Introduction

- Moore’s aim in this paper is to state in sequence some of the most important points in which his philosophical position differs from that of some other philosophers.

§I
- Moore describes his approach to the first point, which is to provide (under §I.1) a long list of propositions which at first sight seem obvious truisms and which, he thinks, he knows with certainty to be true. Then under §I.2, he introduces another proposition which couldn’t be stated until the propositions in §I.1 had been introduced. This time the proposition makes an assertion about other classes of propositions. Each such class of propositions is defined as the class of propositions which resemble in a certain respect one of the propositions listed in §I.1. Again, at first sight this proposition also may seem an obvious truism which, he thinks, he knows with certainty to be true, but which some philosophers have either denied or held other propositions that contradict it. So, Moore’s first point is that §I.2 is true.

§I.1
- Moore’s list of certain propositions is as follows. (i) A living body, my body, exists now. (ii) This body was born at a certain past time and has existed continuously since then, though has undergone changes including growth. (iii) It has remained close to the surface of the earth since birth. (iv) It has been at various distances from other existing things having size and shape in 3-D space. (v) My body has been in contact with many of these things. (vi) Amongst those things forming part of my body’s environment in the senses iv-v, are other living bodies satisfying propositions analogous to ii-iii with the exception that some of them have died and ceased to exist. (vii) The earth existed for many years before my body was born, for many of these years large numbers of human bodies were alive on it and many of these died and ceased to exist before I was born. (viii) I am a human being who, at various times since my body was born, has had many different experiences of many different kinds. These form another list:
  - (a) Perceptions of my own body and other things in its environment. (b) Observed facts about them. (c) Awareness of facts not currently observed. (c) Had expectations with regard to the future and many other beliefs, both true and false. (d) Thoughts of imaginary things whose reality I didn’t believe in. (e) Dreams. (f) Various kinds of feelings.
  - Many other human bodies have been different human beings with experiences similar to the above list as well as those of other kinds.

§I.2
- Moore now comes to his truism that couldn’t be stated prior to §I.1, and which he knows to be true. This is that in regard to many, though maybe not all, human beings such as himself and those in §I.1, each has known to be true a proposition corresponding to those in §I.1. Moore sets this out in a very pedantic manner (which may well be necessary to the argument), but essentially he means that each
proposition, when uttered, has various indexicals (“me”, “my”, “now”). The related propositions are effectively tokens of the same sentence but uttered by another human being, who has himself existed and had experiences, and knows various things to be true. The proposition that Moore claims to be trivially true is that Moore knows that the truisms in his list are also truisms known to be true by the majority of other human beings, but with the indexicals relative to them and their times \(^1\) and situations rather than to his\(^2\).

- There remain two further points related to the use of English by various philosophers who stray from the ordinary usage which Moore maintains.
  (A) Some philosophers have used the word “true” to allow that a proposition that is partially\(^3\) false is counted as true, so that they will count all the propositions in §I.1 as true, while yet thinking of them all as partially false. Moore asserts that he’s not using “true” in any such sense – that a proposition that is partially false is false, even though it might be partially true. So, Moore maintains that the propositions in §I.1 and many corresponding to them are wholly true, and this is what he asserts also in asserting §I.2, so any philosopher who thinks that all of any class of proposition in §I.1 is partially false is disagreeing with him and holding a view incompatible with §I.2, even though he may think himself justified in saying otherwise.
  (B) Some philosophers have used locutions as though they really believed them to be true while actually believing all such propositions of that category, as ordinarily understood, to be partially false. Meanwhile they believe to be really true another set of propositions related to those which the expressions they use actually express. So, Moore want to make plain that he’s not using expressions in §I.1 in any such subtle sense, but only in the sense that any reader would take him to intend. Any philosopher who takes such propositions as popularly understood as expressing an error is disagreeing with Moore and holding a view incompatible with §I.2, even though he might hold that there is some other true proposition that the expression in question might be used to express.
- In saying the above, Moore has assumed that there is some meaning that is the ordinary meaning of expressions such as (E) “The earth has existed for many years past”, something disputed by some philosophers. Rather than assuming that the a question “do you believe (E)” should be answered plainly “yes”, “no” or “don’t know” they say it can be properly met by “It all depends what you mean by “the earth”, “exists” … and so on; if you mean such-and-such , then I do, but if so-and-so, then I don’t, or at least think it doubtful”. Moore thinks such a view as profoundly mistaken as any view can be, for (E) is the very type of unambiguous expression whose meaning we all understand. He thinks that that two questions are being confused: (a) whether we understand the meaning of (E) (we all do) and (b) whether we know what the (E) means, in the sense of being able to give a correct analysis. Moore admits that (b) is a profoundly difficult question to which he will argue no-one knows the answer, since (E) expresses a different proposition each time it is used, as Moore stressed in defining §I.2. This is different from saying we don’t understand the expression, for we can’t raise the question of how

\(^1\) Moore refers to times before he wrote §I.1, which may or may not be significant.
\(^2\) Care needs to be taken – he’s not claiming that he knows that they know what he knows, but that he knows that they know things analogous to what he knows.
\(^3\) Moore doesn’t immediately explain what he means by something being “partially” false – does he ever?
what we do understand is to be analysed unless we understand it. As we soon as we know that someone is using (E) in its common sense, we know we understand him. So, when Moore says that he is using the expressions in §I.1 in their ordinary sense (insofar as they have ordinary senses – no quite all of them do), he has made his meaning clear.

- So, assuming §I.2 is understood, Moore claims that many philosophers have held views incompatible with §I.2, which, Moore reminds us\(^4\), is that with regard to a whole set of classes of propositions, that we have each of us frequently known to be true propositions belonging to each of these classes. They may be divided into two groups:

  A. Those who hold that no propositions of a particular class are true, but all partially false. If no propositions of a particular class are true, then no-one can have known them to be true, and we cannot have known to be true propositions belonging to each of these classes. Some hold this with respect to all classes in question, some only with regards to some of them; either is inconsistent with §I.2.

  B. Other philosophers don’t assert with respect to any of the classes of propositions of §I.2 that no propositions of that class are true, but only that no-one has known them to be true with certainty. They differ from class (A) by holding that propositions of all these classes may be true, but hold a position incompatible with §I.2 since they hold that with regard to some of these classes that no-one has ever known a proposition of such classes to be true.

- Moore now finishes this section by discussing at some length each of these philosophical positions:

  A. Moore reminds us that some philosophers have doubted the truth of all, others only some, of the classes of statements in §I.2. He thinks the chief division of this kind has been the following\(^5\). Some of the propositions in §I.1 (and therefore, of course\(^6\), all propositions belonging to corresponding classes in §I.2) are propositions that cannot be true unless some material things have existed and stood in spatial relationships to one another. These propositions, in a certain sense, imply the reality of material things and of Space – provided you use “material things” in such a sense that to deny the reality of material things means that no proposition asserting that human bodies have existed is wholly true, and “Space” in such a way that denial of the reality of Space implies that no proposition which asserts, as normally understood, that anything has been in contact with or at a distance from anything else is wholly true. Other propositions in §I.1 – such as that I’ve often had dreams – don’t imply the reality of material things or of Space, though they do agree with these other propositions in implying that Time is real, and differ from these other propositions in implying that Self is real. Some philosophers, while denying the reality of material things and Space, have been willing to admit the reality of Selves and Time. Some, in denying the reality of Time have meant something incompatible with the truth of any of the propositions in §I.1, in that all involve a temporal element and are therefore all at least partially false.

\(^4\) This seems slightly different from my earlier translation of Moore, which was rather that we know that other people know…

\(^5\) It’s not clear to me what this sentence means … maybe it’ll become clear as the argument progresses.

\(^6\) I don’t understand the shift from “some” to “all”.
• Denials of all four expressions above – those expressing the unreality of material things, Space, Time and the Self – are really ambiguous in ways that those in §I.1 are not, and it may be that some philosophers hold to these denials in ways not incompatible with §I.2. However, Moore thinks the natural reading of such denials is to express views incompatible with §I.2, and that in the case of each of them, some philosophers have really used such expressions to express such views.

• Moore thinks all such views, whether incompatible with all or only some of §I.1 are certainly false, and thinks the following points deserving of notice:

a) If any of the classes of proposition in §I.2 are such that no proposition of that class is true, then no philosopher has ever existed, and so can never have denied their truth. These classes of propositions belong to a peculiar category such that anyone who denies them is, by his very denial, shown to be wrong to do so – given that they are human beings, who have lived on the earth, and so on. So, if there have been any philosophers, there have been such human beings, and if there have been such human beings, then all the that is asserted in §I.1 is certainly true. So, any view incompatible with the proposition that many propositions corresponding to each of the propositions of §I.1 are true can only be true if no philosopher has ever held it. Hence, Moore cannot give any weight to positions incompatible with §I.2 in assessing it, even though held to the best of his belief by philosophers he respects.

Moore ends this point with an long and complex argument-sentence that I can’t understand: (i) Since if he knows they have held such views he knows they are mistaken; (ii) and if he has no reason to believe that the proposition in question is true, he has even less reason to believe that they’ve held views incompatible with it; (iii) since he’s more certain that they have existed and held some view – that the proposition in question is true – than that they’ve held any views incompatible with it.

b) No philosopher has held views that deny any of the common-sense views in §I.1 has done so consistently. Ways of betraying this are by alluding to the existence of other philosophers or of the human race, using the term “we”, and so on. All philosophers belong to the class of human beings, which exists only if §I.2 is true – they belong to the class of those who know to be true propositions corresponding to each of the propositions in §I.1. In holding a contrary position, they have held views inconsistent with propositions they know to be true, so it’s only to be expected that they would occasionally betray this knowledge. The strange thing is that philosophers should have been able to hold sincerely as part of their philosophical creed propositions inconsistent with those they know to be true. So, Moore differs from those philosophers in group A only, but

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7 On the grounds that it denies the existence of philosophers.
8 What does this “since” relate to?
9 OK so far …
10 Which proposition?
11 What sort of views?
12 Again, which proposition?
13 What views. Is Moore trying to say that he’s more certain that they exist than that what they say is true, because if what they say is true, they don’t exist?
importantly, in not holding propositions inconsistent with other propositions he holds in common with them

c) Some philosophers have argued that some or all of the propositions in §I.1 that no proposition of that type can be wholly true because it entails two further incompatible propositions. Moore agrees this would be a good reason, if correct, but he thinks it false for the very simple reason that since all the propositions in §I.1 are true, and no true proposition can entail two contradictory propositions, then those in §I.1 don’t do so.\(^\text{14}\)

d) While Moore thinks that philosophers denying §I.1 are in fact inconsistent, he doesn’t think their view is in itself inconsistent. It might have been the case that matter, time, space and self were unreal – but, since all the propositions in §I.1 are in fact true, it isn’t the case that these things are unreal.

B. This view is more modest than A, but, unlike A is indeed self-contradictory. Most philosophers who have held this view have, Moore thinks, held that each of us knows propositions corresponding to some of the propositions in §I.1, namely those that say that they themselves have had various experiences at various times, and yet that none of us knows for certain propositions that assert the existence of material things or other selves which have experiences. They admit that they believe propositions of both these types, which may be true, be know to be highly probable, but yet never known to be certainly true. They may admit them to be beliefs of common sense, very commonly entertained by mankind, but insist that they are only beliefs and not known for certain, being matters of Faith rather than Knowledge.

- Moore thinks that what these philosophers have failed to appreciate is that they make assertions about “us” – about many other human beings other than himself. In saying that “No human being has ever known of the existence of other human beings” he is asserting the existence of other human beings. He asserts such beliefs (as those is §I.1) as beliefs of Common Sense, but fails to appreciate that if they are, they must be true, since the proposition that they are beliefs of Common Sense logically entails both the existence of material things and other selves - that many human beings beside the philosopher himself have had bodies and experiences. The difference of view B from view A is that B is making a proposition about human knowledge in general, and is therefore asserting the existence of many human beings, whereas philosophers of group A are not being self-contradictory in setting out their position, only contradicting other things they hold. Moore admits that philosophers of group B are only contradicting themselves, in asserting that no human being has known of other human beings other than himself, if they say they know that other human beings have existed apart from themselves; but, he thinks that they do indeed assert such things. He thinks they constantly betray the fact that they believe the proposition that they themselves are not the only members of the human race as certainly true. This is a contradiction, because they cannot know such a thing unless one human being, themselves, has known what they declare is unknown.

\(^{14}\) This doesn’t seem very satisfactory – he needs to see whether the assurance that others have that these propositions entail two contradictory propositions is greater than that he has that the propositions are true. Since he doesn’t even mention what grounds they have, we can’t make this evaluation.
• Moore claims that his own position, which he knows with certainty to be true of all the propositions in §I.1 *doesn’t* entail two incompatible propositions. If he does know them to be true, it’s certain that other human beings have also known corresponding propositions, and §I.2 is true, and Moore knows it to be true. Moore now asks whether, in fact, he does know §I.1, or whether he merely believes it, or knows it to be highly probable. He has nothing better to say than that it seems to him that he does know §I.1 with certainty. He doesn’t know most of the propositions in §I.1 (eg. the existence of the earth for many years past) directly, but only because in the past he’s known other propositions that were evidence for them. Even though he doesn’t know what the evidence was, this is no good reason for doubt, for we all know various things, knowing we’ve had evidence for them, but don’t know what the evidence was. That there is a “we” is one of the points in question, but that Moore knows that there is a “we” – many other human beings – seems to him something he knows for certain.

• If we need a label for Moore’s belief in §I.2, we can say that he’s one of those philosophers who have held that the common sense view of the world is wholly true. However, according to Moore, all philosophers have, in fact, agreed with him on this – the difference between them is only that some philosophers have also held views inconsistent with this common-sense view.

• The features of the “Common Sense view of the world” – those in §I.2 – have a peculiar quality, that if we know that they features of this view, we know them to be true, and contradictory to deny them while maintaining this view, for saying that we know this is to say they are true. Moore also claims another peculiar property of many of these features – that if they are features in the “Common Sense view of the world” (whether “we” know this or not), then it follows that they are true since to say that there is a “Common Sense view of the world” is to say they are true. Moore admits that the “Common Sense view of the world” is vague, and it may be that there are features in this view that are false and deserve to be mentioned with the contempt that some philosophers speak of “Common Sense beliefs”. However, to speak with contempt of those “Common Sense beliefs” in §I.2 is the height of absurdity, and if these are true, then so are enormous numbers of other features of the “Common Sense view of the world”.

§II

• Moore now turns to the next way in which his philosophical position differs from those of some other philosophers. This is in holding that there is no good reason to suppose that every physical fact is *logically* or *causally* dependent on some mental fact. He’s not asserting that there are any physical facts that are thus independent of mental facts, though he does believe that there are, but only that there’s no good reason to suppose there aren’t. Many philosophers have, Moore thinks,

15 I still feel slightly uncomfortable that I’ve got Moore wrong. Is §I.2 the claim that statements corresponding to §I.1, with changed indexicals, are true of other human beings, or the proposition that Moore knows this (and is there a significant difference)?
believed that every physical fact is logically and / or causally dependent on some mental fact and taken themselves to have good reason for these beliefs. Moore, of course, differs from them in this regard.

- Moore has some difficulty defining what he means by a physical fact, so says they are like a collection of examples (such as “The earth has existed for many years past” or “The mantelpiece is of a light colour”). He means facts like these in a certain respect, but can’t define what he means by this respect either. However, he doesn’t seem to be concerned, as he’s using “physical fact” in its ordinary sense, and amongst his examples are some facts that he doesn’t think are either logically or causally dependent on any mental fact.

- “Mental fact” is a much more unusual expression, which he will use in a specially limited sense which, while natural, requires explanation. He thinks there may possibly be three kinds of mental fact, but he’s only sure those of the first kind exist – though if those of the other two kinds did exist, they would be “mental facts” in his limited sense:

a) Facts of his first kind are such that he is conscious now and seeing something now. Facts of this first kind resemble these two facts in a certain respect.

α. The first example is a fact with regard to a particular individual and time, to the effect that that individual is conscious at that time. Facts that resemble this belong to the first kind. However, the fact that Moore was conscious at many different times yesterday is not of this kind, though it entails that there are or were many other facts of this kind – ones which at each of the times in question Moore could have properly expressed by saying “I am conscious now”. Facts of class α are those asserting, with respect to some individual and some time, past or present, that some individual is conscious at some time.

β. The second example – that I’m seeing something now, is obviously related to the first (that I’m conscious now) in that it entails it, though is not entailed by it, and is a fact of a specific mode of consciousness, a way of being consciousness (just as “being red” entails and is a specific way of “being coloured”). Any fact that’s related in this peculiar manner to any fact of class α is also a mental fact of class β (such as “I’m hearing now”), as is any fact about myself at a past time that could at that time have been expressed by such as “I’m dreaming now”. In short, facts of class β are, and only are, any fact with respect to a particular individual, at a particular time having a particular experience.

So, Moore’s first class of mental facts, of whose existence he is certain, is inclusively and exclusively all of those of classes α and β.

b) Many philosophers have held additionally that, if a certain analysis of facts of class α is true, there are additionally mental facts of other kind. Moore’s unconvinced by the analysis, but thinks we can understand what is meant by the supposition that it is true and what mental facts of this second kind would be.

The proposed analysis is that there is an intrinsic property “being an experience” such that when someone knows he is conscious he also knows that there is occurring to him now an event with this property which is an experience of his; this fact is what he expresses by saying “I am conscious

16 On the assumption that there’s no such thing as blindsight, and that we deny the term “sight” to the perceptual abilities on robots and (presumed unconscious) insects.
now”. If this analysis is true, Moore claims that there must be three further kinds of mental fact:
1. Facts with regard to some event and time; that it had this intrinsic property and occurred then.
2. Facts regarding the supposed intrinsic property and a particular time to the effect that some event with that property is happening at that time.
3. Facts with respect to some property which is a specific way of having the supposed intrinsic property, and some time, to the effect that some event with that specific property is happening at that time.

Obviously, there cannot be these three kinds of facts unless there is the intrinsic property talked about. Moore is very doubtful that there’s any such thing. The proposition that I’ve had experiences doesn’t entail the proposition that there were events which were experiences, and Moore cannot persuade himself that there are any such events. However, he’s willing to admit that this analysis may be correct – that there may be such events even though he’s not aware of them. On the assumption that there are experiences of this kind, then, as many have held, it would be possible that these experiences have to be some individual’s, and so any fact of either of the three kinds above would logically depend on, though not necessarily be identical with, some fact of class $\alpha$ or $\beta$. But, Moore thinks, its just as possible that these experiences might not belong to any individual, so in this case there would be mental facts that are neither logically dependent on, nor identical with, any fact of class $\alpha$ or $\beta$.

c) The final category of potential mental fact relate to *timeless* consciousness, both per se and in specific modes. Firstly, this can relate class (a) facts, i.e. to some individual where we have facts of class $\alpha$ or $\beta$, but without reference to any specific time and where the individual is timelessly conscious. Secondly, this can relate class (b) facts, i.e. the intrinsic property defined in (b) may belong not to an event but to one or more wholes that don’t occur at any time; in other words, there may be *timeless* experiences that may or may not be the experiences of some individual. Moore doesn’t think these hypotheses can even be possibly true, but he’s not sure, so will admit the following five kinds to be mental facts, if they exist:
1. An individual as timelessly conscious
2. An individual as timelessly conscious in a specific way
3. Timeless experience.
4. Something existing timelessly with the intrinsic property “being an experience”.
5. Something existing timelessly with specific modes of this intrinsic property.

- Moore has thus defined his three different kinds of mental facts, but now adds a *fourth*.

d) This class is of facts about the other three classes of facts, which state facts about the existence of facts in the other classes. So, not only is the fact that Moore is now perceiving a mental fact of type $\beta$, but also the general fact that there *are* facts of class $\beta$ is a mental fact.

- Having now defined what he means by “physical facts” and “mental facts”, Moore now gets down to the business of this Section:

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17 I found Moore’s meaning very difficult to follow, in particular in distinguishing types (2) and (3).
A. Moore first disputes that every physical fact is logically dependent on some mental fact. By “F₁ is logically dependent on F₂”, Moore means that fact F₁ entails F₂. For logical independence, we require that it is possible for F₁ to be true while F₂ is false.

- So, Moore holds that there’s no good reason to believe, for some physical facts at least, that they wouldn’t have been facts unless there had been certain mental facts. In particular, he holds this viewpoint with respect to all four physical facts introduced at the beginning of this section.

- In holding to this position, Moore is differing from at least some philosophers, such as Berkeley. According to Moore, Berkeley held that any physical fact is logically dependent on a mental fact of Moore’s 4th class (d) – that there are facts of the sort that an individual is now perceiving something. Berkeley doesn’t depend on the perceptions of some particular individual, which would fall into classes (a) – (c) but only that there is some mental fact of that sort. Moore thinks that some philosophers would agree with Berkeley that a physical fact is dependent on some mental fact (eg. some experience), even while they might not agree with him in supposing that my body is an idea or is constituted of ideas, or that “ideas” cannot exist without being perceived. Many have thought, with what seemed to them good reason, that every fact is logically dependent on every other fact.

B. Moore also holds that physical facts aren’t causally dependent on mental facts. By this he means simply that F₁ wouldn’t have been a fact unless F₂ had been, not (as in logical dependence) that it couldn’t conceivable have been. Moore illustrates his point by reference to his example about his body being closer to the mantelpiece than to the bookcase. While this fact isn’t logically dependent on any mental fact, it is causally dependent on may mental facts, for Moore’s body wouldn’t have been there unless he’d been conscious at various times past, nor would the mantelpiece have been there unless conscious people had made it.

- Moore had two further examples – the existence of the earth for many years past, and the fact that the moon has for many years been closer to the earth than to the sun. He holds that there is no good reason to suppose these facts causally dependent on any mental fact. In this he differs, he says, from those who think that they have good reason to believe that all material things were created by God.

§III

- In addition to thinking that there’s no good reason to suppose material things created by God, Moore thinks there’s no good reason to think that there’s a God at all, nor that human beings will continue to exist and be conscious after the death of our bodies. However, he seems to give no reason for this.

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18 Note the direction of the logical dependence and entailment. One fact is logically dependent on another if it entails it, not if it is entailed by it. The sort of example Moore gives is of “I am seeing now” entailing “I am conscious now”, and is obviously logically dependent on it.

19 I see that I didn’t quote them all.

20 Moore just seems to “hold” the position, not to argue for it!

21 Moore’s language is very convoluted and pedantic to the extent that I can’t understand what he means. I’d thought his class 4 mental facts were general facts, but Berkeley seems to have believed that there can be no physical fact unless there is a corresponding mental fact (that physical thing is being perceived), not that there are 2nd order mental facts.
§IV

- Moore now turns from the truth of the self-evident statements in §I.1 to their analysis, which, contrary to some other philosophers, he thinks it extremely doubtful as to what the analysis of propositions such as (P) “Material things have existed” should be. While he thinks the propositions are certainly true, he holds that no philosopher has provided, on certain points, an analysis of them that is wholly true.

- The analysis of propositions such as (P) above depends on the analysis of simpler propositions such as (Q) “I am perceiving a human hand”, and he thinks he’s no hope of analysing (P) until he’s analysed (Q), but even this isn’t simple enough. He thinks (Q) can be analysed into (R) “I am perceiving this” and (S) “This is a human hand”. It’s the analysis of propositions such as (S) that concerns Moore – for the nature of material things depends on it – and he’s surprised that philosophers have paid so little attention to what they suppose themselves to know or judge (in case they think we don’t know that such propositions are true, or even deny that they are true) when they know or judge propositions such as (S), despite the fact that they say a lot about what material things are and what it is to perceive them.

- Moore is quite certain about two things with respect to the analysis of propositions such as (S):
  1. There is always some sense-datum which the proposition is about, a subject of the proposition (in a sense, the principal or ultimate subject).
  2. The sense-datum itself isn’t the hand, etc.

- Some philosophers have doubted whether there are such things as sense-data, or have used the term in senses that make it doubtful that they exist, but Moore thinks there’s no doubt at all that there are sense-data in the current context. He is presently seeing many of them and feeling more. To explain what he means, he simply asks the reader to look at his own right hand. Doing so, the reader will be able to pick out precisely one thing - which it is natural to take to be, while not identical to his whole right hand, identical to that part of the surface he’s actually seeing. Moore says that what the reader is seeing is sense-data, and that some philosophers have taken this to be the surface of the hand. While Moore takes this as rather doubtful, he leaves it as an open question.

- Since he knows his hand has internal parts which aren’t part of the sense data, he knows that on saying “This is a human hand” we can’t be talking about the sense data itself. Therefore, he thinks it certain that we should analyse this statement approximately as “There is precisely one thing of which it is true both that it is a human hand and that this surface is part of its surface”. Moore thinks it certain that he doesn’t directly perceive his hand, so when he is said to perceive it this means that he perceives something representative of it – a part of its surface.

- This is all that Moore is certain about in his analysis. It includes a proposition of the form “This is part of the surface of a human hand”, where “This” has a different reference from the “This” in the proposition “This is a human hand”. This (“… part …”) proposition is about the sense-datum I’m seeing which is of my hand, so what am I knowing about the sense-datum in question? That it is itself part of a human hand? Moore thinks not – so what am I knowing about the sense-datum? Moore thinks no philosopher has yet answered this with certainty, but Moore thinks there are precisely three types of possible answer – though any answer yet suggested seems to Moore to attract grave objections.
1. I am knowing that the sense-datum itself is part of the surface of a human hand. Though I don’t perceive my hand directly, I do directly perceive part of its surface. The sense-datum itself is part of this surface, and not merely its representative. Hence, on this view, the sense in which I “perceive” this part of the surface doesn’t require definition by reference to a third more ultimate sense of “perceive” – the only direct perception, that of sense-data.

- Moore thinks this view may just possibly be true. If it is, then it seems certain to him that we must abandon a view that many philosophers have taken as certain, that our sense-data really have the qualities they sensibly appear to us to have. The reason is that we know that the sense-datum would look different through a microscope yet must be as identical to the actual surface as the sense-datum seen through the naked eye. Hence, the two sense data, being identical to a third thing (the surface) have to be identical to one another, which is only possible if at least one of the sense data in question doesn’t have the sensible qualities it appears to have.

- Surprisingly, this doesn’t strike Moore as a fatal objection. He takes as a far more serious objection that of double images, when we have two sense-data, each of the surface but which cannot both be identical to it. Hence, every sense-datum is only representative of the surface of which it is a sense-datum.

2. So, what relation has the sense-datum to the surface in question? Not that the sense-datum is itself part of the surface, but that there is some relation R so that what I know with regard to the sense datum is as follows. Either there is precisely one thing of which it is true that it is part of the surface of a human hand and is in relation R to the sense-datum. Or there is a collection of things that collectively and exclusively form part of the surface and hold this relation R to the sense-datum.

- Only one of the many possible views of this type seems to have any plausibility to Moore; that R is an ultimate and unanalysable relation xRy meaning “y is an appearance or manifestation of x”. So, there is precisely one thing of which it is true that it is both part of the surface of the hand and of which the sense-datum is the manifestation.

- Moore thinks the grave objection to this view is how we can possibly know that there is precisely one thing that holds this ultimate relation to our sense-data, and even if we do, how we could know anything further – such as their size and shape.

3. The final option is J. S. Mill’s suggestion that material things are “permanent possibilities of sensation”. What I’m supposed to know with regard to sense-data, the principal subject of the fact when I know that “This is part of the surface of a human hand”, is a collection of hypothetical facts. These are of the form “If these conditions had been fulfilled, I would have perceived a sense-datum intrinsically related to this sense-datum in this way”, and so on for other conditions.

- This analysis seems to Moore just possibly to be true, but it would be as mistaken to take it as certainly or nearly certainly true as it would have been in the other two cases. Moore can think of three grave objections:

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22 I’ve lost track of the levels of perception here – why “third”?
23 How can my sense-datum be identical with your sense-datum, in any case. The whole ideas seems a non-starter.
a) While I do know some of the hypothetical facts in accord with this view, Moore doubts whether the conditions under which I know them differ from conditions of knowing “If this material thing\(^{24}\) had been in those positions and conditions”.

b) It seems very doubtful that there is any intrinsic relation such that my knowledge that I would have perceived a sense datum of this kind under these conditions – as a sense-datum of the same surface of which this is a sense-datum – is equivalent, using this relation, to the knowledge that under some other conditions I’d have perceived a sense-datum of some other kind related by it to this sense-datum\(^{25}\).

c) If Mill’s view were true, then the sense in which a material surface is round or square would necessarily differ utterly from that in which our sense-data sensibly appear as round or square.

\section*{§V}

- In like manner to material things, Moore is quite certain that there are Selves, but equally doubtful as to the analyses proposed by philosophers.
- Moore knows for certain that he is perceiving and has perceived many sense-data, and therefore that there are many mental facts of class \(\beta\), connected by being facts about \textit{him}. However, he doesn’t know how this connection is to be analysed, nor does he think any other philosopher knows with certainty. Just as was the case with the surface of the hand, there are several divergent views on its analysis, each of which seems \textit{possible} to Moore. Of the \textit{truth} of such propositions, there seems no doubt, but there is the gravest doubt as to their analysis, and the correct analysis may be quite as paradoxical as IV.3 (Mill’s view) of the human hand (though Moore doubts that this could be the right answer). In contrast, many philosophers have had few doubts about the correct what they saw as analysis, while others have doubted the truth of these propositions.

\(^{24}\) Ie. Sense-data lose their explanatory power?

\(^{25}\) This is another very complex Moore sentence, that deserves a second reading!