take place in processes of quantum electrodynamics.

"As Colby intimated earlier, people who pursue the mystical path with the idea of learning techniques that permit them to exercise control over, or exploit the potential of, various kinds of energy, are really engaged in something other than mysticism or spirituality, even though they might use these terms to describe or refer to what they are doing. The goal and purpose of the mystical path lie far beyond these sorts of superficial and limited consideration."

After a certain amount of silence following Andrea's remarks and observations, the conversation became somewhat scattered, dealing with various experiences, some humorous and some that were thought-provoking, that different members of the group had undergone during the symposium. Gradually, we all came to the

conclusion that, perhaps, the time had come to bring the gathering to an end.

Chapter 12: Mystical Reflections

The phrase 'scientific framework' does not necessarily carry with it the idea of a unitary or uniform conception of scientific theory, practice and methodology. This is because demonstrating that there are many different perspectives and approaches to doing and thinking about the numerous processes and activities that are encompassed by the term "science" is relatively easy to do.

Nonetheless, there does seem to be one theme or attitude that tends to link these different scientific perspectives and activities together, and this concerns the belief that what is being studied or analyzed is "physical" in some sense of the term. Whether this word 'physical' is translated in terms of: some basic material or 'stuff(s)', together with the possible arrangements and interactions of such fundamental units (e.g., atoms, electrons, quarks, gluons, strings), or whether the term is translated in terms of energy transformations, or whether the word "physical" is construed in the form of some sort of field theory, nevertheless, none of the foregoing possibilities makes much of a difference to the underlying belief that 'something' of a concrete or substantial nature can be referred to as constituting the fundamental nature and structure of the observable universe, in general, or an observable phenomenon, in particular.

In some theories or conceptions the referral process might be more subtle and complex than in others (e.g., compare particle physics and geology). However, in each perspective there is a kind of referring to some physical 'thing' or process that is capable of being detected through the senses of seeing, hearing, touching and smelling -- in conjunction with the intellect's manner of penetrating, arranging, and analyzing the data conveyed through the senses -- which is said to represent a fundamental aspect of explaining why phenomena are as they are.

As is the case with science, there are many different perspectives, practices, methodologies, and so on from which one can approach the themes of spirituality. At the same time, however, throughout many, if not most, of all these approaches there is an emphasis on a transcendent dimension that is said to be outside of, though not necessarily unrelated to, the physical realm.

This transcendent dimension is referred to in many different ways, but generally it is agreed that, ultimately, all references and descriptions are, on the one hand, incomplete, limiting, and incapable of conveying the true nature of the Transcendent and, on the other hand, all such descriptions tend to converge in depicting the Transcendent as fundamentally 'non-physical' in any of the possible senses of the term, while simultaneously subsuming physical phenomena under the 'jurisdiction', so to speak, of the Transcendent. In short, a great deal (but not all) of the traditional literature on this subject matter make reference to the Transcendent not as a thing or process or material or stuff or activity and, yet, according to much of such literature, somehow, everything physical is functionally dependent on, and a manifestation of, the Transcendent.

If one were to adopt some sort of a scientific perspective in attempting to pursue the issue of innatism, the various forms of investigation would very likely deal with, say, the kind of work done by Chomsky, Levi-Strauss, or some of the gestalt psychologists, all of whom, in their own manner, are interested in discovering or uncovering the different processes and characteristics that structure and direct the way human beings, learn, speak, interact, perceive, think, and so on. Such a perspective is built around the theme that cognitive processes, for example, are not merely a matter of certain, very general capacities that are primarily shaped according to environmental influences but, instead, cognitive process are considered to be a set of both specialized and interrelated capacities that are the primary factors to consider in gaining insight into how and why human beings understand, function and interact as they do.

Such perspectives do not exclude or neglect the impact that environmental forces can have on such specific cognitive capacities, but they do identify the direction of primary emphasis and focus in such a perspective. Consequently, within these sorts of framework, intelligence is not treated as a general, somewhat amorphous capacity to understand or think, nor is intelligence considered merely as a generalized capacity to learn such that the manner or organizing, interpreting, and evaluating reality is structured according to the conceptual framework one picks-up from the environment.

Rather, intelligence is construed as representing, to a large extent - though not necessarily entirely -- the specific innate neural biochemical properties of the brain that heavily influence and structure the ways human beings interact with reality. The range of degrees of flexibility that such properties might manifest varies from theory to theory and from school to school, but, as indicated above, they all share a common emphasis with respect to the built in, or semi-hardwired structuring, organizing, and interpreting properties of cognitive processes.

While this sort of scientific perspective is fine as far as it goes and, within limits, such a perspective might be a legitimate and fruitful path to pursue with respect to the exploration of one sense of a position of innatism, that approach to things is unable to penetrate into or make sense of a dimension of innatism that has been prominent in a substantial amount of the pre-nineteenth century literature on this subject, and, consequently, such a perspective has, for the most part, summarily dismissed the whole notion of innate ideas. More specifically, because the scientific framework, as presently conceived, does not really provide a workable means of investigating the notion of an innate idea or truth as an entity that is not functionally dependent on a given physical process or state, nor does it allow one to construct, within such a framework, any plausible account of how non-physical phenomena could exist, science has tended to classify the notion of innate ideas as mere philosophical speculation without any real empirical basis for such a mode of classification.

This is a bit like criticizing someone with respect to whom one has designed special rules that prevent the individual from being a member of a social club, for not being a member of the social club. In order for the excluded person to be allowed in the club, the rules of admission are going to have to change, and this is as true for science's general attitude toward, and rules concerning, the possibility of nonphysical phenomena as it is for the social club analogy.

As indicated before, there is a very definite bias or assumption within many scientific frameworks in favor of fundamentally and absolutely construing reality in terms of physical properties and qualities. That reality -- or at least a portion of it -- does seem to manifest such properties is not at issue here. What is at issue is the

belief that these properties represent the end of the line, so to speak, for what constitutes the fundamental nature of reality underlying all phenomena.

Because of this kind of belief or assumption, a scientific framework -- at least as conceived by those who adhere to such an assumption -- is prevented from considering other possibilities. For example, one such possibility is that innate ideas might be non-physical entities ... a possibility that, when explored, might lead to a far more accurate, penetrating, and heuristic portrait of human beings than is possible given the existing biases of certain approaches of 'science'.

This does not mean that there are no problems with respect to investigating innate ideas from a non-physical perspective. Nonetheless, these problems are quite different from what seem to be the potentially irresolvable nature of the problems that arise within the sort of scientific framework that attempts to force a phenomenon that might be, essentially, nonphysical, into a physical framework. Naturally, those who are committed to the basic assumption concerning the -- 'bottom line'-- physical nature of reality will not seriously consider what is being suggested here, but their failure to do so does not so much necessarily reflect on the actual nature of reality as it does on their ontological and epistemological preferences and how such preferences exclude some possibilities while embracing others.

It seems fairly evident, as Collingwood (e.g., 'Essay on Metaphysics') and others have pointed out, that the choice of, say, methodology to be used in examining any given issue (scientific, historical, philosophical, religious, etc.) is dependent on certain values or absolute presuppositions that underlie, and are hidden within, a given methodology. These values are ultimately the result of a complex sort of reflection upon the relation of things or events or ideas or concepts, one to another, and that are prior to formal methodology.

Furthermore, although one might refer to certain evidence achieved through the application of various formal methods during the process of reflection, the basis upon which the reflection rests and out of which it emerges is, generally, outside of the influence of formal methodology. Only very rarely (e.g., in what Kuhn refers to as a

paradigm change) is the former significantly altered by the latter, or, in other words, only rarely do we allow evidence to enable us to change fundamental assumptions that are the result of a complex, multi-faceted, informal interaction with the environment from which fundamental assumptions and existential stances have precipitated.

To provide some idea of what is meant here, consider the following. There is an obvious difference between evidence and proof. More specifically, agreeing on rules of evidence, as opposed to principles of verification, is much easier to do in the former case rather than the latter.

Thus, while one might concede that a given body of information is acceptable as authenticated data and, thereby, can serve as evidence in support of a particular interpretation of a given event, nonetheless, one still might argue that the same body of 'evidence' also supports other interpretations. Consequently, the existing evidence does not necessarily constitute a proof for any given interpretation.

Of course, in one sense, even though the existing evidence is capable of supporting several interpretations, that body of data might, in fact, constitute a proof, of sorts, for one particular interpretation if one's interpretation were actually correct. However, since this is precisely what we do not know, the existing evidence does not constitute a proof in the desired sense of demonstrating to everyone concerned that a given interpretation of a given event is the only possible correct understanding of such data/evidence.

Moreover, there are a number of difficulties associated with trying to demonstrate to everyone concerned that one understanding, rather than another, is warranted on the basis of the existing evidence. Many of these difficulties arise out of the differences in fundamental presuppositions that, ultimately, shape both rules of evidence and principles of verification. One of the major reasons why such differences in fundamental presuppositions can continue to persist as a source of difficulties is the absence of any unanimously agreed upon means of rationally determining an 'absolute' basis for methodology, capable of winning everyone's, or nearly everyone's, allegiance. In fact, rationality might not even be our ultimate means of determining truth.

The mystics of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and native spirituality all make remarkably similar claims in

this regard. They claim there is a Reality extending beyond, as well as encompassing, the plane of existence into which our intellect, emotions and senses are tied ... a Reality that is realizable only through the agency of our essential, spiritual nature that is metaphysically prior to, and more penetrating than, the powers of reason.

"Metaphysics", as used here, is not just a matter of philosophical speculation about universal principles but, rather, involves direct reference to the principles themselves as grasped through mystical modalities of knowing. As Rene Guenon says:

"Unfortunately one comes across people who claim to 'judge' that which they do not know and who, because they name 'metaphysics' to a purely human and rational knowledge (which for us is only science or philosophy), imagine that oriental metaphysics is no more and no other than that; ... What they envisage has really nothing to do with metaphysics, since it is only knowledge of scholarship; it is not of this that we wish to speak. Can one then make 'metaphysical' synonymous with 'supernatural'? We are prepared to accept such an analogy, since if one does not go beyond nature -- that is to say, the manifest world in its entirety (and not only the world of the senses, which is only an infinitesimal part of it) -- one is still in the realm of the physical. Metaphysics is, as we have already said, that which lies beyond and above nature; hence it can properly be described as 'supernatural'."¹

Moreover, although reference, in the above quotation, is made explicitly just to "oriental metaphysics", Guenon's position can be extended to the essential aspects of many expressions of spirituality. The "essential aspects" of such traditions are emphasized because metaphysics in the above sense of the term is most clearly delineated in the esoteric or essential dimensions of spirituality (i.e., mysticism) and often becomes most confused and diluted in the exoteric representations of the 'Greater Truths'.

If the foregoing indications are accurate, then one cannot give rational proofs for mysticism. This is because mysticism involves what is suprarational and, therefore, outside the range of rational capabilities.

There is, of course, evidence that can be offered in support of the existence of mystical states. But, like all evidence (including arguments that are opposed to, or deny, the mystical position), such data are dependent on the underlying dogmas that lace the pieces of information together. The problem, then, becomes one of choosing one set of dogmas over another, or affirming one set over another.

Nevertheless, determining what is "right" and what is "wrong" depends very much on whether there are any absolutes through which, or against which, to measure choice. If there is not any realm of the Absolute, if all things are relative, random, 'Absolute-independent' happenings, then "right" and "wrong" might be said, by some, to be, merely, arbitrary values that have no logically binding authority to link people intersubjectively. According to such an argument, "right" and "wrong" become so by a process that cannot be extricated or separated off from one's beliefs, values and interests -- either individually or collectively. Moreover, objectivity becomes a function of either subjective preferences or intersubjective fiat.

On the other hand, if there is an Absolute realm -- beyond the physical -- through which physical reality and other dimensions are structured, then "right" and "wrong" become definable in terms of this Absolute, and all that remains is one's acknowledgment of what is the case or one's rebellion against it.

If there is an Absolute beyond the horizons of reason's capacity to understand (something supra-rational), then by definition and as previously indicated, this Absolute realm lies beyond reason and cannot be reduced to rational understanding. In fact, even if there were no set of principles beyond reason's grasp, how could reason possibly determine, with any certitude, that there was nothing beyond rational capabilities?

In line with one of the arguments of Kurt Gödel, one requires something outside of a given system of rationality to verify that system as complete. In other words, on rational grounds, the issue becomes an undecidable one.

In either of the foregoing cases (i.e., there is a realm beyond the grasp of reason and there is no such realm), reason depends on a proof that lies beyond its capacity to provide. In the one case, it is because the proof lies on a suprarational level and, in the other case, it is

because there is no way of rationally ascertaining that there is nothing that lies outside the scope of reason. Consequently, reason can never be self-justifying and always involves an element of faith with respect to the conclusions that emanate from it.

To argue that some statement is untrue because one cannot conceive of how it could possibly be the case does not always prove the impossibility of the statement's assertion. It might, instead, point out the limits of one's capacity to conceive or understand a given possibility.

While one might argue whichever way one pleases, ultimately, one's conclusions rest on faith in certain fundamental ideas about the nature of reason, truth, evidence, proof, verifiability and so on. This is to say, all rationality, of whatever description, is based on dogma of one kind or another.

To contend that all rationality rests on dogma, however, is not to assert that certain of these dogmas might not be true or correct with respect to some facet or level of reality. Reality, whatever it might be, does not seem amorphous, and, therefore, without any characteristics or describable features that can be intersubjectively agreed upon across cultures.

Indeed, the most fundamental arguments of philosophy, science and spirituality have not been over the lack of characteristic features manifested by Reality. The arguments have concerned the nature of the overall epistemological structure of things into which the acknowledged features are believed to fit.

Thus, there is nothing necessarily pejorative in saying that rationality is inseparable from dogma. The problem has always been one of trying to determine, or discern, which dogmas are reflective – to a greater or lesser extent -- of the underlying structure of reality. Ultimately, we are faced with the problem of trying to determine when we are dealing with reality itself (whatever this might mean) and when we are dealing with something – say a conceptual system -- which, individually or collectively, is being imposed on the basic structure of reality such that the conceptual framework screens us from a more fundamental understanding of reality.

On the one hand, all mental frameworks have, or are rooted in, a degree of the fundamental structure of reality for they would not be possible if this were not the case. Even fantasy and hallucinations are possible because the underlying structure of reality allows for their possibility. On the other hand, one need not let the issue go at this, for one is still faced with trying to ascertain the purest or most fundamental stream(s) of reality, and this concern lies behind the pursuits of philosophy, science and religion.

In the section that follows, an attempt will be made to outline certain aspects of a mystical perspective. This perspective is concerned with a way of approaching, as it were, the basic nature of reality. As such, it is an interpretive framework. And, although its orientation is different in many respects from a scientific framework, it is not without its strengths.

If an individual is not properly prepared to understand a particular argument (whether in logic, mathematics, science, or anything else), then regardless of how well constructed the argument might be, such an individual might not be receptive to the ideas being presented. Moreover, if, under the foregoing circumstances, one has difficulty in comprehending a given form of argument, one might not be justified in automatically concluding that the problem lies in the nature of the argument.

Unfortunately, when spiritual issues are being engaged, there are many people who are, often, only too willing to assume that any difficulties that arise -- as is invariably the case -- in conjunction with such forms of argument are due to the inherent nonsensicalness and ultimate vacuousness of a given spiritual position. Of course, there might be some, or many, arguments dealing with various spiritual themes that completely live up to the nonsensical image that such skeptics have with regard to the spiritual dimension. There are, however, other kinds of argument or proof that cannot be as readily dismissed, if at all, by anyone who is willing to expend some effort in coming to terms with the various premises of the argument.

For example, suppose one were to list the following names: Hermes Trimegistus, Ramana Maharshi, Milarepa, Farid ud-din Attar, Meister Eckhart, Marpa, Moses de Leon, Abu Yazid Bayazid Bistami, Shankara, St. John of the Cross, Rabbi Akiba, Lao Tzu, St. Francis of

Assisi, Huang Po, Chuang Tzu, Ramakrisna, Jalalu'l-Din Rumi, St. Theresa of Avila, Naropa. Each one of the foregoing names -- or, more precisely, the lives and values of the individuals represented by each name -- signifies, one might say, a premise of a kind of argument. For want of a better term, such a proof might be referred to as the proof concerning the 'transcendental unity of truth' -- or, following Leibnitz' example, the proof concerning the 'philosophia perennis'.

Any person who takes a little time to investigate the characteristic features and history of each of the above named premises and who is willing to do so with an open mind, will run into something in each premise that circumvents 'things rational and physical'. This theme that runs through each of the premises points directly toward a transcendent dimension in which the essential message of such seemingly divergent doctrines as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Taoism, Judaism, Native spirituality, and Islam are united in 'That' which lies within, behind, and beyond all possibility.

The foregoing represents one sort of argument that might be offered to justify or support a belief in mystical possibilities. There is another kind of argument (considerably different from the first, but related to some extent) which attacks the issue from a much more direct perspective.

One might liken this second kind of argument to doing a mathematical proof in that just as one must go through the steps of, say, an algebraic proof in order to gain an insight into the soundness of such a proof, one must go through the steps of a metaphysical proof in order to be in a proper position to attest to the verities of the metaphysical position. Moreover, just as one requires a method of discipline in mathematics in order to harness the power of reason and, as a result, be able to concentrate on an existing problem, metaphysics also requires a concentration of efforts within a disciplined 'logic' to penetrate to the bottom of an existing metaphysical issue.

However, the sort of metaphysical proof being referred to now requires another kind of disciplining -- a much more extensive and rigorous kind of discipline than is provided by mathematics -- which is designed to purge an individual of the impurities of mind and heart that are said (by, among others, the list of individuals mentioned

before) to veil one from different levels of reality extending beyond the physical plane.

The foregoing remarks represent a pertinent preface to the ensuing discussion because they do not serve just as a cautionary note for those who might tend to reject, out of hand, the notion of mysticism as being a priori absurd. Such remarks also bring immediate attention to several a posteriori features that are shared by all the esoteric doctrines associated with the aforementioned major spiritual traditions.

To begin with, according to the mystics themselves, mystical experience, insight, or illumination is not a matter of philosophical speculation but of lived experience. Mystics are not making speculative predictions about, say, the underlying structure of human nature on the basis of a theory which has emerged out of someone's creative imagination. Their doctrinal statements are rooted in a mystical understanding and/or certain visions that have been revealed to them.

To be sure, there have been many spiritual counterfeits who have tried to pass themselves off to people as legitimate mystics and spiritual adepts and, as a result, have generated great confusion concerning the authenticity of various doctrines, practices and spiritual guides. Nonetheless, the passage of time often has a way of uncovering the fraudulent activities and teachings of would-be pretenders to the spiritual throne. More importantly, the authentic saints and spiritual sages of each tradition have left behind them a legacy (both living and written -- or spoken) which continues to shine throughout the passing of time and beckons to every human being who is willing to examine -- with sincerity, care and openness -- the lives and teachings of such saints.

Finally, to point to all the pseudo-mystics and cults as arguments against the existence of legitimate traditions and saints is like pointing to instances of poor reasoning as arguments against the possibility of good philosophy or science. We often are able to distinguish between sound reasoning and spurious reasoning, and, if we look closely at the lives of people, one also often (though not always) can distinguish between those who pretend to spiritual knowledge and those who actually have it.

A second feature shared by all mystical doctrines is correlative with the first feature discussed above, and it focuses on the issue of practice. All esoteric or mystical doctrines are firmly rooted in an experiential discipline. Having a theoretical understanding of some such doctrine is not enough, one also must absorb the doctrine into one's being and, according to the mystics this process of absorption is only possible through becoming engaged in a specific set of practices or rigorous discipline.

There are, of course, exceptions because the mystics also generally hold that "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth" and, therefore, anyone is capable of receiving benefit from the Transcendent order irrespective of whether, or not, they are engaged in a spiritual practice. By and large, however, spiritual or mystical realization is only attained through following the practices that are embodied in a given mystical doctrine.

The terms "practice" and "discipline" do not refer just to the performance of exoteric litanies or rituals that form part of the formal aspects of a spiritual tradition. Rather, they refer to the performance of works that lie beyond, or in addition to, the normal duties of a spiritual devotee.

These extra practices involve different combinations of: meditation, contemplation, fasting, chanting, spiritual seclusion or retreats, as well as other-directed service. All of these practices are tailored to the needs, temperament and capacity of an individual aspirant by her or his spiritual guide.

Initially -- and, actually, throughout the various stages of the mystical path -- the needs of an individual are related to freeing oneself from one's baser nature. All mystical doctrines are agreed upon this point.

Every person is considered to have a contingent nature and an essential nature. The contingent nature consists of our participation in the material/physical world through our bodies that are connected to this world through the intellect, senses and emotions. This contingent aspect cloaks, as it were, a more essential nature, our real nature.

The means of understanding mysticism is not through reasoning, conceptualization, intellectualization, or theory but through the Divine

spark within human beings that mysteriously links the contingent with the Transcendent. However, the path leading to this essential inner dimension of human beings first must be cleared of the contingent debris that accumulates during the course of lived existence -- that is, the impurities of one's actions, attitudes, intentions, emotions, and thoughts that cloud our perception of the higher Reality.

More importantly, the various esoteric traditions do not treat purity as an end in itself. While each esoteric tradition contains features of discipline that are peculiar to it (and might even be in external conflict with, or in contradiction to, certain aspects of the disciplines of other traditions), the ultimate goal is the same in each case -- to divest the Self of the self, or to break through the illusory appearances of phenomena to the underlying unity, or to turn away from external contingencies -- including one's body and its existential entanglements -- and concentrate on the inner Reality.

One should not interpret "inner" to mean psychological consciousness in the sense of brain functioning, for these still belong to the phenomenal order of things. "Inner" refers exclusively to the transcendental realm lying beyond phenomenal contingencies, regardless of whether these contingencies concern formless phenomena or the world of forms. And, since the reasons why mystics have traditionally interpreted "inner" in a non-psychological (i.e., a non-physical) manner might not be readily understandable, a certain amount of discussion on this matter might be helpful.

In developing his definition of mysticism or mystical consciousness, Walter Stace stipulates in *The Teachings of the Mystics* that:

"... visions and voices are not mystical phenomena, though ... it seems to be the case that the sort of persons who are mystics may often be the sort of persons who see visions and hear voices ... Nor are the voices that certain persons in history, such as Socrates, Muhammad, and Joan of Arc are supposed to have heard to be classed as mystical experiences."²

Stace presents several reasons for ruling out visions and voices as mystical phenomena. He points out there have been a number of well-

known mystical figures such as St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila who treated such phenomena as possibly being Satanic traps designed to direct an aspirant's attention from the true transcendent goal ... or as being Divine consolations that were intended to comfort the aspirant during the mystical quest but that were not to be confused with the actual goal of the quest -- namely, God.

One can agree with Stace that such possibilities are important to keep in mind when trying to understand, to some degree, the nature of mystical experience. On the other hand, there are certain problems that arise if an individual adheres to such suggestions in an overly rigid manner.

For example, Stace wishes to rule out visions and voices as mystical phenomena in order to be able to restrict the use of the terms: "mysticism", "mystical", etc., to the condition of undifferentiated unity that often is referred to in writings that are classed as mystical. According to Stace, any experience that falls outside the unitive condition or state is to be excluded from the set of experiential possibilities to which the term "mystical" (or some variation) can be applied. But if one were to follow this procedure, the question arises: What sense are we to make of the voices and visions? Into what sort of descriptive category is one to place them?

Stace, of course, could proffer several candidates in order to address such questions: These 'candidates' are precisely those mentioned as reasons for ruling out visions and voices as mystical experiences, i.e., Satanic temptations or Divine consolations. Although the first possibility is somewhat self-explanatory, the latter notion might need a certain amount of clarification.

What reasons are there for supposing that Divine consolations are not instances of mystical experience? Surely, the fact that Stace has overruled such a possibility by definition is not sufficient grounds for discontinuing this line of inquiry.

While one has a 'right' to a certain amount of leeway in establishing definitional parameters for an area of investigation, nonetheless, there must be a certain sense of "legitimacy" and "heuristic value" in one's definitional stance. "Legitimacy", means that a definition cannot be so arbitrary as to be unsupported by argument or evidence and unrelated to the phenomenon under consideration.

On the other hand, "heuristic value", suggests that a definition should prove to be of some use in delineating an area of inquiry in an understandable and fruitful manner -- a manner that is capable of conceptually organizing the subject matter into a consistent, coherent, and plausible account of a given phenomenon (even if such a way of doing things might, subsequently, shown to be problematic).

Naturally, there likely is to be a certain degree of overlap between the conditions of legitimacy and those of heuristic value. Something might be of heuristic value precisely because it helps to establish legitimacy. On the other hand, something might demonstrate legitimacy and serve as the foundation for further exploration because it yields positive gains and is, therefore, of heuristic value.

The foregoing brief descriptions of "legitimacy" and "heuristic value" are, of course, still relatively vague. There is, however, enough precision to indicate a sense of the point being made.

Arguments still might erupt over what actually constitutes, for example, the meaning of "consistency" or "coherency" or "supportable", and so on. Yet, the idea of criterial standards is being alluded to ... alluded to in such a way as to indicate that not just any definition is necessarily acceptable.

Having said the foregoing, once again, one can ask: What reasons are there for supposing that Divine consolations are not instances of mystical experience? With respect to the notion of legitimacy, Stace offers the testimony of two Christian "mystics" as evidence in support of his decision to delimit his definition of mysticism to the notion of transcendental, undifferentiated unity and thereby, exclude visions and voices as instances of mystical experience.

One might excuse Stace for assuming his conclusions, to some extent, by presupposing that the testimonies of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila are those of mystics and, consequently, represent acceptable evidence, of a partial sort, for his definitional stance. Apparently, as is the case in many definitional contexts, one must have some kind of an intuitive insight into what is to be considered -- in this case -- mystical in order to be able to derive a working definition of the term.

Even if such intuition is based strictly on finite processes of reasoning, it provides some degree of relation to the subject matter under consideration -- i.e., mysticism. On the other hand, however, there is no a priori reason why one should stop with the two historical figures mentioned by Stace in the search for evidence from which one might draw a functional, even descriptive definition.

Moreover, there is a difference between saying that visions and voices are not to be confused with the ultimate goal and contending that: because visions and voices are not to be confused with the ultimate goal, they, therefore, cannot be considered to be instances of mystical experiences. St. John and St. Teresa do address themselves to the former possibility, but the latter implication is not necessarily entailed in their warnings.

In the quote from Stace's book given earlier Stace mentions, in passing, Muhammad, among others, as an historical figure who supposedly heard voices. He goes on to argue that such a person (or Joan of Arc or Socrates) is not to be classed as a mystic simply on the basis of such auditory experiences.

One might agree with such an argument without committing oneself to the separate argument that such an experience does not constitute a mystical experience. Moreover, although paranoids and schizophrenics often report hearing voices without such experiences being categorized as mystical, nevertheless, logically speaking, one cannot conclude, therefore, that all auditory experiences are capable of being accounted for by labeling them as psychotic symptoms. Nor is the only other available category one of 'normal-but-unusual' (i.e., anomalous) sense perception, a category into which Divine consolations seems to fall for Stace (and this is indicated by his discussion on page 13 of his book that argues that because a vision of the Virgin Mary has shape, color, etc., it is "composed of elements of our sensory-intellectual consciousness.").

In the case of Muhammad, the fact that Stace did not examine the relationship between this historical figure and Sufism in Stace's chapter on Islamic mysticism is rather unfortunate. Through this lacuna, he has left out some very important matters that have great significance for the issue of mystical experience.

To begin with, the non-ordinary auditory experiences of Muhammad were, subsequently, described by Muhammad, himself, as the Archangel Gabriel's communication of Sacred Revelation to a Prophet of God. Of course, with Stace, one could adopt a skeptical position with respect to the authenticity of the claims concerning prophethood by Muhammad, just as one could adopt a skeptical viewpoint concerning the reported claims of Jesus or Moses or Buddha.

In conjunction with Stace, one also could argue that a distinction must be drawn between a given experience and the interpretation of that experience. For instance, the experiences of a Prophet are one thing, and the Prophet's interpretation of such experiences is quite another thing.

On the other hand, without wishing to become entangled in theological controversies, the position to be adopted throughout this section is that Muhammad represents the cornerstone, so to speak, out of which Islamic mysticism grew, just as: Jesus was the cornerstone of Christian mysticism, and Moses was the central figure of Judaic mysticism, and Buddha was the historical passageway through which Buddhist mysticism arrived, and so on. Moreover, this section will argue that there is a dimension of unity to these different traditions, despite the apparently irreconcilable differences that appear on the theological surfaces of such traditions.

Normally, the notion of revelation, as mentioned above in conjunction with the experiences of Muhammad, is treated conceptually as pertaining to exoteric spiritual discourse and, as a result, something to be considered apart from the notion of mysticism. Yet, this sort of bifurcation that many writers (among them Stace) wish to make is somewhat problematic, especially in the context of Muhammad -- though by no means must the following comments be restricted to this context.

Traditionally, Sufis have traced their spiritual lineage, practices and doctrines to the Prophethood of Muhammad. Putting aside the distortions of people such as Idries Shah and others, Muhammad is acclaimed by all the great Sufis -- such as Ibn Arabi, al-Junayd, al-Hujwiri, Hafiz, Jami, Farid-ud-din Attar, al-Ghazali, Jalal al-Din Rumi,

Ahmad Sarhindi, and countless others -- as the spiritual fountain through which two main streams of transcendence flow.

One stream is an exoteric or 'outer' path of salvation. The second path is an esoteric path that not only saves but is said to sanctify. The exoteric goal, generally, is identified with the condition of heavenly existence (or, negatively stated, with the avoidance of perdition). The esoteric goal, on the other hand, is concerned neither with heaven nor hell but seeks to struggle toward union with Divinity.

The term 'religion' is often applied to the preoccupations of the exoteric path, while the notion of 'mysticism' is often reserved for the experiences that characterize the esoteric path. However, one is not necessarily talking about a difference in kind here but more in the sense of a difference in degree or depth. Both the exoteric and esoteric aspects are concerned with transcendence and both paths of transcendence are established through one and the same 'revelation' - the text of which varies from tradition to tradition according to circumstances and the temperaments of the people to whom the 'revelation' is addressed.

Although there are exceptions to the rule, esoteric traditions (whether Sufistic, Vedantine, Hesychastic, Kabbalahistic, etc.) do not operate in opposition to the exoteric doctrines and practices. Instead, the esoteric discipline is intent on fathoming the depths of the spiritual possibilities that are inherent, though hidden, in the so-called exoteric doctrines.

The differentiation between the exoteric and the esoteric is not a difference of doctrine but a difference of emphasis and perspective that, in the case of esotericism, allows entry (or, at least the possibility of this) into the more hidden treasures of the Transcendent realms. Even in the case of the exceptions that are sometimes found within a given tradition, there is only an apparent violation or discrepancy since there is a conformity to the spirit of the law that is more essential and fundamental than the letter of the law since the latter receives its vitality from the former.

To remove mysticism from the exoteric context, as Stace seems intent on doing, would distort what the mystics of many different traditions (such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and even Buddhism) state about the relationship between the outer and inner

aspects of their given doctrines. When one considers the logical possibilities entailed by the notion of 'oneness' that is said to be characteristic of mystical union, then to exclude exoteric manifestations from such a notion of 'oneness' seems excessively arbitrary. In other words, if the undifferentiated unity-experience of a mystic is accepted as disclosing a fundamental truth about the nature of Reality -- despite the appearances of multiplicity within the world of illusions or contingencies -- then, exotericism must be included as something that is a manifestation of oneness.

In fact, to the extent exoteric doctrine emphasizes oneness, it identifies itself, on its own level, with the ultimate nature of Transcendent Reality. If one wishes to maintain a separation between exoteric spirituality and mysticism (which might be conceptually necessary in order to draw attention to differences in levels of Truth or Reality), then such a separation should be maintained with an understanding that they (exoteric spirituality and mysticism) are best thought of as concentric circles generated by, or made possible through, the central Point that they hold in common.

Indeed, when one remembers Pascal's description of the Transcendent One (i.e., God) as being a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere, the exoteric/esoteric distinction becomes less well defined in many respects, yet still remains useful, within certain limits, on the conceptual level. As a result, to automatically eliminate the experience of voices or visions from a discussion of mystical experiences simply because they (the voices, etc.) are reported in an exoteric context becomes difficult, if not impossible, to do in any defensible fashion.

At this point, Stace might present his second line of argument by attempting to argue that the sensations and images associated with 'mysterious' voices and visions are a function of the cognitive aspects of so-called normal or ordinary consciousness that he refers to as the "sensory-intellectual" consciousness and, therefore, cannot possibly apply to the transcendental nature of mystical experience. Stace contends that:

"... the mystical consciousness is destitute of any sensation at all. Nor does it contain any concepts or thoughts. It is not a sensory-

intellectual consciousness at all. Accordingly, it cannot be described or analyzed in terms of any of the elements of the sensory-intellectual consciousness, with which it is wholly incommensurable."³

There is a hadith [reports concerning the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad] which is well-known to the Sufis and that might be instructive with respect to the above quote. This hadith says:

"My slave does not cease to draw nigh unto Me with devotions of his free will (i.e., supererogatory acts) until I love him; and when I love him, I am the Hearing wherewith he hears and the Seeing wherewith he sees, and the Hand wherewith he smites, and the Foot whereon he walks."⁴

From the Sufi perspective, when an aspirant has been brought to an appropriate level of purity, the Heart (the point at which the finite human self ends and the Transcendent Self is said to begin) tends to reflect whatever is disclosed to it. The phraseology: "eye of the Heart", is often used to draw attention to the powers of Divine illumination of which the spiritual Heart is capable. As human qualities are left behind through the process of purification, the 'individual', so to speak, becomes clothed in the qualities of the Absolute.

Of course, one should not develop a literalist interpretation of the foregoing hadith. For example, one should not suppose that God has eyes, ears, hands, or feet. Nonetheless, some sort of qualities are being referred to in the hadith in which 'seeing', 'hearing', etc., are being given expression through, and colored by, the presence of the Divine.

Moreover, the foregoing hadith should not be construed to mean that God is definable. On the contrary, Divinity is said to be without limitation.

Implicit in the depth of Infinity is a plenitude that fully covers the sort of qualities that are referred to in the previous hadith. Through such Transcendent Possibilities, 'vision' and 'audition' of a mystical nature -- taken as essential possibilities within human beings -- are capable of occurring.

Therefore, with respect, for example, to the mystical visions of an individual -- to the extent such visions are truly mystical -- the lesser (the individual's experience) is not other than an expression of the Greater. This, of course, is also true of so-called normal perception, but there is a difference of level and perspective that separates the two kinds of experience even while they are not other than different expressions of the One.

The 'seeing' of the eyes, or the 'hearing' of the ears, or the 'knowing' of the brain are only prototypes, as it were, of a higher Reality. There is no intention here to develop a Platonic-like notion of Ideals in which the contingent realm participates -- although the similarities do not go entirely unnoticed.

Rather, an attempt is being made to indicate that 'seeing', for example, is not something only the eyes can do. There is a 'seeing' of the imagination; there is a 'seeing' of the mind's eye, and there is a 'seeing' of different spiritual faculties. That all the foregoing are referred to as kinds of 'seeing', indicates they bear a family resemblance (in Wittgenstein's sense) to each other. In other words, some sort of essential thematic current (even if indefinable) runs through them that ties the different activities together somehow and justifies the label of 'seeing'.

Underlying the different kinds of 'seeing', or some process that acts as a common denominator, is consciousness -- whatever this might be. Physical sensation is only one medium of consciousness and one vehicle of 'seeing'.

The level out of which a given vehicle operates will impose veils or limitations on the nature of vision experienced according to the structural and functional characteristics of the level and vehicle under consideration. But vision itself is connected with the illuminating quality of the Divine that penetrates to every level in some form or mode of manifestation. In the purest form there is no vehicle of vision, only Vision itself.

One might agree with Stace that sensation in the physical/material sense is completely absent from mystical consciousness. Such agreement, however, does not automatically rule out having, say, a vision through a non-physical/material mode.

A vision is said to be made possible by the qualities of its point of origin and conveyed according to the medium appropriate to the point of origin. Physical/materialistic vision (so-called normal vision) is made possible by the qualities that are characteristic of the physical/material world together with the structural/ functional properties of eyesight (including cognitive faculties).

Spiritual vision is made possible by the qualities that are characteristic of a given spiritual plane, together with the properties of the 'eye of the Heart' or the 'third eye' or the 'Mind/Essence', all of which are different ways of referring to essential, esoteric possibilities within human beings. Moreover, paralleling, somewhat, the 'form' of vision as this is manifested on the physical/material plane, vision on a spiritual level will be affected by such factors as: the purity of heart and individual spiritual capacity, that 'frame', as it were, a given spiritual experience.

The above is, obviously, not so much an explanation of anything -- for nothing has, in fact, been explained -- as it is an attempt to distinguish between kinds and levels of vision or audition or knowing. Such distinction, however, are lost when Stace relegates all visions, etc., to the sensory/intellectual consciousness.

Furthermore, as a result of the unnecessary, structural/functional limitations being imposed by Stace with respect to the notion of vision, one's conceptual understanding of the nature of mystical experience is being impoverished, as well. Stace has, in a sense, 'ignored' experiences that are not of the undifferentiated-unity variety, yet, which, nonetheless, might be mystical.

Shortly after making the claim that mystical consciousness is incommensurable with sensory-intellectual consciousness and, in the process, excludes visions and voices from the former kind of consciousness, Stace states:

"This is the reason why mystics always say that their experiences are "ineffable". All words in all languages are the products of our sensory-intellectual consciousness ..."⁵

There is a very important sense in which the foregoing statement of Stace is not true, for it tends to entirely leave out of consideration the idea of sacred language. Whether one chants the "Om" of Hinduism, the prayer of the heart that is recommended in the *Philokalia*, the Buddhist "Namu Amida Butsu", or some appropriate Qur'anic phrase, one is engaging an aspect of language that extends beyond the level of sensory-intellectual consciousness -- even while the purely relative and contingent linguistic medium is a vehicle for this Transcendent influence. The sacred words are points, so to speak, at which the finite and the Infinite are said to mysteriously 'touch' and intermingle.

In Hinduism, manifested existence is said to have issued forth from the sacred syllable or sound of "Om". In Islam the Qu'ran is considered to be the Eternal and Uncreated word of God. In Christianity, Christ is referred to as the Logos of God, and in Judaism the adherents to the Kabbalah say that God's Light or Hakhmah is hidden in the Torah.

Some have argued that, originally, language was a Divine gift to man that provided a means of communication not only horizontally (i.e., amongst human beings) but, and more importantly, vertically between human beings and the Absolute. Unfortunately, through spiritual degeneration (of which the Biblical account of the tower of Babel can be seen as a symbolic representation), language was separated, so to speak, from its spiritual dimension, and the horizontal possibilities were emphasized, for the most part, to the exclusion of the vertical possibilities.

In short, language became secularized and merely a function of the sensory-intellectual consciousness of human beings. Yet, for those with spiritual discernment, language still retains its sacred aspect and is still capable of providing a medium of adequate expression, within certain limits, for the Transcendent realms. This applies not only to sacred words, phrases and texts upon which has been conferred the power of spiritual alchemy, it applies, as well, to the descriptions given by mystics about various aspects of their transcendental experiences.

This last reference to the descriptions given by mystics about their experiences brings one quite naturally to the issue of ineffability and mystical experience. Before going on to discuss this topic, however,

certain matters concerning the use of sacred language still need to be clarified, especially with regard to Stace's comments on Tennyson and the manner in which the repetition of certain words could bring on or induce a mystical experience.

That many people give what might be unwarranted scope to the application of the term "mystical experience", is unfortunate. For instance, Tennyson's non-ordinary experiences that occurred periodically, from childhood onward, are said to be mystical. James' experience with nitrous oxide is often described as mystical. Wittgenstein, supposedly, had a spontaneous "mystical" experience upon hearing a particular passage from a play. Hitler is often described as adhering to a mystical doctrine and, if one can believe Pauwels and Bergier in 'The Morning of the Magicians', Hitler is sometimes said to have had mystical experiences.

While an attempt has been made in this section to broaden the scope of mystical experiences beyond the boundaries set by Stace in *The Teachings of the Mystics*, one should not suppose that mysticism can serve as a catch-all container into which any kind of anomalous, non-ordinary experience can be thrown with equal claims of legitimacy or appropriateness. A great deal of caution must be exercised before attributing the word "mystical" to an experience or doctrine.

Without wishing to disregard the stipulation that "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth", one might argue, nonetheless, that not all non-ordinary experiences are necessarily mystical, even if they convey a sense of undifferentiated unity to the one undergoing the experience. Non-ordinary experiences can originate from "below" (the Satanic, nether world) as well as from "above" (the realm of Light).

In addition, non-ordinary experiences can originate with the finite mind in the way of purely non-transcendental psychological "happenings" such as psychotic episodes or through the ingestion of various psychoactive substances such as LSD, peyote, mescaline, and so on. Moreover, non-ordinary experiences can occur through engaging the 'occult' that, though hidden from normal perception, might still be a non-transcendental phenomenon.

Mysticism, at least in the context of this essay, refers to the doctrines, practices and experiences that concern the Transcendental

Realm (whatever the ultimate designation for this Realm might be: e.g., The Absolute, The Void, God, The Self, etc.) and the essential, inherent possibilities concerning the Transcendental Realm within human beings.

James' or Wittgenstein's experiences might, or might not, have been mystical in the above sense. Moreover, merely through the repetition of his own name, Tennyson might, or might not, have undergone a mystical experience in the foregoing sense.

Stace, however, goes on to draw some rather questionable conclusions:

"Mystics who following the procedure of constantly repeating a verbal formula often, I believe, tend to choose some religious set of words, for instance a part of the Lord's Prayer or a psalm. They probably imagine that these uplifting and inspirational words will carry them upwards toward the divine. But Tennyson's procedure suggests that any nonsense words would probably do as well ... It doesn't seem to matter what is chosen as the single point of concentration."⁶

Notwithstanding the issue of concentration as an important part of mystical practice, Stace entirely misses the reasons for choosing "some religious set of words" as the focus of concentration. Many mystics maintain that such words are portals, if you will, of spiritual transmission having a power that is capable of constructively transforming one's spiritual condition.

Consequently, the spiritual efficacy of a formulae is not just a matter of being uplifting and inspirational in a conceptual/emotional sense. They are described as having a transcendental depth to them that carries the individual in a spiritually vertical direction, much like thrust in a rocket helps to overcome the pull of gravity.

Spiritual remembrance -- through the use of certain spiritual formulae -- is one of the means by which impure, dross metals are converted to precious metals. While concentration, in and of itself, might have a role to play, it is certainly not sufficient.

What is sufficient, and absolutely so, is Transcendental intervention. Furthermore, one way in which such intervention

manifests Itself is through the way sacred words and phrases are saturated, so to speak, with the power to transform an individual spiritually.

If Tennyson's experiences were actually mystical and if, in fact, the repetition of his own name was capable of invoking such a condition, Stace might have made the mistake of projecting a particularized and isolated instance onto the whole framework of mystical practice, doctrine and experience. In short, there seems to be little reason why one should feel compelled to accept Stace's conclusions over the words of those who speak from within the mystical tradition and who are putting forth a perspective that runs contrary to the one that Stace is constructing in his book.

Stace might claim that the mystics are only lending an interpretation to their experience. However, if, with one hand, Stace is going to grant mystics an insight into the very Essence of Being (as he seems inclined to do), there seems to be little justification for trying, with his other hand, to take away the authenticity and accuracy of such insights ... especially when his wish to withdraw endorsement is rooted in a limited, finite process of conceptualization that, by Stace's own admission, is incommensurate with the Transcendent Realm.

Returning, now, to the issue of ineffability mentioned earlier, the fact that mystical literature (as Matson rightly points out in the chapter on "Mystical Experience" in his book *The Existence of God*) is not exactly devoid of descriptions -- however inexact and provisional these might be -- with respect to the nature of mystical experiences is relevant to the present discussion. Such descriptions might suffer inadequacies due to the inherent limitations of a given language (the aforementioned considerations of spirituality that run through a language notwithstanding), yet, descriptions do exist.

Moreover, a mystical description might be engaged at more than one level. For example, one easily might suppose there would be less difficulty of communication between two mystics than between a mystic and a non-mystic. Whereas a non-mystic lacks the necessary spiritual realization or experiential framework (the term "framework" is somewhat misleading since it suggests form where there might not be any) to understand (in a transcendental and not a cognitive sense) the essence of what is being said by a mystic, another mystic might be

quite capable of knowing what is being referred to or alluded to by the other mystic because of having had similar experiences.

It seems to follow from the foregoing considerations that language is as much a function of the understanding (in both the finite and transcendental senses) of those who use it, as it is a function of its own general nature. Furthermore, accepting such a conclusion does not preclude the possibility that, ultimately, mystical states are, indeed, ineffable. Rather saying things in the foregoing way is only an attempt to emphasize the importance of context and perspective when analyzing the notion of ineffability with respect to mystical experience, and the epistemological perspective of a listener can be a significant consideration in the mystical context.

Matson, in the previously cited work, puts forth an argument that he apparently feels some people might adopt (and it might be an argument that Matson himself is willing to accept) in the process of criticizing mystical claims:

"The non-mystic is put into an exasperating situation. Here he is being solicited to adopt an exotic metaphysic, on no better evidence than the say-so of certain persons who claim to have reasons, but who decline altogether to produce them, -- saying that language -- which is adequate enough to describe quantum theory and relativity -- is incapable of expressing those reasons."⁷

Matson fails to point out that it is not word-language that is capable of doing most justice to the description of quantum or relativity theory. Mathematical language is necessary for such descriptions.

Word descriptions can provide an approximation of the various theories through an "unpacking" of the mathematics of physical theory, but such descriptions are not capable of handling the more intricate aspects of, say, quantum physics that requires a mathematical medium if excessive distortion and oversimplification are not to occur. Thus, when translating from mathematical language into word language, something of the precision and subtlety of the mathematical

expression is lost. Thus, even on a relative level, there can be a kind of ineffability.

The problems of communicability are substantially increased if there is not a shared frame of reference and experience of some minimal sort. For all practical purposes, a scientist who has experiences in the physics lab that she or he attempts to communicate, in mathematical language, to someone who shares neither the type of experiences nor the language, will speak from an understanding that has a considerable ineffable quality to it in relation to non-physicists. Even if approximate translations into word language were possible, the experiences would still remain largely ineffable with respect to those who had not had similar experiences.

Beyond the foregoing considerations -- which are, to a certain extent, peripheral -- there is a more important and essential point. The above discussion has been based on the provisional acceptance of an assumption implicit in the quote taken from Matson's book, namely, the belief that quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity are, somehow, the same as, or on the same level of reality as mystical experiences. However, simply because language is capable, in some sense, of describing aspects of phenomenal existence, this in no way means it should necessarily be adequate under all circumstances -- even in relation to that which might transcend the phenomenal realm.

Yet, the implication of Matson's statement seems to be that if language is capable of describing something as 'sophisticated and complex' as quantum theory, etc., then it should be fully capable of encompassing the transcendental realm. Many mystics, on the other hand, tend to agree that the Transcendent order is, in some respects, entirely other than, and beyond, the physical realm -- a realm in which quantum mechanics and relativity are thoroughly entrenched.

Matson, himself, indicates as much when he notes:

"... mystics pretty generally agree that their experiences reveal the reality of an order of being distinct from, and in some sense higher than, the world perceived through the senses."⁸

Matson, however, has a habit of bouncing around during his argument such that one is often not quite sure what his actual position is -- that is, whether he is stating a position: (1) for the purposes of argument from which one might gain a sharper delineation of the issues involved in a given problem, or (2) because he is subscribing to a particular line of argument that is used to defend a position or attack it. By and large, he seems intent on pointing out the weaknesses (as he supposes them to be) of the mystical claims about the nature and meaning of their experiences.

For example, Matson presents a 'straw man' argument that he believes a mystic might put forth to counter various anti-mystical criticisms:

"You (i.e., the non-mystic) refuse to believe anything not 'publicly verifiable', as you put it? Very well! You say that physics is publicly verifiable, though admitting that to understand physics one must become a physicist. Surely then it cannot be unreasonable for us mystics to tell you that the way to understand mysticism is to become a mystic."⁹

Shortly after presenting the above 'argument', Matson states three objections to the above analogy:

"(1) Physicists, if they cannot talk to laymen, can still talk to one another without difficulty. But there is no technical vocabulary of mysticism enabling mystics to converse about their experiences in a precise manner even among themselves.

(2) There is an agreed curriculum for the study of physics. There is no agreed road to mystical illumination.

(3) The discipline required of the would-be physicist is entirely intellectual. At no point in the proceedings is it made a condition of progress that he "have faith", reform his morals, or anything of that sort. It is otherwise with the mystic path.

Here we have a very serious objection. To lay it down that one must 'believe in order to understand' is nothing less than to refuse to

play the rational game. So-called evidence that counts as evidence only to believers is just not evidence at all..."¹⁰

Each of the foregoing objections is rather weak and substantially biased ... almost to the point of complete blindness in some instances. To begin with, Matson is just plain wrong when he says there is no technical vocabulary of mysticism.

No doubt, the extent of the vocabulary will vary from tradition to tradition. One could undermine his first point by making reference to any number of, for example, Sufi texts that are filled with technical terminology concerning doctrine, practice and mystical experience -- such as: al-Hujwiri's 'Kashf al-Mahjub', or ibn al-'Arabi's 'Meccan, Openings', and so on. If mystics choose not to converse with one another, this has little to do with the absence of a technical vocabulary.

Matson's second point is based on two false premises. First, there is no one curriculum in physics. The curriculum varies, to some extent, from: university to university; school of physics to school of physics; generation to generation, and specialty to specialty.

To be sure, there is a great deal of overlap in what is taught in the way of mathematics and physical theory, but there are also differences of emphasis, technique, instrumentation, and focus from field to field. The notion of a monolithic superstructure guiding all of physics and the idea that there is unanimity amongst physicists are fabrications. Indeed, one only has to examine the state of particle physics, gravitational theory, astrophysics, and varying interpretations concerning the nature of quantum phenomena in order to gain some degree of insight concerning the lack of unanimity within different areas of science.

Secondly, although techniques might vary from one mystical tradition to another, all mysticisms are concerned with assisting the individual to die to one's passions and attachments in order to escape from the world of forms and contingencies into the realm of Essential Reality. If the mystical curriculum displays more variation than does that of the physicist, this is only because the Infinite is more subtle and complex than the finite and, as a result, requires a curriculum that reflects this subtlety.

Finally Matson's third objection is hard to take very seriously, even though Matson seems to think it is well worth serious attention. To "believe in order to understand" is at the heart of every rational game.

If one does not believe in the underlying assumptions, definitions, methodology, and so on, of a given rational theory (physical or otherwise), then one will not understand what is derived from those beginnings. This is precisely the sort of point being made by such people as Norwood Hanson and Thomas Kuhn ... though each does so in his own way.

There is no rational system, including physics, that is based on a presuppositionless methodology, and the search for one has proven as fruitful as the quest for a perpetual motion machine. One's perception is always theory laden, to one degree or another, and the very criteria that are the basis for establishing evidence, validity, consistency, logicalness, etc., are not a priori absolutes but values based on arbitrary choice. One's choice might be correct, or it might be false, but rationalism has no patent on discovering truth.

In fact, a mystic might claim that the rationalist is placing his or her entire faith in that which is impermanent, finite and that cannot lead, even when done well, but to suffering, whereas the mystical aspirant is placing her or his faith in that which is abiding, infinite and that cannot lead, if done well and if Divinity wishes, but to bliss and fulfillment.

The glory of rationalism is science and technology. The glory of mysticism is its Prophets and Saints. Both sides represent a dimension of human possibility and activity.

On page 14 of 'The Teachings of the Mystics', Stace states:

"... there is not the least reason to suppose that the mystical consciousness is miraculous or supernatural. No doubt it has, like our ordinary consciousness, been produced by the rational process of evolution."¹¹

Not only does Stace fail to put forth any proof to substantiate this sort of claim, but, in addition, it is difficult, though not impossible, to

imagine a statement that could be more at odds with the stated position of mystics coming from almost all spiritual traditions. Certainly such a statement would meet with clear-cut opposition from any of the monotheistic traditions.

Moreover, within the mystical currents running through, for example, Hinduism, surely, the Absolute Self or Brahman is, in no way, considered a product of the world of forms but, rather, is the metaphysical ground that makes contingent forms possible. It is Brahma considered through the aspects of Purusha and Prakriti that generates the various levels of manifestation, whether formless or with form.

In the words of Martin Lings:

"In the Uncreated Principle Substance, which Hinduism terms Prakriti, there is perfect equilibrium between the upward, the expansive, and the downward tendencies, sattva, rajas and tamas. The creation itself breaks this equilibrium, being in a sense a "victory" of tamas over sattva. This is inevitable, for creation means separation, and tamas is the tenebrous downward separative pull of manifestation away from the Principle."¹²

Creation occurs through the way in which Purusha, the active masculine principle, acts upon or 'organizes' Prakriti, the passive feminine principle. There is nowhere talk of the lesser producing the greater as Stace suggests is the case.

Furthermore, even in Buddhism that is often, erroneously, considered to be atheistic (The correct term is 'non-theistic' -- that is, its chosen mode of expression is characterized by descriptions that do not conform to a theistic framework, yet, nonetheless, are not necessarily inconsistent with, or in opposition to, such forms.), one finds the following:

"There is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, and were it not, monks, for this unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, no escape could be shown here for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded. But because there is, monks, an

unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, therefore, an escape can be shown for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded."¹³

Once again, Stace's contention that mystical consciousness is -- like normal consciousness -- merely a product of evolution does not seem at all consistent with what the mystics themselves understand. What Stace is trying to do is reminiscent of a lay person trying to tell a physicist what physics is about.

Interestingly, the foregoing quote comes from within the Hinayana vehicle that tends to adopt the most rigorously non-theistic modes of expression of any of the various schools of Buddhism. Consequently, one is somewhat mystified why Stace should select an excerpt from the Udana Sutra and not consider the implications of the Sutra with respect to his own thesis.

That quite a few scientists have come to believe science is, necessarily, in opposition to spirituality and mysticism, is unfortunate. This opposition has manifested itself in a variety of ways, but, generally, a common denominator among these various modalities of opposition centers on the attempt to reduce the transcendent realms to the purely physical/ material principles of scientism and rationalism.

However, even with respect to Buddhism -- which some secular minds like to champion because of its apparent opposition to anything hinting of the Divine -- one must remember that Buddha, himself, is reported to have said:

"Profound, O Vaccha, is this doctrine, recondite, and difficult of comprehension, good, excellent and not to be reached by mere reasoning, subtle, and intelligible only to the wise."¹⁴

The obvious question is the following. If the doctrine is "not to be reached by mere reasoning", what is there within human beings that is capable of comprehending the Buddha's doctrine?

Oddly enough, Stace -- on the basis of his statements that mystical consciousness is a product of evolution -- evidently believes that the answer to the question is a psychological one. This thesis is strengthened: (1) by the fact that Stace suggests mysticism should "be assigned to the sphere of abnormal psychology" (page 14 of *Teachings of the Mystics*); and, (2) by the manner in which he consistently treats mystical discipline as a psychological enterprise of emptying the mind of contents such that mystical consciousness can take the place of ordinary consciousness. He often tends to create the impression that this process occurs within the mind of the phenomenal world.

While one might undertake a spiritual discipline in order to quiet the mind, this process is not a matter of removing one set of contents and replacing them with another set of contents. The discipline is undertaken as a means of being placed in a position to be transformed, as it were, completely through dying to oneself (that is, to one's attachments, passions, and delusions) in order to be born again and become aware of the on-going Presence of Divinity through Self-realization.

This Transcendent realm is not merely a matter of the neurobiology of mystical consciousness, but of Mind (or Heart, or Essence, or Spirit of Self) whose very nature is mystical consciousness. Nothing is left of finite contingencies.

As Meister Eckhart indicated: "there is something in man which is uncreated and uncreatable" (the similarities here to the excerpt from the Udana Sutra are hard to ignore). This something is referred to in various ways by different traditions.

For instance, in Hinduism one refers to the "lotus of the heart" or the "third eye". In the Christian *Philokalia*, one comes across constant references to "Prayer of the Heart". In the Sufi path, the Heart retains a central metaphysical position as that geometric point (in the Euclidean sense) that marks the end of the human self and the beginning of the Transcendent Self.

This raises a further question. How does one account for the transition from contingency to Transcendancy?

This question becomes a mystifying puzzle when one considers the following:

"... symbolism, signs, rites or preparatory methods of any sort have no other function ... (but as) supports and nothing else. But some will ask, how is it possible that merely contingent means can produce an effect that immeasurably surpasses them and that is of a totally different order from that to which the instruments themselves belong? We should first point out that these means are, in reality, only fortuitous. The results they help to attain are by no means consequential. They place the being in the position requisite for attainment and that is all."¹⁵

Apparently, method is not sufficient to 'produce' attainment. And, this is quite clear in the monotheistically rooted mysticisms that emphasize the notion of Grace ... for through Grace, and Grace alone, is one carried one across the mysterious boundary separating (and, yet, uniting) contingency and transcendence.

In fact, much of the theistic oriented mysticism tends to argue that Grace is what awakens one to the possibility of transcendence. Marco Pallis points this aspect out quite well when he remarks:

"Given the incommensurable gap apparently fixed between enlightenment and the seeker after enlightenment -- ignorant by definition -- it is self-evident to anyone who thinks at all ... that such a seeking on the part of a human being with his necessarily imperfect vision and limited powers does not really make sense when taken at its face value alone. Enlightenment (or God for that matter) cannot possibly be situated at the passive pole in relation to man's endeavor; it cannot per se become object to man as subject."¹⁶

In other words human beings are not the ones who initiate the seeking of Enlightenment, God, or the Absolute. Rather, Reality is, forever, seeking out human beings.

Reality calls us to the Path. It establishes one on the Path. Reality provides one with the doctrines, practices, guides and spiritual community. Reality watches over the seeker (in the form of a teacher, guru, shaykh, or master) during the spiritual journey, and, finally,

Reality provides the vehicle of realization through which a mystical quest is brought to fruition.

An aspirant merely contributes one's ignorance and willingness to submit oneself to the possibilities inherent in the Grace that has been bestowed upon the individual. However, one might even question how much of the individual's "willingness" was completely self-generated.

This mysterious relationship of seeker, Sought, and the Path that leads from one through to the Other is lyrically captured in the following portion of an epic mystical poem by Farid ud-din Attar:

"All you have been, and seen, and done, and thought,
Not You, but I, have seen and been and wrought:
I was the Sin that from Myself rebelled:
I the Remorse that toward Myself compelled:
... Sin and Contrition -- Retribution owed,
And cancelled -- Pilgrimage, and Road,
Was but Myself toward Myself:
and Your Arrival but Myself at My own Door."¹⁷

Even within Buddhism one finds a strong strain of the notion of 'other power' (tariki) that underlies much of the doctrine and practices. Of course, someone might object that in the more mystical aspects of Buddhism, the notion of self-power (jiriki) is stressed and, consequently, the notion of Grace doesn't really apply to any ensuing discussion of Buddhist mysticism.

There are, however, several important considerations with respect to such an objection that should not be forgotten. First, as pointed out above, an aspirant -- regardless of tradition -- brings little to a Path except ignorance and a certain willingness to escape from such ignorance.

The seeker also can be said to possess a certain spiritual capacity, but the individual hardly can take credit for having such a capacity. This capacity is a given.

Even if one were to try to account for capacity in terms of a reserve of positive karma that had accumulated over the course of so many kalpas, one still would have to account for the capacity to attract positive karma through 'good' acts. Human existence has been described as being 'hard to obtain', and obtaining it, cannot be reduced to a simple function of individual effort without running into the problem of having to account for how a capacity for such effort came into being or is possible. Whether by virtue of inherent tendencies or 'external' intervention, the individual is the beneficiary of certain "gratuities".

Instructive in this regard is the manner in which many Zen Buddhists are reported to have attained satori. While preliminary preparation is said to be necessary in all instances, many have been described as coming to satori in conjunction with a certain, 'inspired' comment, or a twist of the nose, or a beating, or a broken bone that were delivered through the presence of a teacher.

Wondering whether, or not, these aspirants would have attained satori without the help of their master's insightful intervention is an exercise in counterfactual conditionals. The reality of the matter is that the aspirants all expressed gratitude to their masters for the latter's "action", and this seems to reflect an acknowledgment of the presence of tariki.

Finally, consider the following parable, if one might use this term, that is taken from Zen literature:

"It is said that on one occasion Bodhidharma came to the seashore waiting to cross to the other side. Finding no boat, he suddenly espied a piece of reed and promptly seized and launched it on the water; then stepping boldly on its fragile stalk, he let himself be carried to the farther shore ... the point to note is that Bodhidharma found that reed on the seashore; he neither created it, nor brought it with him. Who was it, then, that placed that reed there ready to be discovered? The "other power"; it could be no other. The reed came to the Zen Patriarch as a grace, to which in the first place he could not be passive."¹⁸

Of course, there might be some who interpret the foregoing story as an indication of the great resourcefulness of a Zen Master, as a kind of 'Tale of Power' intended to inspire and encourage the aspirant who still is somewhere on this phenomenal side of the waters. Such tales of power, however, are not in keeping with the general, if not complete, de-emphasis within Zen Buddhism concerning this dimension of the mystical quest.

As is the case with most mystical traditions, the seeking after powers is discouraged because it represents an attachment and, therefore, an obstacle in the Path of Enlightenment. Consequently, while one cannot automatically rule out other possible interpretations -- especially since teaching stories can be understood at a variety of levels -- Pallis' suggestion concerning 'other power' (given in the previous quote) does not seem out of place.

While those people who would wish to follow the example set by Buddha and not speculate about the implications of a doctrine of Grace (i.e., "other power") with regard to Buddhism -- as, indeed, the Buddha was reported to have rigorously discouraged any sort of theorizing or speculation -- those of us who are more prone to succumb to the temptation will be tantalized by another example from Buddhism:

"... the Buddha picks up a handful of leaves and explains to his disciples that just as these leaves are but a small thing compared to the forest, so also the doctrines he preaches are but a minute portion of what he knows; of this knowledge he will only reveal that which is useful for Deliverance."¹⁹

The foregoing certainly seems to leave the door open for a possible merging, on some appropriate metaphysical level, with other mystical doctrines. In fact, considering the similarity of epithets that are often used, in different mystical traditions, to hint at the unlimited, absolute nature of the Transcendent One, one is not being unreasonable if one were to suppose that if Oneness is truly what It is indicated to be by those who have experienced It, then Oneness is entirely capable of dissolving, on a transcendent level, the provisional differences that appear on the samsaric surface of Reality. To give

emphasis to the foregoing point, one might quote several passages from Ch'uang Tzu that are cited by Rene Guenon in his paper "Taoism and Confucianism":

"Philosophers lose themselves in their speculations, sophists in their distinctions; investigators in their researches. All these men are caught within the limits of space and blinded by particular beings.

"In the primordial state, opposition existed not. They all came from the diversity of beings and from their contacts caused by the universal gyration. They would cease, if difference and motion ceased. They cease at once to affect the being that both reduced his distinct individuality and his particular motion to almost nothing. This being entereth no longer into conflict with any being else, for he is established in the infinite, withdrawn in the indefinite. He hath reached the point from which start all transformations, wherein are no conflicts, and there he abideth."²⁰

While maintaining that all mysticism must be viewed in terms of, or from the perspective of, an undifferentiated unity-experience, Stace makes a distinction between introverted and extroverted mystical experiences and argues that the former kind of experience is the "major strand in the history of mysticism" (page 15 of "Teachings of the Mystics"). Moreover, Stace considers extroverted mysticism to be an impoverished brand, so to speak, of introverted mysticism because, according to Stace, the extroverted mystic uses the physical senses and sees the One in external objects, whereas, the introverted mystic has turned 'inward' and goes beyond all considerations of space and time.

As Stace says in *The Teachings of the Mystics*:

"It is suggested that the extrovertive type of experience is a kind of halfway house to the introvertive. For the introvertive experience is wholly non-sensuous and non-intellectual. But the extrovertive experience is sensory-intellectual in so far as it still perceives physical objects but is non-sensuous and nonintellectual in so far as it perceives them as 'all one.'"²¹

Objections already have been voiced concerning Stace's identification of visions with sensory-intellectual consciousness. And, even though the above quote is not directly concerned with visions, nevertheless, I would like to re-emphasize the point that the mystic is not necessarily 'seeing' just with the physical senses but might be 'seeing' with, or by virtue of, the spiritual eye, as well. What Stace assumes to be a sensory-intellectual component of the 'extroverted' mystics experience might be something entirely different.

Beyond this, one can question whether extroverted mysticism is merely a 'lesser' form of, or halfway house to, mysticism of the introverted variety. There are several levels of argument that seem relevant to such an inquiry.

First, the mystic who 'sees' Oneness in the world of forms could be said to be undergoing a very extraordinary experience, one in which multiplicity and Oneness are reconciled -- something that Stace seems to consider inferior because it involves the world of forms. Yet, one wonders how this 'oneness' of the extroverted mystic's experience (which by Stace's own definition must somehow be undifferentiated and uncompounded) differs from the Oneness of the introverted mystic's experience.

At least two possibilities suggest themselves: (1) There is only the One, but It can be experienced in a variety of ways according to the manner in which It reveals Itself to Itself. (2) there is only the One, and there is no essential difference between extroverted and introverted mystical experiences despite the differences in descriptive expression. In other words, regardless of whether one's descriptive references include the world of appearances, or one excludes such features from the description, to one with spiritual or mystical discernment, there is only the One since irrespective of whether one 'looks outward', so to speak, or one 'looks inward', the One is all that can be seen ... and the One is all that Sees.

One might even suppose that both (1) and (2) hold in the sense that before one experiences the unifying mystical experience, on which Stace focuses, there might be a variety of other experiences that are appropriately classed as mystical and that serve as stations of a Path leading to ultimate union. However, once realization is undergone, then there is only the One, regardless of how It is experienced.

Implicit in this latter statement is the possibility that on the level of the transcendental unity-experience there might be different kinds of undifferentiated unity. Without going into a great deal of elaboration, yet, wishing to give some indication as to what is meant by the foregoing, consider the possibility that is discussed in an unpublished paper entitled "The Spiritual Ascension of a Sufi Master" by Dr. M. Q. Baig.

In describing the spiritual ascension (a mystical journey through certain transcendental mysteries to Self-realization) of Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi, references also are made to the ascension of Shaykh Ahmad's eldest son, Muhammad Sadiq. During the course of the latter's ascension, he reported having attained stations that were higher than those of the Prophets. However, since Muslims firmly believe that no non-Prophet (not even a saint of the highest order) was superior to any of the Prophets, Muhammad Sadiq questioned the legitimacy of his own experience.

Dr. Baig states:

"Shaykh Ahmad explained that there were two kinds of stations: one forms the origin of man, this is man's permanent abode; the other forms the point of ascension where one might reach temporarily only to return to one's station of origin. The stations of the Prophets that one passes through in ascension are only the points of their origin; in other words these are the Attributes of God from where the Prophets originated, their stations of ascension are so high as no mortal, even the greatest of Awliya (Saints), can reach. The proximity of the Awliya to God is much less than the nearness to God experienced by the Prophets."²²

On the basis of the above quote, there are differentiations to be made between the mystical experiences of a saint and the transcendental experiences of a Prophet. Moreover, while both can be said to have 'achieved' the condition of union with God, distinctions are, nonetheless, being made even at this level of spirituality.

This idea that distinctions can be made even when the 'enlightened' condition receives what some might consider

'unexpected' support from a treatise on Zen Buddhism by Garma C. C. Chang when he says:

"Zen is like a vast ocean, an inexhaustible treasury full of riches and wonders. One may behold this treasury, reach toward it, even take possession of it, and still not fully utilize or enjoy it all at once Zen only begins at the moment when one first attains Satori; before that one merely stands outside and looks at Zen intellectually. In a deeper sense, Satori is only the beginning, but it not the end of Zen."²³

Such is the case with all mystical traditions. Mysticism only begins with the realization of experience and in a deeper sense, mystical realization – of whatever kind -- is only the beginning and not the end.

The Absolute (or Void or God) is not definable. It exists without limitation. Its expressed attributes are merely hints and no more. It surrounds Itself in mystery and discloses Itself as It will. It is an Infinite Plenitude that can never be exhausted or encompassed.

That there could be more than one kind of undifferentiated unity experience should not be surprising. That there could be more than one approach to It also should not be surprising. That people who have not attained even the most minimal degree of spiritual realization could disagree about what constitutes mysticism, should still not be surprising. Indeed, this is to be expected.

Footnotes

- 1.) Jacob Needleman, ed., "Oriental Metaphysics" by Rene Guenon, pages 42-43, *Sword of Gnosis* (Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1974),
- 2.) Walter T. Stace, ed., *The Teachings of the Mystics* (Scarborough, Ontario, New American Library, 1970), page 11.
- 3.) Ibid, page 13.
- 4.) Martin Lings, *Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1971, page 3.
- 5.) Water T. Stace, ed., *The Teachings of the Mystics*, page 72.
- 6.) Ibid, page 19.
- 7.) Wallace I. Matson, *The Existence of God* (New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University, 1965), page 24.
- 8.) Ibid.
- 9.) Ibid., page 27.
- 10.) Ibid., pages 27-28.
- 11.) Walter T. Stace, ed., *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 14.
- 12.) Jacob Needleman, ed., "Signs of the Times" by Martin Lings, page 109, *Sword of Gnosis* (Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1974).
- 13.) Walter T. Stace, ed., *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 72.
- 14.) Ibid, page 77.
- 15.) Jacob Needleman, ed., "Oriental Metaphysics" by Rene Guenon, pages 47-48, *Sword of Gnosis*, (Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1974),
- 16.) Ibid., "Is There Room for 'Grace' in Buddhism?" by Marco Pallis, pages 277-278.
- 17.) Farid ud-din Attar, *Conference of the Birds*, translated by Edward Fitzgerald in *Letters and Literary Remains*, edited by Aldis Wright (New York, Harper Row, 1889).
- 18.) Jacob Needleman, ed., "Is There Room For 'Grace' In Buddhism?" by Marco Pallis, page 293, *Sword of Gnosis* (Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, 1974),

19.) Frithjof Schuon, *In The Tracks of Buddhism* (London, Allen and Unwin Limited, 1968), page 66.

20.) Rene Guenon, "Taoism and Confucianism", *Studies In Comparative Religion*, pages 245-246.

21.) Walter T. Stace., ed., *The Teachings of the Mystics*, Ibid, pages 16-17.

22.) M.Q. Baig, "The Spiritual Ascension of a Sufi Master", Unpublished, 1971, page 5.

23.) Garma C. C. Chang, *The Practice of Zen* (New York, Harper & Row, 1959), page 51.

Appendix (Mapping Mental Spaces)

1. The only point(s) of possible contact between understanding and reality is (are) experience(s).

1.01 Initially, we do not know if this possibility is given expression through an asymptote-like relationship (never quite touching although, in some sense, approaching one another as a limit), a tangential link (touching at only one point), multiple-points of contacts, or if understanding and experience constitute the sum total of reality (with nothing independent of such understanding and experience).

1.0101 The term “manifold” refers to the structural character of such points of contact.

1.0102 Contact constitutes junctures of engagement, interaction, transaction, or contiguity between that aspect of reality that is capable of experience and those facets of what is that makes experience at such junctures possible.

1.0103 Interaction, engagement, transaction and/or contiguity at the junctures of contact between that which is capable of experience and that which makes experience of such structural character possible gives rise to points or clusters of data that are processed by different dimensions of understanding as information of one kind or another concerning the possible nature or structure of such junctures of contact.

1.01031 The term “identifying reference” is a way of alluding to attentional and intentional dimensions of experience. By attending to a dimension or facet of experience and communicating the nature of that attention to another individual, we seek to inform the other person about some aspect of what we are intending in relation to that to which we are attending. The communication that involves conveying the nature of the link between attending and intending gives expression to the process of identifying reference.

1.01032 The process of identifying reference tends to involve pointing toward, or descriptions of, or attempting to draw attention to, the structural character of various kinds of qualities, properties, states of affairs, contexts, experiences, modalities of consciousness, events, objects, phenomena.

1.01033 The idea of “structural character” refers to the nature of the form, logic, framework, format, pattern, figure, latticework, set of relationships, and/or set of degrees of freedom and constraints, through which a given aspect of experience, or that which makes such experience possible, is given expression or is manifested.

1.011 Solipsism is a perspective that maintains that reality is generated as a function of an individual’s states of consciousness and all that can be known are such states and, possibly, the nature of the self that gives rise to them.

1.012 The term “relationship” gives expression to the linkage, connection, interface, association, or affiliation of two or more aspects of experience, understanding, or that which makes experience of a certain structural character possible. There are many kinds of relationships that are possible, ranging from: temporal, to: spatial, logical, dialectical, ecological, moral, causal, conceptual, hierarchical, physical, and spiritual.

1.1 Kant might have been wrong, for, it might be possible, after all, to know things in themselves. However, this might be true, if at all, only to extent that we have the capacity to understand the nature, logic, or structural character of such ‘things’, and only to the extent that these ‘things’ are expressed through manifestations that can be experienced.

1.11 The phenomenology of the ‘manifold’ serves as that realm where understanding, experience, and reality are brought into conjunction with one another. Another way of referring to this ‘manifold’ is by the term: phenomenological field.

1.111 Phenomenology gives expression to a being’s capacity to engage experience in a conscious manner.

1.121 Consciousness is a priori – that is, all experience presupposes its existence. Indeed, consciousness is the ground through which experience is given expression. One cannot deny the existence of consciousness without affirming the very reality that is being denied.

1.122 Consciousness is the awareness of experience.

1.123 Reflexive consciousness is the awareness of such awareness and that such awareness gives expression to different kinds of experience.

1.124 A phenomenological field is a framework whose structural character gives expression to the presence of awareness or consciousness (basic or reflexive) concerning experience at any 'point' (simple or complex) one cares to examine, test, or challenge within the context of that framework. The lines of force that are manifested in such a field are expressions of the dynamics of experience, awareness, understanding, and the impact, if any, of that which lies beyond the horizons of the phenomenological field but that interacts with and affects, in one way or another, the structural character of that field.

1.125 Neither awareness of experience nor reflexive consciousness can guarantee, in and of themselves, that one's understanding of the nature of that of which one is aware, or that which makes possible that of which one is aware, will be correct or accurate.

1.126 Consciousness might, or might not, be shaped by contingencies that lie beyond present or all future modalities of awareness.

1.127 Experience gives expression to the sum total of an individual's interaction with reality.

1.128 Reality is synonymous with whatever is, together with whatever makes being possible, including the being of that which is capable of experience and understanding, on whatever level.

1.1281 Truth refers to an accurate, correct, or non-distorted reflection of one, or another, dimension or facet of reality or what is.

1.1282 Truth might rarely, if ever, be acquired in an ultimate, absolute, definitive, and all-encompassing manner among human beings.

1.1283 For the most part, and at best, human beings tend to acquire truths in tangential, asymptotic, or limited ways. Furthermore, rather than grasping the truth of the entire realm of being, we tend to grasp, within varying degrees, limited aspects of truth involving this or that dimension or this or that facet of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

1.129 Understanding is the process one uses to try to map out the possible relationship between experience(s) and reality.

1.1291 The nature of understanding is to construct mental spaces or possible worlds and compare the logic or structural character of such spaces and worlds with the logic or structural character of experience.

1.13 A possible world gives expression to hermeneutical space.

1.131 Hermeneutical space is a logical form that is generated through understanding.

1.1312 Logic arises through conscious construction, or appears ready made in awareness, or is a combination of conscious construction and ready-made components that arise from beyond the realms of consciousness.

1.13121 Logic concerns: (a) the structural character of a form or process; and/or (b) the relationships of similarity and difference between, or among, structural characters; and/or (c) the causal, temporal, contiguous, dependent, associative (i.e., correlation), and/or theoretical, linkages that are believed to be operative in and/or among different structural forms and processes.

1.131212 Logic is a way of organizing, arranging, relating, valuing, exploring, traveling, and/or generating the structural character of hermeneutical spaces.

1.1312121 Logic gives expression to the degrees of freedom, constraints, operations, functions, rules, principles, relationships, and laws that govern a given hermeneutical space or that are manifested through such a space.

1.1312122 Thinking, reflection, inference, interpolation, extrapolation, implication, induction, deduction, abduction, analogy, insight, conceptualization, abstraction, mapping, questioning, believing, assuming, creativity, language, interpretation, hypothesizing, fantasizing, dreaming, feeling, judgment, analysis, evaluation, critical inquiry, and understanding each gives expression to hermeneutical spaces of one kind or another, and logic seeks to chart the structural character (both static and dynamic) of such spaces.

1.322 An idea or concept is a particular kind of hermeneutical space. The structural character of such a space reflects the nature of the idea or concept. Larger hermeneutical spaces are often constructed or generated using various ideas and concepts as 'points', somewhat akin to the manner in which geometric points are said to give expression to, say, a line.

1.3221 The structural character of ideas and concepts tend to be far more complex than the points of geometry -- even the curved points of Riemann geometry -- but are closer in nature to the latter than the former, since the idea of 'curvature' in Riemann's geometry suggests the possibility of an internal structure of varying degrees of complexity that might alter with circumstances and conditions.

1.3222 Reason is the capacity to grasp the structural character of a given hermeneutical space or to follow and/or predict the flow of artificial and/or natural systems of logic as these are given expression through the structural character of such a system being manifested.

1.3223 What cannot be followed through rational means is either irrational (without logical form or unintelligible or trans-rational (that is, beyond the capacity of reason to grasp but not necessarily without logical form, truth, and/or intelligibility).

1.3224 Methodology is a process of evaluation concerning the nature of understanding, experience, and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

1.32241 Evaluation involves the use of reason, hermeneutical spaces, and various systems of logic to establish the value of various aspects of experience or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

1.32242 The value of an experience or that which makes an experience of such structural character possible is an expression of the way an individual is assisted to understand, adapt, or benefit, in some manner, through such an experience or through that which makes an experience of such structural character possible.

1.32243 The significance of 'value' might be relative to: a given perspective, an individual, a community, or a reflection of the possibilities inherent in a given facet or dimension of the way things are.

1.133 One of the essential questions at the heart of seeking an understanding is to ask: what might give rise to experience(s) of the structural character that are experienced through consciousness.

1.134 One form of mapping gives expression to operations and processes that seek to chart the structural character of one, or more, hermeneutical spaces.

1.1341 Another form of mapping gives expression to those attempts of understanding to establish relationships of congruence, matching, resonance, reflection, and/or similarity between (among) the logical character of possible worlds being constructed and the logical character of experience(s).

1.1342 A third form of mapping gives expression to operations and processes that seek to establish relationships, connections, and links among the structural character of a given hermeneutical space, a given set of experiences, and various aspects of that which makes experiences of such character possible.

2. Facts constitute a logical space that gives expression to and/or represents and/or describes various dimensions of the character of experience.

2.01 Different kinds of experience might, or might not, give rise to different kinds of facts.

2.1 Facts might accurately reflect the structural character of some facet of experience, but this need not entail their accurately reflecting the structural character of that which makes experience of such character possible.

2.2 Facts require context and interpretation in order for their significance to be evaluated.

2.3 The context of facts is the catalog of experiences out of which such facts arise.

2.4 A fact might be a feeling concerning, a belief about, a reflection on, a description of, a reference to, and/or an insight into some aspect of experience.

2.41 Feelings are certain kinds of modality of relating to, and interacting with, various aspects of experience and/or that which makes experiences of such structural character possible. These

modalities are non-rational in nature (which does not necessarily mean they are irrational), varying in intensity with circumstances and conditions, and often underwrite, orient, shape, and direct one's commitments and actions.

2.411 Feelings (emotions) must be tasted or experienced in order to grasp something of the structural character of their nature. Just as one can have only very limited understanding concerning the nature of an orange if one has never seen, touched, smelled, or tasted such a fruit, so, too, one can have only very limited understanding concerning the nature of any given emotion, if one has not experienced that emotion from the inside out, as it were.

2.412 Feelings can both help one to better understand the nature of experience, as well as interfere with one's attempt to understand the nature of experience. In the former case, they are complementary to the use of reason and help bring balance to hermeneutical activities. In the latter case, they are antagonistic to and obstacles for, one's attempt to seek understanding.

2.413 When the presence, or expression, of certain kinds of feelings (emotions) dominates or orients hermeneutical activity in a destructive, problematic, or distorting manner, then, one of the biggest challenges to generating hermeneutical spaces that are congruent with, reflect, or mirror the structural character of various dimensions of reality is to find ways of eliminating, containing, or modulating the presence of such feelings in order to limit the extent of bias and error that affects the construction of heuristically valuable hermeneutical spaces.

2.414 A methodology, belief, idea, or activity has heuristic value when it aids the process of discovery with respect to coming to understand the structural character of some aspect or dimension of experience or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

2.421 Beliefs give expression to hermeneutical spaces that often are not amenable to proofs but, nonetheless, tend to be concerned with the relationship among understanding, experience, and the nature of that which makes experience of such structural character possible. Beliefs are a way of orienting oneself within phenomenological and hermeneutical space.

2.42111 Beliefs are ideas and/or values to which a hermeneutical commitment, of some kind, has been made - the nature of this commitment is to accept or treat the focus of this commitment as if it were true.

2.42112 Beliefs involve commitments that are considered to have some sort of value to the one holding the commitment.

2.42113 Discussions concerning belief frequently involve descriptions of the structural character of the nature of a given belief, or belief system, together with explorations of the assumptions, evidence, arguments, explanations, consistency, coherency, validity, heuristic value, strengths, lacunae, problems, and questions that are, or might be, associated with such a belief or belief system.

2.42114 The use of data, evidence, arguments, demonstrations, and proofs in conjunction with beliefs or belief systems is often, at best, suggestive or leads to inconclusive results as far as verification of the belief or belief system is concerned.

2.42115 In general, showing a belief or belief system to be untenable or problematic tends to be easier to accomplish than showing either of the foregoing possibilities to be plausible, probable, or true.

2.431 Insight is the capacity of intelligence to understand, to varying degrees, the structural character of some aspect, facet or dimension of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

2.5 The possible worlds of hermeneutical space consist of a series of facts, assumptions, interpretations, beliefs, values, and relationships that are arranged into a structure that give expression to both form and process of a given character - namely, the logical character of that hermeneutical space.

2.6 The logical character of a hermeneutical space gives expression to the principles, rules, laws, possibilities, forces, processes, and/or limitations inherent in such a space.

2.7 Objects are forms of a given logical kind that populate a hermeneutical space.

2.8 The logical kind to which an object gives expression is a reflection of the structural character of the role that such an object plays in a given hermeneutical space.

2.81 The role played by an object is an expression of the principles, rules, laws, possibilities, forces, processes and limitations that are operative in a given hermeneutical space.

2.82 The role played by an object is the locus of manifestation through which the logical character of the hermeneutical space is given expression by means of the convergent interaction of the principles, forces, forms, processes, rules, laws, and so that are inherent in that hermeneutical space at a given point in time and at a given location within that space.

2.83 Time and location are a function of the logical character of a given hermeneutical space.

2.9 Language is a species of hermeneutical space.

2.91 Hermeneutical space might not be coextensive with language.

2.92 Emotion, sensation, dreaming, aptitude, interests, motivation, movement, fantasy, creativity, insight, thinking, and spiritual knowledge might, or might not, be expressible, to varying degrees, in terms of language, but the former are not necessarily reducible to the latter.

2.921 Feeling, sensation, dreaming, aptitude, interests, motivation, movement, fantasy, creativity, insight, thinking, and spiritual knowledge might all take place quite independently of language and, in most cases, predate the appearance of language.

2.922 Making experience a function of, and dependent on, language, is to render the process of language completely amorphous and, therefore, oblique to understanding.

2.923 Sometimes language determines what we feel, sense, dream, like, do, create, think or understand, but sometimes the use of language is directed and shaped by what we feel, sense, dream, like, do, create, think, or understand.

2.924. Language is a way of giving public expression to certain dimensions of experience and hermeneutical spaces concerning such experience.

2.925 Language is a tool that can assist in the construction of hermeneutical spaces, and, in turn, hermeneutical spaces can inform the way(s) in which language is used as a tool.

2.926 Language is one mapping medium, among many, through which understanding, experience, and reality might be probed.

2.927 Language without a conscious operator does not have the capacity, on its own, to serve as tool for helping to construct or map hermeneutical spaces.

2.9271 The syntax and semantics of a language are static entities until brought alive through use within a context of consciousness and understanding.

2.9272 Language serves as a catalyst for the constructing and mapping of hermeneutical spaces by conscious beings of some minimal level of understanding and hermeneutical capability.

2.9273 Language serves as a medium of public analysis and comparison for different modalities of hermeneutical space.

2.93 Among those beings who are capable of experience, some degree of understanding concerning such experience, and who have developed a certain proficiency with language to be able to describe both experience and understanding, are some beings who say that the propositions or statements of language constitute a picture of experience and/or understanding and/or those facets of reality that are given expression at the junctures of contact where experience, understanding, reality come together.

2.931 This tends to lead to the questions: What is the nature of a picture, and do the descriptions of language constitute a picture, and, if so, what kind of a picture?

2.932 There are many kinds of pictures - photographs, holographs, mental images, magnetic resonance imaging, art works, positron emission tomography, cartography, X-rays, optical illusions, radio wave imaging, sketches, dreams, hallucinations, stills, movies, television, and so on.

2.933 All pictures involve a methodology (well-conceived or otherwise) for engaging the junctures of contact that bring experience, understanding, and reality together.

2.934 Methodology is an ordered process of understanding whose purpose is to engage experience and that which makes experience of such structural character possible in order to probe, within the capacity of the methodology to do so, the nature, structure, or logic of the relationship, if any, between these two dimensions of being.

2.935 Pictures are generated through a process that affects the quality and character of the images that are produced, as well as imposes a limiting context on the mode of engagement to which the methodology underlying the picture gives expression.

2.936 Pictures are an interpretive mapping of some given juncture, or set of junctures, in which experience, understanding, and reality come together.

2.937 Interpretive mapping gives expression to a methodology's manner of constructing hermeneutical spaces.

2.938 Pictures are hermeneutical spaces, the contents of which are filled up by the data that is generated through the way the methodology of the picture taking engages experience and that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

2.94 Language, to the extent it constitutes a modality of generating pictures, does so according to the methodological properties of the language in question.

2.941 The methodology inherent in any given language is an expression of the rules and principles of syntax and semantics that differentiate one language from another.

2.9411 The rules of a language establish the boundary conditions that cannot be violated without removing one from the way the given language permits one to communicate with others who use the same language. Linguistic rules are like the motor vehicle codes that govern the operation of motor vehicles within a given locality in order for traffic to move smoothly with as few problems as possible.

2.9412 The principles of a language establish the degrees of freedom through which an individual can move creatively and hermeneutically within a given language in order to adapt the rules and principles of syntax and semantics of that language to one's individual desires to communicate about issues that are either meta-linguistic or extra-linguistic. Linguistic principles are like road maps

that show you places to which travel is possible but do not specify where one has to go or what routes one must take in order to arrive at one's desired destination.

2.9413 The rules and principles of a given language's syntax and semantics serve as mapping tools that enable an individual to translate, to whatever extent possible, between personal, extra-linguistic hermeneutical spaces and public linguistic hermeneutical spaces.

2.942 Different languages have varying degrees of flexibility concerning the extent to which the syntax and semantics of such languages are able to serve as vehicles of transmission for forms of thought, logic, creativity, understanding, and, methodology that are extra-linguistic.

2.943 Languages and pictures are similar to the extent that each uses mapping methodologies to link together junctures of contact among experiences, understandings, and that which makes experiences and understandings of such structural character possible.

2.944 Languages and pictures are dissimilar to the extent that their respective methodologies give expression to different sets of rules and principles for linking together junctures of contact among experiences, understandings, and that which makes experiences and understandings of such character possible.

2.945 Methodology -- whether linguistic, pictorial, or other -- does not create, construct, or understand, in and of itself, per se. Rather, methodology establishes the limits (or boundary conditions) and degrees of freedom for what can be created, constructed and/or understood using that form of methodology.

2.946 The value of a given form of methodology -- linguistic or otherwise -- is in direct proportion to the capacity of the set of rules and principles inherent in that methodology to enable an individual to probe the relationship between experience and that which makes experience of such character possible. Through this process of hermeneutical probing, one seeks to establish an understanding that accurately reflects the structural character of that which makes experience of a certain nature possible. The greater this degree of accurate reflection, the greater the heuristic value of the methodology.

2.95 Methodology, language, understanding, hermeneutical space, logic, and mapping are different ways of making reference to the process of creating and constructing epistemological mirrors that are capable of reflecting, with varying degrees of accuracy, the nature of the relationship between experience and that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

2.96 The medium of measurement for reflective accuracy is congruency.

2.961 In mathematics, two geometric figures that can be precisely superimposed on one another are said to be congruent.

2.962 In hermeneutics, two spaces that are being compared are said to be congruent to the extent that one can establish mapping relationships that link aspects of respective facets of being in a way that does not generate more problems and questions than the congruency is capable of demonstrating in the way of mapping relationships of a reflective nature.

2.9621 The greater the degree of congruency between spaces being compared, then, the greater will be the degree to which those spaces will be said to merge horizons.

2.9622 A horizon is an expression of the logical nature of some facet of manifested structure. Horizons are boundaries that tend to differentiate what is within a structure from that which is external to such a structure.

2.96221 However, frequently, horizons are not static but shift with perspective, experience, interpretation, and understanding. Facets of experience that, at one time, might have been considered to be separate and independent, might be discovered, at a later time, to have a relationship that requires one to re-work one's understanding of how to differentiate between what is within a structure and what is external to that structure. Like the physical horizon of landscapes, hermeneutical horizons tend to move with us and are shaped and influenced by the nature of that movement.

2.96222 Horizons might be simple or complex. In other words, the boundary conditions that are given expression through the way horizons differentiate between what is within a given structure, and what is external to that structure, might consist of relatively few

elements and/or forms of transaction between the 'internal' and the 'external' realms. On the other hand, such boundary conditions might consist of many facets and dimensions -- both with respect to the number and character of elements, as well in relation to the extent of the transactions that transpire across the boundaries marked by the horizons, thereby making it difficult to determine on which side of the boundary a given phenomenon (whether event, object, process, and so on) falls.

2.96223 Most of us have a considerable backlog of experience with, information about, understanding of, and insight into the process of establishing congruency. More specifically, whenever an individual seeks to translate feelings, experiences, thoughts, beliefs, states of consciousness, and other facets of the phenomenological field into public discourse via a language (spoken, written, signed, mathematical, coded), one goes through a process of trying to create logical spaces through the way we utilize and weave together the syntax and semantics of a given language so that the structural character of this space is congruent with, or accurately reflective of, or able to mirror the structural character of whatever aspect of the phenomenological field one to which one is making identifying reference by means of the language.

2.96224 When there is a mismatch between the structural character of the two hermeneutical spaces (one being: that which is meant, intended, understood, or experienced, and the other being: the language used to describe or convey what is meant, intended, and so on), then, the one who is communicating with someone else tends to amend the character of the syntax and semantics being used to better reflect the meaning or sense one wishes to convey to the recipient of the communication.

2.96225 Similarly, when someone receives communication from another individual, and the recipient does not understand the sense of what is meant or intended by the other individual, then, the recipient tends to use the modality of the interrogative imperative to query various facets of what has been communicated. Here, again, there is a mismatch between hermeneutical spaces -- namely, the understanding of the recipient and the structural character of the linguistic spaces

generated by the one who is seeking to communicate about some aspect of the latter individual's phenomenological field.

2.96226 Most of us do not tend to think of these processes of translating between phenomenology and language as instances of congruence operations, but, this is what is transpiring irrespective of whether, or not, we use this term.

2.963 The notion of "spaces" need not be restricted to geometric, mathematical, physical, or material modalities. A "space" is anything that has a logical or structural form of whatever kind.

2.964 Since we don't, yet, know where or how creative, interpretive, epistemological, and/or linguistic processes take place, we do not know what the precise nature of the space is through which these phenomena are given expression. However, what we do know is that all of these processes have a logical form or structure to them.

3.01 There are multiplicities of logical systems.

3.011 Some logical systems are invented or created and other logical systems are given expression through the structural character or nature inherent in some dimension of reality being the way that it is.

3.012 Whether created or natural, logic gives expression to the structural character of the forms and/or processes governing a given facet, aspect, dimension, level, or plane of being.

3.0121 All created systems of logic constitute hermeneutical spaces.

3.01212 Created systems of logic involve a hermeneutical process of mapping that is governed by a set of assumptions, principles, rules, and propositions that are ordered in accordance with the constraints and degrees of freedom permitted by the set of assumptions, principles and rules that constitute the given system of logic.

3.0122 Natural systems of logic involve the manner in which some facet, aspect, dimension, or plane of being is manifested or unfolds over time.

3.0123 When the structural character of a created system of logic reflects the structural character of a natural system of logic, then,

congruency exists between the two systems of logic to the extent that the reflection of the latter by the former can be shown to be accurate.

3.1 'Characterization' refers to the process of placing an aspect or dimension of experience within hermeneutical space. Assumption, abstraction, categorization, definition, description, belief, faith, and modeling all give expression, in one way or another, to the process of characterization.

3.11 How we emotionally respond to experience forms an important dimension of the characterization process. Liking, attraction, repulsion, hostility, fear, pleasure, pain, trust, avoidance, and so on are all expressions of characterization.

3.112 Characterization is something human beings, along with various other species of life, do in order to help orient oneself within hermeneutical space. Characterization relates us to experience through the construction, creation, and/or generation of modalities of classification concerning such experience.

3.1121 Different systems of created logic employ a variety of mapping techniques -- included among these are: induction; deduction; analogy; abstraction; dialectic; implication; inference; entailment; tautology; validity; consistency; necessity; coherency; assumptions; possibility; plausibility; correlation; probability; causality; conjecture; interpolation; extrapolation; hypotheses; theory; law; formulae; equations; arguments; evidence; demonstration; proof; description; explanation; belief; insight; models; world-making; frames of reference; paradigms, and world-views.

3.1122 Some of these mapping techniques are applied to one, or another, created system of logic as a means of analyzing and/or evaluating such systems. Some of these techniques are applied to the data of experience in order to either map out the structural character of such experience or to generate maps that are intended to account for how experience of such structural character is possible.

3.1123 Induction is a process that uses some set of data as a basis for generating a conclusion concerning the proposed character of similar instances of data not yet encountered. For instance, if all the swans one has seen are white, one might use this base set of data

about swans to conclude that all future instances of swan-encounters are likely, as well, to involve white swans.

3.11231 The risk one runs in using induction is that the conclusion one has formed on the basis of what has been observed or encountered might not be correct. For example, black swans do exist, and, therefore, the belief that all future instances of swan-encounters will involve white swans will fall with the first black swan that is encountered.

3.113 Deduction focuses on the kinds of conclusion one can draw about some facet of experience or about a system of logic given certain information concerning both the nature of that facet of being as well as a background of information about a variety of experiences in general. Such conclusions usually are limited to unpacking or delineating the set of constraints and degrees of freedom that are inherent in the available information. Thus, if I know that human beings are capable of carrying on a conversation, and if I am carrying on a conversation, via a telephone, with a voice that is located elsewhere, then, I might deduce that this other voice belongs to a human being.

3.1131 Conclusions reached through the exercise of deduction concerning a given set of data, propositions, experiences, and so on aren't always correct. For instance, if the voice with whom I having a conversation is part of a complex and sophisticated system of software and hardware that constitutes a framework of artificial intelligence, then, the deduction that the other voice belongs to the human being with whom I am having a conversation might not be warranted. Among other things, one might have to determine whether one could extend the category of human beings to include systems of artificial intelligence before making such a deduction. Moreover, whether such a deduction would, then, be correct might depend on whether, or not, the determination concerning the relationship between human beings and any given system of artificial intelligence is warranted.

3.1132 Interpolation is a form of mapping that inserts or computes intermediate values within a given sequence, series, or set of events, operations, or calculations. These values are believed to be related to the rest of the series or sequence in the same way as the present set of events are related to one another. Interpolation might give expression to either inductive and/or deductive processes.

3.1133 Extrapolation is a form of mapping that seeks to determine or estimate the identity of values that extend beyond the horizons or range of some given set of data, and, yet, retain the structural character of the relationship that links the elements within the known set of data. Extrapolation might consist of induction, deduction, or some combination of the two.

3.114 Mapping techniques involving analogy use the structural features and/or relationships within one context to direct attention to possible similarities of structural character and/or relationship within a different context. For example, rivers and arteries constitute different contexts, but they share a variety of similarities. More specifically, they both: involve liquids; the flow of materials within a delimited framework; pressure; currents; a possibility for transport; are part of a larger ecological system; and so on. One might key in on one, or more, of the foregoing features to establish a relationship of analogy between rivers and arteries for purposes of description, explanation, analysis, modeling, and the like.

3.1141 The value of an analogy depends on both the strength of the similarity that is being proposed with respect to the contexts that have been selected for comparison in this manner, as well as the nature of the purpose for which such an analogy is being established and whether, or not, the similarities are capable of sustaining the purpose for which the analogy has been drawn.

3.1142 An analog is a logical system that purports to reflect the structural character, in some way, of some other logical system -- either artificial or natural. Often times, an analog focuses on the manner in which some other system operates or on the kind of relationships that tend to govern the other system, and, usually, the form of an analog keys in on the idea of using the continuous modulation of one, or more, variables as its manner of establishing congruency with the structural character of that system to which the analog makes identifying reference.

3.115 Abstraction is a process of stripping away the details of a given event, object, phenomenon, experience, process, or context, and so on in order to focus on a limited aspect, facet or dimension of such an event, object, phenomenon, experience, process, or context - often times such abstractions are embodied within systems of symbols (e.g.,

linguistic, mathematical, logical) that are said to represent, or give expression to, the properties or qualities that have been pared down or abstracted in one way or another.

3.1151 Although thinking about objects, phenomena, events, and so on, in the simplified way made possible through abstraction often helps make analysis, evaluation, exploration, experimentation, and/or gaining insight into such objects, phenomena, or events easier to do, the value of such a process tends to depend on the nature of the abstraction, how such abstractions are used, and remembering that simplified systems cannot hope to manifest all of the qualities, properties, and possibilities inherent in the more complex context from which the abstraction has been extracted. As a result, various kinds of error might be introduced into one's mapping program when using: data, ideas, information, and so on, that have been generated through processes of abstraction.

3.1152 Symbols are often used to signify the presence of certain modalities of abstraction. A symbol is not the same as, or synonymous with, that to which it makes identifying reference but, instead, is part of a system of logic that gives expression to a set of abstractions through which hermeneutical spaces are generated that are intended to establish varying degrees of congruency with certain aspects or dimensions of the structural character of experience, or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.11521 Symbols do not necessarily remove one from the context being explored. Rather, they give expression to characterizations of such contexts -- characterizations from which certain details, themes, and so on of the original context have been removed. Symbols permit one to simplify the ways in which hermeneutical spaces are described.

3.115211 Some forms of the foregoing sort of simplification have heuristic value while other forms do not.

3.116 A dialectic is a process of hermeneutical mapping that gives expression to a form of argument that links ideas, events, objects, processes, propositions, phenomena, and/or situations in accordance with some rule or principle or set of such rules and principles. One cannot know the nature of the dialectic involved until one understands the character of the rules and principles being used to shape the linkages among ideas, events, objects, and so on, but, usually, the

linkages of a given form of dialectic have to do with the manner in which structural relationships are said to direct the flow of unfolding or manifestation of some given set of ideas, events, objects, and so on.

3.1161 The Hegelian dialectic is different from that of Marx's dialectical materialism, and both of these are different from the dialectic of a Socratic dialogue. Each of the foregoing forms of dialectic uses different sets of rules and principles to establish linkages within their respective systems of thought.

Furthermore, the epistemological value of a given instance of dialectics depends on the extent to which the set of rules and principles shaping the flow of hermeneutical linkages within a given kind of dialectic is capable of reflecting the structural character of the way some aspect, facet, dimension, or plane of being actually operates or is manifested and with respect to which the dialectic is being used as a means of explicating the structural character of the aspect or dimension to which the dialectic is giving reference.

3.117 Implication is a process of mapping that points in the direction of other possibilities being connected or related, in some way, to the context out of which the indication of implication arises. The extent and character of such a connection or relationship depends on the nature of the implication and the possibilities to which the implication is being juxtaposed.

3.1171 For example, if one were to enter into a house and find dinnerware and food on the dining room table, then, this information implies there might be a group of people somewhere, nearby, who are preparing to eat. On the other hand, one might have wandered into a nuclear test site in which an atomic bomb is about to be exploded and the table has been set to see what, if any, effects (both short-term and long-term) might result with respect to such a house that contains a dining room with a table set with food and dinnerware.

3.11711 Implications might be strong, weak, or unwarranted. In the latter case, although someone has proposed that a relationship or connection exists between two contexts, events, processes, and so on, in reality, no such relationship or connection exists.

3.118 Inferences are conclusions drawn by an individual concerning some given set of data or body of information or array of

propositions. Such conclusions might be causal, relational, hierarchical, or associational in nature.

3.1181 Inferential conclusions are not always correct or warranted.

3.119 Entailment refers to mapping processes that purport to establish that one fact, proposition, event, phenomenon, idea, context, object, or process supports the truth, validity, reality, or existence of some other fact, proposition, event, phenomenon, idea, context, object or process. The nature and strength of such support will depend on the structural character of the entailment relationship that is being proposed.

3.1191 Similar to mappings that involve processes of inference, implication, dialectic, abstraction, analogy, deduction, and induction, so too, entailment proposals might, or might not, be warranted.

3.120 A tautology is a special form of entailment proposal. According to this kind of mapping technique, if one unpacks or delineates the structural character of some given fact, proposition, state of affairs, context, process, event, phenomenon, or object, then, the truth of a given tautology is contained within the structural character being unpacked or delineated. Tautologies are merely re-statements, in altered form, of what is already known about the structural character of some fact, proposition, or issue.

3.1201 Thus, one might say that a tennis ball is yellow, and, then, go on to say that the ball is round and colored. The latter statement is entailed by the first statement – once one understands the nature of tennis balls in general -- because the latter statement is merely re-stating, in altered form, what is known by means of the first statement, and, therefore, is tautological with respect to the first statement.

3.1202 Tautologies are not necessarily about the nature of what makes the structural character of some given experience possible. Tautologies might be part of artificially constructed logical systems (e.g., models, paradigms, frames of reference, world-view, theories, beliefs) that although true in the context of such logical systems have no reference to anything beyond the horizons of those systems.

3.121 Validity is a mapping operation that focuses on the relationship between a given set of data or information and one, or

more, deductions, implications, or entailment proposals that are made in conjunction with that set of data or information. The nature of this relationship concerns the degree to which deductions, conclusions, implications, entailments, and/or inferences are warranted as one moves from a given set of data or information to certain deductions, implications, and so on, involving that set of data. Relationships that are warranted, or follow from, or are evidentially supported tend to be referred to as valid.

3.1211 Determining whether, or not, the aforementioned relationships are warranted, or follow from, or are evidentially supported is not always easy or straightforward.

3.1212 Determining validity within artificially constructed systems of logic tends to be an easier problem to solve than trying to determine the validity of statements involving the relationship between ideas or statements about certain dimensions of experience and that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.122 Consistency is one test of validity. In order for a series of ideas, propositions, experiences, understandings and so on, to be consistent with one another, there must not be anything within any of the given ideas, propositions, etc., which contradicts -- in part, or in whole -- any aspect, dimension, or facet of any of the other ideas, experiences, or propositions that are in the set or series being considered. In addition, one must be capable of showing there is some degree of relationship among the ideas, propositions, or experiences that ties together, in some fashion, the various items in the series or set.

3.1221 Unrelated ideas, issues, experiences, events, or propositions are neither consistent nor inconsistent. However, there might be varying degrees of consistency -- depending on how weak or strong the relationship is that is said to tie the set or series of ideas, experiences, events, propositions, and so on, together.

3.123 Coherency is an indication of the internal validity of a system of logic. Coherency refers to the manner in which a hermeneutical space hangs together to serve as an account, story, description, or explanation and, as such, appears to possess few, if any, lacunae or gaps in its structural structure -- gaps that would tend to

discredit the possible value of the account, story, description, or explanation.

3.123001 The reliability of a methodology, measurement process, or modality of hermeneutical activity points in several directions. On the one hand, reliability concerns the capacity of, say, a given form of methodology to produce results that are relatively consistent with respect to a given phenomenon under similar conditions of engagement. On the other hand, reliability raises the issue of whether, or not, a given methodology or form of measurement has the capacity to accurately reflect, mirror, or establish congruency with some aspect or dimension of the structural character of some given experience, or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.123002 Replication, confirmation, and verification are all different ways of referring to the issue of reliability in both its inward pointing sense (the first aspect noted above), as well as its outward pointing sense (the second aspect outlined in the foregoing.)

3.124 Necessity gives expression to the way logical systems manifest themselves such that the manifesting could not have been other than what it is. The necessity of artificial and natural systems of logic both are functions of the structural character of such systems.

3.1241 The necessity of artificial systems of logic might not extend beyond the horizons of that system.

3.1241 Necessary conditions refer to those facets of a logical system - whether artificial or natural -- which, if not present, will impede something within that system from taking place or being manifested or continuing or proceeding, but, if present, might help provide for the possibility of something transpiring without necessarily guaranteeing such an outcome. Thus, with respect to the lighting of a match - oxygen, a match head with the right composition and quality of sulfur and phosphorus, a minimal degree of dryness, a striking surface of the appropriate properties, and the presence of someone or something to strike the match against such a surface. All of the foregoing conditions are considered necessary since if any of them are absent, the lighting of the match might be impeded, and, yet, if they are all present, there is no guarantee that the match will light since the person or device used to strike the match might not be active, or even

if active, the match might not strike the surface in the way that is required for the match to light.

3.125 Assumptions are mapping operations that serve as starting points for exploration, analysis, evaluation, measurement, methodology, and, in general, constructing or creating hermeneutical spaces. Initially, assumptions tend to be not provable but provide one with conceptual direction with respect to subsequent hermeneutical activity and one proceeds 'as if' the assumption were true in order to see where -- conceptually or hermeneutically speaking -- one might journey from such a starting point.

3.1251 Assumptions might, or might not, accurately reflect -- partly or wholly -- the structural character of some aspect, facet, or dimension of experience or that which makes experience of such structural character possible. However, assumptions -- even if not true -- might be utilized for their heuristic value in suggesting possible avenues of hermeneutical consideration that, eventually, might lead to results that do bear on some dimension, facet, or aspect of being in an accurately reflective manner. Thus, the idea of a geometric point that is without dimension does not necessarily have any counterpart in reality, but it serves as a starting point of considerable heuristic value in relation to constructing artificial systems of geometric logic.

3.126 Possibility refers to mapping operations that entertain various facets of a logical system and treat these facets as if they might be true because nothing that is known to be true contradicts such a consideration.

3.1261 Just as experience, belief, understanding, and knowledge change, so too the character of what one will entertain as being possible might also change. However, what one considers possible might, or might not, accurately reflect what, in reality, is actually possible.

3.1262 Plausibility is a mapping operation or process that renders a judgment concerning not only the validity, consistency and coherency of a given hermeneutical space, but, as well, maps out a degree of confidence one might have with respect to whether, or not, such a space might serve as a candidate that has congruency with some given aspect of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.1263 The foregoing sort of judgment assigns a value that is greater than mere possibility but less than certainty. Consequently, depending on circumstances, there are many values of confidence that might be assigned to such a judgment, and while all such judgments have some degree of reflective capacity or sense to them, not all such judgments are equally plausible.

3.127 Correlation involves mapping operations that seek to establish the degree to which, say, two objects, events, phenomena, processes, or contexts are manifested, occur, or appear together -- either simultaneously, or contiguously, or sequentially.

3.1271 Correlation says nothing about the structural character of the relationship between such objects, events, phenomena, and so on. Rather, it is a measure of the likelihood that if one encounters one of these objects, events, etc, one also will encounter the other object, event, etc -- whether simultaneously, contiguously, or sequentially. Thus, although night and day have a high degree of correlation, night does not cause day, nor does day cause night, but, instead, both are related to a further set of phenomena concerning, among other things, the rotation of the Earth, the movement of the Sun, the propagation of photons across a vacuum, the dispersion of such photons by the atmosphere of the Earth, and the existence of beings capable of discriminating between light and darkness.

3.128 The idea of randomness is an assumption that alludes to the presence of a principle within reality that says there are no dimensions of hidden variables governing a given system and that the structure of such a system is entirely the result of events and processes that, although caused, are not ordered in accordance with any preexisting pattern that is imposed on those events and processes -- other than the fact that such events and processes have the character that they do.

3.1281 An algorithm is a determinate array of operations that are performed on a body or set of data. Although the array of operations is determinate, the outcome might not be predictable (as in non-linear and chaotic systems) because of the synergy -- both negative and positive -- with which the operations feedback into themselves and the data on which they operate.

3.1282 Randomness is an assumption that can never be proved since there is always the possibility that the series or array or set of events that are being called random is a function of an algorithm whose presence and nature has not, yet, been detected.

3.129 Probability encompasses a variety of artificial systems of logic that seek to assign degrees of likelihood to expectations concerning the way a given system or hermeneutical space will be manifested over time. The manner in which these degrees of likelihood are determined and assigned depends on the structural character of the methodology governing a given framework of probability. Irrespective of the method used, the assumption of randomness is often used to establish base lines against which expectations and outcomes might be compared for purposes of analysis.

3.1291 Probability is a way of modeling certain dimensions of a system -- for example, the likelihood that various kinds of event or process will be given expression at different junctures as the system is manifested during its operations or functioning.

3.1292 As is the case with all models, the value of a given probability framework depends on the tenability of mapping processes such as assumptions, abstractions, deductions, analogs, and so on, that are being used to create the structural character of the hermeneutical space that constitutes a probability model.

3.1293 Statistics is a form of mapping that seeks to quantitatively describe, analyze, organize, and interpret a given body of data and/or information, especially in relation to issues of average, frequency, distribution, distance from some standard feature, correlation, trends, and reliability of such quantitative treatments. Statistics is often used as basis for informing, shaping, and directing various kinds of inductive, deductive, and modeling processes, as well as serving as a possible approach to the interpretation and evaluation of experimental data.

3.1294 Although related, in various ways, to probability frameworks, statistics is a different kind of quantitative description than the latter. However, statistics shares many of the same strengths and weaknesses as do mapping operations involving probability.

3.130 Information refers to the ways in which the structural character of experience is characterized, analyzed, interpreted, and organized. Information does not exist in that which is being characterized, rather the structural nature of the logical form of that which is being explored and delineated through the process of characterization serves as the focus of engagement for various processes, operations, functions, and methods that are artificially generated. Each of the foregoing has its own modality for creating the data that become the points -- simple or complex -- from which the hermeneutical space of some system of logic is constructed.

3.131 Information might, or might not, be accurately reflective -- in part or in whole -- of that to which the information makes identifying reference.

3.132 Objectivity is a process that seeks to eliminate as many sources of bias, prejudice, distortion, undue influence, obfuscation, corruption, misunderstanding, and error from the construction, creation, or generation of hermeneutical spaces in conjunction with both experience, as well as that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.1321 Hermeneutical filters are used to process experience, data, information, and so on in a way that emphasizes, or brings out, some features of that experience, etc., while eliminating other facets of such experience. Photographers use various kinds of lenses to filter out certain wavelengths or conditions of lighting. In chemistry, one uses filters to eliminate certain ingredients whose size is larger than the holes of the filter. Audio technicians filter out noise to enhance the quality of sound.

3.13211 All filters have a bias to them that is inclined to some forms, or aspects, of experience, to the exclusion of others, according to the structural character of a filter.

3.13212 Sometimes such biases serve a useful function in conjunction with the quest for objectivity, and sometimes they do not. In either case, one needs to make note of the filters in use and how they shape, color, and orient experience.

3.132121 Calibration is a process that is intended to enable some form of methodology, instrumentation, or hermeneutical activity to

function in an optimal way. Being 'optimal' is a function of the capabilities inherent in the given methodology, instrumentation, or hermeneutical activity, together with the skill and artistry of the individuals who are using such methodology, etc..

3.132122 Part of the process of calibration involves establishing, under specified conditions, base lines of performance and outcomes against which subsequent performance and outcomes generated through such methodology, instrumentation and hermeneutical activity can be compared and assigned meaning and significance.

3.132123 A given base line is not necessarily a reflection of the structural character of some aspect or dimension of experience, or that which makes experience possible, which is independent of the base line. Rather, base lines are established in order to give one a place of known properties and conditions from which to operate and through which one can explore, probe, and experiment with various facets of experience.

3.132124 Base lines and calibration are part of a filtering process.

3.132125 Measurement is a process that seeks to quantify the extent to which some aspect or dimension of experience, or that which makes experience of such structural character possible, gives expression to some quality, property, state, activity, value, or feature in which one is interested. Generally speaking, measurement depends on the existence of some kind of standard unit that either remains consistent over time and across conditions, or fluctuates in known, regular ways according to circumstances.

3.132126 Measurement is another kind of filtering process. The properties of this filter will vary with: (a) the modality of measurement; (b) the nature of, and the problems surrounding, the 'standard unit used by a given form of measurement; (c) the extent to which such a modality interferes with the way in which that which is being measured is manifested; (d) the capacity of the modality of measurement to generate relevant data that serve as hermeneutical entry points through which one might gain insight into the structural character of that which is being measured; (e) the degree of resistance inherent in the structural character of that which is to be measured to the modality of measurement being employed (i.e., some modes of measurement are more compatible with certain dimensions of

experience, or that which makes experience possible, than are other modes of measurement.

3.132127 Unobtrusive measures are those forms of measurement that do not interfere with, or influence, the way some given phenomenon, event, process, object, condition, state, or the like, is manifested during the time in which the modality of measurement engages such a phenomenon, event, etc..

3.132128 At least since the work of Heisenberg, there has been an awareness that the very act of observing a system, phenomenon, and so on, can alter the way in which the system, phenomenon, etc., is given expression during the process of observation. The nature of such alterations might mask, to varying degrees, the actual character of certain dimensions or facets of the system being observed, and, as a result, affect the quality and accuracy of the hermeneutical spaces generated with the assistance of such processes of observation.

3.132129 Quantifying a given property has at least two aspects. The first aspect is to establish a modality of measurement that is capable of reflecting relevant data concerning such a property. The second aspect involves the mathematical treatment of that data.

3.13212901 Methodology, measurement, quantification, and mathematics do not guarantee that the experience or data that is processed through such means will be understood. As Richard Feynman is reported to have once told a student who was anguishing over the nature, meaning and significance of quantum mechanics - "Look, no one understands it, just do the calculations."

3.1321291 Relevancy is not a matter of what is of value to a given form of methodology, measurement, or hermeneutical activity. Relevancy is determined by the actual nature, logic, or structural character of that which is being explored.

3.13212911 The ultimate baseline for all methodology and measurement is reality itself.

3.132130 Not all facets or dimensions of experience, and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible, are amenable to processes of measurement and/or mathematically tractable.

3.133 The interrogative imperative refers to a dimension of human existence that is, on the one hand, rooted in curiosity and the desire to know the truth concerning the nature of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible. On the other hand, the interrogative imperative is rooted in the awareness that there are many ways in which objectivity can be compromised during the process of engaging, exploring, characterizing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, modeling, understanding, and applying experience - such awareness contains the desire to eliminate as many of these kinds of problems as possible.

3.1331 Much of the focus of the interrogative imperative is to determine the extent, if any, to which a claimed insight is possible, plausible, probable, or accurately reflective with respect to that to which the alleged insight makes identifying reference.

3.134 Ockham's razor stipulates that one should not multiply terms, concepts, and assumptions beyond what is necessary to explain or account for a given phenomena. An alternative way of alluding to the same sort of principle is that when comparing two explanations, ideas, assumptions, etc., then, all other things being equal, the simpler of the two is to be preferred.

3.1341 Some of the problems with the foregoing are as follows: what is necessary is often at issue; moreover, 'all other things' often are not equal and how such inequalities affect the process of identifying what is necessary or simpler is not always easily, if at all, capable of being sorted out; in addition, finding reliable measures of simplicity that are independent of the eye of the beholder (i.e., some artificially constructed system of logic) is a complex and difficult process.

3.135 Evidence refers to the set of assumptions, data, information, facts, beliefs, values, judgments, interpretations, understandings, methodologies, mappings, questions, and so on, that have been woven into a framework of reference through which certain kinds of experiences are considered to have some degree of congruency with either an aspect of experience or an aspect of that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.136 The manner or modality of weaving together such evidence is often given expression in the form of a mathematical, logical, or

rigorous argument, demonstration, proof, or explanation, of some kind. These 'forms' are ways of ordering, structuring, arranging, and/or relating the elements of evidence so that the structural character of such a form might be seen, or understood, to have a certain degree of congruency with the structural character of that to which the form of evidence makes identifying reference.

3.137 Forms of tenable argument, demonstration, proof, or explanation are ones that are capable of standing up under the scrutiny of the interrogative imperative over time.

3.1371 Allegedly tenable arguments, and the like, are not necessarily true, for the value and strength of a given judgment of tenability is dependent on the strength and value of the questions that are asked. If the right questions are not asked, then, a given argument or explanation is only as good as the quality and rigor of the questions that have been raised concerning it ... which might, or might not, be all that good depending on circumstances.

3.1372 Proof can be a relative thing that depends on an individual's acceptance of the assumptions, evidence, arguments, propositions, mapping operations, and conclusions contained in the proof.

3.13721 The fact someone accepts a proof as valid, adequate, consistent, coherent, and so on does not, in and of itself, confirm the proof as true, logical, substantiated, and/or legitimate.

3.137211 Before Riemann and Lobachevski, people generally accepted Euclid's geometric proofs and made the latter the cornerstone of a great deal of subsequent work in both mathematics and science. After the work of the two aforementioned mathematicians, people approached the idea of geometric proof differently.

3.137212 Prior to the time when Gödel's notions of incompleteness and inconsistency arrived on the scene, many people regarded the proofs of mathematics as certain and reliable. After Gödel, people looked at the idea of proof very differently.

3.13722 The fact most people believe something to have been proven does not, in and of itself, mean the proof is beyond warranted

criticism. Similarly, the fact few people believe in a given proof, does not, in and of itself, negate the value of such a proof.

3.137221 Some proofs are entirely about the internal properties of a given system of artificial logic, and have little, if anything, to do with reality beyond the horizons of such a system.

3.137222 Some proofs focus on seeking to determine the structural character of various facets, aspects, or dimensions of experience.

3.137223 Some proofs are concerned with the relationship among understanding, experience, and the nature of that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.138 Falsification is an idea introduced by Karl Popper that, in simplified terms, stipulates that while only one conraindication with respect to some given conjecture, hypothesis, principle, or the like, is enough to falsify claims concerning the correctness or truth of such a conjecture or hypothesis, no amount of positive evidence is sufficient to prove the truth of a given conjecture or hypothesis because there is always the possibility that some form of conraindication with respect to such a conjecture or hypothesis might arise in the future.

3.139 Human beings seek out certainty, but, in general, are immersed in uncertainty, unanswered questions, inconclusive evidence, and problematic proofs.

3.140 Hermeneutical spaces can be divided up into linear and nonlinear systems. Linear systems are those that tend to be tractable to mathematical treatment because of the regularity or repetitive nature of the patterns and features to which such a system gives expression. The task, then, becomes one of trying to establish some degree of congruency between the structural character of some form of mathematical system of logic and the structural character of the facets of hermeneutical space and/or phenomenology of experience that one seeks to understand. One uses such congruency as the manifold of commonality through which one generates abstractions, models, logical frameworks, and so on, as a basis for mirroring the properties, structure, and logical nature of a given linear system.

3.141 Non-linear systems refer to contexts in which the forms, patterns, and structures to which such systems give expression tend to

be irregular in character and oftentimes exhibit anomalous behavior of one kind or another. The properties manifested by such systems over time are said to be self-similar rather than self-same (as in the case of linear systems), and, consequently, such systems are not easily, if at all, tractable through most mathematical systems.

3.142 Non-linear systems are determinate in nature. This means that such systems are governed by a set of principles of identifiable nature, but the systems in question tend to be unpredictable because of the manner in which the various dimensions of the system are extremely sensitive to fluctuations taking place within that system (as well as around the system). Therefore, such systems exhibit complex forms of feed-back loops that are not readily amenable to mathematical treatment, and even when such treatments are available, the latter tend to be limited to very specific contexts and subject to a considerable amount of constant manual adjustments in the formulae and equations of such treatments in order to keep up, somewhat, with the changes being manifested in nonlinear systems.

3.1421 Most of life consists of non-linear phenomena.

3.15 Mathematical formulae and equations are expressions of different facets and dimensions of the structural character of the artificial systems of logic to which they give expression.

3.151 The value of a formula, equation, or set of formulae and equations, lies in the degree of congruency that can be established or exists between the structural character of a formula or equation (or set of them) and the structural character of the aspect of experience to which such mathematical forms make identifying reference in a given context.

3.1511 Mathematical and non-mathematical languages, alike, seek to establish congruency among understanding, experience, and that which makes such experience possible.

3.1512 In some cases mathematical language accomplishes the task of establishing congruency far more precisely and rigorously than non-mathematical languages do. In other instances, the reverse might be true (e.g., in the realms of, say, creativity, love, emotion, morality, spirituality, poetry, identity, justice, faith, art, community, belief, purpose, parenting, psychological therapy, and so on).

3.16 All methodologies are subject to the limitations of incompleteness. In other words, no methodology is self-contained and self-sufficient, but, instead, one must journey beyond the horizons of any given methodology in order to discover the value of that methodology.

3.161 Methodology tends to stand in need of, and presupposes, experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.162 Although methodology arises out of experience, not all experience is necessarily reducible to such a methodology or capable of being grasped through such a methodology.

3.163 Methodology, like language, and systems of logic in general, does not move itself. They require the presence of consciousness (basic as well as reflexive) and intelligence to invent, generate, create, construct, apply, understand, and critique them.

3.17 Frames of reference, belief systems, hypotheses, theories, models, paradigms, and world-views are the hermeneutical spaces created or constructed by intelligence as it engages experience through the phenomenological field -- which is the point of conjunction of understanding, experience, and that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.171 A hypothesis is a conjecture concerning the way in which certain facets of experience, or that which makes experiences of such structural character possible, are related.

3.1712 Oftentimes, the nature of this relationship is expressed in terms of independent and dependent variables.

3.17121 Something is considered an independent variable when: (a) it can change in value under different circumstances, and (b) the value is not affected by changes to the dependent variable with which it is associated by means of the hypothesis.

3.171211 Among various possibilities one might cite, global economics, chaotic systems, and mysticism as tending to suggest that few things in the universe might actually be fully independent of changes elsewhere in a given context or system. As such, there are degrees of relative independence and relative dependence.

3.171212 Causation refers to the idea that the relationship between two events, objects, contexts, states, and so on is governed by the manner in which one pole of the relationship is prior to (both logically and physically), as well as, directs, shapes, orients, alters, transforms, changes, and/or helps give rise to the other pole of the relationship.

3.171213 The interdependent nature of many facets and dimensions of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible - as is suggested by, among other things: life, Bell's theorem, quantum physics, the stock market, politics, gravitation, education, peace, cybernetics, ecology, jurisprudence, consciousness, intelligence, understanding, illness, and happiness - indicates that isolating something as 'the', or even 'a' cause, might not be a straightforward matter, and might be, in many instances, quite arbitrary.

3.1713 A theory is a belief or set of beliefs concerning the structural character of some facet of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.17131 Some theories are more rigorous than others in the sense that the former: (a) tend to be supported by more well-considered evidence than the latter; (b) might be more coherent and consistent; (c) might have been subjected to closer and more exacting scrutiny through the interrogative imperative than have weaker theories; (d) are more likely to be accepted as heuristically valuable guides to subsequent exploration by the prevailing community of experts who deal with such matters; (e) tend to have a more precise, and less problematic, ability to describe and/or account for certain phenomena than do weaker theories.

3.17132 However, rigorously developed, a theory is still a belief system that embodies a certain amount of knowledge and has, within limits, a capacity to accurately reflect various facets of experience and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.17133 Hypotheses are used to help confirm or refute various dimensions of a theory by stating issues in a narrow fashion that is both capable of becoming actively operational in the form of testable proposition (or set of them), and, as well, is likely to lead to results

that provide data that can serve as evidence to help confirm or refute some aspect of a given theory.

3.17134 Theories rarely stand or fall due to the outcome of a single experiment that is devised to test a given hypothesis. Oftentimes, if experimental results are inconsistent with a particular theory, the theory might be revised or re interpreted in order to accommodate the new data.

3.17135 Theories, however, might come into disfavor as the result of a series of contraindications that arise from experimental data. A certain theory also might come into disfavor because there some other theory, seeking to account for similar phenomena and/or data, that is considered, rightly or wrongly, to be more heuristically valuable, in some sense, than is the previously accepted theory. One theory might gain in general acceptance over a competing theory because of the influence of certain centers of learning in setting hermeneutical trends that tend to propagate such perspectives to the next generation of researchers. The popularity of one theory might increase at the expense of a competing theory due to the politics of hiring and publishing. Finally, one theory might gain in ascendancy relative to a competing theory because the proponents of one theory die off, leaving the field relatively clear for another theory to establish itself and begin to flourish through the activity of its still living proponents.

3.17136 A paradigm is a theoretical framework that serves as a work in progress that shapes the methodology, experimentation, interpretation, understanding, politics, and education of those who come under its influence. A paradigm is the hermeneutical filter through which certain facets of experience -- and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible -- are engaged, processed, and understood.

3.172 Some people argue that one cannot derive 'ought' from 'is'. In other words, just because some dimension of experience, and/or that which makes experience of such structural character possible, has a certain nature does not, in and of itself, necessarily warrant the inference that one ought to behave in certain ways that are said to follow, or are derivable, from experience or things being the way they are.

3.1721 Whether, or not, the foregoing contention is correct really depends on the extent to which some form of 'ought' is inherent in the logical character of that which makes experience possible.

3.17211 If there is a dimension of 'ought' to what is, then, there is a directional potential that is built into being and existence.

3.17212 In one sense there is such a directional component inherent in being -- namely, reality is what it is. If one wishes to have any hope of understanding various facets and dimensions of that reality, then, one ought to seek generating hermeneutical spaces that have a structural character that has congruency with the structural character of the aspect of experience to which identifying reference is being made through the hermeneutical space and/or the structural character of that which makes such experience possible.

3.17213 If there are one, or more, dimensions of ought to being, then, this, in and of itself, does not necessitate what one will choose to do with respect to such an 'ought'. Ought is a suggestion with a certain degree of moral direction and force (or warrant) with which one complies or ignores at one's own risk - just as truth, knowledge, and understanding (of whatever kind, and on whatever level) are hermeneutical vectors with a certain degree of moral direction and force (warrant) with which one complies or ignores at one's own risk - the risk one runs in the latter case is ignorance, misunderstanding, error, bias, or the like.

3.18 The primary task of education is to provide a means for individuals to explore, gain facility with, learn how to critique, and generate (or adopt) useful applications as a result of the capacity, and inclination, of human beings to generate hermeneutical spaces. The essence of this generation process is a function of the interplay of the following processes: identifying reference; characterization; the interrogative imperative; mapping operations; and establishing congruencies.

3.19 As such, facts, per se, are less important than understanding the processes that gave rise to, shaped, colored, and oriented those facts. Information, per se, is less important than grasping the structural character of the processes that generated data of such structural character. Facts and information, together with their perceived value or reliability, often change over time, but the general

features of the structural character of generating and evaluating the nature of hermeneutical spaces do not change with time.

3.21 Logic is an expression of the manner in which the different, aforementioned components involved in generating hermeneutical spaces are employed by a given intelligence within the context of engaging the phenomenology of the experiential field in the attempt to understand that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.211 There are many kinds of logic and one of the challenges with which all human beings are confronted -- and with which education ought to be concerned -- is to try to discover which system(s) of logic is (are) most congruent with, or reflective of, the structural character of various realms of experience, together with the nature of that which makes experience of such structural character possible.

3.3 Education is a medium for learning about the possibilities, problems, and methods that are associated with trying to understand the logical nature or structural character of hermeneutical spaces that arise in conjunction with various kinds of experience, together with that which makes experiences of such structural character possible.