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### Bouwsma's The John Locke Lectures: "The Flux", Oxford University, 1951

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O.K. Bouwsma

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THE FLUX  
by  
O. K. Bouwsma

The John Locke Lectures  
Oxford University  
1951

Edited and Introduced by Ronald E. Hustwit

## Introduction

These John Locke Lectures were delivered during the winter term of 1951 at Oxford University. Bouwsma had been awarded a Fulbright Lectureship to lecture in England for the academic year 1950-51. He was appointed as Honorary Professor of Philosophy at Magdalene College, Oxford and was sought out to deliver the Locke Lectures later in that year. This leave year followed another leave year from his home university -- the University of Nebraska -- when he spent some time lecturing at both Cornell and Smith Colleges. These two years were the years when he met and came to know Ludwig Wittgenstein -- walking, talking, and keeping a diary of his conversations with him. Wittgenstein had visited the U.S. through arrangements of Bouwsma's former students and friends Malcolm, Ambrose, and Lazerowitz in his first year of leave from Nebraska. During Bouwsma's second year of leave, Wittgenstein lived for long periods of time at Oxford where he and Bouwsma continued their friendship and practice of conversing on walks. Wittgenstein died while Bouwsma was at Oxford, in April of that year.

In his notebook from August 28, 1950, Bouwsma wrote of a conversation with Wittgenstein concerning the Locke Lectures: "He [Wittgenstein] also said that he had been approached by Ryle to give the John Locke Lectures, but there would have been an audience of two-hundred and no discussion. He wouldn't do it. People would hear and make something cheap of what he had said. He might do something for a group of friends" (*Wittgenstein Conversations* 57). Bouwsma had also remarked to me that Wittgenstein had once snapped that if they wanted to know what he had to say that Ryle could tell them. Bouwsma believed that Wittgenstein meant by this that Ryle had formulated Wittgenstein's ideas on mind into a theory of mind which could be presented as the content of a series of lectures -- without discussion and digestion. This fact, that Wittgenstein had refused Ryle's invitation for these reasons, became a source of embarrassment to Bouwsma who had later accepted Ryle's invitation. In his notebook, later that year, Bouwsma wrote: "I was in fear too that I should have to give an account to him [Wittgenstein] of my John Locke Lectures, why I had consented to give them -- since he had refused, and what I should say. I breathed easier when he went to Norway, and later when he went to Cambridge" (*W.C.* xv). What deeply bothered Bouwsma about his consenting to deliver the lectures was that he too did not present content nor results, but cultivated discussion and active philosophizing in students. And now he would be expected to say something important and to say it directly. Later in his life, during the 1960's and 70's, when asked why he never published or showed anyone these lectures, Bouwsma would say that they were not any good. But the reason could well have been that he continued to feel this embarrassment for having agreed to that format to present his ideas. The lectures are, in my judgement, remarkably good, especially when seen in the context that they were written before the years of work which Bouwsma put in on Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (not published until 1953).

In trying to find out more about the setting of the lectures, I spoke with Elmer Sprague who was both a student of Bouwsma at Nebraska and of Ryle at Oxford around the time of the lectures. To my delight, I discovered that Sprague had attended the lectures and with some questioning began to recall some memories which were now thirty-seven years old. The following notes are ones that I jotted down while talking with Sprague.

He began by recollecting that the lectures were given in the early part of the year. He believed it was 1952, but with my help corrected that to 1951. Gilbert Ryle was responsible for the lecture series, and Bouwsma was not only the first American to give the lectures, as is commonly written of Bouwsma, but was the first philosopher in a line of distinguished philosophers to give them.

When working in the Bouwsma collection at the Humanities Research Center in Austin, I found many more pages on the same subjects as the lectures. With this in mind, I asked Sprague if there were more lectures than the six found in the file titled "John Locke Lectures." Sprague thought that these six were all there were -- he at first thought that there were four but then said certainly no more than six. The additional manuscripts in Austin were probably written in preparation for the six lectures. (This is Richard Wood's opinion of them as well.) Bouwsma gave two lectures per week for three weeks. Sprague recalled that the theme of the first was "the flux -- the manifold of experience." [In fact this is the theme throughout.] He also thought that one or another had to do with Plato. [Again correct.] The lectures were given in an examination room. The room was furnished with library style tables and chairs tables which were ordinarily used for numbers of students to write their exams.

Sprague also recalled that H.H. Price was present for all the lectures and that he liked them. [Bouwsma puns with his name in lecture six.] At one point Bouwsma had some preliminary remarks in which he was working toward a punchline that everyone knew was coming -- something about not knowing a hawk from a handsaw. [This was probably Lecture 5 -- where this line is quoted.] Bouwsma had the audience laughing hard, but Price nearly fell out of his seat with laughter. Ryle was also present at the lectures, but Ryle did not like them. P.F. Strawson and Paul Grice also attended. [I learned from another source that Elizabeth Anscombe was there as well.] Sprague thought too that Gretchen, the Bouwsma's youngest child who had accompanied them to England, was allowed to attend the lectures.

Finally, Sprague reflected on what Bouwsma has done in giving these lectures. He believed that Bouwsma felt, in accepting the invitation, that he should prepare something new and not just rehearse something he had done before. The remarkable thing, Sprague felt, was that Bouwsma had so much understanding of language and meaning without benefit of the *Investigations*. He does not mention discussing these topics with Wittgenstein in his record of their conversations. Bouwsma had, of course, been working on the notes of the *Blue Book* for about ten years by this time, but what impressed Sprague is still nevertheless impressive. And, Sprague reflected, was it not

impressive that a man of Bouwsma's age and philosophical experience could change philosophically as he did in these years under Wittgenstein's influence?

After Bouwsma's death in 1978, William J. Bouwsma, Oet's oldest son and historian at Berkeley, became the executor of Bouwsma's literary estate. He sent the manuscripts of the John Locke Lectures to Richard Wood, a former student of Bouwsma's and professor at Northern Arizona University, for an opinion on their merit for publication and also on whether these manuscripts were in fact the Locke Lectures. Wood wrote the following letter to William Bouwsma after studying the manuscripts:

Dear Bill,

I have read the notes sent to me as "The John Locke Lectures," and I see every reason to suppose that they were in fact the lectures -- more or less. There are at least two reasons for the "more or less." The first is that the written notes seem incomplete, at least the ones I have read. The second is your father: even if the written lectures were polished, he quite likely would not follow them word for word.

Now in the pile of notes I sent to Austin, there is one packet which I marked -- I believe I marked it "1951" -- it consists of 320 pages of the long legal pads. That entire packet consists of the work, the notes, the first attempts, dead ends, etc., from which Dr. Bouwsma took the Locke Lectures. Those pages throw a light on the lectures which is very helpful.

The lectures are fine. Dr. Bouwsma, I am certain, did not arrive at his full grasp of "Meaning is use" until 1957-59. That does not mean that what he did prior to that was wrong or harmful or mistaken in any way. In fact, the Locke Lectures will be very helpful to students. Dr. Bouwsma, however was not sure in 1951, not as sure as he was to become after 1958. I don't mean that he was uncertain about "Meaning is use," but uncertain as to what he was doing with it. He was nagged, as it were, by his own understanding. He was certain of Wittgenstein and uncertain of himself. That was to change later. Later his grasp was no longer a concern for him. In the review "The Blue Book," Dr. Bouwsma writes: "If before we were puzzled with: What is the meaning of a word? now we are puzzled with: What is the use of a word? (I think I paced up and down in this cage for years.)" I am suggesting that he, Dr. Bouwsma, broke free of the "cage" in 1958.

The John Locke Lectures constitute an attempt to get clear on how the quest for meaning is found throughout the history of philosophy and how that quest leads to all sorts of problems. It does this through the idea of

"the flux." What Dr. Bouwsma does in the lectures, he does well, but he never again did that sort of thing. That is, this work is more the work of a puzzled scholar than anything else. The perspective which ultimately frees him from these puzzles is seen at work in the lectures, but it is not, so it seems, the central issue: He is still struggling with that.

The notes leading to the lectures, the lectures, and what follows constitute one of the finest records of an intellectual struggle that we have in modern times.

In brief, that is my assessment of the Lectures. I feel they are very helpful if they are placed in the right perspective. By themselves they are strong but incomplete. As part of a record of intellectual growth, they are rich and exciting.

I do not feel you need worry about their publication.

Sincerely yours,  
Richard Wood

Wood sees the lectures as especially interesting in presenting a period in Bouwsma's development. It is not, notice, that Wood believes that Bouwsma later changed or retracted his understanding of "meaning is use," but that he was uncertain about what he was doing with it, and later with much practice, developed certainty. Notice also that Wood thought the lectures would be helpful to others struggling with these problems, if they were placed in the proper perspective.

Some of the incompleteness which Wood refers to in his letter was, I believe, a seeming inadequacy, do to the condition of the manuscript. The hand writing was crabbed in Bouwsma's peculiar style. It is illegible to someone not used to reading his handwriting. There were numerous words at which the reader must guess. There were several places where Bouwsma had inserts and interruptions in the text. Lectures 3 and 4 were misnumbered and out of order. I was able to renumber them only after discovering references in the preceding one which applied to material not presented until the succeeding one. I refined my guesses on illegible words over a period of four years and repaired the text with regard to the inserts and interruptions. It now, I believe, appears more complete. In their typed and reconstructed form, the lectures are now much more readable and comprehensible than the manuscript. I had not fully appreciated the value of these lectures, taking Bouwsma's remarks about their inadequacies seriously, until I read them in their present form. The decision which J.L. Craft and I made not to publish the lectures at the time we published the other lectures, was in part, though not entirely, based upon the poor condition of the manuscript and the fragmentary picture which it presented. And that condition has been repaired.

I would like now to say something directly about the content of the lectures and of what Bouwsma was trying to do in them. Bouwsma called the subject matter of these lectures "the Flux." The title surely refers to Heraclitus: "All things are in flux" or "All things flow." As the flux in Heraclitus refers to the continual change or flow of sense experience, so too Bouwsma uses it to refer to the flow of sense experience in consciousness. But Bouwsma's interest is not in developing or refining the concept nor, really, in tracing its history in Plato, James, Bergson, etc., though he does some of the latter. His interest rather, is in understanding the flux as it relates to the conception of the meaning of a word -- the meaning of a word is its referent in the flux. Various philosophers, including James, Plato, and Bergson have written of the flux in different ways, and some even of naming in relation to the flux. But Bouwsma wants to come to understand or to be satisfied that he does not understand what they have said with respect to how what they have said about the flux is a function of their conception of the way words have meaning. They, of course, have operated without benefit of Wittgenstein's insights into the workings of language -- specifically, that the meaning of a word is its actual use in the language and not some piece of the flux for which it stands.

Bouwsma takes up William James' "stream of thought" in the first lecture. Typically, his style of writing on a philosophical problem appears baffling at first. He begins with some seemingly aimless banter about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, Plato's figure of the aviary, and Locke's "sheet of white paper." But the latter is relevant background for thinking about James' stream of thought. Why should James think of thought as a stream? This type of question sets the tone for all of the lectures. How are we to understand James or Plato or Bergson on some particular idea relevant to the flux and the problem of meaning? Bouwsma proceeds to take apart selected ideas of these thinkers as they relate to his topic. Why does James think of thought as a stream? His predecessors, including Locke and Hume, thought of consciousness in terms of individual units of sense ideas. Consciousness was a series of sense ideas in the way a train was a series of cars or word was a series of letters or a kaleidoscope was made of bits of colored glass. But what now of the flux -- the changing continuous flow of consciousness? How can sense ideas be discrete if they are as discrete as cars and letters and bits of colored glass? Well then, they must be thought of from the beginning as continuous. They are like a stream. If our ideas are like water and if we thought of them as discrete, it would be as if they were a collection of cans filled with water setting together. So, it cannot be like that. The stuff of ideas is like a fluid, but the fluid is connected, it flows in and around the cans -- as if in a stream bed. And now the cans fall out of the picture as unnecessary. Our thoughts flow as our sentences flow. Sentences are not sets of separate words. Sentences are all of a piece. What connects them? Tiny words such as "ifs" and "buts" and "ands" and many more connect them. And what are these? They are the names of feelings James says -- feelings that flow together with many other named feelings. And just as feelings flow together and on in our consciousnesses, so too our sentences flow together and on from our mouths and

pens. Sentences flow and mean as names of feelings which flow in our consciousnesses. Thought is the flow of consciousness, and sentences are the sets of names of the flowing consciousness. The meaning of a word is the thing named in the consciousness. And so Bouwsma's interest focuses on James stream of thought. If one were to read the *Principles of Psychology* alongside Bouwsma's lectures, one could see how closely Bouwsma was reading James and how he took pains to try to see why James wanted to say what he did and choose the particular images that he did. This is true as well for the particular ideas he takes up in Plato, Bergson, Ayer, etc. in the remaining lectures.

Lectures 2 and 3 have subjects similar to each other. In them, Bouwsma looks into the fascination which philosophers have had with the idea that a word is the name of something. A consequent of this idea is that a word is an image, somehow, of the thing which it names. Under this conception, a word, of course, means because it names an image (something in the flux), but the word also has some of the properties of the image itself. There is something "fitting" or "natural" about the relationship between the word and the image. Is this perhaps why James thought that a word could go proxy for its image or mental accompaniment in the stream of consciousness? Socrates, in the *Cratylus*, speaks of this fit between a word and the thing named: "... have we not several times acknowledged that names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which they name?" (Plato 439). Bouwsma, quoting the longer passage from which this comes, discusses this idea of "names rightly given" in Lecture 3. What makes it seem right that a word would fit its referent? Bouwsma refers to this as the "theory of natural names" -- an eagle is named naturally by "eagle." Why? Because "eagle" must carry something -- an image -- with it that looks like an eagle. This idea is not unique to Plato but is "one of a family which has kept philosophers itching and uneasy" for some time. The other family members are: "The conception of form, the sentence as picture, ideas as images, the proposition, the correspondence theory of truth, the problem of imageless thought, etc." Consequently, the understanding of the roots of this misconception of the theory of natural names has importance for a widening range of philosophical problems.

In Lecture 4, the theme of the flux is continued in Henre Bergson's interest in consciousness and self in his book *Time and Free Will*. My guess is that this book was of more general interest in 1951 than it is today, as Bouwsma presupposes that the audience will recognize the book and his interest in it. Bouwsma copies a number of sentences and phrases from that book which are generally reflective of Bergson's interest in the self as composed of continuous consciousness -- as if in a "deep pool." More specifically, Bouwsma's attention turns to Bergson's idea that those who deny the freedom of the will are thinking of the soul as a string of cars "bumping and pulling" one another. Bergson intends to correct this misconception and replaces this picture with that of the soul as a deep pool. Here again, the flux, as in James, is seen as a correction to a mechanical picture of consciousness. And here again, Bouwsma, as he did with James, proceeds to try to understand the phrases and images of Bergson. Similarly, he appreciates the corrective which Bergson is trying to effect, while struggling



to understand what prompted Bergson to offer this corrective. Bergson too, then, is a proponent of the flux. He proposes that we see consciousness as flux rather than as measurable elements -- "psychical states." In the process, Bouwsma produces some typically fine philosophical analysis of the mechanistic theory which attempts to compare psychical states to each other as if they were measurable units of consciousness. And what use do such expressions as "I am not as tired as I was" and "I am sadder than I was" actually have? Here Bouwsma practices the same kind of analysis, though not in as much detail, as he does so markedly in his later papers which bear so distinctly the marks of his work after the *Investigations* was published. The lecture ends with an unusual twist on the idea of the flux being similar in a certain respect to the idea of meaning in use. Bouwsma reflects: "And should anyone now seek rather to escape the discovery of the flux, hiding himself as it were from what by strenuous effort he may see, what are we to tell him? Tell him that words like chameleons, have their environments, and like the chameleons they change color; ... The words "more" and "less" may be pink in one context and green in another; shaped like dice in one context and like fog in another." As he does throughout the lectures, Bouwsma attempts to practice analysis in the form of the question: Why is x (Bergson in this case) saying or trying to say what he does? And in the case of Bergson, as he is with James, Bouwsma is noticeably appreciative of what Bergson is trying to do.

Bouwsma takes up some of the language of sense-data theory in Lectures 5 and 6 as connected to but not so easily identifiable with the flux. The language of the flux in James and Bergson contained pictures of consciousness flowing and changing -- "all things flow," "stream of thought," "the river of elementary feeling" -- which were easily identifiable as presenting the idea of the flux. But the language of sense-data theory is not so easily recognizable as being connected to the very same problems. The language of sense-data theory is "so simple;" it is "such a little word language." It contains such sentences as: "I see a patch," and "I see a match-box." "Speculum" and "sense-data" are also seen. Bouwsma selects a handful of sentences from the sense-data theorists to shake down. Ayer and Price are mentioned by name, but the sentences for consideration are presented without direct identification with any one particular philosopher. For example, Bouwsma writes: "Well, this first friend of mine said: 'A sense-datum is an object of acquaintance.'" And what follows is a classic piece of analysis that I have come to identify uniquely with Bouwsma. He has acquaintances and he is always glad to make new acquaintances, but he is not acquainted with these people as one is acquainted with sense-data. The latter he does not understand yet. "An object of acquaintance" -- is that like knowing Dublin, McConnell Bridge, Walnut St., etc.? Bouwsma tries repeatedly to "pick up an affinity for the word 'acquaintance'" and fails. This is the dominant method of analysis throughout the last two lectures. Later in his work, Bouwsma came to call this method: "the method of failure." He tries to understand some piece of philosophical language by placing it in circumstances where it looks as if it might belong. "'Acquaintances,' I know something of the word 'acquaintances.' Let me show you." But then what he knows only shows that we cannot

understand what the philosopher who used the word meant, for the latter is not using the word in ways one is familiar with. And so on it goes with seeing tomatoes and speculum, and with "there exists some object." The analysis of "I see a match-box" concludes with Bouwsma's confession: "It must be that I don't understand this" and "I don't get it." The country visitor from Nebraska was not feigning ignorance here, he was patiently and deftly showing that the language of the sense-data theorists failed to make sense. The lectures end appropriately with a joke. After teasing out the sense of "speculum," Bouwsma says: "How it [speculum] glances off the surfaces of tomatoes and match-boxes is another story which I hope to discuss in the next lecture. Null class."

When one thinks of these John Locke Lectures as preceding the publication of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and the subsequent years of diligent work in which Bouwsma developed an understanding of that work, one might think that the lectures would be a faulty and preliminary grasp of what Bouwsma grasped so well later. But I have become less persuaded of this view the more I have worked at preparing them for publication. Bouwsma's later work is more patient -- more attentive to taking the time to develop the language and the cases required to show the sense and nonsense of philosopher's expressions. Later Bouwsma would not write about five philosophers in one study. But I find the essential ingredients of Bouwsma's analysis present in these lectures, despite the amount of ground covered in fifty-two pages. The idea that the meaning of a word is its use is central to the lectures, and he knows how to apply this idea to a central theme in the history of philosophy: namely, that fluctuating states of consciousness are the referents and meanings of our words and are the objects of which the world is made. He understands that the important flux is context -- as the context of a word fluctuates, so also does the meaning of a word. And, he demonstrates several, though not all, of the full range of analytic skills and techniques which he shows command of in his later works. He demonstrates here the techniques of trying to understand a philosophical expression by replacing it in the context from which it originally had a use, of developing appropriate analogies to try to make another's ideas clear, of looking for the motive or deeper source of a philosopher's statements, of making the nonsense of a statement apparent by contrasting it with what does make sense. Later Bouwsma could use more techniques and use them more patiently, but what is here is the work of a mature philosopher who had nurtured himself on the *Blue Book* for ten years. It is work that merits attention, I believe, not simply as a milestone in Bouwsma's journey, but in itself as an impressive piece of philosophical work on an important theme.

I need to thank several people for their contributions in preparing the text and introduction. The text was, as I mentioned above, prepared from a manuscript in Bouwsma's hand which was tremendously difficult to read. The typists, in fact, made the typescript from a photocopy of the manuscript. They repeatedly had to leave blanks in the text for me to decipher in places where even the immediate context clues were of little help. That work was tedious and a strain on the back and eyes. It was done by my daughter Holly Anne Hustwit, who is currently a philosophy student at the College of

Wooster, and my wife Barbara Ellen Hustwit, who has had many years of practice of reading Oets Bouwsma's unusual handwriting and written style. Their reward is this thank you which you are now reading. I benefitted as always from talking over my ideas about the task from my friend and editing partner J.L. Craft. Richard Wood and Elmer Sprague both contributed to my understanding of the lectures and their setting, as one can see from the introduction. And finally I need to thank my former Dean of the faculty at Wooster, Glenn Bucher, who, when granting the money for travel and manuscript preparation, remarked wisely that the best spent research money did not necessarily result in publication. I had told him that I just wanted to be able to read the John Locke Lectures. Now I can read them and so can you.



## John Locke Lectures

## Lecture 1

Plato or Socrates or whoever wrote Bacon's plays, Shakespeare, perhaps, (or was it Homer?) must have been a remarkable man. And what led me now to write this sentence was that in thinking about James' use of the phrase "stream of thought," it occurred to me that the figure involved in that phrase belonged to a considerable group of such phrases in thinking about the mind. And, of course, I thought of the best known of all, Plato's, of course. I thought of the passage: "I would have you imagine then that there exists in the mind of man a block of wax. . . ." And I thought of that even more picturesque figure: "So let us now suppose that in the mind of each man there is an aviary of all sorts of birds. I didn't stop there. I went on with: "Of the nature of the soul. . . let me speak briefly and in a figure: and let the figure be composite--a team of winged horses and a charioteer." And, of course, I thought of the parable of the cave. And then? Then I was reminded of Locke's sheet of white paper, not exquisite certainly, but useful. And I thought of some of the words in our common vocabulary, such words as impression and groping and grasping and aspirations and the sentences: My mind was a perfect blank; he drew a blank; white paper, surely. What struck me most, however, were two phrases: "Bees in his bonnet" and "Bats in his belfry." Certainly, I thought, only a reader of Plato could have invented those. Bees -- wax: bats -- birds! The latter, I concluded, must certainly have occurred to some Kantian-Positivist, who, quite confused, remembered that concepts without percepts are blind and thought then of some one of his friends as reaching into the cage and laying his hand not on another bird, but upon a bat, a concept blind as a bat, non-sense. The weasel is a word: why not a bat?

But my main interest in considering these figures of Plato's arose in this way: I thought that if I could be fairly clear about what Plato was up to in using just one or two of these figures, this might help me in studying what James was doing. So I asked myself: "Now what was Plato doing with the figure of the wax and the figure of the aviary?" And what did I say? I said what any of you would say these days. I said: "Well, if you hold your watch to a little boy's ear he may ask, full of curiosity: 'What makes it tick?'" And then, of course, you remove the case and give him the works. "See those tiny wheels." In the U.S. recently there was a man who had a ticking in his head--all day long his head ticked. The doctors listened and said that it was not Swiss. So they did not operate. You have also seen in the show-rooms of the Morris Company the silver chassis of a motor car with all the working parts exposed, the parts that make the four tired wheels go round. They'd never go round of their own accord. Most people seeing a car go by know nothing of the innards of it. They never lift the bonnet or crawl under the car to admire the commotion there. Now, then, remembering and learning and

making mistakes are something like ticking and a car's going by. So in respect to remembering or making mistakes one may ask: "Show me the works." So Plato says: "I will explain," and he tells about the block of wax. I do not mean that Plato says: "Now this is just how it is." It's rather that he says: "Well, what do you think of this?" He cannot show you the wax. But what he gives is roughly a direction for making a learner, a wax learner. I have a friend who became interested in remembering and made a clumsy rememberer. He used two kitchen chairs, three mop sticks, a ball of twine, several decks of cards, and the kitchen silver. I never did figure out how it worked, but I trusted him. Some people are confident that each of us has a comptometer in his lobes. And I heard not many weeks ago that there are 14,000,000 (or was it 14 billion) stenographers, clerks, typists, errand boys, etc. in each average 2 X 4 head. No wonder we have headaches.

Now my interest in the wax and the aviary and the watch works and the chassis and these other contraptions is to emphasize the question: How does it work? In this instance: How does the mind work? Accordingly James would be saying: The mind works like a stream. This doesn't seem at all reasonable. To speak of the mind as a stream is strange enough already. "Works like a stream" is stronger still. Nevertheless, I intend to persist in this bit of folly until I bump my head. There is, by the way, almost nothing at all in the things we commonly say about minds to suggest the figure of the stream. We speak of broad, shallow, single-track, right, sound, of being of one mind, making up one's mind, changing one's mind, of absence and presence of mind. Unlike Plato's figures, that of the stream does not seem to be a derivation from what we commonly say. Hence it won't do to look there for any light. We must look for the beginnings of this in philosophy.

James writes in the tradition of Locke and in re-action against it. Does Locke then ask the question: How does it work? I assume so. Locke, of course, does not use the phrase "stream of thought." Locke says: "There is a train of ideas which constantly succeed one another," a sentence to which James quite vehemently objects. But now to the question: How does it work? Locke, you all remember, was up in words, fighting, against innate ideas. Descartes had said that all men have the idea of God, and he gave an account of how this works. God, the maker, like a craftsman, leaves his trademark, done in gold letters, or in lightning imprinted upon the minds of his creatures. So a man who thinks, need but think, and he will see the Creator's seal: God, God, God. Locke, as you know, has an interesting way of showing that this is not how it works. He leaves his rooms at Christ Church and visits the infant nursery in the Radcliffe Infirmary. He looks at the babies there, one by one, says a few words, and chuckles. He is quite satisfied that God did not leave his trade-seal on the minds of those pink little creatures in their cradles. But what then? Even Descartes did not hold that the babies could read the seal. He maintained only that the seal was there. In any case, Locke is quite willing to admit that the idea of God is commonly present in the mind, along with all sorts of other ideas: "whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others." If now babies do not come impressed, nor even seeded with

ideas, how then do they come by them? The mind works like a white piece of paper, and the type flies in and the paper is written on. This figure is much like that of the wax, but it is important that the paper be white, blank. In connection with this conception of how the mind works, Locke has a special and ambitious project. It's as tho Locke took up two stations, one outside the mind, and one inside the mind. From the station outside the mind, he keeps a watch on all the gates, eye-gate, ear-gate, nose-gate and all the other gates. And he makes an inventory of all that goes in. All that goes in he calls "the materials of thinking." From his station within the mind, he sees all that is present there. This is, I take it, the work-room where the materials are finished, polished, jointed, assembled, the room where knowledge is made and fancies are bred. The aim of the project is to test the products which are prepared for export out of the work-room. And the testing consists in this: The products are, of course--complex such things, for instance, as triangles, gratitude, murder, a dozen, beauty, theft, lead, man, a flock of sheep, etc.

So these products have parts. Each part which goes into the making of one of these products must be identified with what has come into the mind by one of the watched gates, and which, accordingly is listed in the inventory. Locke, as I recollect, manages quite well to get into his inventory what he finds in the shipping room.

I have introduced these sentences from Plato and these other sentences about Locke in order to prepare you for the environment within which James came to use the phrase "stream of thought," namely an environment composed of some other sentences also in the tradition of Locke. These are the sentences I should like to use: James quotes the following sentences from Bain in a footnote: "The stream of thought is not a continuous current, but a series of distinct ideas, more or less rapid in their succession, the rapidity being measureable by the number that pass thro the mind in a given time." The stream in this case is like the stream in stream of cars, stream of traffic. And Bain imagines himself as like a spectator watching the elephants pass. Bain even proposes to measure the velocity of his mind, so many per, 32 feet per second. Imagine our Bain with his watch in his hand, counting: "What's my speed?" The following sentence is from Hume: "But setting aside some metaphysicians of the kind (metaphysicians who, by the way, "when they enter into themselves" find somebody at home), I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity and in perpetual flux and movement." And this sentence: "The mind is a kind of theatre (The Globe) where several perceptions successively make their appearance: pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations." Postures and situations! In 1951 this sounds like a perception with a saucy look, sitting at her window. In any case, one can see at once that the traffic in the stream is much denser than the traffic which Bain observed. And there is, I take it, no question of counting at all. They go too fast. They glide, they mingle. They remind one of Democritus' slippery atoms.

Now neither of these sentences explicitly involves anything corresponding to the block of wax or the cage of birds or even the white paper. In order, however, to expound James' criticisms, I should like to elaborate each of them in terms of a figure which will, I hope, bring into a perspective each of these sentences and James' criticisms.

Consider first the arrangement which may supply the works of Bain's sentence: Imagine a shooting gallery with a concealed traveling cable to which are attached figures of all sorts which turn up momentarily at a certain point in the circuit and fall back at once. Let there be figures of all sorts, Professor Price's tomato, Mr. Ayer's match-box, Professor Moore's hand, Mr. Russell's canine patch of brown, and millions of others, pine-apples, apples, billiard balls, etc. And let their succession be varied. Some never show up again, some do, and some do often. Let their speed also be slower and faster--never, of course, exceeding the limit of countability. Now there's a duck, now there's a tomato, now there's a house, now there's a fragrant green onion going by in a split perception, now there's a broad side of a barn. All sorts of combinations in the succession are possible. It is apparently important that there be some interval between any two figures in the succession, but this interval may also vary as between different figures. Now the mind is not, of course, composed of all this machinery. Imagine further a spotlight which falls upon the figures as they turn up. This light is constant, and outside the circle of light all is dark. The mind is now composed of either this circle of light or of the succession of figures which fall within the circle of light, perhaps both. Bain says that the "ideas pass thro the mind." Hume says that they pass, re-pass, glide and mingle. And now we can understand Bain's "32 feet per second" and also Hume's: "They go too fast." And the figures pass thro the circle of light.

Now James has several objections to this, but at this point I propose to notice only one of them. It is clear that the "series of ideas" and the "succession of perceptions" involve the idea of distinctness. If you can count ideas or perceptions, then either there is some interval between them or some border line where one idea leaves off and the next one begins. Now a smell, now a star in the sky, now an itch in your eye. James refers to this as involving breaches or cracks, divisions or gaps, in consciousness. There are no such breaches, no such cracks. As I represented Bain's sentence, there are, of course, gaps. I spoke of the intervals between the figures, and besides, of course, there is empty space in the circle of light. The circle might, in certain cases, I suppose, be filled, as when the broadside of a barn is passing thro, but when Mr. Price's Canary Island tomato passes thro, one could imagine quite an area of the mind naked, the naked mind. So James looks at the diagram of the mind and points to the circle and says: "No, No, No. This circle must always be full." The headline of Section 3 in this discussion of consciousness reads: "Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous." I propose to discuss this further below. (I am, by the way, not concerned whether the contraption I have described fairly represents Bain. What I am aiming at is a design in terms of which I can understand James' criticism.)

Now consider another arrangement. Hume might have said: "I will show you what the mind is like. I will build you a kaleidoscope." And what does Hume do? First



he collects a very large but still limited number of bits of colored glass, in all manner of colors and shapes. These are the simple ideas. He loads some of them with tiny bits of metal, and within the roll upon the surface of which the bits of glass are mingled and shuffled, he mounts a number of fairly small but strong magnets. And the bits of glass are so made that they can be loaded whenever the maker of the kaleidoscope pleases to load them. In this way bundles of ideas come to be bundled and without, of course, there being any sort of visible putty which some underlying substratum might exude. Hume, of course, says nothing about the loaded bits of glass and the magnets. Saying anything about them would, of course, spoil the show. After all the show, the mind, is what you see thro the peep-hole at the top. And now when the toy is finished, Hume tells you to turn the crank and see for yourself. And what do you see? Why, you see one hurly-burly bundle of bits of colored glass which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity (even if you turn the crank just moderately slow, at mind speed, that will be the case). And in perpetual flux and movement. Bits of glass successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. This arrangement--the kaleidoscope--is different from that of the succession of figures in the shooting gallery, for in this case, tho there may be some play and some vacuum on the unseen surfaces of the kaleidoscope roll (The mind more than abhors a vacuum), there is no void when the mind is exposed, that is, under the peep-hole. The mind is continuous. Hence this way of representing the mind meets the criticism noticed above.

Is this then satisfactory? It is not. And what is the matter? Well, this: Hume says that "perceptions successively make their appearance," "they pass, re-pass, glide and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations." Well, this is certainly how it is with the bits of glass. If you turn the crank slowly and keep your eye fixed on one tiny square of green, you will indeed see it make its appearance, make its disappearance, and then up it comes again. The bits of glass follow his descriptions for perceptions. But they do it much better than perceptions do, for perceptions neither appear, nor disappear, nor pass, nor re-pass. James' words are: "No state once gone can recur and be identical with what it was before." And was that square of green glass the same square of green glass coming up again as it was going down. Yes, it was. So it won't do. The kaleidoscope a mind? A mere glitter circus. I propose to return to the discussion of this also.

Now let us see how the stream issues out of what we have said. Consciousness is not like the procession of figures in the shooting gallery, nor like that specially designed kaleidoscope with the magnets. Consciousness is like the Isis. It is the Thames of your life. And how so? Well, there are two characteristics of rivers which James has insisted upon in criticizing these other conceptions. The first is this: Wherever in the stream you dip your hand, you get your hand wet. This shows that the water is there. There are no cracks, no gaps, in rivers. The water in rivers is continuous. And what did James say about the mind: Why, just this that wherever you look, introspectively, you meet something. Thought is sensibly continuous as the stream is continuously water. So you

see? But this is not all. As you know, some people when they stand on a bridge and watch the water flow by, become pensive and are reminded of the passing of time and life. And looking at the water and following a ripple in the current, many a silent one has mingled his tears with the stream, and thought: "That tear and that water will never fall this way again." "Perhaps I will come again tomorrow and I will watch. Maybe that tear will come again." And what did James say about the mind in criticizing the pattern-kaleidoscope? Why, he said: No state once gone can recur and be identical with what it was before. States are just like any water in the stream. Water once gone can never recur and be identical with what it was before. Never? Well, hardly ever.

Now I should like to toss these two statements: "Thought is sensibly continuous," and "No state once gone can recur." Let us try the first: It arises in connection with Bain's statement in which he writes of the "series of ideas" and in connection with the sort of representation of it which I made in the shooting gallery. Now there are, at least, two ways of re-acting to this sentence and to the representation. You may say: "Oh, but there is no series and there is no such parade. This won't do at all. The whole figure of the procession of figures must be abandoned." And this would now be equivalent to a break with the tradition initiated by Locke and the project involved in it, the inventory of building materials and principles of mental engineering. James, however, does not shoot up the shooting gallery. When James says that there are no breaks, no gaps, he regards this, so I take it, as intelligible in the same way in which one might say this of a wall. There isn't a crack in it. Hence when he goes on to say that mind is continuous, this is now taken as a contribution in quite a different way. It isn't simply that the mind isn't like a wall with open gates and doorways; it is like a wall with no open gates and doorways. It is solid, compact; you cannot poke your finger thro, nor get a word in edge-wise. Everywhere, your finger and your word are blocked by mind stuff. It seems to me at any rate that James has at this stage been too far taken in by the figures which he is resisting. And the phrase "stream of thought" lures him on. Notice this striking formulation of his criticism: "The traditional psychology talks like one who should say that a river consists of nothing but pails-ful, spoons-ful, quarts-ful, barrels-ful, and other molded forms of water. Even where the pails and pots are all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows around it." I should like, accordingly, to urge that James' sentence: "Thought is continuous," is useful only in resisting such sentences as those of Bain and Hume. James, however, treats it as more like an amendment, as much as to say: "Now that figure of the circle of light will do nicely if you play upon it continuously with changing and rippling colored lights. Then let your figures pass thro.

Now consider the sentence: "No state once gone can recur." This might be discussed as sentences such as these: Listening to the ticking of the clock, tick, tick, tick, someone might say: "No tick ever recurs." Tying a ribbon around a tick, as one may band a bird to watch for its return, does not occur to many people. And so too with the

sparks that fly on Guy Fawkes day. They do not return. Whatever the explanation of these sentences is, James does not treat his sentence in that way. Anticipating objections, James writes: "Are not the sensations we get from the same object, for example, always the same? Does not the same piano key, struck with the same force, make us hear in the same way? Does not the same grass give us the same feeling of green, the same sky the same feeling of blue, and do we not get the same olfactory sensations no matter how many times we put our nose to the same flask of cologne? It seems a piece of metaphysical sophistry to suggest that we do not, and yet a close attention to the matter shows that there is no proof that the same bodily sensation is ever got by us twice." This is, I take it, an attack on the kaleidoscope. And the point is that, in whatever he is objecting to, the same sensation is treated as tho it were like the same piece of glass in the kaleidoscope. This leads to something interesting. The same square of glass in the kaleidoscope you can easily identify. You can prove that it's the same piece of glass. You put all those pieces of glass in the frame. No one else has even handled the kaleidoscope. And you pasted on each piece of glass a tiny label and with a number on the label. The number on this label is 1001. That's just the number you were looking for. So this is the same piece of glass. You've found it. Now try that with a sensation. Select it as you do a piece of glass, examine it carefully, paste on the label, record the number, and now watch for its return. Look for the label. Obviously this won't do at all. You can't turn over a sensation and so take a look at its underside. So you see you cannot prove anything about the sensation. Is it the same sensation? Check your records. And, of course, it isn't like the case in which you examine two pieces of wool among a tailor's samples, holding them in the light and scrutinizing them carefully. Yes, yes, same shade exactly. Why not? Because the sensations you are talking about come in succession. Hence, you cannot hold them side by side. Same bits of glass? Yes. Same shade of blue? Yes. Same sensation? No proof. James, of course, does not now draw the conclusion which goes with this. He says: "No state once gone can recur." It is certainly true that "same" in "same sensation," "same green," "same pain," is different from "same" in "same piece of glass." But James rules out "same sensation."

What then does James do with the kaleidoscope? He pours syrup in it. And the consequence is phrases such as these: "the river of elementary feeling," "an undistinguishable swarming continuum," "primordial chaos of sensation," "the world in the consciousness of ant, cuttle-fish, or crab," "the sensible continuous stream." What syrup then is this that he pours? There are, I think, two ingredients. The first is his use of the word "feelings." Sensations are feelings, pleasure and pain are feelings, hope and desire are feelings, surprise is a feeling, and there are even feelings of "if" and "but." Now this use of the word "feeling" suggests that hope and desire are like sensations like sensations that run, as colors run, that are diffuse. This also has a tendency to smudge the edges of sensations. This may account for that free water in which "every definite image is steeped and dyed." The other ingredient is this. James very early recognized that the meaning of a word need not involve that those things to which the word is

applied have anything in common. He talked about similarity, but never did provide any satisfactory explanation. The consequence, as in respect to the previous matter, is that the edges of distinction once more are smudged. If you cannot identify "red" in any particular case, then red is again something diffuse, a creeping incarnadine. This is, at least in part, what motivates his saying that we never do experience the same sensation. Let me add that what I have just now said about the ingredients of the syrup are hunches.

In this way James introduces a conception of mind quite incompatible with the engineering conceptions in Locke and his followers. But he continues to employ the building trade's vocabulary. He writes: ". . .the world of each of us. . .all lay embedded in the primordial chaos of sensations, which gave the mere *matter* to the thought of all of us indifferently. . . . All the while the world *we* feel and live in will be that which our ancestors and we, by slowly cumulative strokes of choice, have extricated out of this, like sculptors, by simply rejecting certain portions of the given stuff. Other sculptors, other statues from the same stone. Other minds, other worlds from the same monotonous and inexpressive chaos! My world is but one in a million alike embedded, alike real to those who may abstract them. How different must be the worlds in the consciousness of ant, cuttle-fish, or crab!" [*Principles* 289]. Here you have the cosmic contractor looking over his accumulation of supplies, gravel, bricks, cement, lumber, glass, but now no gravel, no bricks, no cement, no lumber, no glass. Instead all these things have been ground to a powder and mixed with water. And the contractor says: "I will build me a house." We can understand, I think, how James comes to say these things. His arguments have thoroughly pulverized the materials and made a pretty and thin mind. But he still thinks of himself as the builder's handy man.

## John Locke Lectures

## Lecture 2

I want accordingly to consider the conception of the word as image. I should like to answer the following questions: Why should the word be conceived as a name? And why, having conceived of the word as name, should it further be conceived as image?

That words should have been conceived as names is not, I think, surprising, for it is precisely these words which are used as names. Proper names that, since we so often see and overhear them made, or even make them ourselves, we so easily seem, at least, to understand. What you yourself can make or do make, so I have heard, you also understand. This is, perhaps, why some people are interested in naming a complete new language. They want to make sure that when they order cabbage and the grocer delivers cauliflower, that this is the grocer's mistake. In any case, there is not much mystery in naming. Parents of the new baby look at the baby, and he says: "Well, now. That settles it. The choices are narrowed, and we can't possibly call the baby Xerxes. What do you say?"; and she says: "I told you right from the first that I wanted the baby to be Cleopatra." So they call the baby "Cleopatra". Cleopatra is the baby's name. The coverlet on the baby's basket-bed, non-Parmenideon bed, flux-bed, is embroidered with that name, and she wears a tiny locket with the name "Cleopatra" inscribed on it. The neighbors come in, admire the baby, "Is there anything we can do? Such as . . ." And they say: "Oh, no. We're getting along nicely. Thank you so much." "And the baby's name?" And they tell them. "Isn't it nice?" and the neighbors say that it is very nice. Sometimes he talks about Cleopatra -- little Cletra -- an affectation. Really! What's the matter with Cleo? But not lacking in affection. Some friend of the family asks: "Cletra? Who is Cletra?" And the clever father smiles, looks at the baby, and says: "Oh, I'm so sorry. You didn't know, of course." And then he explains. In this way the noise "Cleopatra" is established as this baby's name. And in some such way, it is assumed, other words too have come to be names. "If" and "Cleopatra" and all the words in this following group: "If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter." Someone named if "if", and had "had," etc. I said that this was assumed, for I can scarcely imagine anyone's asking: "Who named if? Jowett, I think, does not ask: Who named if? Tho the friends of the flux, some paleo-Positivists of a logical, very logical, type may have had something to do with it. They may have been constructing a brown table in the next room and needed ifs for all the joints.

It is not, however, only the way in which naming takes place that we must notice. There is something much like what takes place in naming that also takes place in explaining. In christening ceremonies the baby is, as it were, juxta-posed to the sanctified noise, baby-Cleopatra. Sometimes the name is called a mark which is literally scratched in or carved on the surface of what is named. There is more than juxta; it is

imposition. So cattle on the range are branded with the name of their owner. "What old steer is this?" "That steer? That's Farmer Brown's. Can't you read?" Now something like naming may also be involved in explaining and in telling the names of things. "What is catsup?" "This is catsup." (pointing) "And what is that?" (pointing) "That? That's catsup." Here again there is something like what happens in naming. Pointing is a connection with the spoken word, catsup, a juxta-putting or super-putting of "catsup" on the thing, in this case "catsup." In this way a connection of some sort between them is rehearsed and so further established. Explaining is a little like the repetition of the ceremony of laying on of the name. The pertinence of this is now that pointing in the explanation of words plays something like the role that holding up the baby does in its receiving its name. This may help in understanding how such words as "catsup," "brown table," "teapot" are now said to be names just as are Xerxes and Cleopatra.

There are words, of course, in the explanation of which the role of pointing is not at all clear. What is "in" the name of? Well, you might help yourself in this case with a box and a lively finger. "See! That's in" and "See! That's out, not in." One might get a little tired of this, of course. "What is 'on'?" "What is 'above'?" One can imagine all sorts of graceful index gestures with one's linguistic finger. "See! above." "See!" placing one book on another and projecting an imaginary line from one's pointing finger between the two books, without disturbing them at all. So we get: This is Cleopatra. This is catsup. This is "on." But with some words the fingerless are as able as the fingered. What will you do with "but" and "if" and "and"? The point, however, is not to establish the conception that all words are names but only to indicate how it may have arisen. Nearly all of us who have thought of words as names, when, that is, we have thought of words at all, have very likely thought only of such words as "Cleopatra" and "catsup."

Now for our purpose the important point is that words are names. (This) leads to the idea that words are tags. A word is a tag for a thing. "Cleopatra" -- Cleopatra: "catsup" -- catsup, the name and the named. You can carry Cleopatra into the room: "Look! This is Cleopatra." You can hold up the bottle: "See! Catsup." So with beauty, so with goodness, if you have the right dialectical arms and hands to cuddle these things. A tag is a word written on whatever it is the tag of, or below or above it; or again, it may be a noise made when someone lays his hands on it. Such tags have a use. They help to identify the cat in the bag, the pig in a poke, or catsup in a bottle, or a baby sent by post on a long journey. "Who am I? Read my label." But the immediate point is not now their use. It is rather that there are all these noises in the world and all these curious markings and that they are in all sorts of ways affixed, either literally or figuratively, affixed to things. The grocery shop is full of names. When these tomatoes go, the name goes too. Wherever Mary went, her name was sure to go.

So there are noises which are names and noises which are just noises. We have also noticed that noises which are plucked quite at random out of the auditorium are

ordained to be names. Noises are endowed, are given, meaning. This ceremony of endowment we have noticed in the case of the name "Cleopatra." We commonly say that the baby is given a name, but is the noise given nothing? The noise is endowed, shall we say, with the baby? -- with a meaning anyhow. But the baby is the meaning, isn't it? Now, ostensibly, there is a difference between the noise which is now a name and the noise before it became a name. The question now is: What is the difference? We know already that it must have something to do with that connection between the noise and the thing. In the passage which I read earlier, it is said: The name is an image of the thing. How now has this come about?

Let us consider this question in terms of another one: How can a word, such as the word "beef," get you what you want in a restaurant, for instance? And in order to do this, notice another case in which there is no mystery about what you do, tho you also manage to get beef and some other things.

Imagine yourself in a foreign land where you cannot speak the language. You do, nevertheless, get hungry there. So you go into a place where people are eating. You sit down at a table and a two or three-handed waitress comes up to serve you. She sees at once that you have no words and that there will be difficulties. She looks at you with a question mark on her face and then, raising her hand to her mouth and lowering and raising it again, she shakes her head, as much as to say: "Yes?" And you shake your head: Yes. She goes out and returns with a bowl of something which in her language is not called soup. It is soup. And you eat it. When she returns, she comes in with a platter of meat, reindeer, perhaps, or at any rate, some meat you do not recognize. She points to the meat on the platter and asks with her eyes and shaking head: Yes or no? You, with your shaking head, answer: No. You then proceed to draw a picture on the tablecloth, a picture of a cow, and you make a mark on the picture to indicate that you would like a cut of T-bone steak. In a situation of this kind, you might instead have told her in your very best "moo," but since you can draw quite well, drawing is better. You could scarcely specify T-bone steak with any variation of moo. You go on, in any case, to make potatoes with your fingers and also some carrots. Later you point to an orange at the next table. In this way, you manage to let the waitress know what you want. And you get your beef.

Now I proposed this as a situation in which what you do and how you manage in this way to get what you want involves no mystery. No one asks: "But how when you draw the picture of the cow and mark that place above the cow's ribs, does she, the waitress, know what you want?" Silly! It's a picture, isn't it? And if you ask this, you might as well ask as to how she knows you want an orange when you're sitting at a table in this restaurant, and you're waiting to eat, and you now point at the orange on the buffet. This is the limit surely. But see. You raised your finger and pointed at the orange. You might, however, have drawn a picture of an orange and even colored it to make sure. And now that the picture under these circumstances should have done what the pointing did might lead you to say that the picture points at what isn't present just

as your finger points at what is present. No one would, under the circumstances described, draw a picture of a cow when there is a cow at the next table. So the picture points. But the picture of the cow and the picture of the orange have no fingers. With what then does a picture point? Obviously, by their likeness to the cow and the orange, they point. You may call this a peculiar pointing, if you like. But there is, certainly, no doubt that as the waitress follows a certain line defined by your index finger, so too she follows a different line from the picture of the cow to the beef in the kitchen. Pointing, of course, furnishes the pattern, according to which the use of the pictures is understood.

Now compare this with your getting on in an eating place where you know all the words. "Soup," "potatoes," "carrots," "beef," "orange," "semolina." You say "beef" and you get beef, and you say "orange" and you get your orange. With these words you now accomplish what in a previous case you accomplished by pointing at the beef and at the orange. So it seems plain that these words, like the more obvious pictures of cow and orange, also point. How could you explain your getting beef and orange unless something pointed to them? But now arises the crucial question: How can a helpless little noise like "beef" or "orange" point? It hasn't any fingers and has almost nothing at all. The case seems quite hopeless: Cow in the kitchen; little noise "beef" in the dining room. A finger in the dining room or the picture of a cow in the dining room. One could do something with those. Little noise "beef," little noise "orange." Poor little words! Now notice that the same sort of question arose with respect to the picture: How can the picture point? And the answer was: By the likeness. And this now furnished the only resource for answering the question about the word: How does the word "beef" point? was, of course, by way of a likeness. What likeness? Why, the likeness of the word to the thing, a quite peculiar kind of likeness, just as the pointing of the likeness is a peculiar kind of pointing. When the cow is present, you can use your finger to point. When the cow is not present, you can draw a picture or make a noisy one. There is certainly an advantage in pictures, imprinted on noises.

This is one way, then, of understanding, in part, how the conception of the word as name and the name as image or likeness has arisen. I propose in what follows next week to consider it further and to return later to the figure of "the pot that leaks."

(Is Cleopatra the stolen princess: Was there foul play? If so, why not? And was the unborn son Xerxes also the missing heir! All these questions will be answered in the next installment.)

Now that we are acquainted with a few likenesses, such as the noises "catsup" and "Cleopatra," we are prepared for a more interesting question: What can we do with likenesses such as these: What is "Cleopatra" good for? And the answer might be: "Well, with a name, she can respond to roll-calls, receive mail, come home when she is called, sign documents when she is older, order a telephone, and so on." I do not think that a philosopher who thought of the word as image need be interested in such domestic traffic. What if she is not interested in responding to roll-calls, in receiving



mail, etc? Besides, isn't there something mean and uncouth, Philistine, in making old this point about use, about these uses, and do not those uses, after all, depend upon some other more liberal and, as we might say, some pure service of the name? I should like in any case to suggest something else, something else more basic. I do not mean that if all the trees in the park bear labels, then we can walk up to each tree and read the label: "Juniper. Ah! Juniper," "Cedar of Lebanon. Ah!" "Ah! Philadelphia oak. What a surprise! Why I never thought!" As you know this is fun and is, in some ways, very like what I have in mind. Certainly one may be interested in likenesses -- "mighty like a whale!" -- and words as likenesses have this advantage that they are so easily passed around. When Cleopatra is far away, what could be more convenient than the noise "Cleopatra"? The noise is a substitute.

The point now is this: If you could carry about with you on your back in a bag everything you have a name for, then you would never need any names at all. Instead of the name in your mouth, you would take the thing out of the bag -- Cleopatra, catsup, a lamb chop. If, failing such a roomy bag, but having some bag, you were about to use a sentence with the word "John" in it, John loves Mary, for instance, you wouldn't say: "John." You would take John out of your bag and put him into the sentence. This would be: John loves Mary, John taken extensionally, about five feet, ten inches. If you had Mary in your bag too, you would, of course, put her in the sentence also. And, who wouldn't take Mary out? What a lovely sentence! John in the flesh, ten stone avoirdupois. John standing for himself, L-O-V-E-S, Mary in the flesh, skin, timorous, wee, just a few large pebbles avoirdupois, standing for herself. This is a thing, however, devoutly or just playfully to be wished, still much too cumbersome when otherwise speaking of bulky things. It may seem at first that in this case instead of the word "John" being a substitute for John, John is now a substitute for the word "John." But this is just how it is with substitutes. If saccharine will do for sugar, what will sugar do for? Besides, in the case of John, you know very well which is the original. So the name "John" is a substitute for John, the name "Mary" for Mary, and, of course, "loves" for loves. Other substitutes are, of course, possible. You might instead of putting John in, put John's brother in. Marriages occasionally take place by proxy. "Let me stand for you." "Good: Will you?" "I'll be glad to." So John's brother stands for John. John gets a wife and John's brother is a substitute. In substituting in sentences one must, of course, make sure that John's brother is regarded as a substitute and not as the real McCoy, John McCoy, that is.

In this paragraph which I have just now written, I have quite unwittingly, and now to my surprise, used such expressions as: John stands for himself, and John's brother stands for John. What a wonder, the altogether unexpected expected! For isn't this just how we talk about words? And what could be more fitting? When the baby Cleopatra is in the room, no substitute is required, nothing else need stand for her. In the next room, where walls now intervene, the wordless may draw her picture, and where, as in the room where the baby is, they pointed or looked meaningfully at the baby, they may

now point at or look meaningfully at the picture. This shows clearly enough how the picture is a substitute for the baby. And where, now, many walls or only one or whole cities and seas intervene, the noiser's who do not draw are not poor in substitutes. For what is it now to make the noise "Cleopatra" but to make a likeness? And the noise has this advantage that it is commonly unnecessary to point to the noise. The noise, as it were, always introduces itself with a bang, as much as to say: "Hear me!" or "Here I am!" The noise breaks a silence as an indicating finger breaks the indifference of plain where. There is something like pointing to the noise, in the case of shouting in a boiler-factory, where a part of the volume of the shout is intended to call hearer's ear, as pointing calls seer's eye. But the function now is that whereas the baby "stands for" herself (we may go on to discuss the question as to why we say "stands for" rather than "lies for" or "sits for") and the picture "stands for" the baby, so too the sound "Cleopatra" stands for the baby. The word "represents" is at home in the same context. Where John is present, presents himself, no representation of John is, of course, required. But where John is absent, the name "John" represents him. So once again, "John" stands for John; "Mary" stands for Mary; John and Mary stand for each other; and love stands for a lot.

I should like now to return to the idea of substitute, of substitution. If I drive a bus and get a substitute, then, of course, he drives the bus. If I am a member of a cricket team and someday prefer cricket on the hearth to cricket in the field, then I get a substitute. He plays in my stead as well as he can that is. So we understand the expressions: substitute bus driver and substitute cricket player. And how now is the word "John" substituting for John? I have already intimated what the answer is, but now I should like to state it bluntly. Bluntly then, and perhaps enigmatically, the word "John" looks like John, and when John is far away and you want to see John, what do you do? You make the noise "John." This is his likeness. Remember the sentence: Names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which they name. "John" is a name, isn't it? In this discourse, I have not been careful to make sure that the name "John" is "a name rightly given," but I expect some day to return to this question.

I have already explored some of the motives which may lead to our thinking of words as images or likenesses. I propose now to consider another and perhaps even more powerful motive. It is the analogy between knowing, thinking, and understanding, on the one hand, and seeing and looking on the other, an analogy which is deeply involved in our language. Clearly, in respect to seeing John whom you cannot now see, seeing an image in a mirror or in the water, or seeing a picture, may do as a substitute for seeing John himself. Now notice the sleeping, half-waking analogy in the following expressions, the figures of light and darkness, and the variations upon the figure of sight: A man is enlightened by knowledge; we throw light upon the dark recesses of ignorance. Understanding comes in flashes. Now do you see? -- (understand, that is) More light! Glimmer of under-standing. Chinks in his ignorance. More light; less heat. We inspect. Seeing life steadily and seeing it whole as slightly cracked. Learning is coming to the light. *Dominus illuminatio mea*. Blind to the facts. A survey. We

overlook. We keep in view. People hold different views. They have different perspectives. Focus your attention. Get a clearer view. It's obscure. He's in a fog. A gleam of recognition. A brilliant suggestion. A new outlook. By introspection we see the inner, insight, foresight, hindsight; the dawn of knowledge. It dawned on him. The dark ages. The discovery of. . ., uncovering the facts; evidence; new horizons; reflections on water made by a chemist; as seen from a different angle, a penetrating study, lighting up vast new areas, an illusion, a transparent exposition, a clarifying remark; the eclipse of understanding, see thro; pull the wool over; profound insight; with perspicuity; look into this; dim-witted; circumspect; God sees all; spectator of all time and then some; where there is no vision, the people; groping for an answer he stumbled. Words are sometimes described as like windows and a good word is like a window thro which you see without seeing it. I suppose that such a list as this might be continued indefinitely. The figure of the light and the darkness and the sun furnished the general structure of the parable of the cave even from cave-gloom to philosopher-sunlight.

The prevalence of this analogy in the language of knowledge and understanding one may try to explain. Certainly sight and light play a great part in what we know and understand. And one might even notice so trifling a matter as the wrinkled brows and screwed-up eyes in thinking. The eyes are involved in any intent. "What's that? I don't understand you." But our concern is not with the occasion of this analogy, but rather with its influence in generating and determining the form of our problems. For what, in terms of this analogy, would one expect? The most important feature of this analogy in this matter is, I think, this -- that, in seeing, something must be present to the eyes, before one. And if now knowing is a kind of seeing or is like seeing, then the question arises: Of what sort is this that is before our minds in knowing? And it is almost inevitable that this will be conceived by analogy with what is before our eyes in seeing. Now let us ask in relation to such simple questions as: Do you know John? Do you know Cleopatra? What might be expected? Suppose the answer is: "Yes. I know John." Then, following the analogy, there must be something present to the mind of whoever it is that knows John. And it won't do to say that it's the noise "John" which is present, for that noise would be present even did one not know John. So what is present? Again, following the analogy with seeing, something must be present which is like what is otherwise seen. The rest is simple. What is present must be an image, for the image is like John and is, of course, very convenient. What is peculiar about the sentence which I quoted is that the name itself is identified with the likeness or image, for "names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which they name." If we admit that no image need be present at all when some friend says: "I know John," then the sentence quoted may be taken as a token of the very great power of the analogy just explained. For in effect it says: There must be an image, even if the noise itself must be that image.

That there is an image and must be, or rather that this is how many men have written about knowing and thinking, is clear from this that there was the problem of imageless thought. Notice the following sentences from James:

An exceptionally intelligent friend informs me that he can frame no image whatever of the appearance of his breakfast table. When asked how he remembers it at all, he says he simply knows that it seated four people and was covered with a white cloth on which were a butter dish, a coffee-pot, radishes, and so forth (no kipper). The mind-stuff of which this knowing is made seems to be verbal images exclusively. But if the words *coffee*, *bacon*, *muffins*, and *eggs* lead a man to speak to his cook, to pay his bills, and to take measures for the morrow's meal, exactly as visual and gustatory memories would, why are they not, for all practical intents and purposes, as good a kind of material in which to think? In fact, we may suspect them to be for most purposes better than terms with a richer imagination coloring.

Now this is interesting, for tho James is conceding that there are no images of the appearance of the breakfast table, and that there are, accordingly, only these words, yet he is driven to describe these words nevertheless as images. He calls them verbal images. But why "images"? He does not say that these words are trained noises. Isn't it because he does not see how the words could function unless there were "images." And he too is driven to this extremity, namely, to regarding these words themselves as images.

Up to this point I have tried to understand the conception of the word as image by way of these other sentences: Words are names, and knowing and thinking are like seeing. But once the idea of the word as image is abandoned, other inventions or conveniences take their place. What is Hume's idea, the copy of an impression, but such a convenience? When Cleopatra is tucked away under coverlets, what is your being reminded of Cleopatra like? Why it's musing or being startled, or your being an interested spectator, tender smiling spectator, a seer of her image, mind's eye-lids lifted, while you go on with your knitting. But suppose now that you are neither father nor mother of Cleopatra, but some doctor of babies, a pediatrician, and you think not of Cleopatra, not of chubby little Xerxes, but simply of baby -- what then? Why, then you think, have an image just six inches from your nose, of some infant which is neither isosceles nor scalene; not acute baby but not obtuse either, roly-poly embryo, geometric baby. And if you now have no nose for such a baby and no such other faithful, rosy-cheeked image hovering, why then you must still entertain something, an abstract baby, or rather the abstract of all babies, attenuated, shadowy, just beyond the nursery of visibility, the universal. There must be something before your mind, when you hear, and this word "baby" makes sense. The baby in the word, the image-baby as idea, the either neither or nor baby, the infant baby essence, these are quadruplets with some not uncommon mummies and daddies. And now as there are short names such as "Cleopatra" and "Xerxes," so there are also long names, such as sentences. And corresponding to such long names, there are longer spreads before the mind. So if I say: "Descartes, sitting before the fire, wore a red dressing gown," you might imagine a

scurry of images flashing about to take their places in that orderly spread, corresponding to the order of the words in the long name. This might be described as the mind making you a proposition. But this would be a mistake. For as in the case of the short names, there is here too a gradation in an order of attenuation, and the idea of proposition marks the limit of such attenuation. Hence, too, there is no such scurry as I suggested above, for the constituents of a proposition are such that they can be in many places at the same time. Hence, they are already where, according to the suggestion, they are scurrying to. Hence, these quick images are on certain views unnecessary.

## John Locke Lectures

## Lecture 3

In the United States where I live, slang is slung more than it is in some other countries. Many of these slang expressions are extremely puzzling and puzzle people in the United States as much as they do people in other countries. Of course, the context in which the slang is spoken is usually revealing so that people easily catch on to the slang that is slung. Nevertheless, if I now tell you that what I am about to read to you is a lot of bologna, I do not suppose that you would understand that at all. And if I tried to explain to you that that meant that it was apple-sauce or so much banana-oil, I do not suppose that you would be much enlightened. For all you know, it might mean that what I was about to read was very nourishing and quite substantial. Isn't bologna and isn't apple-sauce and isn't banana-oil? There are, of course, instances of slang which are quite striking and quite obscure and which one might suppose one could figure out, especially after they have been explained. Consider, for instance, such an expression as: "He's a long drink of water." This baffled me at first and until I was told what it meant. Then I said: "Oh, of course, why, yes. That's very good." And I thought of the giraffe. Does it baffle you too? When it's explained to you, I think that you will agree with me.

Recently in my reading, I came upon an expression which greatly excited me. It seemed to belong to a class of expressions with which I was vaguely familiar, expressions which played upon a variety of earthen-ware vessels. I suppose that you have heard such expressions as: "It's a crock," "He's in the jug" (which is a synonym of "He's in the clink" or "He's in the hoose-gow"), and "He's cracked." This last expression may, of course, be related to such other expressions as: "He's an egg" and "He's a bad egg" or "He's a good egg." There are also expressions which play upon the word "pot." There are pot-shots and pot-hats, and there is the expression "going to pot." And this now is one of the sentences which startled me: "All things leak like a pot" and "the world is a man who has a running at the nose." I can imagine that if no one had explained to me the meaning of the expression: "He's a long drink of water," I should have continued to puzzle about this for years. And so it might have been with these sentences.

I suggested above that the context in which a slang expression is used is usually revealing, and I, accordingly, set about to study the context of these sentences. I looked out of the window. And, of course, I muttered to myself: "All things leak like a pot and the world is a man. . .," trying with both eyes to make the words in my mouth fit what I saw. I still remember one of my best days at the window. Down in the street below my window, two men were rolling barrels of ale towards a big red lorry drawn alongside the curb. "Ah!" I said, and I am sure that my eyes were bright with promise, and then I noticed that the barrels were empty. I was not then aware, in my innocence, that the

barrels being empty made no difference. I reflected upon dons and giraffes and Merton Street and barrels. "Leak like a pot." The lorry was driven away, on Simonds, and a smaller, red lorry was driven up to where it had stood -- a truck full of milk. Two men lifted down bushels of milk, not spilling, and carried them, disappearing thro the gate. A boy, pushing a cart loaded with Brussels sprouts, followed the men with the milk. Milk, milk, but nothing leaking like a pot! Nothing to cry over: nothing to make me glad! I was wretched. Suddenly it occurred to me that it was raining, and I heard the drip, drip from the roof, and I exclaimed with Archimedes: "Righto!" I said: "Jolly well! Righto!" I had been in England for several months. "It does leak like a pot. The world is a man with a running at the nose, and I know where the nose is." And then? Well, it was one of those unusual days. It stopped raining. I gave up for that day. And, some days later, I turned my back upon the window, and scribbled my way to empty barrels that leak and to the nosy world. And now in order to explain this, I shall need to read to you the following passage.

This passage [Cratylus 439] is in the language of a man by the name of Jowett, and what I am to read is, I think, a translation. It is in the form of dialogue. And one of the characters is a man by the name of Socrates, an older man, I think. Perhaps a don. He also does most of the talking. The name of the younger man, a student, I suppose, is Cratylus. He doesn't say much. He says: "Yes," and "Certainly," and "True," and "I think so," and "Undoubtedly." You'll notice when he comes in. The portion I am about to read is from a longer conversation which has been going on for some hours.

Soc: Well, but reflect; have we not several times acknowledged that names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which they name?

Crat: Yes.

Soc: Let us suppose that, to any extent you please, you can learn things thro the medium of names and suppose also that you can learn them from the things themselves--which is likely to be the nobler and clearer way; to learn of the image whether the image and the truth of which the image is the expression have been rightly conceived or to learn the truth whether the truth and the image of it have been duly executed?

Crat: I should say that we must learn of the truth.

Soc: How real existence is to be studied or discovered is, I suspect, beyond you and me. But we may admit so much that the knowledge of things is not to be derived from names. No. They must be studied and investigated in themselves.

Crat: Clearly, Socrates.

Soc: There is another point. I should not like us to be imposed upon by the appearance of such a multitude of names, all tending in the same direction. I myself do not deny that the givers of names did really give them under the idea that all things were in motion and flux; which was their sincere but, I think, mistaken opinion. And having fallen into a kind of whirl-pool themselves, they are carried round and want to drag us in after them. There is a matter, Master Cratylus, about which I often dream and should like to ask your opinion: Tell me, whether there is or is not any absolute beauty or good or any other absolute existence?

Crat: Certainly, Socrates. I think so.

Soc: Then, let us seek the true beauty: not asking whether a face is fair or anything of that sort, for all such things appear to be in a flux: but let us ask whether the true beauty is not always beautiful.

Crat: Certainly.

Soc: And can we rightly speak of a beauty which is always passing away and is first this and then that? Must not the same thing be born and retire and vanish while the word is in our mouth?

Crat: Undoubtedly.

Soc: Then how can that be a real thing which is never in the same state? For, obviously, things which are the same cannot change while they remain the same; and if they are always the same and in the same state and never depart from their original form, they can never change or be moved.

Crat: Certainly, they cannot.

Soc: Nor yet can they be known by any one; for at the moment that the observer approaches, then they become other and of another nature, so that you cannot get any further in knowing their nature or state, for you cannot know that which has no state.

Crat: True.



Soc: Nor can we reasonably say, Cratylus, that there is knowledge at all, if everything is in a state of transition and there is nothing abiding; for knowledge, too, cannot continue to be knowledge unless continuing always to abide and exist. But if the very nature of knowledge changes, at the time when the change occurs, there will be no know-ledge; and if the transition is always going on, there will always be no knowledge, and according to this view there will be no one to know and nothing to be known: but if that which knows and that which is known exist ever and the beautiful and the good and every other thing also exist, then I do not think that they can resemble a process or flux as we were just now supposing. Whether there is this eternal nature in things or whether this truth is what Heroclitus and his followers and many others say is a question hard to determine; and no man of sense will like to put himself or the education of his mind in the power of names; neither will he so far trust names or the givers of names as to be confident in any knowledge which condemns himself and other existences to an unhealthy state of unreality; he will not believe that all things leak like a pot or imagine that the world is a man who has a running at the nose. This may be true, Cratylus, but is also very likely untrue; and therefore I would not have you be too easily persuaded of it.

In this passage, the sentence which first startled me was this one: "Must not the same thing be born and retire and vanish while the word is in our mouths," and it was also this sentence which led me to pursue my present amazement. There are some others which are equally striking: "All things leak like a pot" and "the world is a man who has a running at the nose." The world has a bad cold. There is also reference to a whirlpool and to some people who are "carried round and round," caught no doubt, in the drain, in the gush where the pot runs flush. The illustration of the leaky pot is a fair face. All this is naturally contrasted with a pot which does not leak, with a man in summertime whose nose is well-kept, un-sniffing. These are mere symbols of "an absolute beauty or good or any other absolute existence." There are, accordingly, leaky pots and pots that do not leak and men with leaking noses and men whose noses are whole and sound. And just as the fair face is a leaky pot so, too, is my view of Merton Street. The conception of the leaky pot is to be understood only in terms of this contrast. Obviously, one can never see how a fair face or Merton Tower is like a leaky pot simply by gazing with wide-open eyes at either. Hence, before I go on, I should like to explore this contrast.

Imagine, for this purpose, a museum -- a museum, deep in calm, fixed in breathlessness, done in silence, clothed in invisibility, awful, laid away in heaven. And the walls thereof are purest essence, some quint-essence, some tri-essence, but none semi-essence. If senescence is no wall, for neither is olderness nor youngerness any ness at all, all is evermore and never the less. And of what essence and what essences are

those walls? Of all heavenlinesses are they and of brightliness the beaminest. Essences participating in essence, like May-girls round May-pole enribboned, and enribboning one another, they ring-round this conjugation of hyper-supers. Ethereal jasper, aery hardness of Hymettus, spirit of preciousness in rocks, fair form of creme-de-lune, moon-stone, celestial. And the gates thereof are multitude, swinging fro at the approach of mere thought of touch-word. Ping! in invisible's inaudibility, and swing in gate's immobile mobility. And what now is inner and inner-most, for outermost and outer of essence is but dressing for omni-forms. Wax-works? Mere rags of rags. Paintings? Statues? Even thrice removed. Guess again. This is the museum of quiddities, of whatnesses in their highest nest, tucked away, ensconced, writing for refiner's defining, so fine are they. The museum of none-such such-and-suches.

Let us enter. The ring of Gyge's turned, in the twinkling of a tom-tit's eye, in more than much less than a jiffy, is embody de-bodily. So flits pure spirit, all spree undone, wrapped up, vamoosed, a charioteer unhorsed, flying, seeing the sights. As hitcher of wagon to a star, so sires look-fast soul, uttering to behold. And what is then to be mind-eyed? Of all goodliestness, the utmost, the mostest. Of goodness incessant, the non-stop, the one big Idea, the biggest of all, apathetic, no-cart goodness, untouchable, no pal at all, nor yours nor mine, but splendiferous. Of beauty, supremious, abstemious, no woman, all form; no face. Of justice the thorny spikes thereof, pricking mind's eyes' conscience with imputations insufferable; no mercy. Of equality two sticks that beat as one, twin-twined, indiscriminable. These, flutter pilgrims gaze on, as from bowed heads, eyes, shyly raised, for these, mounted high in dazzle-dome, raise the roof, so aery and yet so eagle-strong of wings are they. In space-less allwhiles is otherness with no taint of form or in respect to, mere grime of the world, unmuseum, impure, Piccadilly. And sameness too, the unadulterated milk of all kindness whatsoever, apple-kindness, horse-kindness, man-kindness, and of all species and genera without this and that moth and rust of corruptibility. In whileless not-a-space, stood bed, in radiant coverlet, no Stratford-on-Avon second-best bed, but in glory Parmenidean, all-is-rest bed. And chair in patience by bed, Hepple-white, whiter than Hepple, and more Hepple too, chair stood, posing for carpenters and sculptors, creakless to all eternity. On the walls in flicker speed, as with invisible hand, the number series were being unravelled. Pilgrims have been known to linger there reminding themselves: There exists a number such that..., hoping on their unhappy returns, to escape the necessities of pencil calculations. In one recess, one niche of timelessness, a lean-to, out-house to the museum, were tucked away after-thoughts, non-mental reservations, don't know where to put them, strays, standing humbly low in the shadow of a great congregation of upmosts, three immaculates, cute and coy, immaculate hair, immaculate mud, and immaculate dirt, jewels of consistency.

Now, there is the museum, full of pots that do not leak, of men who are not running at the nose. And why did I introduce this? In order to understand how one might come to speak of a fair face as a pot that leaks. The answer is, of course: By way

of the contrast. Remember our museum, deep in calm, fixed in breathlessness, done in silence, clothed in invisibility, awful. And now imagine our spirit tourist, Gyge's ring returned, no longer sprite, encoiled, incorporated, emerging out of pure light where no dust dances, nothing moves and suddenly come into Oxford Street. Will he not shudder at this hub-bub? Out of museum chilly calm into flesh-pot tempest; out of immobility into quick-pace hustle; out on no-no noise into hoots and calls and screeches. Will he not close his ears and stop his eyes? Remember how that cave-man in the parable, moving out of bright noon-day to cinema darkness, stumbles thro the aisle and collides with the usher in a pretty face whom he cannot see at all. Well, dark is dark and light is light and noisy is noisy and quiet is mousy on Christmas Eve. And it doesn't matter now that our pilgrim alighted first in Oxford Street rather than in Merton Street. It would have been all the same there. Do you think that Galaten danced on her pedestal and shouted, before Pygmaleon first saw that something was up? So much for the pot and the puddles now.

What I have elaborated in so much detail is, of course, an old story. And I have prepared it only as the setting for what I now propose to do. For I am intent on understanding how this contrast has arisen and that, not generally, not thoroughly, but in terms of only one minor conception which plays a part in it. The theory of this contrast is exceedingly rich in motives, and what I am interested in, may very well be a relatively insignificant one. It may, however, turn out to be a conception which is one of a family which has kept philosophers uneasy and itching ever since it was first introduced. In the family are, I think, included such famous members as these: The conception of form, the sentence as picture, ideas as image, the proposition, the correspondence theory of truth, the problem of image-less thought, etc. The sentence with which the quotation from Jowett began is this: "Well, but reflect; have we not several times acknowledged that names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which they name?" I realize, of course, that not many of us would say this. But I am now going to show you how reasonable this is and how it is, at once, related to the conception of the museum and the leaky pot. We may also come to understand the sentence: "Must not the same thing be born and retire and vanish away while the word is in our mouths?" For we shall then be prepared to substitute for "while the word is in our mouths" the other phrase: "while the likeness or image is in our mouths."

Let us return to the concept: the word as image. Someone might be puzzled at this point and might say: "I can see how in knowing, something must represent, stand for, something else, and how an image could do this, but I do not see how a name, a noise such as 'Cleopatra,' 'catsup,' 'John,' could be the image of anything." One might, as some philosophers do, be talking about some ideal language and imagine further that some inspired man, a giver of right names, looked at something and with his talent of tongue, made pictures out of sounds. "Out of these tones he made a star; out of four syllables he made a baby. But. . ." And so he might go on. This seems at first like a reasonable murmur. But the following considerations may help. After all, Adam was

such a giver of names. "And out of the ground, the lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man called every living creature that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field." Now notice that "whatsoever the man called every living creature that was the name thereof." There may be some difference of learned opinion concerning the exegesis of this sentence, but one can, certainly, if one has the right disposition, easily find embedded in it the doctrine of natural names. "That was the name thereof." The sentence does not say "That was to be the name thereof," and this difference may be of the utmost-most significance for the theory of names. For this clearly suggests that Adam, in giving names, was not so much inventing names as discovering names which were, already, invested in the very nature of all things that are. And this discovery would be explicable only if, in some way which we certainly do not understand, the name is an image or likeness of that of which it is a name. For the passage once more suggests that Adam looked upon the cattle and gave the name, the only clue to the name being what he saw.

This exegesis, taken by itself and depending, as it does, exclusively upon a grammatical construction, might not be altogether conclusive. But there is more. For there is abundant evidence, even in our present modes of speech and scripture, these well-nigh six-thousand years since the fall, of a generous remnant of that perfect language in which the image was the word. That some words do imitate sounds in nature, such words as "hoot," "honk," "squeak," "quack," "tinkle," "buzz," "boom," I need scarcely remind you and so will not do so, much as I am inclined to. Such imitation is, in any case, relatively crude and involves no mystery, for in these words one sound is the likeness of another. The difficulty arises where a sound is or becomes the likeness of what is seen. Consider such words as mouse and mosquito, deer and cow, elephant and hippopotamos, giraffe and goat. It is in respect to such words as these that we hear and see and see and hear, that each of these words is a godsend and that the genius of Adam in the days before words is most clearly revealed. Uncanny is not the word for it. If you were asked, visiting a zoo, to pick out an animal which should thereafter be called a mouse, would you, do you think, pick out a whale or a yak? I do not think so. A mouse is a mouse and a yak is a yak. And such sentences as these are not now lightly to be dismissed as mere tautologies. For in the lives of the geniuses of language they are as stirring as the shout "America" on October 12, 1492. I am not unaware that the mouse-like character of the word "mouse" is nothing so obvious as the moo character of the word "moo" or the cock-a-doodle-doo character of that word. But the subtlety of the mouse character of the word "mouse" should remind us of how difficult it is to deny that the word "mouse" has that character. This should make us more grateful for the blessing of the makers of words and more receptive to the view that words are images.

I can, with a certain stretch, imagine that there are some people who do not believe that there are natural names. They think, or at least so they say, that an eagle

might quite as appropriately have been called a "dachshund." They take no offense at all in being called by number when they go to prison. Now admittedly there is no demonstration of the view which has here been set forth, but the following may help them to see how, in case there are no natural names and so that Adam did not discover them, to see how noises do become images. Suppose that when Adam looked at the eagle and called its name eagle, this was nothing special. He might, so the new view goes, have said "oogle" and not "eagle," and this would have made no difference. In any case, preposterous as this now seems, let us suppose this. The noises which are made to serve as names are neutral, indifferent, like Locke's white paper. There is, however, this difference among noises. Some noises, like photographic plates, are sensitive, and some noises are, like china plates, not sensitive. And among sensitive noises, some are more sensitive than others. What now happens in naming? As we noticed earlier, the noise and the thing named, the eagle, for instance, are brought near together, and the shadow of the eagle falls on the noise. In the case of photographic plates, we are quite familiar with what happens. The plate is now a picture of that the shadow of which fell upon it. So, too, with the noise which is now a name, and this is why speaking of the name as a noise strikes us as quite wrong. So the noise which is not impervious, becomes a picture, and in being so, has a power, which it did not previously have. And now we can understand the difference between the noise "eagle" and the noise "oogle." The noise "eagle" has the sensitivity which the shadow of the eagle requires for making a good image. But the noise "oogle" could never take the image of an eagle unless the eagle, unhappily, had a bad eye. James writes of "terms with a more imaginative coloring," technicolor noises, and we are prepared now to understand this: As the water in the stream mirrors what it passes on the banks of the stream, so noises mirror, under especially defined exposures, the things they hang around.

So much for the conception of the word as image. Hume, you all remember, distinguished between the impression and the idea in terms of the liveliness and faintness of the whatever it is. So there are degrees of liveliness and faintness. And may not we then distinguish further between the word and the idea in terms of still further degrees of faintness? We might then have this order, proceeding from imperceptible whatever it is thro all degrees of faintness, scarcely make it out at all to "Oh, yes, I see," to vivacity Gracie herself. And in some case, the perception of the image which is a name may proceed as the fading out of the noise and the coming into clear view of the image -- much as we descry thro the haze in the distance the farmer standing high and erect upon his great load of hay. Hume does not seem to have said anything about the word as image, but this may be because, since the images he did consider were such good ones, he never did notice noises underneath.

Now let us return to the distinctions with which our discussion began -- the leaky pot and those pots which do not leak, the crocks and jugs in the museum. In order to understand these distinctions, we set out to elaborate the ideas of the word as name

and the word as image. We saw how, for instance, in the case of the name "Cleopatra," this involved both the noise and Cleopatra, the baby. Let us now ask: Is "Cleopatra" a good name? And the answer is: No. And this requires explanation. If you will recollect what a name is for and how it is to serve, this will at once be clear. A good name is an image of that which is named and is to be used as a substitute after the named, the baby Cleopatra, is named. The baby being absent, you make the noise and there she is. Now if the baby is named in the morning and you use the name in the afternoon, the image might serve. But suppose that the baby was sleeping in the morning, and now in the afternoon is chewing on her toes, what then? The image of the baby sleeping will surely not do for the baby in the afternoon. This is not all. "Cleopatra" is the name of a baby now. Soon that same name will be the name of a little girl, then of a big girl, and then of a young woman. In such a case, the name, the image, either remains as it was and so, in continuing to stand for what is named, makes a baby of little girl, big girl, and young woman. Or the noise "Cleopatra," still sensitive, gathers to itself a succession of images and is a blur, or like a palimpsest is image upon image, always one exposure behind skidding "Cleopatra." That "age cannot wither her" is, of course, favorable, but "nor custom stale her infinite variety" is fatal. Faithful image is impossible. No such name is proper.

So the account of names now outlined permits of a certain criticism of names. There are good names and there are bad names. "Names rightly given are the images and likenesses of the things which they name." But there are also names which are given "under the idea that all things are in motion and flux." Now, then, is "Cleopatra" a good name? Certainly not. "Cleopatra" is a bad name. Not that Cleopatra can have a good name. She is the sort of thing which can have nothing but a bad name. If only Cleopatra did not grow and did not change in any way, and if, too, she never moved, never even blinked, then she might cast an everlasting shadow and that would be her name. The idea of Cleopatra's casting a shadow is easy enough. The difficulty is her infinite variety and so, too many shadows. "Who is Sylvia?" Who is Cleopatra? Are there then no good names?

There are names such as "mop" and "beauty" and "horse" which are names as "Cleopatra" is a name, but what in each case is named is seemingly not like Cleopatra. We are now fairly clear about the name "Cleopatra" and of what naming in that case is like. We have also noticed something about the explanation of the word "catsup." We point to the catsup and say: That's catsup. But in doing so we are not giving the same sort of explanation that we do of the name "Cleopatra," when we say: "That's Cleopatra," pointing to Cleopatra. In explaining the word "catsup," I might have pointed to any bottle of catsup, and someone to whom I explained the word "catsup," tomorrow when I asked him to pass the catsup, might be bewildered. And why? Because the bottle of catsup which was on the table then had been replaced by another bottle. And if he now said: "Sorry, it isn't here," this would show that he had misunderstood the explanation. "Catsup" is the name of any catsup. Clearly there is some mistake, just as there would

be, if, on the other hand, I ask for Cleopatra, and some young man looked around and was about to pass me just any young woman. This would also show that he did not understand. "Cleopatra" is the name of this particular girl. But "catsup" is the name of catsup.

I asked: Are there any good names? Well, how about "catsup"? Remember now that in order for it to be a good name, the noise "catsup" must bear an image, and that image must be constant, and it must be in no way contaminated by the shadows that arise from your plate or that bottle. One consideration disposes me to say that it may be a good name. It is this. In the case of the name "Cleopatra," the image that falls on it falls from the baby in all sorts of poses, and yet the name is the name no matter what the pose. But the noise "catsup" is fraught with no such antics. Not only does no catsup toss and creep, but even if it did, the word is not the name of any this or that catsup. This then allows for the possibility of a loyal image, underived from any kitchen or table catsup, but from some essence most unearthly. I read the sentence: "Tell me whether there is or is not any absolute beauty or good or any other absolute existence," and was it not Parmenides who asked: "Or absolute catsup"? It is clear now, I think, that there may very well be.

Now then to return to my original question: Is Merton Street a pot that leaks? Of course, it is. Notice first these expressions which may help us to understand this curious language. We say that words convey meaning, carry, refer. There is the burden of what he said. What one says may be weighty or light. Sometimes words are packed with meaning, loaded with significance. These figures suggest little horses, but also sauce-pans and pots. Now if, pursuing this, we remember what has been said, we may see that the noise which is the word is a pot, and the image which makes it a name is what is carried in the pot. And now what would a pot be that leaks? Well, naturally, it is a noise the burden of which, the image, that is, runs. And if now the pot that leaks is regarded as a reflection of that whose shadow is cast upon it, then that too may, without being too precise, be described as the original leaky pot. And so it is, I take it, with little Cleopatra. But it is also the case with Merton Street, the flux in slow motion.

And now I should like, if there should be any children with us, to warn them that I have given no account of the famous doctrine of the Flux. I have done scarcely more than study one sentence which in a certain context is related to that doctrine. I have tried with my halting thinking finger to follow a certain thread. And now I have come to a loose end. And this is where I get off.

## John Locke Lectures

## Lecture 4

In the essay which I have already read, I tried to show that corresponding to the distinction between the conception of "names rightly given" and names not rightly given, such names as are given by the friends of the flux, there were the pots that do not leak and the pots that leak. I tried to explain this by pursuing one slender thread, namely the sentence: "Names rightly given are the likenesses and images of the things which are named." We noticed that, in the context in which these terms are employed, little baby Cleopatra and Merton Street might both be taken as illustrations of the pots that leak. In this lecture I propose to investigate a distinction much like that just now adverted to, back again, as in the case of the pots that leak, something or other is regarded as fluid, and something else in contrast to this is regarded as solid. But what is solid is, in part at least (surprisingly), what really is solid, Merton Street, for instance, high walls, and cobbles. But so is little Cleopatra, and so is water. There is, as you may expect, some difficulty about the conception of solid water, and since we have now dipped into the matter, (or at least skimmed the surface) we should perhaps distinguish between water taken internally, that is water within water, and water as in the phrase "body of water." This is water taken externally, bathing shores as in seas and washing banks as in rivers. Now, solid is contrasted with fluid. And what now is fluid? It is the soul or the self which is fluid. I should like to show in what I am now to read that this distinction between "the earth and the heavens and all that therein is" as solid, and the soul as fluid arises, as the previous distinction arose in the passage from Jowett, from certain difficulties; you know what kind. These difficulties by themselves do not lead to such a distinction. But when combined with a certain way of treating them, they do.

I am now going to introduce you to some of the language with which Bergson describes the self or consciousness. These are some of his phrases: "multiplicity without quantity" (nothing to count-like water); "duration as a quality" (twenty minutes or a day as just no time at all); "that which consciousness reaches immediately and which is probably what animals perceive"; "a duration whose heterogeneous moments permeate one another"; "a self in which succeeding each other means melting into one another"; "fluid inner states"; "confused, ever-changing, and inexpressible because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility." Perhaps these sentences will help: "Not all our ideas, however, are thus incorporated in the fluid mass of our conscious states. Many float on the surface like dead leaves on the surface of the pond"; "deeper strata of the self"; "digging below the surface we penetrate into the depths"; "suddenly emerging from the obscure depths"; "it is the deep-seated self, rushing up to the surface"; "in the depths of the self. . . a gradual heating and a sudden boiling over of feelings"; etc. If you study such phrases as these, you may get the impression of the



soul as like oil and water well mixed, viscous, iridescent, gently churned, deep; and down and down and down, in commotion, boiling. I have no intention of denying that this is just how it is with the soul. Isn't a psychoanalyst like one who dives under the surface of a sea between lily-pads and lotus and swims about in a tropical pool below, among very strange fishes? My interest lies in trying to follow Bergson's discovery of this pool.

Bergson, himself, gives warning that this is by no means easy. It's nothing like falling off a log in the pool. "We reach the former (this deep self) by deep introspection." "We perceive this self, whenever by a strenuous effort of reflection"; "the moments of real duration, perceived by an attentive consciousness." "It becomes, indeed, more and more difficult as we penetrate further into the depths of consciousness"; "deep"; "strenuous"; "attentive"; "more and more difficult." For the present I have scarcely any hopes of attaining, after a strenuous and difficult submersion, to this consummation. I am scarcely any introspectator at all. But I may be of some help to others. And how? Well, my understanding is that tho each one of us lives at least on the surface of such a pool and each of us is fluid underneath, yet by habit, by some tendency toward lumpiness, we see, perceive, almost all that we see as coagulated. Hence, before we can even attempt the severe penetration which is required, this lumpiness and our inclination towards it must be exposed. I said "even attempt," for I would not have you deceived by any expectation that once this is exposed, all the rest is easy. If you have ever been a drunkard for very long, you must certainly know that the knowledge that you have a tendency is not all that is required for your seeing clearly the flux in the tankard for what it really is. As I suggested earlier, the tendency toward lumpiness is connected with what we do with language, and this is why the horse and the mouse have no such problems as I am now confronted with. There are no John Locke lectures in stables.

What I now propose to discuss is contained in a book by Bergson, entitled Time and Free Will, and in this book, he tries not so much to define or even to argue that the will is free. He tries rather to show that people who deny that the will is free, think of the soul as like a string of cars, pulling and bumping one another in a long procession. He is accordingly, intent upon disabusing people of this conception. It's as tho he said: Now, if you will think of the soul as like a spring with a pool gathered and lying over the source, and if you look you will see it bubbling there, then you will cease to think of yourself as moment by moment being jerked and bumped by the one just passed and the next one coming, bumpety, coming along. And now, he goes on to show you that this is just how it is. This is, at any rate, how it strikes me. In doing this, Bergson seizes upon some nice problems.

Consider the following passage:

It is usually admitted that states of consciousness, sensations, feelings, passions, efforts, are capable of growth and diminution: we are even told that a sensation can be twice, thrice, four times as intense as another sensation of the same kind. This latter thesis, which is maintained by

psycho-physicists, we shall examine later; but even the opponents of psycho-physicists do not see any harm in speaking of one sensation as being more intense than another, of one effort as being greater than another, and in thus setting up differences of quantity between purely external states. Common sense, moreover, does not have the slightest hesitation in giving its verdict on the point; people say they are more or less warm; or more or less sad, and this distinction of more or less, even when it is carried over to the region of subjective facts and unextended objects, surprises nobody. But this obscures a very obscure point and a much more important problem than is usually supposed.

What now is the obscure point and important problem? The problem is defined in terms of such sentences as: "I am warmer than I was," "I am sadder than I was," "I am more confident than I was," "This sensation is brighter than that," etc. The problem arises out of the contrast with such sentences as: four is greater than two ( $4 > 2$ ); this box is larger than that; the house is higher than the wall; the giraffe is the tallest animal. And what now is the problem? Bergson says: "Look! When you say that four is greater than two, you mean that four contains two. You can put two into four, and that space is greater which contains the other. And so with the boxes. If you hold one box over another box and let go, then, bang! If it falls into the other box, the other box is larger." Naturally, Bergson won't object to your using a measuring stick. Even, then, you will be putting some inches into another's foot. This is super-imposing. Isn't it tho? Very. We need not in any case be concerned with Bergson's use of the word "contained." Four is like a box and two is like another. Strangely, talking about number in this way does not bother Bergson. Our concern, however, is with the distinction in the use of expressions such as "greater than," "more," "less," "increase," "diminution," etc., a distinction which Bergson was sharp to see. And now what about: I am not as tired as I was; this looks lighter than that? Well, with some spirit, Bergson asks: "And do you think that you can put one tired in another: Does the one red contain the other red and can you show it there?" Bergson's words are: "It is only to evade the difficulty to distinguish as is usually done between two species of quantity, the first extensive and measureable and the second inextensive and not admitting of measure, but, of which it can nevertheless be said that it is greater than another intensity. For it is recognized thereby that there is something common to these two forms of magnitude, since they are both termed magnitudes, and declared to be equally capable of increase and diminution. But from the point of magnitude, what can there be in common between the extensive and the intensive? Indeed! The extended and the unextended. If in the first case, we call that which contains the other, the greater quantity, why go on speaking of quantity and magnitude, where there is no longer container or contained?"

Well, there you are. You see what the problem is. All these years, since you were tiny yourself and thought your brother big, you have been acquainted with boxes and numbers and shoes and coats, big ones, little ones, some too big. And when people

asked you: "How big?" you told them, quicker than a yard-stick. "The box holds sixteen sardines, my shoes are too big for me, my shirt is from head to tail, ten hands smaller than a horse." So you've known for a long time: big, little, too big, etc. And now someday you discover that you have also come to talk about your toothache, and your "How are you feeling today?" as tho there were a kind of "muchness" about those. My toothache is worse, much worse. And how am I feeling?" Much better. And so with your feeling sadder, warmer, more discouraged. There are all kinds of a muchness, as Alice learned from the dormouse. Now, then, what have boxes and numbers and shoes and coats in common with aches and sads and warms and treads? In inches, ounces, ergs we know? But show me one inerg of tired. We know how to set up two books together to see which is the larger, but how do you set up two toothaches to measure the height of them? You cannot? Then, clearly, you have been talking about two toothaches as tho they were like two books. And you have talked about a pain as tho it were a box. You might as well talk about a pain as something you put your shoes in. Bergson sees that there is something strange about this, but something also terribly wrong.

It must not be supposed that what has troubled Bergson in this instance is a matter which has long since been tucked away to rest. In Oxford, too, something like boxes and pains tumbling about together in sentences have flurried dons. I had occasion, not many discussions ago, to meet it fresh out of an arguer's mouth, under wrinkled brows, in the company of fellow-wrinklers. The question was proposed by a certain, Mr. John Doe, dear to the bar, by the name of Hart. And the question ran something like this: Last year I spent my holidays in France. The year before I spent my holidays at Brighton. I enjoyed them both very much, and while I was enjoying them, I never thought of comparing them in the matter of enjoyment. But when I returned home someone asked me how I had enjoyed myself, and I said at once that I had enjoyed my holidays in France even more than I did my holidays in Brighton. And now the question: How did I know that? Again there are as in Bergson's case two of the same kind -- enjoyments in this case -- and one is more than the other. I think that what bothered Bergson was what also puzzled Mr. Hart and the rest of us.

There were other sentences such as: Mr. X was angrier than Mr. XX (Mr. Y had left town to buy a bicycle). This seemed easier to explain. There were red faces to compare. Mr. X's face was redder than Mr. XX's face. There was stomping out of the room, length of strides, relative slam, slim slam or grand slam of the door, clench of fists, number, velocity and volume of curses, etc. Novelty counted far less; sputtering counted for more. At any rate, if in this case one asked: How did you know? one might answer: By the pitching of the voice, by the smiting of the crockery, by the texture of the missile -- paper, tomato, cabbage, rocks, iron weights. How long was his face red, three weeks? was asked by someone. By the Grace of St. John's it was. I do not know what Bergson would have said about this. I think, however, that his concern was with respect to sentences in the first person, such as: I was angrier then than I was before. And his

question then was: By how many calories? or choleries? There were some other sentences such as: "The grass looks greener now after the rain." "My toothache is worse." "My hands are getting warm." Curiously, perhaps, these were not considered troublesome. But if someone said: "The grass looks greener now than it did last spring," that would startle the wrinklers again. How does he know that? Well, perhaps, he looks out of the window with two eyes and sees this spring's grass; and with his third eye, mind's eye, he sees the grass of last spring. Now he can compare and see that the grass looks greener this spring than it looks now last spring. Difficulties arose over third eye vision.

I have introduced this report, non-verbatim report, in order to show you that what bothered Bergson still bothers people in 1951. All these comparatives, more, less, angrier, looks greener, getting warmer, etc., immediately suggest the use of such expressions in the company of stoves, numbers, boxes, and accordingly lead to the attempt to conjure up the missing enjoyment or the missing anger, the looks green of last spring, in order to compare them as we may with stones and numbers and boxes. Bergson says in effect: If you use the words "more" and "less" you must mean more and less, and if you mean "more" and "less," then you should be able to say how much more, how much less. A word is a word and its meaning is its meaning. These words used in different contexts must have something in common. And this is what Bergson is looking for. Let Mr. Hart show how many hedons of enjoyment he joyed in France and how many he joyed in Brighton, and let him then do his arithmetic; much as he might show us how many jiggers there are in a bottle and more than in another bottle. And if he cannot, why, then, let him joy his pleasures dumb. And what, by the way, was Bentham doing but complying with what Bergson requires? Forty pin-pricks in a headache; three headaches in a stubbed toe.

I have labored this point because it is relatively simple and exemplified certain aspects of Bergson's criticism of the language of psychical states. For Bergson objects not only to such words as "more" and "less" in the description of sensations, emotions, etc. He objects to all words and all description. We can, I think, see how this pattern of criticism might be continued in respect to other forms of expression. For is not the language of psychical states patterned after the language of stoves and shoulders and hearts and mice? There are warm feelings, hot words, cold shoulders, chicken hearts, mousy fear. And so we try to represent the soul, borrowing unseemly and impossible images from the kitchen, from the theatre, from the physiologist's notebook, from the scurrying mouse. I had occasion not long ago to notice how we prevail with water to talk about emotions. "Emotions well up. Children and young girls bubble over. There are springs of emotion. A sad person is a deep well. Emotions come in waves; they are like the tides; they ebb and flow. There are floods and 'seas of passions.' Some people gush; some are turbulent. Anger boils. A man blows up like a boiler. They even hiss like steam. Sorrow overwhelms. The dear girl froze." Wells, bubbles, springs, waves, tides, seas -- surely, this is "the incursion of space into the domain of consciousness."

Joy in a bucket; sadness in a flask! Notice the following phrases: Lily-livered, spicy story, tall tale, little minds, big ideas, blistering remarks, sunny disposition, frame of mind, barbed words, anger burning, love turning, a melting look, crest-fallen, grasping meaning, high spirits, mush, hard as nails, the fires of repentance, soft pity, kindled wrath, bitter words, sweet girl, my sugar. In the use of these phrases, as in the cases cited earlier, we use the furniture of the pluckable, kickable world to represent the unrepresentable. So far I have cited only such language as is plainly metaphorical. I do not mean in this case that the use is plainly metaphorical. But this is not the limit of what I take Bergson's criticism to be. To use any language whatsoever in respect to the psychical is to distort the view of the psychical. For language is designed to fit lilies and livers and spices and trees, the spic and span, the neat and natty epistemological object. To use a noun such as fear or pain is like pinning labels on the water in the brook. "I will show you fear in a handful of dust." The dust I see, but where is the fear?

This criticism of the language of psychical states I have outlined in order to see how, by means of it, we may understand how something like the doctrine of the flux emerges from it. But in order that we may appreciate this in the more inclusive perspective of his view, I must try first to represent that.

The second verse of the first chapter of Genesis is as follows, "And the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." "The earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." This picture is, of course, indistinct. In some other descriptions of the origin of all things, it is said that in the beginning was "primordial ooze," and out of primordial ooze, warm and wet and dark, maggoty ooze, all things flickered, light and the firmament and earth and sea; and out of primordial ooze, too, all living things swam and flew and crept and walked. Milton helps us to see great beasts, one minute a hill of elephant mud, slowly and laboriously emerge, sticky, caked, unscrubbed.

, now half appeared  
 the tawny Lyon, pawing to get free  
 His hinder parts, then springs as broke from Bonds,  
 And rampant shakes his brindled mane:  
 ("Sticky-caked-unscrubbed" isn't in Milton and isn't in Genesis: That goes with the  
 ooze.)

Now Bergson's view is, I think, not much different from this. There is something very much like primordial ooze; the waste, the void, the darkness, "the confused, ever-changing, and inexpressible," the immediate data of consciousness, the original, the one and only stuff out of which to make a world. Ask for the best. Take no substitutes. But primordial ooze is not asleep. It has a tendency, a tendency to lumpiness, to coagulation. And so out of the original viscosity, there do arise, as in the other case, "all things both great and small. Primordial ooze, it made them all." And how does it do

this? Primordial ooze jellies, hardens, solidifies. And so we get the too, too, solid world. And what is primordial ooze up to? This is, I suppose, a mystery. "The meaning of the world is not in the world" nor in the ooze either. This solidification Bergson refers to as the refraction and breaking to pieces of the self. Perhaps this sentence will interest you: "As the self thus refracted and thereby broken to pieces is much better adapted to the requirements of social life in general and language in particular, consciousness prefers it and gradually loses sight of the fundamental self." The all-broken-up self loves company and lectures. In any case we have these distinctions. The solid world and all its furniture, chunks of ooze, caked, snapped off, riding the surface of the sea, and, of course, the sea, the sea of consciousness.

We are now prepared to reflect upon the consequences of Bergson's criticism of the language of psychical states. The consequence of that criticism is a discovery, the discovery of the equivalent of that primeval ooze which I have just now pointed out to you. That must be an exciting day in the households of such discoveries, when Mr. Columbus hurries down the stairs, bursts into the midst of his wife's tea party and announces that he has seen it. And when, in consternation and always so understanding, she asks: "What? What did you see?" Imagine him in his triumph, replying: "It, them...," speechless, then, his mouth half open, agitated, busy with the unsayable. For this is certainly the predicament of those who have the uneasy fortune to be such discoverers. In Bergson's words: "There is no common measure between mind and language"; "the confused, the ever-changing, the inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it." Tweezers!

How now is the discovery made? This is how it strikes me. When Bergson protests, as we have seen, against the language of psychical states, urging that this language is patterned after the language of all sorts of things, things, and that since sensations and emotions are not things at all, this language will not do at all -- this, I say, does not involve that when Bergson has a toothache he cannot distinguish that it is worse than it was or that, when he adds another lump of sugar to his tea, it now tastes sweeter than it did. His strictures upon the language, however, do have this consequence. "The tongue," writes St. James, "is a little member" and again: "But the tongue can no man tame." But by virtue of the stricture upon the language -- "Musn't say: My toothache is worse" -- Bergson has now tied his active tongue, has tamed it a little. This now makes it appear that he is prepared to appreciate his toothache in ways in which other men are not. For when other men, unwittingly, naive, still go on saying such things as: "My toothache is worse than it was," he knows that they have quite queer toothaches or, at any rate, queer cubic conceptions of what a toothache is. He, however, has seen the toothache naked, no longer prim in the clothes of 1-2-3. At some expense, of course. For by extradition of the only language there is for talking about toothaches, he has made the toothache unspeakable. It is not to be mentioned. The phrase "the confused, the ever-changing, the inexpressible" is the phrase of desperation. The difference between his having a toothache and not saying: "It is worse

now," and someone else's having a toothache and saying quite naturally: "It is worse now," strikes Bergson as a sign that he has discovered something about toothaches which other men have not seen. This is, of course, illusory. The toothache is unspeakable not because of some now newly discovered fact about toothaches, but rather because Bergson has screwed up the language, made it a bit screwy.

I have tried in this essay to discover whether there was some correspondence, some similarity in the settings of the leaky pot and of that sea on whose surface we bob. In respect to the first, we noticed the conception of "the name rightly given." In the latter, we have now noticed how the language of inches and boxes, and things generally, leads in the same way to a no -- no to the language of psychical states. And should anyone now seek rather to escape the discovery of the flux, hiding himself as it were from what by strenuous effort he may see, what are we to tell him? Tell him that words, like chameleons, have their environments, and like the chameleon they change color; and words are like Proteus, too, fitting into quite different designs, changing their shapes. The words "more" and "less" may be pink in one context and green in another; shaped like dice in one context and like a fog in another. And we shall warn him -- with apologies to Professor Ryle -- watch your concept of mind -- how and what you do wordily.

The paralyzing effect of language upon water.

John Locke Lectures  
Lecture 5

In lectures which I have previously read, the immediate subject has been some version or other of the flux. I have tried to understand a certain aspect of the doctrine of the flux in Plato, and certain similar ideas in Bergson and James. In each case I tried to identify the source of the doctrine of the flux with a certain criticism either of language generally or of some quite restricted part of the language. In Plato this criticism, it was alleged, is guided by the conception of an ideal language, "names rightly given"; in Bergson and James it is guided by the language of out of doors. The consequence of this criticism is to make it appear either that the whole or a part of our language is quite tipsy. But the further consequence is the substitution for the rejected language of specimens of a language which is unmistakably woozy. The doctrine of the flux is, accordingly further identified with such sentences and phrases as these which follow: "All things flow"; "No man ever steps into the same river twice"; "Multiplicity without quantity"; "heterogenous moments permeating one another"; "confused, ever-changing, and inexpressible"; and in James: "the river of elementary feeling"; "an undistinguishable swarming continuum"; "primordial chaos of sensations"; etc. These sentences and phrases are all regarded by those who use them as the news of some newly discovered bubbledom. I have no intension of denying that in Bergson and James these doctrines were useful in resistance to certain other mistakes. I think that they were useful.

The flux in these cases mentioned is easily identified, the flowing, the inexpressible, the chaos, the river. I want now to consider certain things which some people say which are not so clearly identifiable with the flux. The language in this instance suggests neither river nor chaos. It does not bear the label of the flux. It is, as a matter of fact, mischievously child-like. There are no such sesquipedalians or sesquipedalians-minus-ones, such as Bergson's "heterogenous moments," nor are there any of these allowing picture postcards one finds in James: "the primordial chaos of sensations." Everything is so simple; it's such a little word language. What then do those people say? Why, a man looks and he says, "I see a patch." His friend asks, "What patch?" and the answer is: "I see a canoid patch of brown. What do you see?" The answer is: "I see a patch." "What kind?" And the answer is: "I see a feloid patch of grey." After a pause the conversation goes on again: "What do you see?" "I see a stipple." "A stipple? Where?" "I see a stipple just rising out of a patch of church." Now is not this charming? How innocent! Little children with their crayons and drawing paper!

I want, of course, to explain how and under what circumstances people come to use such language, for as you may have guessed, I am not going to discuss children playing with their crayons and paper. Imagine, then a man, looking steadfastly at a bit of fruit, the fruit, glossy, fleshy, of a solanaceous plant, also called a "love-apple." He looks, as I said, intently, and then he says: "Ah, another speculum." His friend, bosom



friend, friend of long understanding, looks at the love-apple. Then looks at his friend. "What was that? What did you say?" I said: "Ah, another speculum." Naturally, his friend is puzzled, just as you might be. "Speculum! Now what does he mean by that?" Again he studies the love-apple. "Speculum, is that another word for love-apple? or the name of a species of love-apple, like Beef-steak or Ruby? Is this a speculum love-apple?" The man smiles and says: "No, no that isn't it." He blinks several times; his eyes fall upon the love-apple. Then he says: "More speculums -- specula -- just as you please." Then he turns the love-apple round about thirty-minutes by the clock-face, a thirty-minute turn, that is, and says: "There you are. Quite a different speculum!" His friend is still confused, does not understand. "Flu speculums! A quite different speculum!" He picks up the love-apple and taking his fruit knife out of his pocket, he asks: "Would you mind?" Then he cuts off a very thin slice from the side upon which the speculum eyes were first fixed, and then from the side upon which they were fixed after the thirty-minute turn of the love-apple. "There," he says, "have a speculum. I hope it tastes good. I'll eat this one." The man chuckles, eats his slice of the love-apple and says: "No, you don't understand at all." His friend says: "Come, come, show me a speculum, just one conclusive unmistakable speculum. I'd like to understand this." And the man says: "A speculum cannot be shown. A speculum shows itself. But I cannot pry it loose, or lift it out and set it up for you to see. It's not like that at all." His friend is, I suspect, rather stupid. He says: "Well, I don't understand this, and I don't understand either why you cannot help me."

The man is quite concerned and promises that he will try to explain. "But," he says, "I must tell you a little first about not understanding and about explanation." And then he goes on: "The account of the building of the Tower of Babel relays the following passage: "Come, let us go down, and then confound their language, that they may not understand one another." When I was a boy I had a teacher who explained this in some such way as this. Imagine: A man, a worker, that is, on the tenth floor. He orders his fellow workman, his helper, to go down to the fifth floor and to bring him a hammer. His helper leaves and in thirty-minutes returns. Then saying: "Here it is," he hands him a sickle. Then there is a quarrel and shouting, and they don't understand each other's shouting. Finally, they end their quarrel, arguing, as they think, about democracy, but talking about quite different things. Of course, they quit their work. They laid no linoleum. On the next floor a worker asks his helper to go down, Moses, and bring me a hand-saw. And down goes and up comes his helper bringing not a hand-saw, but a hawk. Naturally, the workman is furious: "How do you expect me to cut off this piece of board with a bunch of feathers?" They quarrel. They saw no saw-dust that day nor sawed any boards, anymore, that day. Now this illustrates one kind of not understanding one another. The same words – "hammer," "sickle," "handsaw," "hawk," – occur in different languages, in such a way, that if someone speaking one of the languages calls "hammer," another who speaks the other language reaches for a sickle, and if one calls "handsaw," another flies out the window and returns with a hawk. In

such a case as this, however, one can see how in a year's time two people working together might easily come to understand one another. "Oh, now I see, when I said 'hammer,' you thought I meant bring me this." And he held the sickle in his hand. "I'm so sorry. I'll never throw a brick at you again." And the other man says: "Duck! Duck! I thought that was a powder-puff." They are still horribly confused, but you can see how, when their tempers have cooled, they will teach one another. Of course, in a project as extensive as that of the building of the tower, where thousands of workmen are shouting orders, and where each has his own language, learning all is quite hopeless. "Most of us have difficulty learning as few as twenty languages." He smiled at this; perhaps he was spoofing. He was, however, something of a linguist, so I scarcely know.

"Now," he went on, "the situation at the tower was relatively simple. It is easy to see both how they did not understand one another and also how they might have learned. The language in this situation has an environment which is the same both for learners and teachers, and so much of what is required for easy explanation is lying about in full view for anyone to see. "Here's a brick, here's a saw, here's a hammer? There, that's a hammer, sickle? There, there, up on that flag, that's a sickle." And so on. And now this is altogether different from the situation in which I was when I was talking a little while ago noticing the speculum. It's quite true that I kept my eye fixed on the love-fruit and that there are speculi in connection with looking at the love-fruit. And yet, I can show you the love-fruit as they could show each other hammers; I cannot show you a speculum. And that means, of course, that if you are to understand me, and I'm to help, we'll have to do something different. You know, of course, how we do that. We do it with definitions. You know definitions, of course. "And yet, I must caution you. Definition in this case is extremely difficult."

This seemed to me awfully decent, so cautious, so eager to prepare, so thorough. "In any case," he went on, "I think, I should explain briefly, how a definition works. If a number of people are standing at some distance from an aviary with a large number of birds in it, and one of them exclaims: "See it now? See it?" You who has just come may look too. You look, but can't imagine what they are looking at. You ask: "What do you see? What are you looking at?" And someone answers: "There's a speculum paradisium in there." "And what's that?" "What! You don't know what a speculum paradisium is! It's that blue bird there with the twinkles in its tail. Just like diamonds. There, he just flew across the aviary." Then you look and you see it too. The man gave you a few words; they guide your eyes. He gave you a definition: "A speculum paradisium is a blue bird with twinkles in its tail." It helps. Now this is something like what I should like to give you so that you can identify the speculums."

Then he was suddenly quiet. He was thinking. "You know," he said, "what I am trying to do for you is terribly difficult. And I shouldn't like you to be deceived by the definition I just gave you of the paradisium. That I might lead you to suppose that the definition I am going to try to give is easy too. As a matter of fact, several very brave men, friends of mine, have tried to do what I'm trying now to do and rolled straight

down the side of a mountain. I'm going to tell you a bit about how their attempts failed. But before that I must tell you that *speculum* is not the key word. The key word is *sense-datum*. *Speculum* is just one type of *sense-datum*, along with auditory, olfactory, tangitum, etceterarum, etc." These friends of mine were busy about the word "*sense-datum*." And we must notice what they said so that we don't fall down the side of a mountain too.

Well, this first friend of mine said: "A *sense-datum* is an object of acquaintance." Then he got up from his chair and said: "Just a minute. I've got something here in a box." And he read this passage: "In the ordinary way we talk of being acquainted with persons or places or even with facts, but this does not give us a sufficient indication of what it is to be acquainted with a *sense-datum*. When, someone tells me that he is glad to make my acquaintance, no doubt, he is also making the acquaintance of *sense-data*, in some sense, but the sense in which he is supposed to be acquainted with them is not the same as that in which he is acquainted with me. But in what sense, then is he acquainted with them? Some technical sense, presumably. But if so, it needs to be explained; and until it has been explained the *sense-data* has not been satisfactorily defined.

This seemed to me admirable. The man clearly had his eye on the word "acquaintance," and noticed something peculiar about this. I could almost overhear the man thinking. "Object of acquaintance? Acquaintance? Cousins, I know, and friends, pals, chums, girlfriends, enemies, old flames, and, of course, acquaintances, casual, slight, special, chance. And *sense-datum* an acquaintance, slight, casual, chance? No, that won't do. He's an old acquaintance of mine. We used to play in the same sandbox. And here's an old *sense-datum* of mine? We used to go to school together? No, that's not right either. Object of acquaintance? Do you know Dublin? Do you know pains? This is different. Surely I'm acquainted with Dublin, but Dublin is not acquainted with me. McConnell Bridge, Waml Street, Grafton, Howth Hill, the Coombe, -- yes, I know Dublin. And St. Stephen's Green. And are you acquainted with the *sense-datum*? Not a bit like a city. And are you acquainted with the facts in the Phoenix murder case? Oh, yes, I'm Irish, you know, or something or other. My grandfather used to run a pub not far from the park and the patriots used to drink from his mugs and gab in his fire about the good and the beautiful and those murders. Besides, I've read a book about the case. Yes, I'm acquainted with the facts." And are you acquainted with *sense-data*? Acquainted with what? What's that? At the cocktail party Mrs. Hubbub asks: "Are you acquainted with Mr. Such-and-so?" "No, I haven't met him." Then she says: "Well, you must meet him." And she introduces Mr. Such-and-so. They go through the ceremony, say the words, shake the hands. They are now acquainted. Have you ever shaken hands with a *sense-datum*? Trying to pick up an affinity for the word "acquaintance." No luck.

There is one thing here, however, that puzzles me. In the passage which he read, after having failed to ring any bell with the word acquaintance, does he then surrender the word, give it up! No such thing. "When someone tells me that he is glad to make

my acquaintance, no doubt he is also making the acquaintance of sense-data, in some sense." When someone gives me a check that no bank will cash, no doubt he is still giving me money, in some sense. Bogus money, "No doubt" and "in some sense." There might be an occasion for some sentence as this: "When someone tells me that he is glad to make my acquaintance, no doubt he is also making the acquaintance of my face." But now the "in some sense" is not required. Why is the man so tender of the word "acquaintance"? Never mind that, however. What interested me was the way in which he tried to make the word "acquaintance" ring. That he said: "It rings, in some sense, when it only gave a thud," we can forget.

"So you see," he went on, "What we must be careful of." And now I'll show you what another friend of mine said. "Listen," he said, and he began again reading from the book. "He (my friend that is) says that when I look at a physical object, for instance, a tomato, there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is not a reflection on a cleverly painted piece of wax, or even a complete hallucination. But, he goes on to agree, there remains something that I cannot doubt. I cannot doubt that there exists a red patch of a round and bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other color patches, and having a certain visual depth and that the whole field of color is directly present to my consciousness. And it is this object, whose existence I cannot doubt, that he proposes to call a sense-datum."

Then he looked up from his book, "Now that sounds pretty good, doesn't it?" I think it does too. But did you notice: "I cannot doubt that there exists," and he stressed the word "exists," "exists a red patch." And he squinted with his left eye, peering expectantly at his friend, "That won't do, you know. I'll tell you why. 'Exists' in 'there exists a red patch' isn't at all like 'exists' in 'There exists in the heart of Africa a tree that seven men can't ring round.' This latter 'exists' won't help you at all to understand: 'There exists a red patch.' Hence, people that are used to talking about trees in the heart of Africa and other such things, will only be misled by talking about a red patch that exists. For, in this instance, they may, trying the experiment, look at a tomato and expect to see a red rag descending, or a tomato in tiny yellow pants with a tinier patch of red and bulgy shape. We must be very careful to avoid these misunderstandings." Then he added, "Accordingly one has to go on to explain that the sense of 'exist' in which it is meaningless to say 'I doubt if this patch exists' is the special sense that is appropriate to 'sense-data,' and, of course, not to trees in Africa. If you do this you will avoid all misunderstandings, and, as a matter of fact, you will avoid just about everything." This latter he spoke under his breath so that his friend could scarcely hear.

This again struck me as admirable. This was, I thought, the right way to try to ring a little change out of a suspected word. It was the sort of thing he had done earlier with the word "acquaintance." I thought: "Now, there is a man who knows a flirting word, a word that doesn't mean a thing. He will be careful." Nevertheless, I still remembered his extraordinary kindness towards the word "acquaintance," and now there seemed to me a like tenderness, coyness, in respect to the word "exists." For every flirt, I thought, there

is some dalliance. And some people, too, keep for years their no-good checks. Hope! And I tried to keep in mind the lesson of these criticisms of his. A vocabulary may be quaggy so that if you put your understanding foot down, you sink. In some cases one must test the words much as one tests the tufts in a swamp with a pushing foot, with a feather-foot, (Bird) bird-lightly.

The conversation went on. "I'm sorry," he said, "that these preliminaries have taken so much time. They must be very trying when someone is waiting in suspense to get one's first glimpse of a speculum or sense-datum. But now, I think, we are ready for the unveiling." "Listen to this," and he picked up his book again. And this is what he read: "Suppose that I'm having an experience which it would be natural for me to describe by saying that I was holding a match-box in my hand and looking at it." Then he looked up from his book to say that the man who wrote this happened to be looking at a match-box, just as his other friend had been looking at a tomato, and as he himself had been looking at a face of the love-fruit. That, he said, made no difference. He went on reading: "In that case, assuming the experience to be veridical, there is a familiar sense of the words "see" and "touch" in which what I am now seeing and touching is simply this match-box." At this point he took up a match-box from his table, looked at it, and moved his finger lightly, touchingly, over it. "There you are," he said, "seeing and touching this match-box." Then he began reading again. "And there is also a familiar sense of the word "see" and "touch" in which what I am now seeing and touching is not the whole match-box, but only a part of its surface."

At this point, his friend looked troubled. "Just a moment," he said, "I'd like to review this." Someone holds up a match-box and says: "See this match-box?" and I say: "Yes. I see it." I suppose he calls my attention to it because he wants to tell me something about it. There might be some situations in which one might even say: "I see this match-box." Ordinarily certainly one never would. But, I can imagine someone who has been blind for a year or a season, who with returning sight, might go about exclaiming: "I see! I see! I see this match-box, I see the flowers! I see the sky." I suppose that now one might say that these were special uses. The first "Yes, I see it" is obviously spoken in a mood of expectancy and one might expect someone to go on: "Go ahead, yes. What about it?" And then would come some story about the match-box. In the second case, there is obviously nothing of the sort. One who, when he heard the newly seeing blind man exclaim: "I see! I see! I see this match-box! I see the flowers!" responded with: "Yes! Yes! Go ahead, what about the match-box?" would obviously not have understood at all. The man's likely response would be: "Wonderful! Wonderful! Oh that's good". I can't make out whether the author of what you read is thinking of these sorts of sentences or not. There is another use which one might consider. The optician, examining certain eyes, might step back from his patient with a tiny match-box and, holding it up, ask: "Do you see this match-box?" The patient responds: "Yes, I see it." He might even respond with: "I see this match-box" if he were asked to pick out from among small objects on a table, things which he could see. Once

more in such a case, the optician who would then say: "Well, go ahead. What of it?" would certainly have lost his optician's mind. I simply do not follow this talking in a Leyden jar about a sentence like this. A sentence has many more lives than a cat, and they may even run concurrently. The sentence treated in this other way is rather Cheshire, a fade out.

But this isn't all that troubles me, nor what troubles me most. The last part of what you read was this: "And there is also a familiar sense of the words 'see' and 'touch' in which what I am now seeing is not the whole match-box, but only part of its surface." We now have four sentences: "I see the match-box," "I see this match-box," "I see the whole match-box," and "I see part of the surface of the match-box."

Now this is ostensibly important for the explanation, because the author is interested in saying that the first two sentences involve a "familiar sense of the word 'see' and now either the latter two sentences or only the last involves another familiar sense of the word 'see'." I am supposing that he is eager to make this point about these two familiar uses in order to prepare us for still another, but, as I suppose, unfamiliar use of the word "see." If, however, this is how one is to be better prepared, I rather fear that I will flunk the test. For, listen! What is meant by: "I see the whole match-box?" I can imagine someone's saying, and you might meet this in one of Plato's humorous dialogues: "You never can see the whole match-box." Some cunning Euthydemus might hold a match-box in his closed hand with the end of it just peeping out. "Do you see the match-box?" Socrates would answer: "Yes, I can just see it there peeping out of your hand." "The whole of the match-box?" and Socrates would say: "No, just the part there under your thumb." And then? Then Euthydemus would open his hand and with the match-box lying in his palm, he would once more ask Socrates: "See the match-box" and Socrates would say: "Yes I see the match-box." "The whole match-box?" And Socrates would reply: "Why, yes. You're not covering it up any more with your hand." And this is the admission they have been working for. For now they can make fun of Socrates. They call him Argos-Socrates. They say: "Socrates says that he can see the whole match-box. So Socrates has more eyes than other people. He has eyes that look from six directions upon the six sides of the match-box and has several eyes inside the match-box. For certainly Socrates cannot see the whole match-box without also seeing the inside of the match-box. Ha! Ha!" Now, I am not saying that the author you were quoting means by "seeing the whole match-box" any such thing, but if he did mean this then I could understand how he would come to distinguish between "seeing" in "seeing the whole match-box" and in "seeing the match-box" or again in "seeing a part of the surface of the match-box." For I can imagine at least that an eight-eyed octopus, with an eye at the end of each extremity might see only by way of some elaborate coordination of the positions of its arms. The octopus' seeing the match-box might then involve something like getting one's fingers properly placed on the keys to play the piano. Nothing like this is involved in what you mean by "seeing a match-box."

Let us now suppose that this is not at all what he means. Imagine rather that all that is intended is the distinction between the two cases cited in the questions of Euthydemus. Euthydemus holds the match-box in his hand, covering it except for the end peeping out under his thumb. "Do you see it?" "Yes." Then he opens it, and it lies in view of his palm. "Do you see it?" "Yes." Well, then, here you have two uses, familiar uses, of the word "see." If this is correct then, I suppose, that one could multiply distinctions in the use of the word "see" by covering the match-box with fingers and removing one finger at a time. It must be that I don't understand this. I can imagine someone's saying: "No, you've missed the one possibility. Seeing the whole match-box involves your turning it over in your hand so that your eye falls upon each surface of the match-box, and taking the match-box apart so that you can see both the inside and the outside. That is how you see the whole match-box." Now, if in the same case, one said that the sentence: "I see the whole match-box" doesn't mean what the sentence "I see the match-box" means when the match-box lies quiet in Euthydemus' hand, I should understand that. But what is said is that we have here two familiar senses of the word "see" and that is quite a different matter. I don't get it.

I'm sorry I have found this so difficult. You warned me, however, that it would be difficult and so, I take it, that neither of us is surprised. You told me that we were engaged in something quite unlike the definition of the *speculum paradisi*, and I am convinced that you are right. Don't give up, however. It may be that what troubles me now may not keep me from soon seeing the *speculum* in the love-apple or the *sense-datum* in the match-box. *Sense-datum* in the match-box? What am I saying?

## John Locke Lectures

## Lecture 6

I began last week, you will remember, a discussion of the language of sense-data. I remarked upon the extreme simplicity of some of that language, reminiscent of childhood games such as "Hide the thimble" and "I spy." This simplicity, however, I further remarked, was deceptive. Nothing so easily recognizable as thimbles and collar-buttons and looking and perhaps finding them under the dresser was involved. This comes out, of course, not at all then in that part of the language to which I referred, but is seen in the curious and mystifying circumstance in which it is used. If a boy today climbs a wall and does some damage to his clothes and tomorrow, when he comes to school, is greeted with cries of: "I see a red patch," no explanation of this is required. But as we saw, if a man looks steadily at a love-apple and then quite earnestly says: "I see a red patch," some explanation of this is obviously required. We were, accordingly, busy, groping, trying to find our way thro several explanations. But if the love-apple itself opened no way, neither did these preliminary explanations. The word "acquaintance" banged shut upon us and the word "exist" clicked quietly closed. We were busy when I left off reading, with a more extended explanation, which I intend to quote for you in a minute or two. Before I do so, I should like to guide you to what I am about. My intention is to show you how very much, in this instance, the theory of sense-data is like that of the flux--remember, in this instance. This, I hope, to show by a continuing examination of the explanation which I shall read to you. Beyond this I propose to sketch an account of only one of the several motives which play their part in the theory of sense-data. This will involve no frontal attack either upon the love-apple or the match-box. It might even be described as a form of shadow boxing.

The following, then, is the passage which the man with the love-apple is sending to his friend in order to explain his remark: "I see a speculum." And in the midst of that reading, his friend tries to understand and, in doing so, talks, and sometimes much too excitedly. The suspense, which is necessarily involved in his beholding the speculum, is too great for him.

This is the passage: "Suppose that I am having an experience which it would be natural for me to describe by saying that I was holding a match-box in my hand and looking at it. In that case, assuming the experience to be veridical, there is a familiar sense of the words 'see' and 'touch,' in which what I am now seeing and touching is simply 'this match-box.'" And there is also a familiar sense of the words "see" and "touch" in which what I am now seeing and touching is not the whole match-box but only a part of its surface. Up to this point, you may remember, the friend had expressed considerable uneasiness. The passage goes on: "Now in both these senses, if it should happen that the match-box does not exist, if I am dreaming or having an illusion, then either I am seeing something, or a part of something, other than a match-box--"



something that I mistake for a match-box--or in the case of a total hallucination, I am not seeing or touching anything. But it is also possible to use the words 'see' and 'touch' in such a way that even if I am dreaming or having a complete hallucination, so that there is no real physical object there, it can still be said that there is some object that I am seeing or touching, and further that this object really has the characteristics that the physical object, which I mistakenly think that I am seeing or touching, in the other senses of the words 'see' and 'touch,' appears to me to have. And what I am seeing in this sense may perhaps be a certain patch of color 'standing out from a background of other color patches and having a certain visual depth,' tho I am inclined on psychological grounds to doubt whether this would be an accurate description of any normal visual experience. Let us then call the whole of what everyone sees in this sense at any given moment his 'visual sense-field.' Then a visual sense-datum may be defined as anything that is the constituent of a visual sense-field. And, in general, a sense-datum may be defined as anything that is the constituent of a sense-field." (I pine, apple, for you, apple of my eye.)

Now that I've written this down, that first sentence strikes me as very peculiar: "Suppose that I am having an experience which it would be natural for me to describe by saying that I was holding a match-box in my hand and looking at it." This is now the direction. Suppose. Go ahead and suppose. Now then, what have you supposed? Notice that the direction is not: Imagine yourself holding a match-box. That would be simple enough. But that isn't what you are to suppose. What then? Suppose that you are describing an experience which you are at the moment having and that the description which you give is natural. The natural description now is: "I am holding a match-box and looking at it." Now I take it that it would be natural to say this if you were holding a match-box, provided, of course, it both felt like a match-box in your hand and looked like one. But it would obviously also be natural for you to say this if you were not holding a match-box, but were holding a box which looked like a match-box but which was a trick-box so that when you opened it, out would jump a little grey mouse, a clay mouse. You thought it was a match-box, but it wasn't a match-box and someone asked: "What's that you are holding in your hand?" and you said: "I am holding a match-box." This does seem quite natural. Supposing, in this case, would not be as simple as one might suppose. One would need to suppose, imagine, several different sorts of occasions. And one must attend especially to the word "natural" and to the word "description" and to "having an experience." But supposing in this case is much more complicated even than I have now indicated. First you suppose, then you assume. Assume what? "Assume the experience to be veridical" which is very big for: Assume there is a match-box. And then what? Then suppose "that the match-box does not exist, if I am dreaming or having an illusion" or that I am having an hallucination. And now the direction, so it strikes me, is utterly useless. What is natural description in hallucinations and dreams and under the illusions of drunkenness? What in these various states is natural and what unnatural? Must we find out from Freud and his

friends what is natural? For notice that the descriptions which are sought are not descriptions of the dream or of the hallucination; these descriptions are purported descriptions in the dream, in the hallucination. In my dream I exclaim: "I am holding a match-box in my hand," and as I hold it later I take a match out of my mouth and strike it on the baked apple I am holding in my hand. Is this: "I am holding a match-box," natural description? What isn't, in dreams? I can imagine someone holding a match-box or imagine someone holding something which he thinks is a match-box but which isn't a match-box. I can imagine someone in sleep muttering: I am holding a match-box and I can imagine some fire-bug, an arsonist, exclaiming: Take this match-box out of my hand. But what is required in order for there to be an experience which is to make these mutterings and exclamations "natural"? I do not know. And the author gives no account.

The next sentence purred. It went: ". . .if it should happen that the match-box does not exist, if I am dreaming or having an illusion, then either I am seeing something or a part of something, other than a match-box, something that I mistake for a match-box or in the case of total hallucination, I am not seeing or touching anything." When the man with the love-apple read this part, his friend looked very pleased. "That's good, very good," he said. "That's just what my grandmother used to say." But when the man had finished reading the next sentence, believe me, he didn't purr. He seemed to behave rather like some twentieth century Thrasymachus, ready, not to eat his own words, but rather to devour whole paragraphs of somebody else. "What!" he almost shouted: "It is possible," "It can still be said," "There is some object," (shades of "There exists a patch") "Really has the characteristics"! "What next?" Obviously, he lacked some of the patience and nice refinement which are necessary in the pursuit of abstract subjects. But in order that you may understand or at least see what upset him so, I am going to quote the sentence: "But it is also possible to use the words 'see' and 'touch' in such a way that even if I am dreaming or having a complete hallucination, so that there is no physical object there, it can still be said that there is some object that I am seeing or touching, and further that this object really has the characteristics that the physical object which I mistakenly think that I am seeing or touching in the other senses of the words 'see' and 'touch' appears to me to have." I thought at first that it was the rather Mississippi-like character of the sentence which distracted him (The Mississippi is the longest river in the world) but this turned out not to be the case, as you will see. The sentence struck me as interesting, and since it seemed to me right in the pit of the explanation, I was eager to see it digested.

When he had iced his temper a little and settled back, he began to talk, and, as I thought, straight to the point. By the time he was finished, the sentence seemed a bit frayed. And this is what he said: "Listen! It is also possible to use the words 'see' and 'touch' in such a way that!" Why, in order to discern the speculum, is it necessary for me to take lessons in theology? I have read the scriptures. I know very well that "with God all things are possible." "It is also possible!" And as for "it can still be said that there is

some object," how is that intended to peel the love-apple? "Do you believe in baptism?: Believe in it! I've seen it done." The question is not as to whether something or other is possible or whether something or other can be said, the question is as to what's up in the case of the possible and this can be said. This is a nice weasel if you ask me. Earlier it was complained that someone would have to explain the sense of the word "acquaintance" and the word "exists," since whatever the sense of these words is or was in the preferred definitions, trying to figure out some meaning for them led nowhere. But any definer could have begun his sentence with: "It is possible to use the word 'acquaintance' and 'it can be said that a so-and-so exists,'" and in that case, I suppose, everything would have been pudding and pie. Semolina!

And notice further. What can still be said? Just that "there is still some object that I am seeing." "There is still some object," not "There exists still some object." "Exists," remember, won't do, but "is" is enlightening. Perhaps, if you said: "There is in the heart of Africa a tree seven men can't ring round," people would get quite wrong ideas about that. They would imagine that there "is" in the heart of Africa "an object" which goes along with having an hallucination. A man lying under a tree snoozing away a whole forest of sense-data. He hesitated, shook his head, was apologetic, seeing that the man was doing his best to help him. He fell like a beggar who studies the silver some almsman gives him. "Thanks. Is this silver lead?"

"I'm sorry," he said. But that isn't all. Notice how this goes: "There is still some object." Object? Object? Earlier we had: "There exists a red patch." There was a little milk on that, and now: Object! We know how to make the litmus-paper test on the words "acquaintance" and "exists." Now let us try this on the word "object." The word "object" occurs, I think, most frequently as a deliberately non-descript word. "You will find a tiny object--it's the only thing there--lying on the table. It's for you." Surprise! Surprise! "See that object just below the hill there, no, not that. . . on your left near that big stone. If donkeys with their long ears were small as cats and sat back on their haunches, resting erect on their forelegs like that, I'd say. . . . But this is much too small. What is it?" The word "object" is a poker-faced little word even when the cards are all on the table, but what is one to make of it here? Does it come straight out of sentences like this, or as I very much suspect, does it come, trailing clouds of metaphysics, fresh out of Hegel?

His friend raised his hand in protest. "No, no, no! You're wrong. You forget how that sentence goes on. Here it is: "...there is some object...that really has the characteristics that the physical object which I mistakenly think that I am seeing...appears to me to have. You see, there's more milk in this than you supposed."

"All right," said eager-to-learn, "let's test the milk. The object has characteristics, really has the characteristics, not just those it appears to have. And what characteristics? Let us return to the match-box. The phrase seems to me now to be ambiguous. Is the intention to distinguish between the characteristics which a match-box has and those which it only appears to have or does he mean to speak of all characteristics of match-

boxes as characteristics which they only appear to have? I am going to suppose that he has in mind characteristics of match-boxes. Let us try this first. If now there is some object which really has the characteristics of a match-box, then, I take it that 'there is some object' means in this case: there is a match-box. A match-box certainly does have the characteristics which, in this sense, a match-box appears to have. On the other hand, if the object 'really has the characteristics' which the match-box only appears to have, as distinguished from the characteristics it really has, then 'there is an object' might very well mean: There is a barn or a flat low box twenty-feet long or a blue box the size of a match-box, etc. For see, a match-box may appear lop-sided like a barn, twenty-feet long like a crate for shipping a dachshund, or like a blue box when it is as a matter of fact, really, that is, all. Now I don't think you need a special use of the word 'see' for seeing a lop-sided barn or a long crate or a blue box. Love-apples, tomatoes, match boxes--these I touch and see, but specula and sense-data--well, you see. Remember, I'm not saying that your words make no sense. It's just that those explanations do not help me."

The man closed his book, cut two slices off the love-apple, and said: "Let's go to a movie." They did.

I said earlier that the language in which people talk about sense-data is child-like, deceptively child-like. "I see a patch." Now I should like you to notice that just as Plato heard, as it were, askance, the language everyone uses and Bergson was troubled by the language of the soul, so too a sense-datum believer may develop a skittishness about the language of sense-data. I should like to quote two bits of this in illustration. This is a sentence from the paragraph of which I quoted a part: "And what I am seeing in this sense may perhaps be a certain patch of color standing out from a background of other color patches and having a certain visual depth, tho I am inclined on psychological grounds to doubt whether this would be an accurate description of any normal visual experience." I can't imagine what is meant here by "psychological grounds" nor by "accurate description." Never mind that. There is dissatisfaction with the language. In a later portion of the same essay from which this sentence was taken, there is further complaint about "the poverty of our sensory language," and the author goes on to say: "But I suppose that a suitable vocabulary could be invented, if some ingenious person thought that it was worth his trouble." "I suppose!" "Worth his trouble?" Why not? The author, however, gives a hint as to what such an invention would be like. There is, apparently, to be no more of this talk about red patches. It is also curious, by the way, that when the friends of sense-data meet and talk, they do not always understand one another.

Now let us pause for a moment to admire the predicament of this author. Imagine him then standing in the middle of the room with his hands behind his back. Suddenly he brings one hand outstretched before him and he glances down at it quickly. In his hand is a match-box. And he says as tho to himself: "I see this match-box." Then he goes to the table and writes down: "I see this match-box," see, spelled

"see," one s. He returns to the middle of the room and again stands with his hands behind his back. Suddenly, as before, he throws the match-box high towards the ceiling so that it comes turning and twirling down again. He keeps his eyes fixed on it and says: "I see the whole match-box." Again he goes to the table and writes down on his sense-pad: "I ssee the whole match-box." But this time he writes see with two s's, "ssee." This pleases him and again he returns to the middle of the room. Once more he puts his hands behind his back and again brings before him the hand with the match-box in it. But this time he looks at it very curiously as tho he were having difficulty focusing properly. Finally he shakes his head as tho he'd got it right and says: "I see...," and then hesitates. He goes to the table and as before writes down his sentence: "I see...," but this time he spells see with three s's, sssee. His friend, also the best friend of sense-data he has ever known, looks at the pad and asks: "Why didn't you finish this last sentence. I see...what?" He shrugs his shoulder. "Did you sssee a yellow patch of a boxy shape? or a boxy shape with stipples?" "No," he says. "I can't say that I did, you know. And if you think that is strange, let me assure you that I have psychological grounds." His friend scratches his head. "Psychological grounds! I suppose when you did write, 'I see this match-box' and 'I ssee the whole match-box' that you also had psychological grounds, but, of course, of a different sort: Nothing interfered, then, I take it. You aren't nervous are you?" "No," he says. "I'm not nervous, tho my feet are cold. Besides," he added, "don't you feel that there is something bilious about our vocabulary? I get so impatient waiting for the genius to unstop us." "All the same," replied his friend, "I think you should finish the sentence. Why don't you write: I sssee XXX? The XXX will show that it's something special. Besides, it matches the spelling of tri-sibilant see." This did not appeal to him. He said: "Write I sssee an object, object spelled with two umlauts." And that completed the documentation. Now this strikes me as very much like the flux, the inexpressible, the can't be said.

I should like now to ask, as in previous cases I asked: "What gives rise to this?" I do not, of course, intend to make more than one suggestion concerning it, a suggestion, however, which arises out of the attempts at definition of sense-datum which I have read to you in the course of this paper. The temptation involved in what I want to consider, however, seems to me so exceedingly powerful that I may not myself be able to escape. The temptation of Joseph seems to me in comparison the mere dangling of a sweet-meat. Hence, if I should lose my shirt. . .as he lost his garment. . . .

It will be remembered that the first explanation began: "When I look at a physical object, for instance, a tomato, there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is not a reflection or a cleverly painted piece of wax or even a complete hallucination"; and the second contains these words: "If it should happen that the match-box does not exist, if I am dreaming or having an illusion...or in the case of total hallucination." I am supposing that a part, at any rate, of what leads to the sense-datum theory is puzzling about illusions and hallucinations: And I should like now to notice first of all an illusion. Consider the following:

"I was lying in my berth in a steamer, listening to the sailors holystone the deck outside, when on turning my eyes to the window, I perceived with perfect distinctness that the chief engineer of the vessel had entered my state-room, and was standing looking thro the window at the men at work upon the graveyards. Surprised at his intrusion, and at his intentness and immobility, I remained watching him and wondering how long he would stand thus. At last I spoke, but getting no reply, sat up in my berth, and then saw that what I had taken for the engineer was my own cap and coat hanging on a peg beside the window. The illusion was complete; the engineer was a peculiar-looking man, and I saw him unmistakably; but after the illusion had vanished, I found it hard voluntarily to make the cap and coat look like him at all."

Now notice how this goes. "When on turning my eyes to the window, I perceived with perfect distinctness the chief engineer," and later "and then saw that what I had taken for the engineer was my own cap and coat hanging on a peg." Of course, this being an illusion, there is no engineer, and, as you have also heard, there is "my own cap and coat." There is no mention of any patch of color nor of any object in respect to which our vocabulary is so poor. But it is now easy to see how the patch or the object is brought in. Suppose you begin in this way: "Well, as you lay in your berth, you certainly saw something, didn't you?" Notice that this comes straight out of the account: "I perceived with perfect distinctness the engineer." "Well, now you certainly did not perceive the engineer, did you, since there was no engineer?" (tho the language from which this "I perceived" is drawn, specifically says: I perceived the engineer). The answer now may well be: "No, I did not perceive the engineer." "And neither did you perceive the cap and coat hanging on the peg," since, if you had, you would not have taken them for the engineer. That's right, isn't it? Now, then, there must have been something else which you perceived, neither the engineer nor your cap and coat. And what now was that? Let me tell you. It was a blue patch of a human and somewhat bulgy shape, engineer shape." "Well," he replied, "you may be right about that, but I haven't the slightest recollection of any patch intervening. And even when I tried 'voluntarily to make the cap and coat look like' the engineer, it didn't strike me that I was, as it were, trying to weave a shadow over my cap and coat. Still, I can see how you might think of it in that way."

Is there a patch, an object? One can imagine that someone might say: "Well, I'll have the illusion over again. I'll lie back on my pillow at dawn and look at my cap and coat, but this time I'll watch for the patch. (The Price of sense-data is internal vigilance.) I'll see the object you were speaking of, if there is one." I take it that this won't do. To distinguish the patch would be to spoil the illusion. But this suggestion may help us to understand how the questions which give rise to the idea of the patch are themselves generated. Consider how some arch illusionist might make preparations for the illusion just described. He might use in part the colors and folds and contours of the "cap and coat hanging on the peg" and build around and within these the effigy of the engineer. He would arrange this in such a way that an irregular drapery could be raised and

lowered from the ceiling. Let us call this total effect an irregular and black and white patch. If the illusionist takes cunning advantage of the light coming thro the window, then for anyone who has seen the engineer, and in twilight at ten paces, the illusion may be complete. Now, then, at dawn, the patch is lowered and falls in such a way that as the cap and coat show thro and within the outlines and folds of the patch, behold! The effigy of the engineer, "intent and immobile." Now, then, the man in his berth wakes and reports; "I perceived with perfect distinctness" the engineer.... And now without his knowing it at all, the arch illusionist in a twinkling or just gradually...it is twilight...rolls up the patch. And then, the awakened sleeper, rubs his eyes, and sees that what he had taken for the engineer was his cap and coat. And when he tries to revive the illusion, he finds it hard. The illusionist might have arranged for this, too, lowering the patch at long intervals in order to make it easy.

Afterwards the man is questioned. "You didn't see the engineer, did you?" "No, I certainly didn't see the engineer." "And you didn't see your cap and coat hanging on the peg?" "No, I didn't recognize those at all." "But you certainly saw something, didn't you?" "Well, as I said at first: 'I perceived with perfect distinctness' the engineer, but since there was no engineer and since I didn't perceive my cap and coat, I scarcely know what to say." "And would you like to see now what you really perceived!" "Of course, I would." They blindfold him, put him back on his pillow, lower the patch, arrange it for maximum effect, and then un-blind him. He looks now, and looks again, amused: "Well, I'll be dimmed," and then goes up to inspect the ingenious rag and congratulates the illusionist. "The clearest and best unmistakable sense-datum I have ever had the privilege of laying my eyes on. I have no psychological grounds whatsoever for not saying that this is a colored patch, and as for vocabulary, well, now we can give a demonstration."

I have, in these few paragraphs, suggested or thrown at you a certain way of looking at the sense-datum insofar as this enters into the discussion of illusions. There are three types of sentence which are involved: "I perceived with perfect distinctness" the engineer, "What I had taken for the engineer was my own cap and coat," and "I see a patch." As I have tried to represent the: "I see a patch" it enters into the account of the illusion in the way in which "the ingenious rag" enters into the arrangement of the illusionist. The sense-datum theory is a theory about the seeing that goes on behind the scenes or very deep within the scenes. And one can easily work out some similar account in respect to hallucinations. Here is a report:

"About 8 o'clock in the evening I went into the dining-room to fix a cup of tea, and on turning from the side-board to the table, on the other side of the table before the fire, which was burning brightly, as was also the gas, I saw standing with his hands clasped to his side, in true military fashion, a soldier of about thirty years of age, with dark, piercing eyes, looking directly into mine. He wore a small cap with standing feather; his costume was also of a soldierly style. He did not strike me as being a spirit, ghost, or anything uncanny, only a living man; but after gazing for fully a minute, I

realized that it was nothing of earth, for he neither moved his eyes nor his body and in looking closely I could see the fire beyond. I was, of course, startled, and yet did not run out of the room. I felt stunned. I walked out rapidly, however, and, turning to the servant in the hall, asked her if she saw anything. She said not. I went into my mother's room and remained talking for about an hour, but never mentioned the above subject, for fear of exciting her, and finally forgot it altogether, returning to the dining-room, still in forgetfulness of what had occurred, but repeating, as above, the turning from the side-board to the table in act of preparing more tea, I looked casually towards the fire and there stood, I saw, the soldier again. This time I was entirely alarmed, and fled from the room in haste. I called to my father, but when he came he saw nothing."

Notice once again the language: "I saw standing with his hands clasped to his side in true military fashion, a soldier." "I called to my father, but when he came, he saw nothing." There was nothing there. So she did not see a soldier. And now the question is: What deceived her? What did she really see that explains all this? She saw a patch. This answer, once the question is admitted, seems to me altogether reasonable. Certainly people are deceived by patches--like an oasis in the sky. But once this is admitted, there is no such thing as trying to find the patch. What, I take it, happens is that people invent descriptions of patches, which patches, I take it, are then qualified to explain the deception. In this case there is then a patch of soldier which as a likeness may be calculated to deceive. There is no such thing as winding back the hallucination in order to inspect the hallu- it sets out from. A sense-datum in the case of hallucinations is the hallu- from which the hallu-cination sets out. Something like a decoy, not a duck. In the case of illusions, it's an illuse from which the illusion starts. If you only could wind-back either the hallucination or the illusion, then you would see the pure, innocent, what-not all the ducks took for a duck. Now this may be a part of what Mr. Ayer means by the "psychological grounds" which keep him "from speaking of patches." What remains of the theory of sense-datum is little more than: There must be an object, and this may also explain the: "It is possible...and it can be said." For Mr. Ayer seems growingly conscious of the fact that he himself has never seen a patch, nor has he any other alternative description to offer. There is an object, there must be an object to explain illusions and hallucinations.

And what now is that speculum that man saw, looking at the love-apple? Well, it's a patch; it's an object. You've seen it glancing off "the cap and coat hanging on the peg"; you've seen it the occasion of distress for the young woman in the dining room, the stuff of apparitions from which she made a soldier. How it also glances off the surface of tomatoes and match-boxes is another story which I hope to discuss in the next lecture. Null class.