

Divisibility, Logic, Radical Empiricism, and Metaphysics

Abstract:

We will explore the problem of the manner in which the world may be divided into parts, and how this affects the application of logic. We will also consider how this affects the problem of knowing the world. Such considerations bring us to discuss how the divisibility of the world relates to idealism, realism, and the radical empiricist program of James. The epistemological difficulties sometimes associated with realism will in particular be shown to be in principle the result of misunderstanding the nature of the divisibility of the world. When such divisibility is properly understood, we claim that there is no epistemological dilemma, at least in principle, although of course in practice there may be other difficulties. We conclude by tentatively analyzing these practical difficulties.

I. THE DIVISIBILITY OF THE WORLD

It is a fact which may be easily observed that our experiences admit certain distinctions by which we can refer to different parts of them. Such divisibility may first be noted when we distinguish the five different kinds of sensations which we have. Within each type of sense, we may further divide the particular sensations: the feel of the chair upon my back is distinct from the touch of my feet upon the ground, while the orange oval that I see (a table) is distinct from the brown shape to my right (a wall). Within these we could continue to divide if we wished, but the point is adequately illustrated with these examples.

Now philosophy, since the time of the ancient Greeks, has tried to understand this divisibility (Aristotle, 2001; Plato, 1997). The tendency, since the time of Aristotle, has been to try to understand the world in terms of a collection of indivisible individuals, such that the world could be considered as simply the collection of such individuals. However, certain difficulties arise as a consequence of such an attempt. If an individual is to be an individual in the fullest sense of that word, then it is often claimed that it must be completely describable, at least in essence, without reference to any other individual. In other words, the individual must be described entirely in terms of universals. The initial impetus towards this tendency may be found in Aristotle, who defined 'substance' as something which 'is never a predicate,' from which it follows that each individual substance must be described only by

universals and not by other substances (2001). Now the problem which results from this is that it now becomes unclear how any individual can interact with another. For suppose that two individuals X and Y interacted in some way. This would be a kind of a relation R between them, so that $R(X,Y)$ would hold. But then $R(X,*)$ is a predicate defined in terms of X which is predicated of Y. This contradicts the desire to define the properties of all individuals solely in terms of universals; X has entered into a predicate applied to Y. Therefore if we wish to still hold that individuals are described only by universals, it must be maintained that all the properties of Y must really be definable without reference to X. However, if this is so, then there can be no real interaction between X and Y. To put it another way, this theory maintains that if Y is an individual, it should be described only by universals. But then it cannot be involved in an actual relation with X, because then to describe Y we must reference X. As a result some philosophers have considered the possibility that the world is not in fact divisible. Of course this blatantly contradicts our everyday experience; as a result, that experience is called an illusion by some. But calling it an illusion does not change the fact that this illusion has distinguishable parts, and the illusion is in fact a part of reality. Some philosophers simply accept that short of some Absolute One, there is always contradiction, and hence the illusion of life is simply self-contradictory (Hegel, 1969). Others divided the world into unrelated monads correlated by God, although they did not explain how God could do what was inherently contradictory to their philosophy (Leibniz, 2005).

Such a solution is not adequate, because to say something is a contradiction would indicate be taken to mean that our descriptions of it are not able to be descriptions of one and the same thing. Whatever exists can be described in some terms, even if that is only to be what it is. If there is a contradiction it is in our description, not in the thing itself. So to say that an actual thing, like life itself, is an illusion and self-contradictory is meaningless, like saying that a colour smells like a rose; contradiction applies to description, not to things.

Now the above reasoning may be considered too ridiculous to actually have been taken seriously

by any philosopher. Taking that as may be, we argue that the error in the above reasoning is in thinking that a divisible part of the world is in fact *indivisible* and describable only in terms of universals. Rather, we must take a new understanding of the nature of the divisions which may be applied to the world.

Even if we took the traditional notion of an individual, we would still find that there are distinguishable parts of that individual, since many predicates will be predicated of it. Of course, those distinguishable parts are, in such a theory, only universals. The orange shape before me has a universal shape of oval, a universal colour of orange, and so on. But it is not in this way that we suggest the world can be divided.

Rather than trying to divide the world into individuals described in terms of universals, we instead consider that any distinguishable part of the world may be considered as a unity in itself, but it must also be understood as part of a larger whole, as part of the world itself (taken as the whole of reality). This idea goes back to Frege, who considered that depending upon how we conceptualize a part of the world, the number we assign to it may greatly differ: this thing is one wheat field, but numerous grains of dirt and pieces of wheat (2007). Indications of it may also be found in James (2007c). In that way the concept of ‘substance’ might still be relevant; some part of the world might form ‘one substance,’ though of course it might not be a substance in quite the traditional Aristotelian sense since it is a part of the world as we described, it could be very like it for all practical purposes (maybe even identical, depending upon how Aristotle is interpreted).

However, just some part of the world has been distinguished from the rest does *not* mean that it can be completely described without reference to other particulars in the world. Quite the opposite in fact: a full description of the thing will require that we specify how it fits into the world as a whole. And just because something is independent of some kind of relation or of some other thing does not imply it can be fully described without reference to such relations or that other thing, for it may be in

such relations, or it may be in relation to that other thing. I would be quite different if I lacked hearing, for example. To leave out my hearing would not mean that one would have to leave me out of the world entirely, but it would leave out some part of me.

We will now define *independence* and *dependence*. To say that some distinguishable part of the world X is dependent upon some other part of the world Y means that X would not exist without Y and whatever relation X has with Y. To say X is *relatively independent* of Y means that although it would change if we got rid of its relations with Y, it would still exist. Let us consider an example. We will say that a part of the world X is independent of Z, where Z is a universal property or type of relation, whenever X does not require any properties or relations of type Z. I exist (whatever 'I' am) independently of my sense of hearing, that is, independently of my having audible sensation experiences. On the other hand a patch of colour is dependent upon its shape (and the shape is also dependent upon having a colour), although it is not entirely clear whether it is dependent upon its own particular shape or just upon having a shape in general. Finally we will say that Z is *replaceable* for X if we could substitute some other particular for Z into all Z's relations with X (hence X may be dependent on Z while Z is nonetheless replaceable for X). For example, a painting must be painted. But it could be painted by anyone, and apart from the manner in which it came to exist as a painting, it would not differ from what it is. In particular we will later want to consider parts of the world which have no dependence upon being perceived consciously for their being, and determine such things are conceivable, and whether they are knowable.

When there is a relation between two distinguishable parts of the world, then at least if that relation is active and not merely passive, then they do in fact comprise a part of the existence of one another. By 'active' we mean here only that this is some kind of real interaction, as opposed to simply being similar to one another or coexisting. 'Being the same colour' is passive, because the only changes about the one coloured patch that are changed by changing the other are its comparative relations with it, whereas

‘being supported by the table’ is active, since the thing in question would not be supported without the table. Of course, any relation at all expresses some truth about all the parts it relates. Hence there are no two things in the world which are totally independent, only relatively independent: all things have some sort of relation to all others.

This does not mean, of course, that a thing cannot be in part described without knowing anything about the rest of the world. When we see some patterns of colour on the left side of our visual field, we can describe them without saying how they relate to the patterns on the right side. In other words, whenever a thing X is independent of other things in general, or relatively independent of them, then we can describe it without reference to them, since the only thing that these other things can change about X is the collection of things that it is independent of. For this reason, we emphatically are *not* saying that Hegel was correct in thinking that one can dialectically know everything about reality by starting with any given piece of it (1969). Things are not adequately related to one another for that to be true.

Finally, what we have said largely relates to the notion of particulars. But similar considerations apply to universals. We may, for example, understand universals as simply the ‘internal shape’ of particular parts of the world, considered *qua* ‘shape.’ Abstract conception then becomes something which communicates the shape without that shape being filled by a particular (whether such communication is conscious or not). However, such consideration about universals does not have much bearing upon our present topic, so we will leave it aside.

II. Logic

Now logic in general, or at least mathematical logic, works with elements in a domain of discourse (2002). However, no mathematician would ever consider a given unit described in full by those properties of it which do not make reference to the other elements. For example, we may say ‘x is a set.’ That does not fully describe its relationship to other elements, however. It does not tell us if x is a

subset of y , for example. What it does tell us is that since x is a set, it can also be in the relation of being a subset of some other thing. It is also notable that although mathematicians do in fact usually work with indivisible individuals, this is often known to be merely a simplifying assumption, at least in applied mathematics such as physics. When, for example, a physicist approximates the planets as indivisible points, no one thinks that they really believe one cannot further divide each planet; it is simply that any further divisibility plays no major role.

Our claim, then, is that whereas James suggested (or at least we may interpret him this way) that logic requires individuals in the traditional sense, in fact logic does not work with such individuals (1977a). It certainly works with ‘unit’ elements (in Frege’s sense of that term), and these are generally termed individuals, but these things are not considered as described only by properties. Every individual in a domain of discourse is also described by the relations that it has with other things. We describe one set as being contained in another, or we describe two sets as overlapping. This fact should have led philosophers to realize this interrelatedness of the parts of the world sooner, but unfortunately mathematical logic was not developed until after these errors had already cropped into philosophy.

III. Perception and Epistemology: Theory

Now the dogma of individuals described only by universals has led to a number of issues related to epistemology and also to metaphysics. After all, if all individuals must be described only by universals, then no particular can cause another particular to exist, or causally modify another particular. In addition all perception is reduced to simply being an individual in a state of ‘thinking X .’ But ‘ X ’ is not another particular, so in fact we cannot ever perceive another particular, according to this dogma. A particular state of experience could not involve any other particulars. Nor could there be causation between individuals, because once again ‘caused by X ’ is not strictly a universal.

Our above considerations show that this is not true when we change from the notion of ‘individual’ to simply ‘distinguishable parts of the world.’ One particular can perceive another particular through

direct 'contact' with it, so to speak: the relation between the perceiver and perceived is a part of them both and they are thus parts of one another in some sense (it is an 'active' relation, in our above terminology). Such perception does not mean that one thing simply causes another thing, the perceiver, to be qualified by some universal form of perception, but that one thing is in fact the content of the perception of the other: the perception is not simply caused in the mind by some other object, but the other object is itself the content of the perception, is in the conscious mind itself while also being separate from it. Every perception is of course a 'state' in some sense, whether of a mind or of an event. Yet this state can involve content which exists separately from being perceived, that is, which is not dependent for its existence upon being the content of a mental perception. What exists can both exist on its own and also exist as the content of a perception or thought, without depending upon being such a content for its existence. Therefore perception is not a case of an event merely representing some other object in the mind, but rather the object is itself appropriated into the mind.

Berkeley argued that whatever was perceived must be perceived in order to exist (1977). Now there are two grounds upon which this could be argued. The first is to argue that all perception is simply a case of a mind being qualified by a universal of 'thinking X.' But we have shown that perception can be something else instead, and in fact insofar as perception always reveals to us something about the world, even if only that there is a perception of some general kind, perception is always a revelation of the world to us. Perhaps a certain perception does involve some qualification by a universal, but as such the event of perception itself is revealed as having a certain form, and is itself the content of a perception, indeed it is in some sense its own content. Thus every perception involves some part of the world as content, even if it is only a qualification by a universal. Granting this, it may nonetheless be argued that we cannot know what it would mean for something to exist apart from being perceived, since everything we perceive is perceived by us (this would actually mean that we could not know what it would mean for something to appear to anyone else and leave us in solipsism) (Winter,

2008). Berkeley in fact seems to use both arguments in his work. But this latter argument is dependent upon an unjustified restriction of our ability to conceptualize, one which in fact contradicts our general experience. We can in fact conceive of being independent from being perceived.

With that said, it follows that perception can be a case of a mind being in relation to a thing and knowing it as part of its being, with the thing perceived forming the actual content of the perception, without that thing being dependent upon being perceived (by anyone) for its existence (although it could be claimed that the thing perceived depends upon being perceived by someone in order to exist, and maybe in some cases this is true, we have shown that it need not be true in all cases). We do not necessarily mean here a 'mind' in the sense of 'thinking substance;' but certainly different experiences that we have bear some conscious connection with one another, and if nothing else that connection certainly constitutes a mind. In addition, perception need not be restricted to sensations; one may perceive causes as well, or anything that exists, at least in theory: all things are of the sort that form the content of thoughts, although not all things need to actually be the content of thoughts to exist. Our emotions, for example, are considered by some to be something other than combinations of sensation (Lewis, 2001; Whitehead, 1978). In addition Whitehead in fact believed that we have perception of causes and things acting on one another occurred on a regular basis (1978). James agreed with him that we perceive causation in instances where it occurs, or at least maintained that we understand the concept of causation as it really is even, if we only infer instances of its applicability (1977b, 288-289). Even if we do not perceive any causes, that does not mean that they are sorts of things which cannot be perceived or understood or used in describing the world, for we can understand concepts which are communicated to us without necessarily having to see particular instances of them. Causation, whether it is perceived or unperceived, is exactly the sort of thing that we conceive of it as, or at least is similar to it. To justify this claim we appeal only to experience, although our opinion here is shared also by a number of philosophers (Plato, 1997; James, 1977c; Whitehead, 1978).

Berkeley's final objection to the idea of unperceived existents is that something which is not perceived is devoid of content, because whether it exists or not does not make any difference to our experiences. Yet this is false for two reasons. First, the unperceived thing may exert control over our experiences. Berkeley acknowledges this but points out that such control need not be unperceived; we may equally think that it is a thought in some mind. Certainly this is true. But although that controlling thing itself can be the content of experience, we maintain that it does not need to be so in order to exist. Thus it can affect those parts of the world that do make up our experiences, and it can also itself be potentially experienced, whereby Berkeley's objection is answered. All things in the world are able to be the content of perception (in theory), but they do not need to be the content of a perception in order to exist. This idea should be compared to the radical empiricist program of William James, which maintains that the world is comprised of pure experience (1977c; see especially 'A World of Pure Experience'). We agree with this general idea, provided that it is understood that the world is not constructed of experiences alone. Rather, it is constructed of the *kinds* of things that experience is constructed of. Anything in the world *can* be itself perceived (in the sense of actually being a component in an experience, not simply causing a state of experience), but the parts of the world do not *need* to be parts of experiences in order to exist, at least not generally. Hence although the whole world is composed of those things which also form experience, this is not idealism, and nor do we deny the objectivity of the world and its history. Rather we affirm the objectivity of the world, while also maintaining that the world is itself accessible to us. Truth for us remains a matter of accurate correspondence to fact, but what we have said implies that in theory one could potentially *check* such correspondences - if one had a mind that could access that part of the world in perception - for the whole world is potentially available to be experienced. In this, we are in disagreement with James' pragmatic definition of truth (1977c). His pragmatic definition of truth is really more a definition of when some idea is useful for life, and to be useful for life does not mean that the idea must be true in

the sense of correspondence, as Nietzsche so eloquently observed (1968). However, everything which is true can, under our theory, become relevant to experience: if the notion of ‘substance’ which we mentioned before has any applicability to the world, then it is directly experientiable, possibly as a form of interconnection between certain parts of the world. For more on this matter see (Whitehead, 1978).

This leads us to now ask whether a perceiving mind could know (with certainty) that a perception was of this sort, and was not merely a qualification of the mind by a universal. Also, we wish to know whether that mind could know that the thing perceived, the content of the experience, exists independently from being perceived. In other words we wish to know whether it is possible to have certainty that some component of an experience exists independently of that experience.

Here we will consider these questions theoretically. Later we will consider whether the human mind can have such certainty in a practical sense. Now, there are certain things about perception which are absolutely certain. I cannot be wrong about the fact that I am seeing a brown patch in the right side of my vision. This experience simply *is*, and the form that it has is given at least to some degree, for whatever else this experience might be metaphysically, this much is certain: it is ‘some kind of perceiving a brown patch.’ In this way even if perceptions are merely qualifications of some mental substance or simply forms of a self-contained event, the perception knows itself at least to the degree of knowing that it is ‘some kind of perceiving a...,’ which shows that all perception involves some knowledge and revelation of the world. Our claim therefore that all things in the world are of essentially the same kind of thing as forms the content of thought (but they can exist in many cases without being the content of thought, even if some things that are the contents of thoughts are unable to exist without being such a content) could still hold even if some thoughts involve content that can only exist as parts of thoughts. But we wish to know to what degree the nature of the experience can be fully known.

Now *theoretically*, although with the caveat that in practical terms the human mind may not be

able to access this sort of thing, one can conceive of an experience of a perception which was given with a form that could not be other than ‘perceiving a thing with being independent of being perceived.’ Similarly, one could conceive of an experience of perception which was given with the form ‘a perception which is a relation between two things,’ and combinations thereof. The very being of the perceived object might be revealed in the perception; the very nature of the perception itself might be revealed with it. Such things are no more judgments than the fact that I am seeing brown on my right; I may err as I try to verbalize this experience or as I posit additional existences as its cause, etc., but the experience itself simply is, as ‘stubborn fact,’ in Whitehead’s words (1978). As such a mind could theoretically have absolute certainty of these things and know the world with certainty. However, it is not clear whether or not the human mind can do so.

One caveat must be noted with respect to logic here, which could not be previously mentioned because we had not yet discussed these epistemological issues. Logic is purely formal, and so as James pointed out it cannot express our notions of causation and activity in itself (1977b). However, that does not mean it is entirely inapplicable to such concepts. It means rather that whatever symbol we use in logic to represent that concept is merely a symbol, and logic deals only with the formal relations between statements, and not with their meaning. The meaning of the statement depends upon the concept itself, which describes causation (or activity). We may also clarify somewhat our earlier remark about universals. What we said may be rephrased as saying that an abstract conception has as its content the sort of thing that merely communicates a potential form for objects, i.e. a concept, without actually being a thing that exists *in* that form. Hence it is possible to think conceptually about some part of the world without that part actually being the content of the thought, in the sense of being the thing with which we have direct contact in the thought. But such conceptualization can also involve other particulars, because universal descriptions can involve particulars (‘being seen by X,’ for example). It should also be noted that since each thought is different, and each particular also different,

that the content of these abstract conceptions need not be thought of as any sort of Platonic Forms, *per se* (1997). In fact the forms of particulars are derived from nothing but themselves; they are not derived from universals or the abstract ideas of them. Universals and abstract ideas rather are things that can match particulars, and not the other way round, although particulars can also match parts of one another, thus blurring the distinction. This also let us see how it is that so frequently in experience, such as when reading, we find ourselves grasping concepts more than the individual sense data (Merleau-Ponty, 2006). Such concepts are simply given to us in experience, unlike other cases of conceptualization when we take some conscious role in the process. Similar considerations will often apply to emotions (and even sensations in some cases), although a full consideration of these matters would take us too far afield.

Now when we consider the sort of knowledge and description considered above, it will become clear that all things are open to perception. There is no hidden world of the noumena here, and also there is no phenomena that is ‘merely appearance,’ for what exists, what the world *is*, is revealed to us as it is when we perceive (Kant, 1990). The thing perceived is also the thing which exists in itself, appearing as it (at least in part) is (though of course some things might exist without being perceived, so perception should not go too far; the sense data we perceive should not be mistaken for those things which control and dictate when and where they exist). In removing the hidden noumena, we have also removed the idea of mere appearance (Nietzsche, 1998). Of course it does not follow that there are not parts of the world which we do not perceive or perhaps cannot even describe precisely with the concepts available to us; instead of the noumena there are now degrees of describability. But there is nothing of a fundamentally different character; all things are open to being perceived and grasped conceptually as well.

IV. Perception and Epistemology: Practical

First let us consider our knowledge of our own mind. In each of our experiences, there is some

aspect which is shared, which is the actual consciousness. This is a distinguishable part or aspect of each experience. The content itself is also a distinguishable part of the experience, at least insofar as we can conceive of someone else having such an experience instead of us. It follows that the mind is at least some kind of thing that qualifies each experience we have. Whether it can ever exist independently of perceiving things is not answered by this. Similarly, the content of our perceptions is at least some sort of thing that qualifies the event of that experience.

But can we go beyond this to know whether or not those things we perceive exist independently of our own perception? Is the patch of brown to my right in fact a piece of sense data, existing independently of my perception of it, as opposed to being merely a quality of the event of perception? Does my mind go on even when it is not conscious of itself? It is difficult to discuss such things due to the introspective nature of the questions. However, it seems to be generally agreed among the less philosophically minded people that we experience ourselves willing freely (without constraint) and as a result of our free choices causing things to happen; that we directly perceive the processes and activities by which various types of power act. This is also the opinion of a number of philosophers (James, 1977b; Pink, 2004; Whitehead, 1978). If so, it seems that also we see that this causal activity is not the sort of thing that is dependent upon our own perception thereof. Particularly we see that sometimes we seem to cause things to happen without being aware of it. However, we note that this is a very controversial issue. Nietzsche in particular criticized the idea that we have any direct perception of willing or the ego (1968, 1998). One of the great difficulties here is that we cannot ostensibly show one another our own experiences. It is therefore very difficult to have a dialogue about this matter. As a result we will not take a dogmatic line here. We will, however, note that our philosophy makes the opinions of James, Pink, and Whitehead on these matters quite plausible and certainly their conclusions must hold true for at least some theoretical sort of mind if there are to be powers in the world at all, since all things must be of the same sort of thing as the content of experiences. And at the least, as we

have mentioned before, the perception, as given, is a revelation of *something* about the world (the event of the perception itself is at the least revealed to be ‘a perception of...’), even if the particular content of some of our perceptions cannot exist without being such a content. Therefore even if some of our perceptions are of things that cannot exist without being perceived, they are not fundamentally of a different sort of thing than the other things which can exist without being perceived (but which can, of course, also be the content of perception), and the experience is not fundamentally different than an experience of such a thing. In addition, it is entirely consistent to think that things like sense data might exist without being perceived, although in practice it is unlikely that this ever occurs.

If we consider now the problem of those things which we do not perceive, we see that they are not of some fundamentally different nature from what we do perceive or at least from what we can think about. On the other hand, insofar as we see regularities in the world, we can group things together, but we cannot say that this constitutes all that can be said about those regularities, as Sartre seems to have suggested we should do (1956, 3-5). After all it would seem rather peculiar if there was no sort of control on these appearances, dictating them and thereby giving them their regularity. Similarly when we consider another person, we infer that they must have a mind like ours. The mere regular appearance of their body is not considered adequately explained by merely noting the regularities; we think there must be something actively connecting these appearances together. The problem of determining what sort of evidence is adequate to justify such an inference is the business of empirical science. Now of course Sartre admits this, saying that there must be a ‘principle’ of the series of appearances, in addition to the appearances themselves. What we would add to this is that such a principle and its causal activities could *themselves* be the object of perception, at least in theory, and that the principle may not be simple: it may have distinguishable parts. The principle lying behind my perception of this wall (which only include some brown sense data) may in fact be millions of different principles of atoms, rays of light, neurons, and so on, which could each be theoretically perceived as

they are (and in the process of producing the effects by which our sensations ultimately arise) by some mind, working together to form the principles tying together the contents of our experiences. Thus these principles (which are the ‘physical matter’ of the world) are potential contents for experience (although they do not need to be the content of an experience to exist). We feel justified in positing their existence based upon our experiments and the indirect evidence they provide, and they are what we would ordinarily mean by ‘the wall itself,’ though again it is important to realize that they can also be the content of perception, in theory. In a rather similar way we infer when we see a letter that someone has written it even though we have no other evidence of their existence. Yet if we were to go and see them, then we could gain more evidence. When we perceive the effects of the physical universe we likewise infer its existence, and we also could potentially see it in action through perception, if only our minds were of the sort that we could make ourselves ‘go and see the universe.’ And in a similar way, the mind itself is in some way inferred to be some kind of a principle underlying the events of experience, which could itself be perceived directly (although whether we do in fact do so is controversial). Our consideration up to this point does not indicate whether the mind as a guiding principle is a separate principle from the physical universe, or is a principle which is derived from the principles forming the physical universe; either would be consistent with what we have said to this point. It is important to realize, however, that when we infer the existence of these controls from what we directly perceive, the things we directly perceive are not simply *representations* of those controls. What we directly perceive simply is what it is. It only becomes representative of something else when we infer from the patterns that it presents that something else exists. The brown sense data is simply brown sense data; it is not in itself representative of anything, but I infer from the regularity of it that there is something, the ‘wall,’ controlling the presence of that sense data. The words on a page are simply black and white marks, but we infer from their patterns that they are meant to indicate thoughts in a mind like our own.

Note, however, that the neurons as they are described by science are not *identical* to what we experience, per se. In science we have particles moving in a space, whereas in experience we have colours, sounds, and so on. Whatever the position we choose to take on the nature of the mind, it must be remembered that the conscious life itself is something over and above the physical per se, even if it is correlated with it. In other words, even if we were to say that the brain produces these perceptions entirely on its own, still these events of perception are something over and above the other physical properties of the brain.

As a last note about theoretical perception, it should be noted that two minds can perceive one and the same thing, even other minds (in principle; it does not seem that we in practice generally perceive the actual thoughts of other people, but only our own; we infer that others have thoughts like our own for the reasons given above). But this is not the same as saying that two people perceive the same statue, as we might do if two people stood in the same square. In that instance, each person perceives different sense data which is produced by some sequence of events with a common origin. But we mean that the very same sense datum or other part of the world (including a mind, whatever that is) could be perceived by multiple minds, at least in theory (whereby we find ourselves in agreement with James once again; see 1977d). In practical instances when we say two people perceive the same thing, we only mean that we infer that the process by which their perceptions of sense data are brought about are intertwined with one another in an essential way (perhaps by involving many of the same atoms).

V. Conclusion

Instead of considering the world as being composed of individuals capable of description solely in terms of universals, we have considered the division of the world into parts as a function of distinguishability. Therefore to say that something is a 'unit' in the sense of Frege merely means that it is a portion of the world divided off for some purpose. Such things can exist independently of one

another, but they also interact with one another directly, and their properties involve one another directly, not only universals. Through this we have shown that the epistemological difficulties historically associated with the idea that there are things which exist independently of perception are not inherent in that proposition but rather are a result of misunderstanding the nature of the divisibility of the world. Our experiences include within them other parts of the world, which exist in the same manner as any other part. Those parts which we do not experience are not essentially incapable of being experienced, but merely happen to not be the content of experiences. Therefore, while our theory is in some ways similar to idealism, in that all aspects of the world can be experienced directly, it is closer to realism, in that most if not all things can exist without being the content of experience. This manner of understanding the world's divisibility has also been seen to be not only compatible with the dictums of logic but in fact is suggested by them.

Finally, we have considered how these epistemological problems may be theoretically resolved. We have shown that they are completely solved in theory, although in practice their solution for humans is far less obvious. However, these practical difficulties are not fundamental. Rather, they are like the practical obstruction to seeing what lies in a locked box: we could do so, if only we could get ourselves inside the box or open it.

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