

Philosophy



in Defense of
Common Sense

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Matters of Certainty and Conviction

David M. Shaw

*Dedicated to Ford Oxaal, a friend and patron,
but above all, because much of the following was influenced
by his criticisms and insights*

Also Included:
The Geometry of Visual Perception
by
David M. Shaw and Ford Oxaal

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Preface

There are many noted philosophers. They contradict each other. How is it possible to choose among them? Assuming each are equally logical (some are not) they must, then, differ in premise.

Philosophy in pursuit of wisdom begins first by testing the obvious. The most reasonable philosophy must be distinguished by being founded upon the most obvious premises unless contradiction results. In this case at least one premise must be changed.

I submit that the following is based on obvious premises and is internally consistent. In so far as existence of the external world is thereby proved and free will is logically demonstrated, both being matters of common sense, the following stands as a defense of common sense.

At Issue

Three major positions question the existence of an objective external world and our ability to objectively perceive it.

1) Because we believe we are perceiving while dreaming, we therefore, while perceiving cannot be certain we are not dreaming.

2) If outside of experience does exist another world, the two, being absolutely different, could not in any event interact or have a causal relation.

3) But, even if they could interact, since the external thing exists absolutely different than exists the experience of it, nothing of the one could be known by the other. The thing and the “experience of it” would be utterly different... “knowledge of a thing” cannot be of the thing but rather only of the experience (of the thing) itself.

These positions intrinsically lead to skepticism and relativism, and discredit any reason for Philosophy. Yet thus far they endure.

Here following are each disproved.

Critique of Contemporary Philosophy

Contemporary philosophy has us at the bottom of the skeptic's barrel. They have it that philosophy can prove nothing....that philosophy is a “closed system” which can only prove its own premise. Proofs of philosophy, mathematics, all logic is “cyclical” leading nowhere but back unto itself.

This is the neo-skeptic's axiom. This contemporary school concludes that philosophy can at best define its own premises but proves nothing beyond that.

For three reasons is their axiom false:

First, to distinguish the constitute parts of a premise including their consequent differences is no slight discovery if a premise is principle to Being or Existence. If a premise is not principle then it is not worthy of philosophy.

Second, Philosophy may proceed in logical certainty beyond definition via the “principle of contradiction”. When a set of alternatives are fixed and all but one are logically eliminated, the remaining alternative becomes the logical certainty. Being the only possible alternative, it must be true even though in and by itself it could not “by definition” be proven to be necessarily so (a priori). Thus, the lone alternative becomes a logical necessity and reason does thereby exit definition and enter something external – in addition to first definitions or premises.

Third, the skeptic's axiom takes no consideration of the possibility of founding Philosophy upon more than one mode of premise/fundamentals. Their notion may apply to mathematics but not, therefore, to Philosophy which though rigorously logical need not be wholly of a single model. Mathematics is solely a matter of measure. Philosophy comprehends, orders, defines etc. It is not founded upon one fundamental as is mathematics; Philosophy discovers (fundamental) differences...

More than one mode of premise necessitates difference between premises. However, their consequent differences would not exist in any one of the different premises but would exist *between* them.... in *addition* to them. Thus can Philosophy proceed outside or beyond the given premises. In discovering the differences between premises does philosophy discover things outside of premise and mere definition. Indeed, Philosophy must necessarily analyze differences. It is the greatest part of how Philosophy proceeds.

In truth there *are* at least two absolutely distinct self-evident philosophical premises: (1) I exist, and (2) change happens. Neither is contained in the other, both are fundamental and their differences are real – their differences exist. This is the subject of Certainty in the following treatise, Defense of Common Sense.

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MATTERS OF CERTAINTY

Introduction

The “Proof of the External World” is the single most important, essential, principle proof required of Philosophy. It advances certainty beyond Epistemology unto Metaphysics – from subjectivity to objectivity. Without proof of the external, conjecture is always subjective, skeptical and rendering of Philosophy as philosophically useless.

Proof of the external world is principal to metaphysics, the study of the nature of reality. Yet it must first be born of epistemology, the study of the nature of the mind.

The axiom of epistemology is that “I experience” and that therefore experience exists. The denial of this is a lie. To proceed beyond this and address the subject of experience (perception) is to exit epistemology and enter metaphysics. A proof of the external world alone makes this possible. It is the bridge between the two disciplines. If there is no external world there is no metaphysics. Proof of the external world is the first priority of philosophy. Fail in this and Philosophy fails in its most fundamental purpose. Proof of the external world is the “holy grail” of philosophy.

Yet few philosophers have presented proof of the external world. Most pass over the problem as simply a matter of common sense. That there exists something outside of experience *is* a matter of common sense. Almost everyone knows this intuitively. Nonetheless, logically it is not a premise or axiom. It is like a theorem. It must be demonstrated.

However, this has proven to be an extremely elusive logical problem dating back to the origin of philosophy. Since then only two thinkers have gained recognition for their effort in proving the external world. Most recently is Emmanuel Kant. The problem with his proof is that it is as long as his book The Critique of Pure Reason which in its length and complexity is far removed from common sense. But being a matter of common sense so should be its proof.

The other thinker is Descartes who wrote over three hundred years ago. His proof is that God exists, which he demonstrates with the ancient “ontological argument”, and thereafter reasons to the external world. The existence of God is the first thing he proves external to experience. But Descartes puts the cart before the horse. We should understand that something must necessarily exist outside of experience and then that God exists.

Preliminaries

Common Sense: An unreasonable premise logically yields unreasonable conclusions. What is unreasonable excludes Common Sense. Common Sense stands upon the reasonable. It is unreasonable to dismiss the reasonable unless it be demonstrated otherwise. In short, Common Sense stands unless demonstrated false or unlikely, that is, unreasonable.

Reason: Logical (consistent) common sense is the root and trunk of reason. The resulting logical consequences are the branches and fruits of reason. Together they constitute reason.

Premises

1. All that is = Being = Existence.
2. I am = Consciousness exists.
3. I experience change = change happens.
4. The principle of logic: inclusion, exclusion, and identity (which includes similarity [for example, squares of different sizes are all similar but not the same]).

Because my experience exists and changes, change happens. Change is as self-evident as is the existence of my consciousness. Both are manifest.

The consequence of change, its nature and the nature of consciousness, however, are not as apparent or manifest. Here is where philosophical inquiry enters. Thus the following definitions, proofs, and demonstrations.

Certainty

Certainty is discovered through the three axioms of logic, “set/subset” (identity – inclusive), “contradiction” (difference – exclusive), and “compare/contrast” (beyond/between – synthesis).

1. The method of set/subset is a matter of determining identity by inclusion. It renders a priori truth by definition. For example, if X includes Y and Y includes X, then X equals Y.

2. Contradiction is a method of eliminating all possible propositions to a single, remaining logical certainty, that is, the only possibility is a certainty.¹

3. Compare/contrast discovers differences between fundamental premises and renders certainty beyond/between those premises.

¹ A self-evident premise or axiom, though not requiring proof, may be established by demonstrating its denial as illogical.

I

PROOF OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD

A. I am.²

Consciousness exists. I cannot deny that I am conscious because to deny it would be an act of consciousness hence a logical contradiction.³

My consciousness is what exists as I am presently aware – nothing more nor less. Of what I am not aware is not of my consciousness. What exists not of my consciousness is external to it. By this is meant the term “external world”. The following is a proof that there exists an external world outside of and in addition to my consciousness.

B. I experience change hence I have change of experience.
I cannot deny the existence of change. Because I experience change, change exists.

C. Change necessitates coming into being. Conversely, to come into existence necessitates change. Thus change and coming into being or becoming are the same.

Something cannot come from nothing, nor could nothing become something, because in either case “nothing would become” which is the same as no becoming.

If something comes into being it must, therefore, come from something. That something from which it comes is its “cause”.

D. Given a cause there must be an effect otherwise something would not become and there would be no cause.

An effect must be *different* from its cause otherwise something becomes the same as itself which is no becoming – no change.

Therefore, cause necessitates change.

In short, becoming or change necessitates cause.

E. In conclusion, since I experience change, which necessitates change, and since change necessitates cause, it follows that consciousness of change (as effect) necessitates the existence of something different than that awareness alone as its cause.

Thereby, I know with certainty there must be something other than

2 No English sentence is shorter or more certain...an interesting fact.

3 Editor's note: The objection that consciousness may be erroneous is irrelevant: consciousness, whether erroneous or not is nevertheless undeniable, and the proof that follows here is dependent only on the undeniable existence of consciousness.

and external to my consciousness as some cause of my experience. Existence, therefore, includes my consciousness and something external to it.⁴

4 Editor's note: The proof may be recast as a proof by contradiction along these lines: Consciousness includes nothing more, and nothing less than that of which it is aware (whether "erroneous" or not). Cause includes its effect, or else something of the effect came from nothing. Therefore, if awareness A causes awareness B, awareness A must include awareness B, and A and B would be experienced together, and not as change. Therefore, for change to be experienced, something other than awareness itself must be the cause. This "something other than awareness" is called the "external world".

II

EXISTENCE AS THE NECESSARY WHOLE

Existence, including all that exists, must exist as a one, unique whole. This is why:
Something that exists must exist as a whole, a part, or a whole and a part.

Existence cannot exist as a part because nothing else can include it.

Therefore, existence can only exist as a whole. This is uniquely true of existence and is not true of anything else because existence would include that “anything else” as a part.

III

EXISTENCE AS ETERNAL

Though my experience as a part of existence changes, existence must be eternal, uncaused and unchanging. This is why:

A cause must include its effect otherwise something of the effect came from nothing.

Existence cannot be the effect of some cause because existence would then be included in its cause as an effect and exist as a part. But existence cannot exist as a part.

Even if existence “were” included in its cause as an effect and since this cause would necessarily be included in existence, the two being included in each other would be the same. Yet a cause which has itself as an effect does not change or remains the same.

While existence includes all cause, no cause includes existence.

Because existence cannot be caused it cannot change. Therefore existence is eternal.⁵

5 Because existence does not change I know I am not existence because I know I change in awareness. This is a secondary proof of the external world.

IV

PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Proof of God:

I know there exists something external to my consciousness as a cause of my experience.

Existence includes all that exists, together as the necessary whole.

My consciousness exists as a part of existence.

The whole is greater than any of its parts.

*The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.*⁶ Therefore, the whole is greater than any of its parts. It follows then that existence is a whole, inclusive of and greater than my consciousness as a part. Hence it must be a one whole at least “conscious” if not greater than I am.⁷

In conclusion, there exists something eternal and at least conscious (as I) that includes the cause of all that exists. The eternal “conscious” creator of all things, therefore, exists.

6 The whole includes all its parts plus also the whole thereby constituted. For example, a radio consists of many parts which if properly combined form also a working radio – a one, whole radio in addition to all its parts. There is a difference between a disassembled radio and one assembled as a whole even though both have the same number of parts. That difference is the whole in addition to the sum of its parts. (Editor's note: the whole is excluded from being a conglomeration of its parts. And in the case of Existence, unlike the radio, no part is necessary to the whole.)

7 Being greater than my own consciousness, it must be either a greater degree of consciousness than my own or be altogether greater than consciousness. For this present proof it suffices that Existence is necessarily at least as conscious as I am.

V

FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Though my consciousness exists my experience changes.

There is something of my awareness that in itself does not change but remains the same and, therefore, constitutes one whole “me”. This constant is “me”/“I”. While I remain my experience changes.

I am. “I” is my consciousness' identity and any particular experience I have is a quality accidental or not essential to “me” or “my” consciousness. An experience may come or pass but I still have being as I. Both taken together at any time, however, constitute my consciousness as a whole.

Thus, given consciousness one must be aware of both one's self as the subject (constant) and experience as the object (changing). The first is constant and necessary (I), the latter (object) changes.

If this difference did not exist there would be nothing for me to be aware of. There would be no object of experience – no awareness. If there is no awareness there is no consciousness. Consciousness is of myself *and* my changing experience.

VI

CHANGE

Change and difference are the same thing in experience.

If experience remains the same, the difference between the experience of subject and object would ever be the same. Consequently there would be no awareness or consciousness. This is why:

In consciousness any “difference” that remains the same is experienced the same and so becomes one with I or the subject, which is what is experienced the same in consciousness. But the subject alone does not constitute consciousness. If experience remained the same there would be no object of experience – nothing to be aware of. If there is no awareness there is no consciousness.

VII

FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF DIFFERENCE

My consciousness exists as a whole including that of which I am aware – nothing more nor less.

That I am is absolute. Either I am or I am not. My awareness is all my awareness – no more or less. There is no partial “I am” – only I am, which is that of which I am aware.

My experience changes. It is caused to change by something existing external to my experience.

Thus, I exist as a part of existence – a whole part different than all other existence.

But if there be one part there must exist at least one other part. It follows then that existence must include at least another part other than my consciousness.

Because my consciousness exists as a one whole part it must be wholly different than any other part. Also must any other part be wholly different than my consciousness.

In short, existence must include at least two parts that are absolutely different. This difference is substantial so we say each are of different “substance”.

Therefore, existence includes at least two substances.

It has been objected by “Monists” (those who maintain there can only be one substance) that different substances, being substantially different, could not interact because they would have absolutely nothing in common. Thus, even if another substance did exist we could not know about it. But their position is without grounds. This is why:

Given absolutely different substances there must, then, exist a difference – a real difference. Further, not only must the difference actually exist but it is in fact all that the different substances could have in common.

To illustrate, consider the example of oil resting upon water. Though neither is said to commingle with the other, a movement of the one would have a corresponding movement of the other even though between them is no being – but there does exist an 'interface'. It is not at all difficult to conceive of more than one substance having a real, *existing* difference in common. This is a logical necessity. It is common sense.....difference exists.

VIII

FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF SUBSTANCE AND QUALITY

What exists the same is “substance”.

A substance includes absolutely nothing different but rather everything the same. A substance exists one and the same having identity in being all that is the same and nothing different.

As there exists more than one substance difference of substance must exist. While difference exists of substance it does not have being in substance. This is how:

Difference of a substance exists in that there does exist difference *between* (different) substances. This difference between does not, therefore, exist in either or any substance. What does not exist in substance has no 'being'.

Difference then is a “quality” *of* substance not something *in* substance. Hence, difference is of a substance in quality, caused by what exists externally different. In this way or mode has substance difference without being itself different.

It further follows that though change necessitates difference, substance even with change would remain the same while changing in quality. Change is a quality of substance due to different external substance but not something intrinsic to or within the nature of any one substance itself, alone. Time is a quality of substance.

Difference as well as change is caused by substance but neither are in substance. Both are *of* substance as qualities but neither has being *in* substance.

IX

TIME

Existence includes difference. Difference exists.

Existence, therefore, includes the existence of something without substance but which nonetheless exists.

Difference in experience necessitates change, and change necessitates time. All experience, all awareness, all consciousness is of/in time. Time exists because change exists. Change exists because difference exists.

Necessitated by different substance, there exists real difference which exists without substance. Thus is time.

X

ABSOLUTE SUBSTANCE

Absolute Substance is that whole One which includes all that exists, that is, Existence itself.

No other substance can include that which includes all that exists – it is unique.

Any other substance being a part can only include a part of that which cannot exist in part but rather must necessarily always exist as the whole, all inclusive One.

Conversely, Absolute Substance includes all that exists, including difference, as a whole – all at the same time. Nothing external to it can exist – no difference, no time...yet within exists difference, change.

The difference between Existence itself and any other substance is the same for each other in that their difference is equally absolute; each being, always, equally and wholly included in the same Absolute Substance (but never the other way around).

Conversely, all other substance, each being totally different from the others must have each infinite difference(s) from the other.

The Absolute Substance is universal in that it includes all things. Conversely, it is absolutely distinct having no part in any other being or substance because it can not exist in part. Existence alone is All, indivisible, One.

XI

FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF EXISTENCE

It has been deduced that Existence is the cause of all things but does not change. That It is eternal. That It is one and whole. That It exists greater than consciousness as I can know it.

My consciousness could never comprehend this greater consciousness because mine is included in it and not the other way around.

Because Existence includes consciousness and is one whole, Its “consciousness” must be wholly one and the same with Its unique all inclusive existence – the same as all that exists = existence. Thus must Existence be aware of all that exists. Thus is It all knowing.

Because It is aware of all existence It is aware of all difference which for us is time. Yet existence as a whole does not change. Existence, then, must be aware of all time as one time...all difference as one difference...all at the same time.

Outside of existence is no more or other differences. Outside of existence is no other or more time. In It is included all difference, all time at the same time. Existence is aware of all time at once.

Existence is all in one at once – It is at once all in one.

Being aware of all that exists, It is aware that It experiences all at once. This is not possible for me because being a part I must perceive in part – not all at once but rather in time.

Existence, aware of all that exists, is aware of my changing experience as It also experiences all at once. The whole includes the part but the part does not include the whole.

For me there is an external world; for Existence alone there is not. While my consciousness is included with time, Existence includes all time all together at once.

In one Existence now includes the infinite changing of everything as in a moment.

We cannot comprehend all things at once or all difference together as a single unique whole – but we can conceive of it.

For example, we can conceive of space existing as a whole one, without parts and everywhere the same. On the other hand we cannot conceive of space without the difference of height, width and depth. Hence we can conceive of a single whole substance with difference.

Possibly the best way to conceive of all time at once is to imagine eternity speeding up eternally faster (1/1) such that all happens at once. Yet in that moment is all time, much as between any two points there exists infinite different locations or points – the same amount as between any other two points no matter how infinitely close they get. In a moment an infinite time would pass. But for us not all at once because we as a part could not comprehend (include) it.

In conclusion:

I am not aware of all at once. I experience change. All my experience includes change.

Existence includes change because I, as a part, experience change.

Because my experience changes I know that there is a world external. Because Existence is all together at once, Existence knows it is without external world though it includes change within. Such is the primary difference of that consciousness greater than my own. I cannot comprehend this but, in final analogy, it can be conceived.

Consider existence as white light formed by beams of the three different primary colors. White includes all colors together as a whole – it includes the three pure primary colors, the secondary combinations, and all those tertiary etc. Yet, white is itself colorless. It remains white even if its composite beams change one into the other – while there is difference within, the whole remains the same, white. While white includes all colors, no color includes white being a part of that which includes it. Every color, all of them different, are included in the same, one, whole light – white....even while changing within.

XII

UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Existence comprehends all existence. Having all that exists as the object of awareness, it is truth. Its awareness does not merely correspond to what exists but includes what exists. Being one unique whole Its consciousness is as It exists inclusive of everything.

Whatever attribute is of my consciousness must in this universal consciousness be greater, absolutely greater, because all else, including me, is partial.

Its will is of what exists and happens. Its will is, therefore, omnipotent. Being one with Its consciousness, which is one with Its knowing, It cannot be false or lacking about anything that exists but is always according to truth, that is, reality. Its judgment and truth are one. Its judgment as reality is ever wise or according to what actually is and happens.

It is all knowing and omnipotent. Of this we can be certain.

Lastly, it must also necessarily follow that since the Creator is conscious of all, the All Knowing must be aware of any prayers intended. No intention could go unnoticed. All that happens is noticed and fully understood. In this you can be certain.

MATTERS OF CONVICTION

Introduction

With no desire to expand upon the above into every possible avenue or to anticipate criticisms, I am mindful that there lingers in every reader's mind some question or objection. But to meet every detail would labor and make tedious what I would rather be brief and simple.

In what follows I want to touch upon several related topics to form more of a study or sketch rather than a completed painting. The above concerned some matters of certainty. What follows will concern some matters of “conviction”. These are matters which, while not certain, are eminently reasonable.

Preliminaries

Any proposition which cannot be determined as certain might, however, be truthful and wise for other reasons – reasons that support conviction.

“Logical Conviction” – That which is demonstrated most probable alone, by itself, constitutes *logical conviction*. Conviction like certainty is held without reasonable doubt.

“Fanatic” – Conversely, a conviction is *fanatic* if held unsupported by this logical probability.

“Belief” – That which is held to be more likely than other possibilities but not by itself most probable is a *belief*. A belief can be logically contradicted. Rejection of a belief need not go counter to reason.

“Notion” – Least considerable is a *notion* or an idea considered as one of several possibilities even if most unlikely. In having a conviction or belief it is possible to have a notion of their opposite. Certainty alone excludes any notion in contradiction.

Thus is intended the terms: certainty, conviction, (fanaticism), belief and notion. Between certainty and notion there is a hierarchy of reasonable assent. Conviction is second to certainty. As defined above I will be making use of these terms in denoting degree of logical assent.

I

THE PRAGMATIC IMPERATIVE

Axiomatic to the above proofs of certainty is that “I am”. Its denial leads to self-contradiction. Axiomatic to the following is “I will to be” or the motive of self-preservation. Its denial leads to contradiction.

The denial of self-preservation, beyond intrinsically negating the first axiom, involves contradiction of motives. To will not to be includes willing not to will to be. But at the time of so willing, “to will not to will” is a contradiction. This would be an irrational thing to do. Heroism and self-sacrifice may be reasonable in having another motive (see chapter X).

To will to be is the first principle of life. Self-preservation is the natural impulse of all life. Upon it stands ethics and prudence. It is the “pragmatic imperative”.

An extension of self-preservation by way of its augmentation is well-being. Both are matters of pragmatism. Self-preservation is the root principle of pragmatism however applied.

II

FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF PERCEPTION

The following addresses a fundamental question. How do you know that what is experienced as perception is not imagination instead of external reality? How do you know you are not dreaming when perceiving? This is why:

Perception is the experience of what is external to consciousness. Perception is, therefore, at least in part due to something external to consciousness that affects experience. What is external that affects consciousness is the object of the experience or “perception”.

Experience necessitates change of experience. The cause of changing experience is the difference that exists between consciousness and another substance (see Matters of Certainty). What is experienced as the object of perception includes their difference acting upon consciousness.

The resulting qualities of 'conscious substance' are experiences which may correspond to their external cause much as a word corresponds to a thing or idea. These are “perceptions”.

In so far as perceptions are similar it is presumed that their external cause, as their objects, are similar.

Perception is an experience presumed to correspond to external conditions. How they correspond must be learned. The correspondence must first be noted, then repeated, and then assumed. This is possible only by noticing that similar experiences conform to similar objects of perception. It is this similarity that perceptions and their external objects have in common. That both have similarity is what they have in common and is what corresponds. That a perception and its object are different, that we perceive only in so far as the nature of mind permits, that all perceptions are in the nature or medium of consciousness alone etc. are all granted true. Nonetheless, they can actually *correspond* much as a word does to what it denotes. A word and its denoted object are completely different but they can still correspond.

The presumption against the reliability of perception is “solipsism”. A solipsist denies the knowable existence of external objects of perception.

The solipsist holds that nothing external is “knowable”. But if one regarded this with conviction one would soon destroy oneself. To disregard perception is to disregard self-preservation.

A solipsist approaching a cliff will not recklessly continue over the edge. One would give the perception of the cliff a benefit of doubt that one would not give to the theory of its non-existence. In practice the solipsist acts with more than a notion of a cliff. To walk over the edge might be one's last act of fanaticism. Thus, for the solipsist there really is not even belief in the possibility that there is no perceivable external world. The

solipsist entertains only a mere *notion* which he, therefore, does not act upon. So far and no further can a logical “solipsist” go.

As a last ditch effort to cover his inconsistency, the solipsist might respond that when avoiding perceived danger it is not the perceived danger that is avoided but the discomfort of the experience. Of course, this begs the issue because the solipsist thereby admits a causal relation between his own well-being and what is experienced as perception. This is the very same reason why we all avoid perceived danger ... the anticipated discomfort or harm to our well-being.

The “solipsist” might be satisfied with being certain that he cannot be certain of an external world. However, we *are* certain that an external world exists (see Matters of Certainty, chapter I “Proof of the External World”). But this is not the issue. The question is whether perception is reliable.

That perception is reliable and must be logically held in conviction is second only to the certainty that there is an external world. This is why:

Though not absolutely certain, the most reasonable possible conviction is that our perceptions are reliable and able to correspond to external objects. It is possible that similar perceptions may not absolutely or always correspond to similar external causes. Mirages and illusions are possible. Imaginations and dreams most convincing as perceptions are possible. We have all been deceived. Certainty, however, is here not the issue – the issue is “logical conviction”.

We have seen that all experience must change and that this is the result of the difference between the external world and consciousness. The different influences of the external world upon the nature of mind cause different experiences. But this is the same as there being experiences which are from something external...such is what perception is.

That perception is reliable is most reasonable because it is evident that the same cause would have the same effect, and as it is evident that a similar cause would have a similar effect, so it is most reasonable to expect similar external conditions will have similar effects on experience.

Though deception is possible it is most reasonable to expect that similar experience from the external world are perceptions caused by similar external conditions.

In conclusion, because deception is not common, deception is not probable. It is possible but not probable. Thus its opposite is probable. What is probable of two possibilities is by itself most probable and so may be held with logical conviction. Also probable of two possibilities is that self-preservation, being the pragmatic imperative, takes priority over other possibilities that what is experienced as perception is illusion. This is safer and most conducive to self-preservation unto well-being.

That perception is reliable is most probable and ought to be held with conviction. It is a pragmatic imperative. To be a solipsist or act upon it is fanatic (conviction without reason).

III

SPACE

Space is an infinite volume in which extended things are located and thereby included.

What exists must be either a substance or attribute/quality.

An attribute of a thing is in part included by that thing but cannot include the thing of which it is an attribute. An attribute is a part. But space cannot be a part of some substance. It cannot be an attribute. It must be a substance. This is why:

Space cannot be an attribute of a substance. If it were, that substance must in part exist in space and in part not exist in space, as a quality is a difference of more than one substance (see Matters of Certainty, chapters VII and VIII). But space is an absolute. Either a thing has location in space or it does not. If a thing exists in space it has location and cannot be said to not have location. It would have to be wholly included in space. A thing can not be located and also not located. Thus space can only exist as a substance, not an attribute or quality of some other substance.

This 'substance space' cannot, however, be the substance consciousness. This is because not all experience concerns space. Suffering, delight any emotion or appetite etc. need not include matters of location but exist as will. Location/space is not necessary to consciousness.

Since space must exist as substance, but not the substance of consciousness, it must be a different substance perceived other than and external to consciousness. We have perception of space not experience as space.

Given that there is space there is location. If there is location there is distance. Thus, external to consciousness exists space, location and distance. Disregard of space, like disregard of perception, would be most fanatic and dangerous. Conviction of external space is a pragmatic imperative.

IV

FREE WILL

The determinist axiom is that everything is determined – all is caused. What I experience as self-willed is actually externally caused. To the determinist it is *certain* that “free will” cannot exist. Determinists regard as irrational and absurd the “notion” that *anything* is uncaused. Free will is only caused to seem to exist. Their position is held as a certainty without exception. Their position is absolute. Therefore it is absolute or not at all.

The following demonstrates that determinism does not stand absolute.

Every experience of will must include intention or volition. In this, intention or volition must include at least belief if not conviction that one is freely willing. Experience of free will includes at least belief in self-motivation, i. e. that I intend or I will – I 'cause'. An experience of will or volition is inclusive of at least belief in being self-willed or motivated. It follows, therefore, that in the very act of willing, whether actually caused or not, it is impossible for any reason to disregard the self as the author of volition... Yet the determinist claims *certainty* of his being determined externally. Nonetheless, during the very act of willing they cannot be certain of this, rather quite the opposite. When willing they must have at least belief if not conviction in self-determination – whatever else would be a notion.

Every time the determinist experiences volition they are in denial of *certainty* in determinism – including when they take the effort to express their odd position. When they do, they lie. Volition is the experience of the self affirming the judgment. But one cannot at once affirm the inability to affirm. It's a contradiction.

No determinist would deny that they experience “free will”. We all intend to act and have motives in acting. This they argue is caused. But, caused or not the determinist must concede that they contradict themselves. They do so by intending or being “caused” to intend contrary to their own theory. This is contradictory and absurd.

Consider: A. I am certain X is irrational.
 B. I intend to act according to X.
 A. I am sure free will (X) is irrational.
 B. I intend to act according to free will (X)

The determinist necessarily lives their life affirming what they judge to be irrational and impossible. They are “certain” that all is determined, but in self-interest they always intend and strive as if in their own mind the opposite is true.

The motive of self-interest is at least a belief that contradicts the “certainty” necessary in being a determinist. The motive of self-preservation contradicts determinism.

That the self has not the possibility of determining contradicts the very intention of willing which intrinsically includes at least the belief of the I-willing/self-motivation.

Whether the determinist is or is not determined to act irrationally, they are inconsistent and would act irrationally, which is not philosophy. Whether one is or is not caused to assert conviction at least one would act rationally and not as an irrational hypocrite. One need not contradict judgment but rather act accordingly and pragmatically.

Not only is the intention of self-preservation intrinsically contrary to belief in determinism but it is even out of pragmatic considerations that the determinist never surrenders to their “certainty” in determinism. Instead they rather take responsibility to provide for their judgments. That the will is free and that we act accordingly is not only logical but a pragmatic imperative. Determinism is self-contradictory.

Determinism like solipsism can stand only if it is certain. Its position is intrinsically absolute. To demonstrate free will as a logical possibility is, therefore, sufficient disproof of 'certainty' in determinism. If free will is a possibility then determinism has no logical grounds in certainty (see above definitions: notion, belief, conviction).

But free will is possible. Certainty in determinism is not logical. This is why:

The will is included or at least in part is caused internally by that part of consciousness experienced as “I” / “me”. Any act of will is intended to be an act of the self. Thus is it experienced. It is the self that wills. “I” will. Any act of intention is an act of “I” intend. Thus must I will *as a part of the cause* of so doing.

Given that experience is in part caused by external substance, the substance or nature of consciousness must also be a *part* of the cause for what is experienced. Consciousness, as we have seen, is a real part of its difference between other substances.

Though external world effects different experiences such that the will is affected differently, my will remains the same will – mine. For example, the same force may lift a light object but sink beneath a heavy one. Similarly the same force of will when acted upon by different experience must have different effect but remain the same will – mine. A train engine pulling a caboose is self-propelled but affected by the load of the caboose. If more cars are added, the engine will be caused to go slower though the same self-propelled engine exerts the same horsepower.

It follows then that my will can be self-propelled, caused by me, yet partly affected by the external world.

In conclusion, while the will may not be totally free from external cause, it would necessarily have to be totally free from external determinism. Being in part self-caused it is self-willed.

FREE WILL AND GOD

Given an omnipotent and therefore omniscient God, would not all be predestined? All would be known and preordained. If so, would not God be culpable for all that “free will” does – good and evil...as we murder does not God murder? Would not free will be impossible for us?

The answer turns on 'volition'.

Definitions as applied:

Intention – The ends and design for acting but not necessarily acted upon. The ends viewed for acting.

Motive – The ends for acting when acting. The intentions in acting. The purpose in doing.

Volition – Intentions while acting upon a choice exerted. Assent in fulfilling intentions. Intentional act. Doing with motive.

Culpability for an act depends upon volition. Thus is determined the motive in acting.

If in the very act of creating free will God knew its consequences God could be considered culpable for them. But if the consequences of free will were not thereby intended God would not be their author and could not be considered culpable for them.

The precise question is, does Divine volition in creating free will necessarily include knowing its consequences or intending them?

To the contrary, creation of free will is not inclusive of knowing its result. The one does not necessitate or depend on the other. They are two wholly different things. Rather would it be an impossible contradiction in motive to both intend free will while intending knowledge of its consequences. No will beyond God's would be created. It would be to intend that free will is not free. Such motive is contradictory of its ends, rendering divine ability to create free will impossible. Yet we have free will.

Instead, motive does not include intention beyond its own ends. If the volition in creating free will creates free will, the ends of intending free will is fully, completely met – no additional intention of precognition is necessary. Precognition is not necessary to create free will; it is actually contrary to it. God's motive in creating free will could not include intention of knowing its future.

The creation of free will and omnipotence are not contradictory if in creating free will God has not the intention of prior knowing of its consequences. Otherwise God could foresee consequences as the result of a wholly contingent, different motive. Thus could God create free will and also know its consequences as a *result*.

Accordingly, in the act of creating free will God would not know its results and thereby intend them, but having created free will God could consequently (instantly) know its results by a separate, other volition. Two distinct volitions, the latter contingent upon the first but not the other way around.

Having created free will God could then know its results, the knowledge of which had no part in the antecedent motive of creating free will.

Without prior knowledge of free will's results God could not intend them.

God did not intend creating free will together with the intention of knowing its

results, but consequently would God know its results without intending them.

Free will exists because God wills it. God wills it without contradiction. Our free will and God's omnipotence are not mutually exclusive.

REFLECTIONS:

Creation consists of more than one act – probably a spectrum ordered one to the other.

Beyond not being inconsistent to omnipotence, free will is the greatest conceivable exercise of omnipotence. Thus is free will divine. Thus has it “divine image”.

Those creations that are subject to natural law are through it preordained by God. free will may move against natural law.

God determines natural law, free will may bend it.

Evil exists because free will exists.

Free will has power opposed to God but God remains omnipotent because free will remains subject to creation and its author's permit. God permits free will.

Since there can be no affection for things determined, as is a robot, God created free will as something worthy and able of love.

V

WISDOM

Wisdom is the quality of knowing with understanding.

Judgment in wisdom is good judgment. The fool has bad judgment. The difference is not simply a matter of degree in knowledge. This is why:

It is possible that a youth of little experience or study might be wiser than an elder of greater experience. Experience and knowledge, though they may widen wisdom, are not in themselves wisdom. Further, it is possible to have uncommon intelligence and yet lack wisdom. An accomplished physicist may lack even common sense. Intelligence, though it may deepen wisdom is not in itself wisdom.

While being a matter of knowing, wisdom is not a degree but a type of knowing. This type is “understanding”. Understanding is to see the parts of a whole in relation to the whole and therefore to each other. To know many parts individually is to know them differently than to understand them related to each other as parts in a whole. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The latter is a greater quality of knowing.

Wisdom is the ability to understand situations in context. Consequently, in the act of judgment alternatives are given priority in view not only of situation but also in view of its greater context. That the judgment may choose wisely, the proper order in priority is acted upon.

In short, wisdom is an understanding of priorities – of first things first.

In judgment wisdom does first things first. Without this understanding of priorities there is no wisdom – regardless of the many things known.

Wisdom is understanding priorities.

For judgment the highest priority is having the wisdom required to see things as they are in relation to each other as a whole or in context. The greater is discernment of relation or context, the more inclusive and truer are the priorities discerned. Thus does the judgment choose wisely. The fool's priorities are out of context and, therefore, not of reality. The fool, in having false judgment, is a danger to themselves and even to others. Thus is wisdom a pragmatic imperative.

VI

FOUNDATIONS OF WISDOM

To understand things in context and right priority is to see things in “perspective”. To see things in their true perspective one must first establish the correct point of view. To see things from this viewpoint renders perspective. The further removed the point of view is from the point of perspective, the more warped or distorted is the vision. To see things in their real perspective renders wisdom. Understand then:

I know I am not that to which all is related.

I know I am not the center of reality.

I am a part of a whole. I am a part of reality but I am not reality. I am not the whole context. I am not the context in which all things or even myself exist.

In wisdom to see myself as I really am, in context together with what is external to me, it is necessary to get out of myself as the point of view; to rather seek a viewpoint inclusive of me but in view of a greater context. To see from beyond myself. This requires humility or the consideration of other than self as regards others and myself.

Understanding in humility is necessary to wisdom. Humility is the beginning of wisdom. In pride wisdom has no place. It is the first thing first, prior to finding point of view, prior to understanding context, which is prior to discerning priorities so that judgment may choose in wisdom. Humility is the foundation and first priority of wisdom.

Also is charity a foundation of wisdom in judgment, being both necessary and prior to it. In so far as charity requires humility, the founding act in wise judgment is an act of charity. To *act* in regard to something other than only the self alone is charity whether of small or great degree. Charity is humility in volition which is the necessary beginning of wisdom.

Humility and charity as they regard wisdom in judgment are pragmatic imperatives.

In itself, the ends of wisdom is vision.

In judgment, the ends of wisdom is one's greatest well-being.

With vision the wise seek to secure happiness. The achievement of this is peace with confidence.

VII

VIRTUE

The opposite of virtue is vice.

Vice is bad habit. The opposite of bad habit is good habit.

Virtue is good habit.

Habit is acquired by repetition, the more so, the more determined.

Vice is the habit of placing in priority understanding below some other choice.

As reason is a matter of understanding, whatever contradicts the understanding is not apparently reasonable – it is unreasonable. Vice is behavior that is judged unreasonable by the self.

Vice is always grounded on judging with disregard of one's full understanding and knowledge. It is reckless, thoughtless.

In vice the choice is for some desire that has become greater than that attached to one's understanding. In repetition this other desire grows as its opposition weakens until vice becomes “vicious”, out of control and mindless.

Virtue is the habit of acting according to one's judgment or full understanding. This is wise, safe and reasonable.

Virtue, having been tested and repeated gathers in persuasion the longer it is practiced. When the understanding is valued in judgment above all else, such that it will not be compromised, virtue is manifest.

Virtue is not specialized to oppose a specific vice but opposes any appetite that disregards one's full understanding. The practice of any virtue increases virtue – the practice of any vice increases vice to diminish virtue's influence.

Virtue is a weapon against not only vice but also appetites at their first appeal. As it increases it becomes a future guarantee against reacting recklessly, even in sudden emergency, even against fear. It stands up to fear so that what has to be done is done. Virtue is the foundation of courage.

Having reach of mind to consider and provide for well-being in the future, virtue unto courage is a pragmatic imperative.

VIII

GUILT

As pain is bad so too is guilt bad.

Guilt is to one's self-regard, as pain is to one's body. In guilt there is no well-being, no happiness, no peace. At worst there may be despair. Guilt is a bad thing.

But as pain warns of danger to the body, so too does guilt warn of danger to one's virtue and future well-being. Though not pleasing or desirable, both pain and guilt can serve a greater good. The child places its hand atop a flame and because of the pain withdraws it and so preserves the hand from further harm.

Guilt is a consequence of going counter to one's own understanding. It is the self-understanding and judging the self. Guilt is the regret of being contrary to what one understands. *Guilt is self-condemnation.*

The distaste and avoidance of guilt gives consent to virtue. In so far as guilt induces virtue and future well-being it is a pragmatic imperative.

But, in continuing consent to vice against one's better judgment, guilt eventually diminishes until gone. Ultimately vice renders those with judgment more like those without, as is a lunatic mindless and reckless in deed, without conscience.

Guilt is the wage of betraying one's own understanding. Vice is the wage of ignoring guilt. The one sacrifices well-being and the other self-preservation. Guilt is a pragmatic imperative, but may be lost.

IX

THE IMMORTALITY OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Demonstration / Proof of life after death

Among all issues this is of greatest import. It is context to wisdom.

Whether or not there is life after death cannot be known with certainty. Yet it fundamentally embraces self-preservation. It is a matter of life and death. Whether life is everlasting or passing vanity is the question. It touches upon every branch of philosophy.

The prospect of life after death leads to religion. Its absence directs logic to make the best of this life. In either case its regard dictates ethical perspective.

Death is the most certain and significant fact of life. It must be considered. It must be decided upon. It cannot be ignored.

Since decision on this matter may not be based on certainty it must be considered in terms of prudence. It must be decided upon wisdom in judgment not certainty in knowledge.

The position that death is final has empirical evidence. We all, without exception must die and there is absolutely no evidence of survival thereafter. In fact, *all* things pass away. There is no empirical evidence of anything immortal.

Though this position is not illogical, it is not wholly reasonable. I intend to demonstrate this epistemologically, metaphysically, and ethically. Thus do we proceed:

Epistemologically:

Though it is possible to speak or write a contradiction it is not possible to comprehend a contradiction. One cannot even conceive the inconceivable. That $5+5=14$ is not conceivable. Likewise one cannot comprehend one's self not conceiving. This is because it involves contradiction. To conceive of not conceiving is a contradiction as it requires conceiving. Since death includes one's not conceiving, it follows that one cannot comprehend one's own death. Your own death is not comprehensible to you.

Life on the other hand is knowable to you as death is hardly conceivable and incomprehensible.

Death is a notion while life is evident.

What is incomprehensible and unknowable cannot be reasonably believed over its opposite which is conceivable, comprehensible and knowable.

Metaphysically:

It is evident that our body dies, it is not evident that so too ends our consciousness with it.

While my body is "mine" it is not me. To diminish the body of its parts does not consequently diminish that I am me as a whole. If I lose a finger, hand, arm or leg I am still me. Eventually loss may kill my body. Either I am altogether me or not at all. The

one remains whole as the other may be diminished in part.

They are different subjects. The body and consciousness are not contingent upon each other because they are of different substance. The body is of the external world which is different substance than consciousness. The body is of space. It is located and has extension or volume. It and every part of it have some height, width and depth. My consciousness and every aspect of it does not have height, width or depth. This is evident of such experiences as emotions. It is also obvious even for experience of space. For example, an experience or imagination of a mountain does not have height, width or depth. The experience of a mountain has no size. In experiencing a mountain one does not have a little mountain in one's brain or skull. Consciousness is a matter of awareness not size in space (extension).

Some have objected that consciousness is in itself a “configuration of brain mass”. However, that my body is contingent on my brain does not determine that so too is my consciousness. The two are not at all of the same quality let alone substance. They confuse by ascribing identity with correspondence as if to assert that a word must be the same as the object it denotes. Granted it is reasonable that the brain is the principle organ of perception and that a similar configuration of the brain could correspond to a similar experience of consciousness. These may be of similar correspondence but they are not of similar or same nature. Further, the “Mind Brain Identity Theory” is in itself illogical, as are all monist theories. This is because if our existence were of one, same substance there would be no experience of difference or change. All would be the same (see Matters of Certainty, chapter V).

Lastly is the objection that immortality is unlikely because there is no evidence anywhere of anything that does not in time pass away. But, to the contrary, while this appears true of physical objects we know from the above that existence is eternal – that the Absolute Substance is conscious and eternal (see Matters of Certainty, chapters III and IV).

Ethically:

The fundamental motive of all that lives is self-preservation. Even the worm if disturbed will naturally avoid danger and do what it can to augment its safety and well-being. Humans in doing “what it can” utilizes a reach of mind enabling us to anticipate dangers not yet present. This reach of mind enables us to grasp that we must die. Given this reach, the law of self-preservation would motivate us to attempt avoiding a final end in death. It is for us an act of self-preservation to earnestly seek life after death. To heedlessly ignore impending death is to be like the animal devoid of this reach. It would be for us sub-natural and in judgment foolish.

Religion, in so far as it seeks life after death, is a natural human pursuit of self-preservation. For animals lacking reach of mind, religion is not possible. For humans it is as necessary as self-preservation is natural. An archaeologist finding a grave with buried bones and artifacts would not be amiss to conclude that it was of human work.

That we know there is life after death or not is beside the point. Having no certainty in the matter does not remove the natural impulse or reasonable motive to avoid demise. *To seek life after death is reasonable – the opposite is not.* It is a matter of self-

preservation. It is a pragmatic imperative.

Beyond pursuit of self-preservation, even consideration of well-being weighs in favor of belief in life after death.

Pursuit of well-being is the extension of self-preservation. The one is connected to the other as a matter of degree, such that negation of well-being is negation of preservation which is death. Conversely augmentation of well-being is augmentation of self-preservation.

Now, the greatest good of well-being is happiness. Thus, as wisdom is the perfection of judgment which guides volition, it follows that the greatest good and final end of wisdom, judgment and volition is preservation in happiness. But happiness is not possible unless there is at least belief in continued life after death. This is why:

Given reach of mind, grasping your own impending death would injure and diminish your well-being by preventing an abiding sense of security. Happiness is not possible without security in it. Hence, only the fool when not mindful of inevitable death could have fleeting “happiness”. Yet hiding your head in the sand is hardly a method of wisdom or philosophy. There is no truth in the bliss of somnolence.

On the other hand and to the other extreme, do not commit yourself to hapless morbidity in hopelessness. To do so you must have good reason – but there is none.

What is at stake here is the quality of life in the well-being of happiness.

Confuse not pleasure with happiness. The opposite of happiness is despair. The opposite of pleasure is pain. Pleasure entails the satisfaction of the appetites. Happiness entails fulfillment in judgment. They are two different things.

Pleasure is fleeting and satiable. A feast will provide great pleasure when hungry. Later there is satisfaction. Shortly, when full, the pleasure of eating ceases. Pleasure is satiable. Happiness, on the other hand, is not satiable. Happiness is a sustained sense of satisfaction brought on by *securing* priorities. When security of what is most important ceases, so too does happiness. There can be no happiness without at least the belief of security in it. Those things of which self-preservation consist are of the highest priority. Unless your preservation is secure, everything of yours is lost. Where there is no preservation there is no security, where there is no security there is no peace and happiness.

Consider a king who has all the bounty of a rich and content realm. Now suppose that a great adversary advances with a superior army. Its impending invasion threatens to take everything away. Like the prisoner condemned to execution both might have pleasure in their last feast, but the king could not find happiness in his present bounty as he did when all seemed secured and beyond threat. Neither our king nor condemned will have that peace of mind of which happiness is made – unless they are hopeful of escape.

Know that everything your eyes see and your fingers touch, all your possessions, must for you shortly pass away – of this you can have conviction. Rather in wisdom secure what might be secured and only to such things attach your happiness and well-being. But if there is no afterlife, what is left for you that will not pass away? Nothing would be secured and so in nothing would there be true (reasonable) happiness.

Consider a passenger aboard an ocean liner about to depart on a cruise. Their fellow travelers are excitedly relishing the voyage and looking forward to their new destination. There is, of course, an unlikely chance that their ship will sink and doom all. If our passenger morbidly elevates this unlikelihood into conviction of impending doom there cannot be happiness in his circumstance – no enjoyment of the cruise as ought to have been expected. Rather will there be despair of ever arriving at any destination save horrible disaster. The skeptic is much like the miser or hypochondriac, the one not enjoying their wealth and the other their health. Even so, if the passenger should in fact never reach their destination by ship nor by lifeboat, what short life was left would have been wasted in misery instead of pleasant expectations.

Justice:

In so far as justice is concerned, true justice is impossible unless there be after-life. Justice in this life is everywhere compromised. It is partial. Many have ill fortune. Many who are wicked profit. Full justice is possible only if karma is continued into after-life.

Conclusion:

Given that everlasting life is no less possible than everlasting death and that self-preservation, well-being, peace of mind, happiness and justice are all at stake, it follows that these, being of the highest priority, ought to be pursued with expectation of continued life after death. It is a win/win proposition. It is wise to so pursue and foolish not to.

X

HEROISM

In context with what follows a few useful definitions as I make use of them:

Appetite: Immediately desirable pleasure.

Judgment: That faculty of consciousness which deliberates to choose.

Intention: The ends and design for acting but not necessarily acted upon.

Motive: The ends for acting when acting.

Conviction: A possibility which is determined alone most probable. Determined most reasonable. Held (like certainty) without reasonable doubt.

Resolution: Determined conviction to act upon intention.

Volition: Intention while acting upon a choice exerted. Assent in fulfilling an intention. Doing with motive.

Will: That faculty of consciousness which asserts volition. Degree of assertion. Effort in doing.

Morality: That ends of ethics. Conditions for peace and happiness.

Happiness: Security in possession of priorities.

Ethics: The most reasonable plan of action in pursuit of happiness and peace.

Virtue: The means to acquire resolution in conviction. The habit of following one's understanding of judgment. The foundation of courage.

Courage: The ability to sustain conviction over fear, greed or any appetite.

Wisdom: Understanding in context so that priority is discerned.

Charity: Volition according to wisdom when opposed by any appetite. A founding act of wisdom.

Hero: Who has wisdom in judgment and courage to act accordingly.

Heroic: The act of a hero when risking safety.

Fool: Those who risk much for little.

Fanatic: One who has conviction without reason. Foolish convictions.

The shades and nuances of motive make full philosophical treatment of ethics most complex. However, principle understanding of ethics can be had by rendering its highest or most excellent aspect together with its opposite. Thus would be established the contrary poles within which all possible shades of volition are arranged.

Of all volitions the most ethical is Heroism. This is because heroism requires the most virtue. Least ethical is cowardice. Cowardice is the negation of virtue. It is the result of weak character brought on by vice.

The opposite of the Hero is the coward. The coward has not the courage for their convictions. When exposed to fear and danger the coward will abandon their convictions to run away. The coward forsakes their own judgment by betraying their convictions.

In fear is the will opposed to conviction as in danger is reflection and judgment opposed.

The hero stands by their convictions. The hero has the courage to stand up to fear and danger. The hero does not escape fear and danger but rather opposes them with courage when conviction calls for it. 'Courage is doing what you are afraid of doing'. *The hero is not fearless or unmindful of danger and might have a great desire for safety* but resolves instead not to escape and stands. The hero stands to do what has to be done.

Courage is the hero's virtue.

Submission to fear is the coward's vice.

Courage is developed by practicing virtue.

By small things are great things done. By repeated sacrifice of appetites in small things is virtue unto heroism approached and acquired. If you cannot carry a toothpick how will you carry a cross?

To surrender your judgment for fear of any loss, usually loss of a small gain, is always to *exercise* vice. The appetite of the coward supersedes their judgment much like the animal which does not have judgment. But if they do have judgment and betray it they cast themselves unto guilt and shame of their own consideration.

While in small things virtue is undone, so too is the opposite true. Virtue comes of small, easy steps. In so far as civility and courtesy require consideration and deference, manners do exercise virtue. Civility precedes charity. If you have not courtesy you will have not charity. But in the general course of life virtue is most emphatically practiced in overcoming temptations – usually slight temptations. Failing this is cowardice most emphatically exercised which becomes the fool.

Volition is in all cases a matter of self-interest. Whether it be cowardice and vice or charity and heroism, all are done in “self-interest”. Heroic charity is done in self-interest. Being common to all volition, self-interest is not here a matter of distinction. However, resolution in judgment is distinguishing. While some resolution is required for the smallest act of charity it is wholly lacking in cowardice. There is the divide.

As wisdom requires charity in its practice (see Matters of Conviction, chapter VI) and as all acts of courage are to the highest degree charitable; because wisdom and courage, as pragmatic imperatives are of paramount self-interest, it follows that charity is ever exercised in self-interest (not pride which has self-destruction). Charity is of self-interest because nothing is more in self-interest than acquisition of wisdom and courage. For this reason doing charity is gratifying. Also is it gratifying because of the benefits intended for the well-being of others cared about. Charity is doubly gratifying.

The practice of charity exercises virtue and wisdom unto courage. Conversely the practice of virtue and courage involve charity and wise self-interest.

But, whoever practices virtue as a drudge will soon quit. Rather work out in wisdom like the athlete does to gain victory. The successful athlete trains with an aim. Though there is no gain without effort the gain is judged worth the cost. The athlete exerts themselves with the vision of victory in view. Whether the exercise be slight or arduous it is endured in self-interest. Thus also is virtue and charity exercised unto heroism...all in self-interest.

Courage is a matter of self-interest because charity is. No heroic act is without charity. Courage opposes fear that judgment may be sustained. The more courage is developed the better are we able to oppose fear and safeguard against impetuosity. The hero may risk well-being unto preservation but does not thereby sacrifice self-interest. All volition is self-interest.

In forsaking judgment the coward cannot act wisely. The fool has no judgment. But the hero is no fool.

Though not a coward, a daring person acting boldly for foolish unreasonable convictions is likewise not heroic. Rather such is the fanatic. The fanatic with poor judgment would risk much without understanding, as does the fool. But the hero is no fanatic.

There is no heroism in fanaticism because there is no wisdom in fanaticism. Without wisdom there is no virtue. Instead is the hero most virtuous.

Lastly is the fool who is without fear and reckons not danger. Consider the idiot prancing over a cliff in gallant pursuit of a butterfly. But the hero is not “fearless”. Rather does the hero oppose fear with courage so that what *has* to be done is done.

The greater the danger risked the more heroic the act. Yet also is it true that the wiser the motive the more worthy the risk. If the risk be great but the gain small there is no heroism. Risk for foolishness is foolishness – the greater the risk the more the foolish.⁸

In conclusion, whoever develops courage enough to follow wise priorities, even at risk to safety, is the hero able to do the heroic. Priority being a matter of wisdom, wisdom as well as courage must be engaged. The hero, in short, is one who is wisely courageous. The anti-hero is the fool and the fanatic.⁹

8 As wisdom is required to achieve courage but courage is not always required of wisdom, between the two parts wisdom is the greater because it must precede. It follows then that those certain of no afterlife, or doubtful of it, though they nobly sacrifice more in risking their life than those who have conviction in afterlife, of the two the latter is wiser. Not only wiser because denial of afterlife is unreasonable, but also because the latter risks less for the same heroic ends or motive. And if the latter hopes for a greater justice in after life their end is that much greater and wiser.

9 Having dilemma never thrust upon them but having instead lived a sedate life of fortitude and hidden charity, the hero who does not prove them self in heroic action is no less the 'stuff' of the hero. The only difference between the two is that the latter is tested worthy of the first i.e. the hero precedes the heroic. One must first be heroic before doing the heroic. Similarly, heroism is intensely personal and independent of public acclaim. A popularly laudable event could in truth be done with fanatic lunacy. While what is worthy of acclaim is that which is perceived commendable, and it is always good to applaud the commendable, nonetheless, the hero regards neither applause nor derision, being intent only to do what has to be done regardless of what others think.

XI

GOVERNMENT

Definitions

Society – a community supported by mutual interest beyond family tie.

Justice – reciprocity

Freedom – exercise of capacity

Right – a freedom conducive of reciprocity in society.

Liberty – the full constellation of rights. Those freedoms reciprocal in society.
 Freedoms retained in society.

Purpose of government – the survival and well-being of the governed.

Ends of government – to bring humanity to its fullest potential.

Prior to government is society. It is from society that government becomes.

Prior to society is family.

Upon family does society stand as does government stand upon society.

Thereby family supersedes society as does society supersede government with family trumping all.

The natural origin and purpose of society is the PRESERVATION of the families that formed/compose it, which is the raison d'etre of government itself. This is why:

The first and most powerful bond among individuals requires only instinct – it is naturally compelling and inevitable. From its origin humanity bonded in family – it is human nature to do so. Most primitively family begins confined to near/immediate relation but, when feasible and advantageous, of more distant relation is the "clan" formed, until of different clans the far family relation of "tribe" emerges. Each stage is reasonably and intrinsically motivated to further the preservation of participating families unto their well-being and protection of their property (legacy).

The last (4th) stage begins when different tribes combine to form "Civil Society". While civil Society consists of universal citizenship extended beyond family relation it, like the preceding stages, has its origin in consideration and protection of family interest. For the sake of family do all the stages, including the tribe, have their origin.

The founding practical motive establishing civil Society is the "Social Contract".

While not a discrete historic event the social contract inevitably occurs (usually gradually) when conditions among tribes render it feasible and prudent.

John Locke mistakenly ascribed the social contract as a compact among individuals.... in pursuit of individual security and liberty. Yet its allegiance would not be originated between individuals for individual rights but rather between families for family rights. Already, before the social contract, are individuals combined in family, clan and tribe.

Nonetheless it is consequential that as family secures its safety so too would its constituent members. Family rights precede individual rights, the latter derived from the first, not the other way around. In this order do natural individual rights emanate from natural family rights.

The integrity of family is the fundamental purpose of civil Society. All Society exists because of family.... for family. Then does government exist BECAUSE OF AND FOR SOCIETY.

Government exists for the benefit of society. The purpose of government is the survival and well-being of the governed.

Because there is no survival or well-being unless they are ongoing, in order to serve its purpose government needs be enduring. To provide survival and well-being government must endure.

Government founded upon lofty principles that cannot stand is bad government. Above all else must government be practical or it shall fail and serve no one.

Endurance of government depends upon its form being adapted to its circumstances.

There are two basic circumstances to which government must be conformed. Fundamental is the human nature of the governed. This is a constant – universal. Second are the impinging conditions near, far, present and future. This is a variable – relative.

As the first is immutable, universal and constant it is upon laws of human nature that government has foundation on bedrock. Upon this part of natural law is government best formed enduring, as is nature enduring.

Moreover, unless government is in some measure consistent with human nature it would be inconsistent to human nature. Such rule is inhumane. Inhumane authority is criminal and illicit.

Survival is the first and founding natural law common to all that lives. Its augmentation is safety which is well-being unto prosperity.

Government that is ordered to secure safety and promote prosperity is good. What government does not is in proportion poor.

It might be prudent in emergency to press for survival at prosperity's expense. This would be required of legitimate government. Survival precedes well-being.

After emergency passes, however, continuing upon the same course becomes favor which is illicit. It has authority a force at war against the governed instead of protecting them. Such a condition, *if prolonged*, makes civil disobedience a matter of self-defense, just and necessary. In emergency a minority will profit and would after have

it their interest to prolong their arrangement/privilege. Post emergency, if government favors them it behooves the rest to resist both.

Emergency aside, prosperity is the native course of government because it best serves survival. As wealth has provision for the future so does prosperity serve survival. Preservation of society is central to governance and prosperity is not unconnected or aside from it.

Safety augmented is well-being. Well-being becomes prosperity. Prosperity fortifies survival.

Thus also are discoverable fundamental laws supporting well-being and prosperity that are thereby natural, immutable and universal, connected as they are to preservation. Both aspects of civil law are constitutional. Together they constitute 'Liberty.'

The fundamental principle of liberty in all its actual applications is 'reciprocity.'

Reciprocity is the guiding principle of justice. There is no justice without reciprocity. Excellent government establishes reciprocity in its laws or is not just. What is not just is illicit.

Nothing is more conducive of society than reciprocity because it is the essence of society.

Reciprocity is universal or not at all. Reciprocity can apply only universally. Thus is justice. Thereby are all natural rights common to each citizen alike (universally) and so by excellent government maintained through just arbitration.

The rights constituting liberty are equal limits each upon another, mutual and reciprocal. A right is a domain that no other citizen may trespass. As such is liberty constraint against society, even the majority. Naturally what is forbidden to society is forbidden to government, its servant. Natural rights are equally for each citizen restraint upon government as well as neighbors. Liberty is at once freedoms and constraints.

Know then that government is not the ultimate guardian of liberty. Liberty, being restraint against government is naturally intruded upon by government as it tests its limit to increased itself. Loss of liberty tends to government's gain.

Instead, the natural check on government is society. This is because society has most to lose from loss of liberty. The method by which society can protect itself against violation is through (1) "jury of peers" and (2) "popular vote".

Jury of Peers

While liberty is for each citizen equal, criminals forfeit rights to the degree they made war against society. Rights do not apply to internal enemies just as they have nothing to do with external enemies. This is a matter of preservation.

Judgment upon criminals needs consideration of law in precedence (past judgments) but has also need for mitigation according to society's present "climate of forbearance" – be it lenient or severe.

By jury of peers is society enabled to judge considering the present 'sense' of the law. Accordingly society represented by jury has a necessary part in forming laws it must

itself abide.

Similarly, jury of peers is crucial because society through its citizens gains constant review of its law and by their own judgment exert recourse in view of how it affects themselves.

Lastly, because a jury of citizens is not expert at law the presentation of law in court requires a certain clarity. It is unnatural to respect law that makes no sense – this spawns contempt for law and government. By keeping its law under continual review and scrutiny does society keep its own law transparent and reasonable rather than a convoluted cover for privilege. The jury of average citizens, rooted as they are in society, best keeps law anchored to common sense.

Popular Vote

Periodic popular vote certifies that government remains answerable to society in service of its purpose (“the survival and well-being of the governed”). If not answerable government betrays its purpose. Lacking purpose it is worse than useless. Rule without purpose is arbitrary, illegitimate and dangerous. Where their interests oppose it is government that must be amended or society falls under it. Society under government has a tyrant for its master. But...

General election periodically affirming or changing its chief officers naturally holds government to its purpose. No more substantial check on government exists.

In metaphysically reflecting the actual, common human nature of each citizen does government have each citizen with equal vote. Human nature, the same for all, warrants universal suffrage.

If society is without representation in its own governance it is a slave subject to government. On the other hand, by popular vote on its own behalf, does society in every respect fully and wholly exert itself as it actually is – this to decisive political effect.

Because the vote is cast from multiple viewpoints, each with their different perspectives, all in reflection of every facet in society, it is especially required that the voters be widely informed. An uninformed vote is a blind danger to the voter and their neighbors. The informed vote carries true interest. Only thus may society in all its many parts act together for its *own* interest as a whole.

Speech and press exist to communicate. That citizens are informed is necessary to their vote. In so far as the right to vote is essential so too then are these rights that make it viable. To the degree either is compromised will the resulting vote be compromised.

For this same end must there be legitimate limits about speech and press against deceit or recklessness. This is because corrupt speech and press do likewise corrupt the vote.

The freedoms to libel and deceive have no right. They are license. The rights of speech and press exclude fraud.

The limit of speech and press, making them rights of liberty, extend unto reciprocity but no further – or there be privilege. What is reciprocal is fair and just, what

is not is unjust. No right can be unjust.

This is not to suppose that restraint cannot in proper degree be further narrowed for exceptional reasons. Secrecy and its censures may be required against society's enemies especially in emergency and war.

Also the principle of reciprocity reaches to consideration of fairness toward children. Because children are society's future and survival, but are defenseless, Society does well to protect them publicly in making itself "child proof." Society in its own preservation needs to educate the children but never scandalize them.

Though each citizen is equal in vote and liberty it needs be that there are not equal benefits. Individuals differ in talent. Some are handicapped, some are brilliant, some lazy, some motivated. Yet Society greatly benefits from the fruits of talent and industry. Encouraging talent by way of rewarding its achievements the talented naturally rise in command, particularly economically in the market. This too is good for society because the most able are most suited to command. Ultimately, however, all citizens low or elevated are each equally subject to society by way of the vote and jury.

Property

The first of all rights is Life. Without it no other right is possible.

Second but close beside is Property. Without Property there is slavery. Between the free and slave is the right to own property. Who own not their time, effort, labor and fruits thereof do not own themselves but are subject even unto their right to Life. Thus are Life and Property joined. Understand then: upon their rights of life and property emanate *ALL* other rights.

The rights constituting liberty are derived from and contained in the primary natural rights of Life and Property. In its service to society the purpose of government is to protect liberty especially by safe-guarding the life and property of each individual citizen. What other rights required in support of these are consequently also natural, reciprocal, conducive of society and necessary of government protection.

Trade

Where there is no right to trade there is no right of property – over what one has no discretion one has no ownership. Without property there is no liberty but slavery. Hence, *without fair trade there is tyranny*, but where is liberty is fair trade.

The natural laws of reciprocity that establish justice, excellent government and prosperity are intrinsic to and discoverable in the wider 'laws of economics.'

All transactions of government regard laws of economics. Laws that apply to trade are the same that apply to all transactions whatsoever. They all have their principle in reciprocity.

The more perfectly is reciprocity manifest, the more just is society and prosperous it may become. By discovering and instituting the laws of economics conducive of

society does humanity reach its greatest achievement – excellent government, fair trade and the fullness of liberty.

Fair Trade

Important is the distinction between 'fair trade' and 'free trade.' Their distinction is akin to that between liberty and freedom. Free trade has the full gamut of freedom, unrestrained as it is in nature before society appears. There “might makes right”; force without justice rules. Fair trade, conversely, is confined only to those transactions that hold to reciprocity.

Obviously, on the grounds of reciprocity, the rights of trade exclude freedom to defraud. Unto the boundary of reciprocity do all limits upon trade, society, government and individual citizens arrive...no further.

The guiding condition that distinguishes 'fair' from 'free' trade is “neighborhood effects”.

Neighborhood effects may be positive and reciprocal, or negative and not reciprocal.

In example of positive neighborhood effect consider two neighboring farms. The one is an apple orchard. The other raises bees. The bees naturally trespass to avail themselves of the apple blossoms. Reciprocally the consequence benefits both, the one being assured pollination, the other plentiful honey. To the negative, consider a potter who upon their own property builds a kiln which when fired envelops the neighboring bee farm with smoke to its and the orchard's ruin.

The distinction between government and economics is largely academic. Their difference is as a whole to a part. The universe of economic law is inclusive of government and its laws, not the other way around. Yet government may interfere in the market. Every trade would come under its sanction.

Imperfect government, therefore, results imperfect economy. As is society ordered by its government so too is ordered the economy that sustains them. Government and its economy fit hand in glove. As is the government so shall be its economy. Each are entities of the other. As is formed one so shall correspond the other. Understand then: the more consistent with fair trade is government the more perfect is its form.

It follows that the most perfect form of government is consistent to and conducive of the laws of economics supporting fair trade in liberty. Where there is fair trade there is liberty. Where there is not there is tyranny.

Democracy restrained in liberty is opposite to tyranny. Democracy with enshrined fundamental, natural rights guaranteed by its law is “constitutional”. Thus, most consistent to fair trade is “Constitutional Democracy”. Otherwise is democracy unrestrained majority rule whose transgressions upon liberty or the market are as prone as if by any despot. At worst could democracy devolve into anarchy and mob rule. But being constitutional preserves democracy in liberty. Understand then: some form of practical constitutional democracy is, therefore, excellent government.

Democracy even in its most pure form is intrinsically representative in so far as its officials are elected. The greater society becomes and more complex its circumstances the more necessarily representative in form must evolve its democracy.

In conclusion, the ultimate form of government suited to a great and prosperous society is Representative Constitutional Democracy, that is, the “Republic”. In consideration of its ultimate potential, society is most excellently ordered as a republic.

Republic

The Republic is most receptive of humanity's fullest social and economic destiny with all its complexities and inevitable marvelous blessings. In safe-guarding liberty and fair trade would the Republic bring human potential to fruition...this being the very ends of excellent government!

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the ultimate authority and source of legitimate rule – its establishment is enforced justice, which is reciprocity.

In government sovereignty is derived from the reciprocal Natural Laws of human nature and economics. This part of Natural Law is absolute for all society of whatever government; wherever, whenever rule is exercised, however imperfectly. To the degree rule deviates it fails of reciprocity and is unjust. But by the Republic are these Natural Laws codified and most closely conformed to. Society thereby receives its natural order.

Of course, if there be God everything would be under God's sovereignty. Nonetheless, even so granted, still would sovereignty pass to civil law through Natural Law *as* God's Law. What contradicts Natural Law would contradict God's Law. Positing God or not, Natural Law over government stands supreme. This is discoverable (not invented) by reason and practical experience. Upon Natural Law does government, its constitution and civil law derive legitimate authority or in some part they be instead unnatural instruments of injustice.

In the Republic sovereignty descends from Natural Law, through the constitution unto its government and law, finally to rest upon each individual citizen who, in liberty, has dominion over them self...but not each other.

Individual dominion by popular vote empowers society to advance and maintain sovereignty but not to usurp it. Even in majority the 'people' are not sovereign. No man is sovereign over another.

Rather is it for society to discover the reciprocal laws of nature that establish sovereignty and then constitute them. Thus endowed by true sovereignty is government able to harmonize society with reality – with nature itself, and thereby operate most perfectly to its ends.

Rule

Rule is authority enforced.

The authority of government has rule by force. Force compels. Whatever government compels must serve its purpose (“the survival and well-being of the governed”) or fail. To the degree rule benefits its society is it excellent.

The rule of government exists to pursue *society's good as its own good*.

Its pursuit excludes compromise for any other purpose. Under no circumstance should government sacrifice its own society's good in favor of another government – even in benevolence. Understand that government's rule must be rigorously “selfish”. The individual is at liberty to sacrifice their own good for another, but government is not. What for the individual may be ethical may for government be unethical.

Consequently, be vigilant least, for any reason, government's normal tendency moves it to impose itself above the interest of its society. Universal suffrage, well informed, alone can bind both to the same, common interest.

All said, there is a limit beyond which rule may not transgress. Under no circumstance does inhumanity benefit society. Inhumanity as a means discredits its cause as an ends to profoundly undercut it. Atrocity renders its agents criminal – criminal against all humanity. Since crime has no legitimacy, government can not abide it.

There is no cause so great, so holy that it may condone or absolve atrocity. When revealed it inevitably brings down disgust and wrath upon itself. This is because the sociopath is a criminal danger to everyone, none excepted.

Between governments there should be no pretense of benevolence. Understand that each government must naturally and morally stand for their own above all and everything else. This, however, is not a political detriment as it results *predictable* understandings more than obscure suspicions. This in turn promotes stability from which mutual accommodation can evolve.

Mutual accommodation among states is a blessing for all, but it needs be that it evolves slowly. Its motions and aspects are gigantic and in proportion slow. Thus, for government and society is patience a crowning virtue. It is the principle virtue of diplomacy.

War

Diplomacy and trade are the normal resorts between governments. War is last resort. It is the failure of diplomacy and the ruin of commerce.

War requires extension of government's authority. In war government power over society necessarily widens, this at liberty's expense. Prolonged war *entrenches* this increase. Therefore is prolonged war sure to retard democracy's progress. Peace surely promotes it. Consequently authority's self-interest in power is too often ready to risk war.

Know then that government by nature, left to itself, is not wholly adverse to war. Society to the contrary dreading war, in liberty can exert balancing if not overwhelming opposing bias. Without liberty tyrannies, unchecked, instead tend to eventually exhaust themselves in warfare to society's ruin. Those who live by war die by war.

What is waged in war most precious to society is its youth who take arms. Instead is it for society to bide its time in diplomacy despite mounting tensions so long as common grounds remain.

But when gone, war may be justified under four conditions:

In self-defense before a material threat...this being the first among natural rights. When against force must force oppose.

When it is evident diplomacy no longer bides but spends time.

There is at least plausible prospect of success.

It is first and foremost waged in interest of the youth who bear its brunt and receive its future boon or burden.

Given these conditions, justly may government wage war against immanent threat – even preemptively.

However, during the course of war it may become evident to many that no longer do all necessary conditions apply. Casualties beyond treasure may indicate too great a cost proportioned to the ends. Maybe possibility of success loses hopeful prospect. Capitulation then may be prudent especially if annihilation is the alternative. Possibly avenues of diplomacy may open.... even more happily the threat itself passes. Particularly in the latter case could continued violence become atrocity and a wicked cause.

Granting that war is intrinsically brutal, if its underlying scheme is inhumane the perpetrator is a priori anti-human which is criminal.

In every case, when reason comes to hardly support war, society needs be ready to guide its government away from its prolongation. Beyond inflicting grievous loss and stifling liberty, particularly does prolonged war brutalize the youth who fought, only to poison society with discontent and crime.

To deter war government is obliged to develop and sustain the state's defense and offense. But of the two the latter least invites invasion. A strong offense with weak defense is better than the other way around. This is because without offense defense is prey and will in time collapse. States heed with respect each others attack capacity...not the walls that hem them in.

For this reason must policy be coupled with accommodating foreign relations of mutual interests and trade. Otherwise manifest offensive capacity (wise to project), by its very nature, is a menace if not a threat to invite conflict not avoid it. However, broad minded diplomacy pursued for the long run will eventually bring trust, a wider *common*

deterrence (defense), and the bonds of reciprocal benefit, these the most formidable supports of peace.

Conclusion

All said, the above Matters of Certainty and Conviction render Subjectivity, Relativism and Skepticism philosophically unreasonable and, therefore, positively fanatic. Their scope may apply to “accidental” or unessential circumstances but not to matters of Philosophy which is directed rather to the universal and constant. Philosophy has no room for the subjective or relative except as incidentals and altogether no place for Skepticism.

For the past 250 years Philosophy has been on the wrong track.... unto ugly, unordered consequences. This Cosmology is asserted to correct that way and lead us toward solid, constructive grounds for the beautiful and excellent.

Common sense stands unless proven otherwise.

This treatise confirms common sense.

THE GEOMETRY OF VISUAL PERCEPTION

Straight Line Perspective – Not the Geometry of Visual Perception

The system of geometry that corresponds to the appearance of space is the “geometry of visual perception”.

Traditional “linear perspective” or “straight line perspective” does not depict the appearance of visual space. It is not the geometry of visual perception.

The true delineation of a view's actual visual shapes on a flat surface results in “curved line perspective”. This is the geometry of visual perception and is explained as follows.

Linear perspective is a projection which will appear visually correct when properly viewed (from the point of projection). Linear perspective is valid in this. Nonetheless, it does not picture, draw, or depict on a flat surface a view as it appears. Curved line perspective does. They are both valid. They are valid for different reasons. They define two different things.

Linear perspective is a *projection* of objects in space from a viewpoint or point of projection onto *any* surface. From that point of projection the projection will appear visually correct.

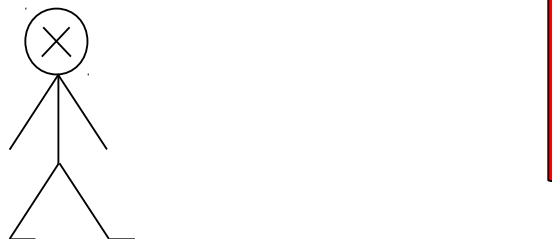
Curved line perspective is not projection. Curved line perspective is a *graph* and pertains only to a flat surface as required by the two-dimensional nature of shape. All visual perceptions concern shape – shape need be no more or less than flat.

Curved line perspective depicts or draws on a flat surface the same visual shapes comprising any given actual view. Curved line perspective draws what you see. It draws *visual shapes the same as you see them*. Linear perspective does not.

Straight Line Perspective – Projection

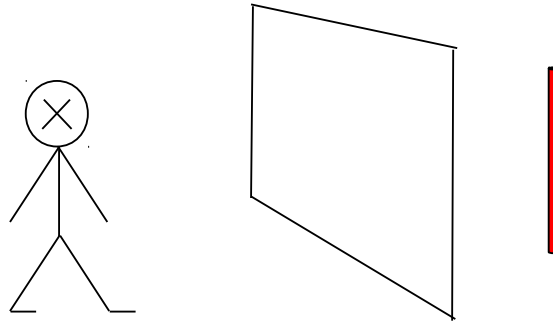
Given a fixed point of view (x) and a fixed length or “stick” in space –

a)



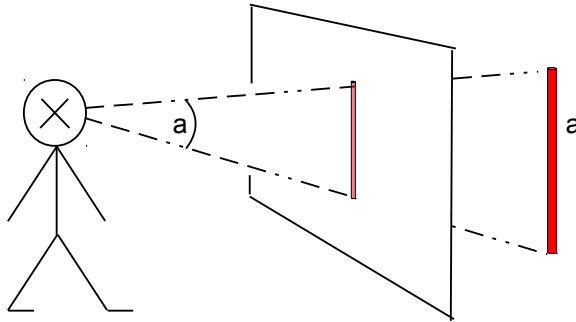
and given between them a flat plane of projection or a picture plane –

b)



the projection of the stick onto the picture plane results a linear perspective “depiction” of the stick.¹⁰

c)

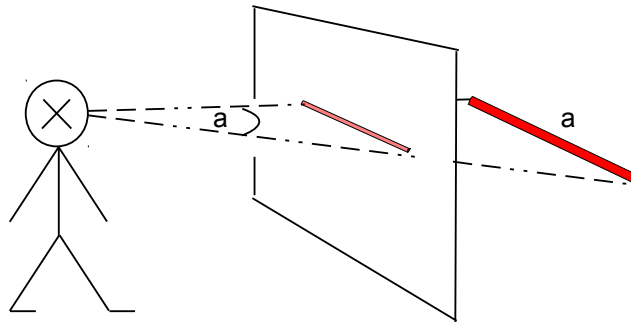


From the viewpoint or point of projection (x) the projected stick would exactly eclipse the actual stick and so will both appear the same.

The top and bottom lines of projection or “visual rays” fix the length of the projected stick as they correspond to the top and bottom of the actual stick. These visual rays form a common “angle of projection”.

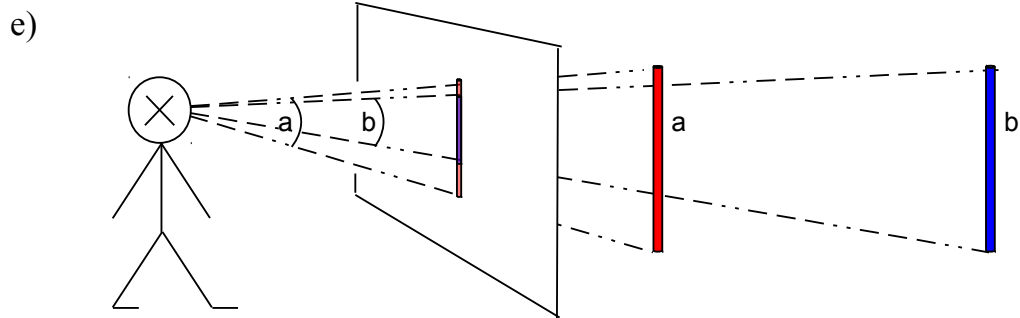
If the stick is now rotated horizontally (parallel to the picture plane) it will appear the same length because the angle of projection is the same.

d)

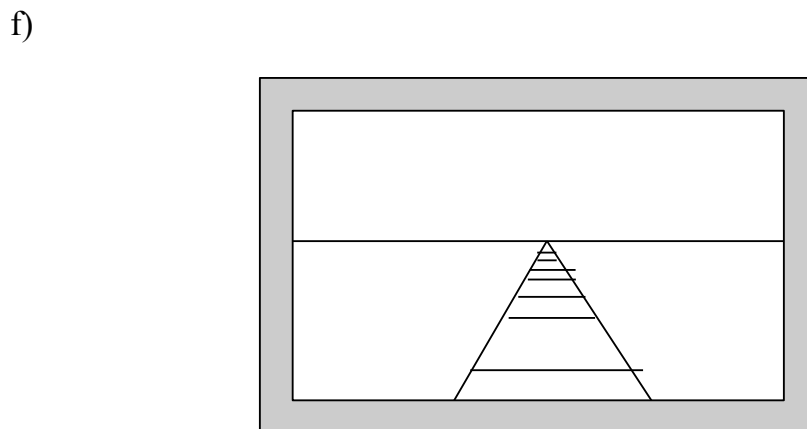


¹⁰ Linear perspective has driven visual media from Renaissance paintings, to photographs, movies, television and electronic media of all kinds.

Consider that a second, same sized stick is now placed further from the viewpoint. It will form a smaller angle of projection and will, therefore, project a smaller length. Thus, the same actual length appears shorter the further removed it is from the viewpoint. This is the key to visual space. This is a principle of visual perception: *things appear smaller the further away they are from the viewer.*



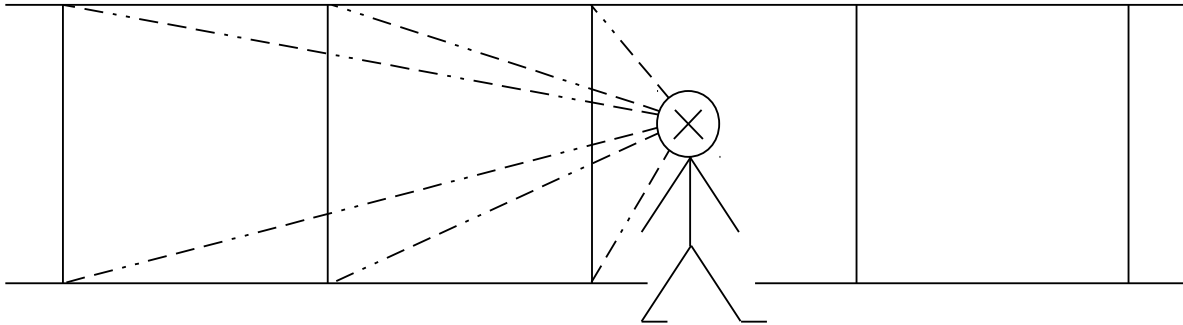
Now consider a train track laid out before us to the horizon consisting of a multitude of equally sized parallel ties. As the ties (fixing the common distance between the rails) appear to diminish in length so must the rails consequently appear to converge at the horizon. The train track would, therefore, project onto the picture plane something like this:



The exact rate that things appear smaller is known by their angles of projection. In our previous example of the two sticks (e) it follows that when the second is removed far enough away so that its defining angle is half that of the first, it will accordingly appear half as long. Nevertheless it does not follow that the projection of the second stick in linear perspective will be depicted half as long as the first. It is not. For linear perspective it need not be drawn in the same proportion or shape as it would appear. It need only be depicted such that when viewed it *appears* in correct proportion. It would not be drawn proportionately half as long! This is why:

Consider now placing the train track horizontally, like a fence parallel to the picture plane:

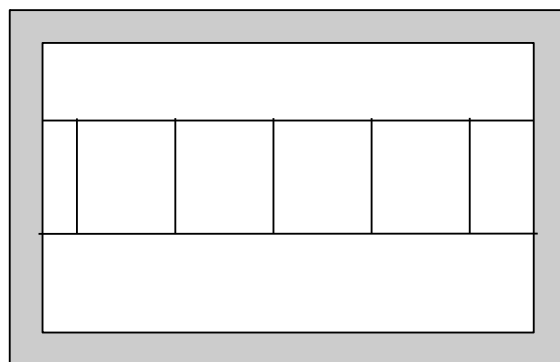
g)



It would follow from the above “principle of visual perception” that the equally long fence posts (just like the ties) receding further away from the viewpoint to the left and right would have to appear smaller. Their respective angles of projection will decrease as they actually recede further left and right. However, linear perspective would not project or draw the lengths getting smaller on a flat surface. They would in this case be projected all the same length!

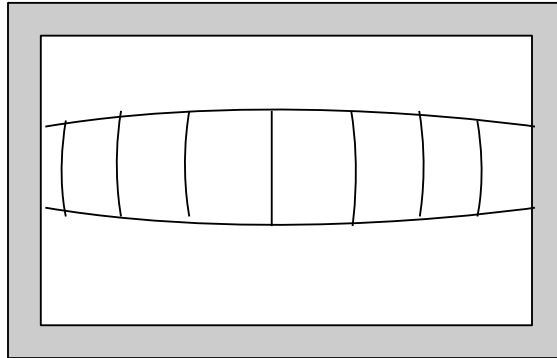
In linear perspective, regardless of their distance from the viewpoint, all the posts would be drawn the same (projected) length. The depicted rails distanced from each other by the same lengths would accordingly be drawn as parallel and not converging. As a depiction this is not visually correct – only as a projection viewed in actual space does it *'become'* visually correct.

h)



Instead, visually the posts appearing diminished left and right would accordingly have the rails depicted converging left and right..... like this:

i)



It is principle to visual perception that things appear smaller the further they are from the viewer. It is principle to the depiction of space. Yet linear perspective does not conform to this principle. It does not depict the shapes of space or a view, on a flat surface/plane, the *same* as they would appear.

Because linear perspective fails to conform to the visual principle of diminution it cannot be the geometry of visual perception.

Curved line perspective, on the other hand, does depict the correct proportionate shapes in viewing space (always depicting proportionately smaller what appears smaller).

Linear perspective does not depict the scene as it appears because the actual picture plane and what is delineated upon it are themselves viewed in actual space/distance and so will both together naturally appear diminished as they actually become distanced from the given viewpoint (the point of projection).¹¹

In the above example (h) the depicted fence posts actually become further distanced on the picture plane from the viewpoint. Accordingly their depiction, though all the same size, are caused by actual distance (when viewed) to appear getting smaller the further they are actually removed left and right. In short, linear perspective works because the picture or projection itself is viewed in space and thereby is subject to 'natural perspective'.

Accordingly, while being depicted as parallel, the fence rails will naturally appear to converge as they are actually removed further away from the viewpoint on the picture plane left and right. Again, this is because the picture plane and the posts/rails delineated parallel on it do actually and also recede from the viewer. While not depicted as converging they will, when the depiction is viewed, appear to converge. In linear perspective the rails are *not drawn as they appear* but distorted in order that they

¹¹ Nor does projection onto a sphere depict appearances. For example, horizontal parallel lines would be depicted with uniform shape (great semi-circles) on a sphere. But this is contrary to their *appearance* which, as we shall see, varies in shape from straight to semi-circle. Projection onto any surface merely replaces the external object of visual perception, but does not describe the perception thereof.

therefore appear correct when viewed in actual distance.

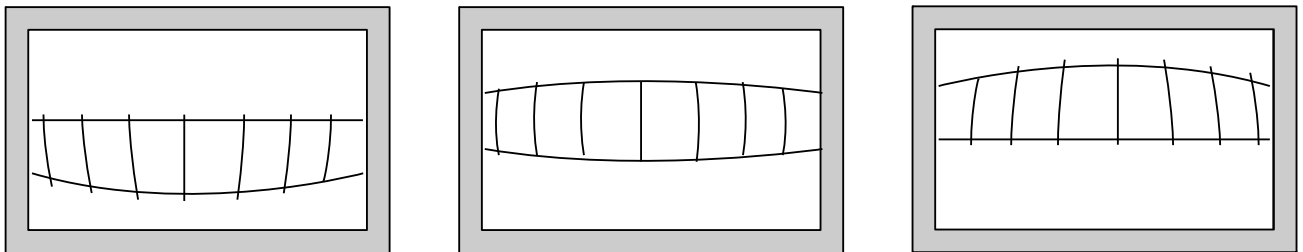
On the other hand, curved line perspective will render the true visual shapes of a view. A length that appears three times longer than another length would be depicted three times longer. If the angle of projection of one length is twice that of another it would be drawn twice as long. This is the difference between the two systems of perspective.

Curved Line Perspective

In the above example (h) the equal lengths of actual fence posts would instead be depicted getting smaller to the left and right, appearing the greatest where closest to the viewer. Hence the depicted rails, being separated by visually diminishing lengths (posts) would correspondingly be depicted converging left and right. If continued, as if viewing a fence extended to the horizon, they would eventually converge at their vanishing points to the far left and right.

There are three basic ways to depict this convergence of fence rails left and right.

j)



The following demonstrates that the above three possible differences in visual shape (of the fence) will depend on what/where the viewer is looking at – that it depends on the direction in which the viewer is looking or the direction of the viewer's *line of vision*.

In demonstration consider a most simple scene. Suppose standing on an infinite plane and looking straight ahead at the horizon. The horizon would have the visual shape of a straight line. Mathematically this is because every visual ray that defines or intersects the horizon together with the line of vision would all lie on a common plane together with the line of vision.

Consider secondly the same viewpoint and scene, changing nothing but the direction/line of vision. Suppose now looking directly down or perpendicular to the plane. The same horizon would now have to appear as the shape of a circle being defined with the direction of vision by all (equally) 90° visual angles. Notice, therefore, that the visual angles *change depending upon the direction of vision* while the actual scene and

viewpoint remain the same. In this second case the entire view would be a visual circle encompassing the entire picture plane (outside the circle, opposite to this direction of vision, would appear/be the sky above the viewer).

In short, the same scene can be viewed and thereby appear differently *even if the viewpoint remains the same*. The difference depends upon the direction in which the scene is viewed...it makes a great difference.

In the three scenes of the fence (j) the first case represents the visual shape of the fence when looking at the bottom rail where the visual rays that intersect it all rest on a common plane with the direction of vision. Thus would the bottom rail appear straight with the top rail converging toward it. They would finally meet at their two common vanishing points 180° apart or at a visual angle of 90° to the left and 90° to the right.

In the second case a different, “football” shape results but from the same unchanged viewpoint when, however, the direction of vision is now raised to intersect a point between the two rails (such that each, having symmetrical visual angles, would symmetrically curve toward each other meeting at their common opposite vanishing points 90° left and right). The last (third example) results when the viewer looks further up intersecting at the top rail.

In view of an infinite plane, when viewed perpendicularly, its horizon comprising 180° represents half-space as a circle. Its center point is the focal point or what is being looked at in the direction of vision. The visual shape of half-space is therefore a circle with its center at the line of vision.

Because visual shape is not a matter of size, the size of the depicted circle is irrelevant. The size of the picture depicted is irrelevant. The size of a shape does not affect its shape. A big circle or big square are no more nor less a circle or square than smaller ones. So long as proportions are kept the same the shape is the same. A view (of half-space) will be depicted as it appears so long as within the circle the same configuration of shapes are depicted as are viewed within the intended corresponding 180° field of vision. Thus may the appearance of space be depicted according to proportion but regardless of size. Size has nothing to do with shape, only proportion.

In short, given a fixed viewpoint and from it a fixed visual ray as the direction of vision, there exists a fixed 180° field of vision around it. Changing the direction of vision will change the view of that scene by changing what half of the actual scene is being viewed within the 180° field. Consequently changing the direction of vision from the same viewpoint will change the visual shapes composing the view – the scene remains the same, the viewpoint remains the same, but the view changes...depending on the direction of vision!

The shape of the 180° field of course remains a circle. The center of the field remains constant as the central focal point of the direction of vision. What changes in changing the direction of vision are the visual shapes within the view – within the (actual) 180° field of vision.

In conclusion, it follows that the appearance of a view depends not *only* on the viewpoint (as does linear perspective) but *also* upon the line of vision. To change either may change the visual shapes or appearance of a given/fixed scene. Visual space is

determined by *BOTH*. Both are principles of visual perception. Direction of vision is a principle of visual perception. Direction of vision is a principle of the geometry of visual perception. Only curved line perspective utilizes this principle – straight line perspective does not. Curved line perspective is a more complete definition of visual space.

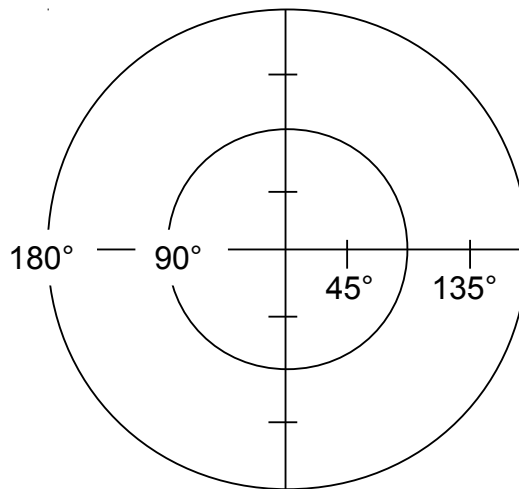
The Geometry of Visual Perception

The center of any given view is what is being looked at as the focal point in the line or direction of vision. All the visual angles forming a 90° angle with the direction of vision geometrically define a visual circle which would encompass a total 180° field of vision or half of visual space (the half space in 'front' of the viewer). Its depicted shape, regardless of size, is a circle.

Within that field any visual ray to any location will form an angle with the central direction of vision which, when plotted proportionally within the 180° field or circle will altogether depict all the same proportions (shapes) as do the visual proportions to which they correspond. Thus, all visual angles of 45° would encompass a total visual field of 90° around the direction of vision and define a circle depicted exactly half way between the center (point of vision) and the 180° field circle.

We now have a “radial graph” within which a scene of 180° can conveniently be plotted.

k)

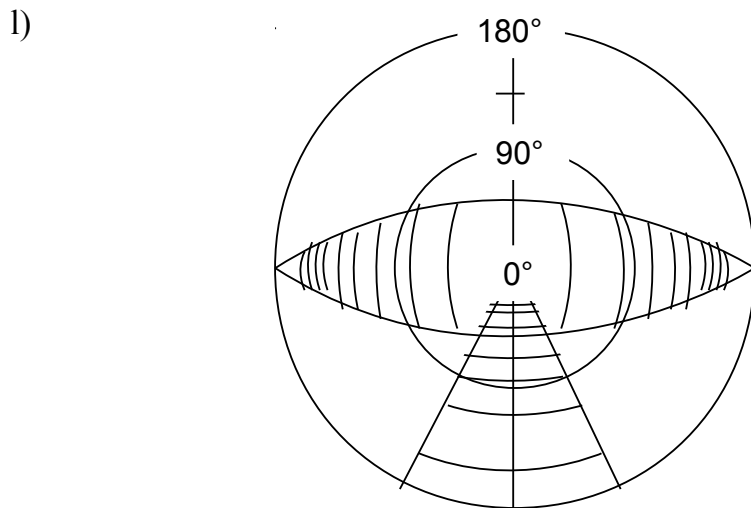


Given any visual angle of any view there can be determined and plotted a coordinate in proportion to the corresponding 180° view's field – so long as the magnitude of the visual angle and its radial degree is determined.

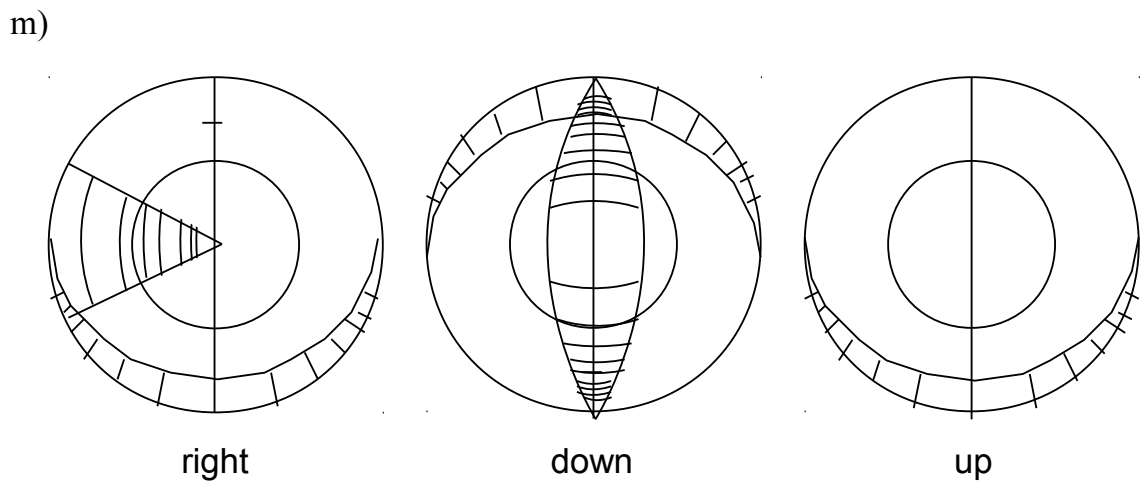
The result is curved line perspective wherein the same shapes are depicted as are the visual shapes to which they correspond – both of the same proportions.

As a final example let us suppose we are standing on our train track, looking directly at one of its vanishing points on the horizon with our fence, perpendicular to the

track, and distanced from the viewpoint so that the closest point of the top and bottom of the fence are 45° with respect to our given direction of vision. Our view would look something like this:



Keeping the *same* viewpoint but looking in *different* directions, the same scene would appear differently – something like this:



We trust the reader can extrapolate any further instances and that the reader appreciates that *the appearance of space depends not only on fixing a viewpoint but also a direction of vision....*both as necessary *principles* of visual perception.

In conclusion, the above demonstrates:

A] that “direction of vision”, beside viewpoint, is a determining *PRINCIPLE* of visual perception (such that space is relative to a point and vector).

B] Consequently, curved line perspective is the geometry of (1) visual space, and (2) a point in motion relative to actual space.

