

## OXFORD REALISM

This is a story of roughly a century of Oxford philosophy told from the outside. It is highly selective. We mean to trace the unfolding, across roughly the last century, of one particular line of thought—a sort of anti-idealism; also a *sort* of anti-empiricism. By focusing in this way we will, inevitably, omit, or give short shrift to, more than one more than worthwhile Oxford philosopher.

Our story begins with a turn away from idealism. Frege's turn began in 1882, his definitive case made in "Der Gedanke"(1918). The main elements of Oxford's realism, or anti-idealism, were probably in Cook Wilson's lectures by 1904, and certainly in his student, H. A. Prichard's 1909 *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*. It would be misleading to suggest that either philosopher held unwaveringly throughout to the realism in question. Indeed, some of Prichard's later work is, in the light of the earlier, somewhat puzzling. But within the first decade of the last century a view had emerged which overlaps Frege's at many key points, and which continued on in the main lines of thought at Oxford for the rest of the century.

Idealism, Frege argued, abolishes truth. A main evil in it is that it places the objects of experience beyond the reach of *judgement*. In doing so, it leaves us *nothing* to judge about. Perception's main role is to make the *world* bear for the perceiver on what he is to think. If what one experiences belongs, in Frege's term, to 'the contents of his consciousness', then, Frege argues, this is something perception cannot do. There is *no* judging of (again Frege's terms) what requires a bearer, and admits of no two such. Such is *one* point Prichard retained throughout, directing it late on against those *he* called 'sense datum theorists'. It is a point Cook Wilson directed, around 1904, against Stout. There is a positive side to the coin: *all* there is for us to judge about—all there is which, in being as it is might *be* a way we could judge it to be—is that environment we all cohabit; to be a thought is, intrinsically, to be sharable and communicable. All these are central points in Cook Wilson's, and Prichard's, Oxford realism. So, as they both held (early in the century), perception *must* afford awareness of, and relate us to, objects in our cohabited environment.

There is another point which Prichard, at least, shared with Frege. As Prichard put it,

There seems to be no way of distinguishing perception and conception as the apprehension of different realities except as the apprehension of the individual and the universal respectively. (1909: 44)

Compare Frege:

But don't we see that the sun has set? And don't we also thereby see that this is true? That the sun has set is no object which emits rays which arrive in our eyes ... That the sun has set is recognised as true on the basis of sensory input. (1918: 64)

But don't we see that this flower has 5 petals? One can say that, but then does not use the word 'see' in the sense of bare experiences of light, but means by it a thought, or judgement connected with this. (1897: 149)

For the sun to have set is a way for things to be; that it has set is the way things are according to a certain thought. A way for things to be is a generality, instanced by things being as they are (where the sun has just set). Recognising its instancing is recognising the truth of a certain thought; an exercise of a faculty of thought. By contrast, what instances a way for things to be, what makes for that thought's truth, does not itself have such generality—any more than, on a different level, which Frege calls 'Bedeutung', what falls under a (first-level) concept might be the sort of thing things fall under. What *perception* affords is awareness of the sort of thing that *instances* a way for things to be. Perception's role is thus, for Frege, as for Prichard, to bring the *particular*, or individual, in view—so as, in a favourable case, to make recognisable its instancing (some of) the generalities it does.

For all this agreement, there is difference in focus. Where, for Frege, the main ill of idealism was that it made no room for *truth*, so nor for judgement, for Cook Wilson and Prichard the main ill was that it made no room for knowledge. Ideas (Frege), or appearances (Prichard) are not (Frege) things one can *judge* to be some way; nor, equally, and for the same reason, are they (Prichard) things one can *know* anything about. No way of standing towards *them* would *be* knowledge. It is in this version that the shared view continued to shape Oxford philosophy throughout the last century.

Oxford realism coincided roughly with several other rejections of idealism. Frege's has been mentioned. There was also, at Cambridge, Moore's and Russell's celebrated revolution, begun in 1899 with Moore's "The Nature of Judgement", and continued with his "The Refutation of Idealism" of 1903, and with various papers by Russell (See notably "The Nature of Truth", 1906). Russell's focus was a bit different from either Moore's or Cook Wilson's and Prichard's. As Russell puts it, "I think that Moore was most concerned with the rejection of idealism, while I was most interested in the rejection of monism." (1959: 42) Specifically, Russell spent a good deal of time campaigning against a 'doctrine of internal relations', held by Bradley and others. But, as Russell also said, both he and Moore were concerned to insist on "the doctrine that fact is in general independent of experience." (Ibid)

Russell reports finding it exhilarating to reject idealism:

I felt it ... a great liberation. ... In the first exuberance ... I became a naïve realist and rejoiced in the thought that grass is really green ... I have not been able to retain this pleasing faith in its pristine vigour, but I have never again shut myself up in a subjective prison. (1959: 48)

A subjective prison, though, is just what Russell entered eagerly in his atomism of 1917, one of whose virtues is, he tells us, making objects of judgement out of what are precisely *Vorstellungen* in Frege's sense. Neither Russell, nor Moore, nor (later) Prichard was able to hang onto that realism with which they began. Prichard always opposed what *he* called 'sense data'. But by 1938 he had become convinced that, in the nature of the case, an object of perception was always sole property of its perceiver. The fragility of their realisms has a systematic ground: lack of the tools needed for disarming the argument from illusion. Austin first introduced those, as will emerge below.

In addition to the 'realism' just sketched, Cook Wilson also contributed to Oxford

philosophy a new conception of philosophical good faith (certainly new relative to Hume, to Hegel, and to most of the post-Cartesian tradition). It is a conception perhaps better known as later championed by Moore. Cook Wilson expressed it thus:

The actual fact is that a philosophical distinction is *prima facie* more likely to be wrong than what is called a popular distinction, because it is based on a philosophic theory which may be wrong in its ultimate principles. ... There is a tendency to regard [the second] as the less trustworthy because it is popular and not due to reflective thought. The truth is the other way. ... (1926: 875)

A philosopher's claims must be answerable to something. If they are, say, claims about seeing, there is nothing better to which they may be answerable than the way the verb 'see' is actually used. This is one way of putting the foundations of what came to be known as 'ordinary language philosophy'—some decades before there was any. This, though is a point about philosophic methodology. It does not yet identify the main focus of 20<sup>th</sup> century Oxonian interest *in* language.

**1. Language:** Though for Cook Wilson and Prichard knowledge came first, present exposition begins with language. The most significant Oxford views of language did *not* persist throughout the century. Rather, with their roots firmly in Cook Wilson, they flowered from the late '40s until the early '60s, largely thanks to J. L. Austin, then more or less disappeared from the Oxford scene. But these distinctive views of language were borne mostly of necessity. More specifically, they were (or were seen as) what was necessary in order to keep afloat those very views of knowledge and perception which not only bear the Oxford mark, but, moreover, persisted into this millennium. It is a nice question how, it was thought, those views on knowledge and perception could stand alone, without Austin's view of language.

Austin's linguistic legacy has two parts. One is a particular conception of the relation of language to thought—thus, too, of truth. The other is a methodological strategy. One concerns the relation between mind and language, the other the strategy of minding one's language. We do not normally attend to the ways our words work; rather to what we hope to work with them. But, the idea is, in philosophy words can all too easily block our view of the phenomena; clarity as to *words'* workings is often the best way to see through them to the objects of our study. Both these views are rooted in Cook Wilson, though in somewhat different ways.

As to the first, there is a line of thought in Cook Wilson's notion of logic which adumbrates—, perhaps inspired, a main line in Austin's view of language. Cook Wilson was, roughly, a contemporary of Frege. So it is fair to compare the two. On first reading, Cook Wilson—precisely in his concern for the ordinary use of words—may seem to be missing all Frege's best insights. He probably did miss some. But both agreed in finding a *grammatical* distinction between subject and predicate—a distinction as generated by English or German syntax—of little or no relevance to logic. Frege: writes,

Our logic books still drag in much—for example, subject and predicate—that really does not belong to logic. (1897: 60, and cf. *Begriffsschrift*: vii (section 3).)

Rejecting that distinction, he gives fundamental importance to another, that between *object* and *concept*. Cook Wilson writes,

The above analysis [of a statement, or proposition] would make the distinction of subject and predicate, one not of words but of what is meant by the verbal expression. We may call this the strict logical analysis, and the distinction of the words of the sentence into 'subject words' and 'predicative words' may be called the grammatical analysis. (1926: 124)

Thus, for example, in 'That building is the Bodleian', 'that building' is the grammatical subject; in 'Glass is elastic', 'glass' is the grammatical subject. But in the first either 'that building' or 'the Bodleian' may identify the *logical* subject, depending on the use being made of that sentence on an occasion. In the second, either 'glass' or 'elastic' may identify the logical subject on a use. *Mutatis mutandis* for logical predicates. An instance of the *sentence* 'Glass is elastic', while meaning just what it does, having precisely the syntax and semantics it does, so while having the same grammatical subject and predicate, might have either of two pairs of strict (or true) logical subject and predicate. So the well-formed part, 'glass', in the sentence, 'Glass is elastic', might, on two different uses of that sentence to state something, make either of two different contributions to the stating of what is thus stated. Similarly for other sentences and their grammatical subjects and predicates.

Two different uses of the sentence 'Glass is elastic', each to say something to be so, may thus form a minimal contrasting pair: in the one member of the pair, but not the other, 'glass' is the logical subject in what is said; there is a corresponding difference in logical predicates. What each says differs in no way not entailed by these differences. Accordingly, Cook Wilson tells us, each use, or what is said on it, requires a different 'logical analysis' (see 1926: 125). The first use thus says something which admits of the first, but not of the second analysis, and *mutatis mutandis* for the second. Thus, each differs in what is thus said. Perhaps there is something to be said which admits of either analysis, just as for Frege a given thought admits of many different analyses. But here each member of the pair requires an analysis which the other does not admit of. So neither member is a thought analysable in either of these two ways. Whether 'glass' figures as a logical subject contributes to determining what it is that is thus said.

Does each member of the pair thus express a different thought in Frege's sense? That depends on whether the different analysis each requires—a 'logical' analysis in Cook Wilson's sense of this term—is an analysis of the thought expressed. For Frege, to bear on the thought expressed is to bear on how some question of truth would be decided. So the minimal difference between each member of the pair would make for a different thought expressed in each if, but only if, whether 'glass' was the logical subject mattered to when, or on what condition, the relevant whole would be true. It is not evident that whether something is a logical subject does so matter. For the moment we leave this question open.

To a Fregean, two or three things may seem to have gone wrong already. One of these lies in something Cook Wilson stresses about the just-mentioned 'logical' distinction:

Subject and predicate mean not the idea or conception of an object, but the object which is said to be an object of the idea or conception. But, while the

things called subject and predicate are objects without anything that belongs to our apprehension of them or our mode of conceiving them, the distinction of them as subject and predicate is entirely founded on our subjective apprehension of them, or our opinion about them, and on nothing in their own nature as apart from the fact that they are apprehended or conceived. It may be said that the distinction is not in them, but in their relation to our knowledge or opinion of them, and so not a relation between what they are in themselves apart from their being sometimes apprehended. (1926: 139)

*Logical subject* and *logical predicate* may thus seem mere psychological notions, which, for Frege, could have no bearing on logic. Whereas Frege's distinction between *concept* and *object* precisely is a distinction between the sorts of things we designate in expressing the thoughts we do.

Cook Wilson's logical subjects and predicates need be no more psychological than Frege's thoughts. A thought, for Frege, identifies a commitment there is for one to make in his stance towards the world; one by which a thinker exposes himself to some definite risk of error (as Frege puts it). Stances, commitments taken, are part of a thinker's psychology. But what stances there are to take—how it is possible to stand towards things—need not be, and for Frege is not, a psychological matter. Nor is it a psychological matter how those stances relate to one another, e.g., by relations which preserve truth. For Cook Wilson, two statements, otherwise as alike as possible, but differing in whether such-and-such is their logical subject, accordingly differ in what question(s) they are to be understood to answer; and, accordingly, in to what one is committed in making them. What questions there *are* thus to answer, and how the answers to one relate to those to another, need be no more a psychological matter than those parallel issues, above, about thoughts. Of course, that there *are* different questions for statements with different logical subjects to answer is a substantial thesis which needs to be made out. Such is the really important issue.

In dismissing the subject-predicate distinction, as in many other contexts, Frege insists,

Thus we will never forget that two different sentences can express the same thought; that as to the content of a sentence, what concerns us is only what can be true or false. (1897: 60)

One sentence, perhaps, can express many thoughts (each on some occasion). But what concerns Frege here is that many sentences can express *one* thought. As he often stresses, the same thought can be articulated, now this way, now that, so that now this, now that, appears as predicative in it. The same thought can be structured in many different ways out of many different sets of concepts and objects. Intuitively, we can see how we would, in some sense, understand 'That building is the Bodleian' differently depending on whether it was an answer to the question what that building is, or an answer to the question which building is the Bodleian. But what we have not seen—and what Cook Wilson has done little towards showing—is that *that* difference in understanding makes for different thoughts expressed—or, again, exploiting Frege's above framework, that such a difference could make any difference to when the thought thus expressed would be true.

Frege's object-concept distinction falls on one side of another distinction, equally

fundamental for him, between sense and 'Bedeutung'. One might think of this *Bedeutung*, on Cook Wilson's lines, as what we speak of, on some understanding of *speaking of*. But it is not the sort of object of discussion that Cook Wilson has in mind. Rather, it is, so to speak, a distillate from things at the level of sense, notably thoughts, of what matters for the sorts of calculations, or relations, of concern to logic, most notably truth-preservation. Frege begins a discussion of his main essay on the sense-reference distinction by remarking,

The fundamental logical relation is that of an object falling under a concept;  
all relations between concepts reduce to this. (1892-1895: 128)

He goes on to observe that, waiving some niceties, there is considerable justice in the view of extensionalist logicians. Having first explained how attempts to ascribe features to concepts generally misfire, ending up speaking of *objects* where the intention was to speak of concepts, he goes on to remark:

If we keep all this in mind, we are indeed in a position to say, 'What two concept-words denote is the same just in case the associated extensions of the concepts coincide.' And with this, I think, an important concession is made to the extensionalist logicians. (1892-1895: 31)

If logic is concerned with, as Frege puts it, the laws of being true (*Wahrsein*), then logic is concerned with thoughts, since, for Frege, thoughts just *are* that which raise questions of truth (see 1918: 59-60). But the business of logic reduces, for most purposes, at least, to operations on the level of *Bedeutung*. The first sentence here is all that is needed, and really all that Cook Wilson demands, to honour his insistence that logic is, in some sense, about thought. The second *seems* entirely consistent with his views on the role of relations between things as opposed to our manners, on occasion, of apprehending them.

So though, for several reasons, Frege is not prepared to say just what a concept is (here see his 1904), one can think of what is at the level of *Bedeutung* as including such things as mappings from some range of things to others; as the taking on of such-and-such range of values for such-and-such range of arguments. What corresponds to objects and concepts at the level of sense is, to use one of Frege's terms for this, modes of presentation of them: ways of thinking of some object, or some concept, in thinking things to be some given way. One may, e.g., speak of fauns as gambollers. To do so is to make truth turn, first, on how fauns are—so which concepts assign them the value true—and what gambols—so what *this* concept assigns the value true. Such sets the stage for logic's calculations. Speaking of being a gamboller is *one* way, of many, of bringing *that* concept into play; one way of presenting it.

What there is not at the level of sense, on Frege's conception of things, is anything corresponding to logical subjects and predicates, or more pertinently, since something would *be* a logical subject, or predicate, within some given proposition, or something of that form, there is, for Frege, nothing at the level of sense which *has* logical subjects and predicates. Certainly thoughts do not. Thoughts, for Frege, articulate into elements only relative to an analysis. If we were to decompose a thought so that its elements were being about the Bodleian, and being about being in the Broad, what we would thus have would be *one* way of presenting, or regarding, *that* thought. We would have a mode of presentation of a mode of presentation of whatever, at the level

of *Bedeutung*, thoughts present. If sense just is what fixes reference, there is no room at either level for a distinction between subject and predicate.

As noted, there is *something* in Cook Wilson corresponding to Frege's level of *Bedeutung*. Its denizens are the things we talk *about*, on an ordinary understanding on which this includes, for example, the Bodleian, glass, being in the Broad, and being elastic, and by 'real relations' between them. So it is not quite inhabited by the same things which belong to Frege's *Bedeutung*. But it might be seen as inhabited by Cook Wilson's candidates for the things which really matter to the concerns of logic—notably truth-preservation. For he insists that when we say, 'That building is the Bodleian', no matter what the grammatical, or even logical, subject may be, what we *speak of* is just that building being the Bodleian. Which, one might well think—and Cook Wilson seems sometimes to think—leaves nothing for truth to turn on but whether that building *is* the Bodleian. But then, why is there *any* interest in the notions of (strict) logical subject and predicate, at least if one's concern is with that to which laws of logic apply? How can whether such-and-such is the logical subject of one's statement matter to when what one stated would be true?

Here is one approach to answering these questions. Frege restricts sense (*Sinn*) in his sense to what bears on *truth*, which he takes to exclude much in the understandings our words bear. It is under this restriction that no features such as logical subject or predicate *seem* to distinguish any given sense from any other. If such is *mere* appearance, it is most straightforwardly dispelled by pairs of statements (or thoughts) which differ in when each would be true, and then in a way precisely marked by difference in logical subject. Such would place Cook Wilson's distinction within Frege's conception of sense. Such an idea seems to have inspired Austin. His essay, "How To Talk (Some Simple Ways)" (1952) is, in effect, a more refined elaboration of Cook Wilson's idea; its object (or one of them) is to show that features of this kind do bear on truth.

Austin's distinctions carve the field more finely than do logical subject and predicate. But the drift is the same. Suppose the problem is to come up with samples to show what *crimson* is. Then sample A may be ill-suited for the job. But suppose, rather, that the problem is to say what colour A is. Then, perhaps, 'crimson' is as well suited for the job as anything. Now the problem is to show that, where someone says A to be crimson, the purpose for which this is to be taken to be done—the job so speaking of A is meant to do on that occasion—is something that *can* matter to whether what is thus said is true. Austin works towards making this plausible. To what extent he succeeds is another question we leave open. For it turns out not to matter all that much.

In the end, its answer does not matter much. If Austin began from the above question, his investigation led him to a more general point about what is relevant to questions of truth. It is that what words mean in their language, so far as that goes, does not fully determine when what one says in saying what *they* say would be true. It does not fix for *them* a truth-condition. Rather, what is said to be so in using words as meaning what they do is, in general, compatible with saying any of indefinitely many things to be so, each differing from the others in when it would *be* so. Accordingly, what one says of something in calling it a dahlia, or hexagonal, is liable to depend on whether, *in those circumstances*, such-and-such would be called *being a dahlia (hexagonal)*. Austin puts the point thus:

[T]he question of truth and falsehood does not turn only on what a sentence *is*, nor yet on what it *means*, but on, speaking very broadly, the circumstances in which it is uttered. Sentences are not *as such* either true or false. (1962: 110-11)

Whether one speaks truth in saying that cloth to be crimson, or that fossil a dahlia, depends on the demands on speaking truth on *that* occasion. One may, on one occasion, speak truly, and on another falsely, in saying the very same thing, in the very same condition, to be the very same way (e.g., crimson). What being crimson, or a dahlia, might be admits of understandings. One speaks truly, or falsely, in calling something a dahlia only where enough is to be understood as to what would *then* so count. On different occasions for speaking of something as a dahlia, or as crimson, different ranges of cases would count as something so being. What being a dahlia is as such does not by itself pick out any one such range. Such is the form into which, in Austin's hands, Cook Wilson's seminal idea had sprouted by mid-century.

Not that the idea was even then ubiquitous in Oxford. The most significant dissenter in Austin's lifetime was H. P. Grice. His counter-view first appeared in (Grice, 1961), then, more fully, in his 1967 William James lectures. The focus is on one corollary of Austin's view. Suppose that, as per that view, words (e.g., 'Fauns gambol') *underdetermine* what would be said in using them as meaning what they do. Circumstances of a speaking must then do *work* if something true or false is to be said then in using them.. In those circumstances, there must be something which *would* be understood by *gamboling*; enough for gamboling so understood to be something fauns do, or not, full stop. Circumstances are not obliged *per se* to do this work. Which means that one *might* say 'Fauns gambol', assertively, while neither saying something true nor saying something false. Or if the ways of fauns should rule *that* out, such might happen for some speaking of, say, 'Sid tried to lift his pen', or 'Pia did it voluntarily.' Grice focuses on this corollary of Austin's point.

Grice's case against Austin centres on the truism that in *saying* given things one may also *suggest*, or imply, others. If I say, 'Pia became pregnant and married', I (often, not inevitably) at least suggest that pregnancy preceded marriage. It is not yet shown, Grice insists, that this is part of what was *said*. Grice introduces the technical term 'implicate' for all those ways in which, in stating, things may be communicated which were not stated.

The core idea to be used against Austin is to be: where Austin sees the possibility of *saying* a variety of things in given (unambiguous) words (while meaning what they do), Grice will argue that the variety here is only in what is implicated; that just *one* thing, either true or false, was said in all Austin's envisaged cases. Or rather, this is what Grice needs to argue. He tends, instead to focus on the corollary, arguing only that if, in certain circumstances, one would not say, e.g., 'Sid tried to lift his pen', this may be, not because what one thus said would not be true, but rather because one would implicate something unwanted. It is not clear that Grice really grasped Austin's point. If not, this may be because of an unfortunate choice of words by Austin. We will come to that shortly. In any case, the idea of implicature is arguably ill-suited for impeaching Austin's view. The idea to be countered is: a sentence, say, 'That painting is crimson', may be used of a given painting, in a given condition, to say different things, some true, some false, where there is no limit, in principle, to the new things new occasions may make available thus to say. The counter would be: these different things are merely implicated. But then, what is implicated,

on any such occasion is, on some possible understanding of being crimson, that the painting is crimson. Now what, in addition to *that*, is to be the thing which is *said* throughout all those cases? Surely something to the effect that the painting is crimson. Each use of those words *implicates* that the painting is crimson, as being crimson would *then* be understood. In addition, each use *says* the painting to be crimson on some understanding of being crimson which is the *same* throughout all these uses. What understanding is *that*?

Austin's possibly unfortunate phrasing, of which Grice makes much, appears in his rendering of Cook Wilson's second methodological point:

Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth making, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon ...

... When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking again not *merely* at words ... but also at the realities we use the words to talk about: we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as the final arbiter of, the phenomena. (1956-57: 182)

A cook-wilsonian idea applied. Do we ever see tomatoes? When would it be *seeing* that this question is about? When would it be what *we* are prepared to recognise as seeing that was spoken of? Are tomatoes the kind of thing one might *so* relate to? Well, how *is* the verb 'see' used? Just what might make a relation one could *not* bear to a tomato recognisable as what we thus speak of? Attention to the details of this might, the idea is, spare us much fruitless philosophy. Again, if one is inclined to say that causation is mere appearance, he might ask (on the right occasion) whether, then, no one (really) spilled his beer.

But Austin's vocabulary here, specifically, 'what we should say when', can be misread. Supposing that there are things words are *for* saying, it would be natural to read this as: 'If you (one) were to use *these* words of *this*, or in *these* circumstances, what would you say?' What one thus asks after is how words in fact work. Austin clearly hears things this way. Grice insists on a different reading. On it, 'what we would say' merely reports our customs, mores, manners: 'One wouldn't say, 'What's the vigorish?' when the neighbour asks to borrow a cup of milk', 'One shouldn't say, 'That's just autobiography' to your small niece when she says she wants another biscuit'. But asking what one would say when *can* be a way of asking what the words one uses in fact apply to, or describe *truly*—what they *are* for in their language. If one is moved primarily by Austin's view of language and thought—that it is not, e.g., English words, but rather their use on an occasion, which determines how things are thus represented to be—one will so read it.

**2. Knowledge:** Germs of Austin's view of language are found in Cook Wilson. So is pressing need for it. At Oxford the view did not long survive Austin himself. It was lost in what is known as 'the Davidsonic boom', if not sooner. Whether need for it survived is another matter. One cook-

wilsonian idea which lasted out the century at Oxford concerns knowledge (most centrally). It appears later in the guise of *disjunctivism* (a term derived from J. M. Hinton (see section 3), and its various applications. Austin saw his view of language as essential to the viability of Cook Wilson's *insight* here. Later Oxonians seem to disagree. This section will set out the insight and raise the question which Oxonian was right on this.

The idea about knowledge, simply stated, is: knowing is no less than having proof. *Having* proof here is, *inter alia*, appreciating what one has as the proof it is. For it to be *proof* is, *inter alia*, for it to exclude absolutely P not being so—as the pig before you excludes any possibility that there is none (it remaining only to recognise its doing so). Having proof need not be having a proof. Cook Wilson expresses this idea as follows:

In knowing, we can have nothing to do with the so-called 'greater strength' of the evidence on which the opinion is grounded; simply because we know that this 'greater strength' of evidence of A's being B is compatible with A's not being B after all. ... Belief is not knowledge and the man who knows does not believe at all what he knows; he knows it. (1926: 100)

Prichard insists that knowledge is 'certainty'. Here certainty that P is, not a feeling, but a standing conferred by one's access to the world: there being no room for what one is aware of to fall short of it being so that P. (See 1950: 103-104.) For Prichard and Cook Wilson, to know is to have *proof* in the present sense. For Prichard, being *certain* as to P excludes *intelligible* doubt whether P.

Let us apply this view to the question whether knowledge might rest on evidence. One might think so. Has Sid been drinking? That loopy expression is some evidence for this, his slurred speech a bit more. Now he comes close, and we smell his breath. Now we *know*. What has happened? One story might be: Sid's expression is a bit of evidence, his slurred speech a bit more. With his breath the evidence mounts so high that we *know*. Good enough evidence amounts to knowledge. Cook Wilson and Prichard reject this story. On their view, if all we have is evidence, even very strong evidence (but still, evaluable as to strength), its presence leaves open the possibility that Sid has not been drinking. The question, 'But *has* he?' makes sense. Where one knows that Sid has been drinking, *not* for all one knows not. So having *evidence* does not amount to knowing. This is not to deny that one can come to know that Sid has been drinking by smelling his breath. But where one does this, one is aware of, as Prichard puts it, some fact of nature: Sid could have breath like that only if he had been drinking. In which case, his breath smelling as it does is, not evidence, but proof.

Cook Wilson refers to knowing as a 'frame of mind'. One *could* say 'mental state'. But, as both stress, to see whether you know that P, attend, not to what sort of state you are in, but rather to the question whether P. What you need to ask is whether *that* question is settled, beyond *any* doubt, by what you are aware of. *Has* Sid been drinking? *Is* there a largest prime? *Is* there *proof*? Sid's breath *tells* me he has been drinking only if I see how *that* breath can only so mean. Looking elsewhere to see whether I know that P would be self-defeating. (See Prichard 1950: 92-93.) If that one knows showed itself only in some other mark distinguishing such frames of mind, then to see that I know I would need to see that my frame of mind had that mark, thus that it had the mark of knowing that it had that mark. A malign regress would have begun. If knowing *is* a

mental state, one sees whether he is in it *in re* P only by directing attention to its object, P. This idea, in more general form, has enjoyed a long life at Oxford. (See, e.g., (Evans 1984, 223-229.)

For Cook Wilson and Prichard, knowledge is not a variety of belief. In Prichard's words,

Knowing is not something which differs from being convinced by a difference of degree ... as being more convinced differs from being less convinced ... Knowing and believing differ in kind as do desiring and feeling, or as do a red colour and a blue colour. ... To know is not to have a belief of a special kind, differing from beliefs of other kinds; and no improvement in a belief and no increase in the feeling of conviction which it implies will convert it into knowledge. ... It is not that there is a general kind of activity, for which the name would have to be thinking, which admits of two kinds, the better of which is knowing and the worse believing. (1932/1950: 87-88)

Part of the point is that knowledge is not *analysable* in terms of belief (or of anything). It is not believing (or any other non-factive stance) with such-and-such further features added. Such is now a widely held view, at Oxford, and beyond. But Cook Wilson also holds that when you know that P, you do *not* believe it. This is, to say the least, less widely held. It may *seem* to be controverted by obvious facts—e.g., if Sid stands as he does towards Pia being the new dean, then it can be (depending on how he thus stands) that I, knowing that she is, may say, truly, 'Sid knows that Pia is dean,' while you, doubting that she is, may say, also truly, 'Well, Sid *thinks* that Pia is dean.' Each of us, it seems, states a truth about Sid's condition; truths which hold simultaneously, and, it seems, may hold of the same frame of mind, or mental state. Austin's view of language make this less convincing. Cook Wilson's thesis may then be seen as a not-implausible disjunctivism, denying a certain sort of common factor in standing as one might towards a thought both in knowing, and in merely judging it. (See J.M. Hinton, 1967.) However, this remains here only a suggestion.

Cook Wilson and Prichard stress a further feature of their view. Given their conception of a frame of mind, it seems to them simply to follow from the above conception of knowledge. Cook Wilson sets up the inference by considering the possibility that there are two frames of mind—one knowing, the other merely being under the impression of knowing—which were such that if you were in the one, you might be unable to tell that you were in it rather than the other, so that, as he puts it,

the two states of mind in which the man conducts his arguments, the correct and the erroneous one, are quite indistinguishable to the man himself. But if this is so, as the man does not know in the erroneous state of mind, neither can he know in the other state. (1926: 107)

So a state of knowing cannot be indistinguishable to someone in it from an 'erroneous' state—one of merely seeming to have proof; nor vice-versa. Prichard puts the conclusion this way:

We must recognize that whenever we know something we either do, or at least can, by reflecting, directly know that we are knowing it, and that

whenever we believe something, we similarly either do or can directly know that we are believing it and not knowing it. (1950: 86)

We will refer to this point as *the accretion*.

Not that one can *always* tell his frame of mind just by reflection. Nor does Cook Wilson, or Prichard, hold some general form of semantic internalism. The point turns specifically on what *knowledge* is. Suppose that I cannot see, just by reflection, that I *could not* be mistaken as to whether P. Then I cannot, in fact, have proof. For whatever *my* grounds are for taking it that P, these are *not* incompatible, or I cannot see them to be, with P failing to obtain. So, so far as I can see, perhaps not P. Such is not knowledge. Having proof is, necessarily, what one can see oneself to do.

At which point, the conception begins to crumble. Suppose you now, in fact, see a pig before you. A genetically engineered ovine ringer pig, or a fleshapoid mechanical one, are at least conceivable. So are tricks with mirrors and lasers. Things might then be just as they are now, for all *you* could see. You cannot tell *by mere reflection* that no such thing is so. If it were you would not know there was a pig before you, since there would be none. So you do not meet Cook Wilson's standards for knowing there is a pig before you. So, it seems, no one ever would. Again, you may have, clearly in mind, what is in fact a perfectly good proof of the Pythagorean theorem. You may in fact appreciate how the proof proves. But one does, sometimes, suffer illusions of proof. Can reflection alone rule out *all* possibility of your now being in such a position? So, it seems, the conception plus accretion make knowledge collapse, or at least contract beyond plausibility.

Preserving the conception thus means treating the accretion. Enter Austin. For Austin's way with the accretion, we start from the question whether knowledge could be based on evidence. On this he says,

The situation in which I would properly be said to have *evidence* for the statement that some animal is a pig is that, for example, in which the beast itself is not actually on view, but I can see plenty of pig-like marks on the ground outside its retreat. If I find a few buckets of pig-food, that's a bit more evidence, and the noises and the smell may provide better evidence still. But if the animal then emerges and stands there plainly in view, there is no longer a question of collecting evidence; its coming into view doesn't provide me with more *evidence* that it's a pig, I can now just *see* that it is, the question is settled. (1962: 115)

Evidence contrasts with proof. Unlike proof, it is liable to be weaker or stronger, better or worse—as with the noises and smell in Austin's case. For it to be so liable is for evidence that P to be compatible with P not being so. So having evidence cannot be knowing on Cook Wilson's conception (accretion or not). Austin suggests that seeing a pig can give one *proof*, so knowledge, that a pig is about; and thus *not* mere evidence. Suppose that Sid, approaching Pia's farm, sees a pig in the pen. That pig's presence in the pen is as incompatible with it failing to be so that there is a pig there as a proof that there is no largest prime is incompatible with there being one. Accordingly, Austin insists, seeing the pig *can* (sometimes) provide *proof* in the strongest sense.

By contrast, in the case Austin imagines, the sounds and smells are compatible with no pig about. They are thus merely evidence.

But let us adjust cases. Pia, a country girl, arrives on Sid's farm, sniffs, and says, 'So he keeps pigs.' *Must* what she sniffs provide her something less than knowledge? Sid, on Pia's farm, sees a pig in the pen. *Must* this supply him knowledge? We can distinguish between, on the one hand, things smelling as they do, and, on the other, Pia's then smelling what she does; on the one hand, the pig's being in the pen, and, on the other, Sid's seeing the pig in the pen (or, for a closer parallel, the pen's being as it is, and Sid's seeing what he does of this). Things smelling as they do is compatible with Sid keeping no pigs: other things *could* have made the smell. Whether Pia's smelling what she did is compatible with no pigs about is another matter. That pig's presence in the pen leaves no room for there being none. Whether Sid's seeing it gives *him* proof is another matter. Austin's idea is that answers to things like the second member of each pair are liable to depend on further factors. This is what allows him both to reject the idea of knowledge on evidence and to insist that seeing the pig *may* furnish one proof.

Austin endorses a further feature of Cook Wilson's view. He writes,

Saying 'I know' ... is *not* saying, 'I have performed a specially striking feat of cognition, superior, in the same scale as believing and being sure, even to being merely quite sure': for there *is* nothing in that scale superior to being quite sure. (1946/1970: 99)

What, then, *is* the difference between knowing and merely being sure? For Cook Wilson and Prichard, these are different 'frames of mind', distinguishable on 'reflection'. Austin puts things differently:

When I say 'I promise', a new plunge is taken: I have not merely announced my intention, but, by using this formula ... I have bound myself to others ... Similarly, saying 'I know' is taking a new plunge. ... When I say 'I know', *I give others my word; I give others my authority for saying* that 'S is P'.

When I have said only that I am sure ... I am not liable to be rounded on in the same way as when I have said 'I know'. I am sure *for my part*, you can take it or leave it ... that's your responsibility. But I don't know 'for my part', and when I say 'I know' I don't mean you can take it or leave it (though of course you *can* take it or leave it). (1946: 99-100)

This idea has attracted much criticism. There are two main complaints. First, the verb 'know' has other uses in the first person than that Austin has in mind—e.g., 'It's hard to park near the beach in August'; 'I know, I know.' Second, even if 'I know' often marks a special force attaching to 'I know that P', to describe that force is not yet to tell us what knowledge is, or how to understand 'know' in all its occurrences.

How telling are such objections? Austin's idea is that saying 'I know that P' is offering oneself as authoritative as to whether P; offering relief from the burden of settling this oneself, on grounds that the work needed has already been done. Suppose there is an identifiable use for 'I know' of which this is so. Then that it is so may be *part* of what knowledge is. Suppose this much.

Now suppose that Vic says Pia to know that a finch is on the branch. What Vic said may then be to be understood in terms of that use just mentioned: for Pia to be as thus said is for her to be in a position to invoke that use in making *good* offers of the sort just sketched; that is, to *be* authoritative. Austin's insight can thus offer entry into a more general understanding of the workings of 'know', and thereby of knowledge.

One might still ask what the *point* is of putting things this way. A start of an answer: authority is a *status* one might enjoy or fail to, gain or lose—notoriously, not just by increase or decay in one's credentials, but by change in the circumstances in which one is to enjoy it. 'Sid was the fastest draw in town until The Kid arrived.' Sid's trigger finger remained unchanged. Now we are close to Austin's main idea:

The question of truth and falsehood does not turn only on what a sentence *is*, nor yet on what it *means*, but on ... the circumstances in which it is uttered. Sentences are not *as such* either true or false. But it is really equally clear ... that for much the same reasons there could be no question of picking out from one's bunch of sentences those that are evidence for others, those that are 'testable', or those that are 'incorrigible'. (1962: 110-111)

So whether A is (or counts as) evidence for B, as opposed to *no* evidence, or as opposed to proof, depends not just on what A and B are, but on the circumstances of so saying (or so counting things). Correspondingly for proof. Which allows us to say: *Pia's then* smelling what she did may rule out any possibility of absence of pigs, depending on what counts as compatible with that very historic event having taken place. And Sid's seeing what, in fact, was a pig in the pen *may* fail to give him proof, depending on whether he counts as then able to recognise what he sees for what it thus is, so, *inter alia*, on what his ability to tell pigs at sight would then need to be. Whether N has proof or merely evidence thus depends on the circumstances in which he is to be so credited. With that, Cook Wilson's conception of knowledge lines up, near enough, with what, when it comes to cases, we *recognise* knowledge to be. The question raised by subsequent Oxford philosophy is whether there is any alternative way of accomplishing this.

What thus emerges is an application of Austin's view of language to the special case of epistemic notions—as portrayed here, the case of assigning epistemic status. The general view applies equally, e.g., to talk of things being blue. There are, on the view, various things to be said in calling the sky blue, some true, some false. *What* one would say in so speaking varies with the circumstances of his doing so. Whether the sky is blue or not independent of any such circumstances—whether it is *really* blue—is thus an ill-formed question. The idea is: *mutatis mutandis* for knowledge.

Pia watches the pig emerge from its shelter and approach her. In *her* circumstances, does she know that a pig approaches? There are many occasions on which to say her to, or not, each one for reckoning her an authority on this or not. These may differ in what, on them, would merit such recognition. Pia might, thus, qualify as an authority on some, not on others. First, then, there are different things to be said, on different such occasions, in saying Pia to know that a pig approaches. Second, some such things to be said might be true, while others are false. There may

be truths and falsehoods thus to be expressed. Third, there is *nothing* either true or false to be said in saying Pia to know this *other than* what there is to be said on some such occasion. So there is nothing true, or false, to be said which *is* so said throughout. Such is knowledge on Austin's view.

What, then, of evidence? Is Sid's breath proof, or mere evidence, that he has been drinking? The question, as thus asked, might well leave us at a loss. On Austin's view, so asked (as such questions are asked in philosophy) it need have no answer. On some occasions, whether Sid has been drinking counts as more than can be settled by smelling his breath. His breath is, for those purposes, merely evidence. (One's smelling what he *thus* does, perhaps, does not settle whether Sid swallowed.) In others it might. The breath then counts as proof. The breath remains the same. What varies is what proof would be. What it varies across is occasions for counting that breath as evidence rather than proof, or vice-versa.

Pia stares at the approaching pig. Does she know that a pig approaches? Nothing in *her* circumstances answers that question. So far there is no determinate enterprise of settling whether a pig approaches which she has thus accomplished (or is in a position to) or not. There may now be occasions for counting her as knowing this, or as not—as authoritative, or not, on that subject. On some of these she may so count, on others not. Changing example, suppose the pig is a *bisaro*—a certain breed—and the question is whether Pia knows this. If she can tell a *bisaro* by sight, then, perhaps, yes. But *can* she tell a *bisaro* at sight? For a start, from what else need she be able to distinguish a *bisaro* to count as having this ability? Such is not the sort of thing fixed independent of some occasion for the question. This summarises Austin's core idea.

What now of the accretion? By it, one who knows that P must, on reflection, be able to answer a certain question. The question is, in effect, whether he has *proof* that P, or rather whether, so far as he can see, it is possible for P to be false—for him to be in error. As Pia, wandering by the pen, notes the pig therein, whether she knows that there is a pig in the pen, the idea is, turns on whether, on reflection, she could find the answer to *the* question whether she has proof of this. But if Austin's idea is right, there *is* no such question. There are questions to raise on particular occasions for raising one, and that is all. That Pia is strolling by the pen does not automatically make for any such occasion, or none providing a question that has answers. Just *seeing* a pig does not fix a determinate question as to whether one has proof of this. Whatever it does, it leaves countless further occasions on which to ask whether Pia *knew* there was a pig—thus, on the conception in common to Austin and Cook Wilson, whether she had proof. Whatever the answer to some supposed question raised just by her strolling by, it would not settle these further ones, each of which would be to be settled in its own distinct way, and, thus, if some in the affirmative, others not. On Austin's view, the accretion is simply senseless.

On the other hand, dropping the 'on reflection', when Pia sniffs the air in the forecourt of Sid's farm and says to herself, 'So. He keeps pigs,' if the question is whether she can see what she smells to rule out things being otherwise, and if it is a determinate one, there is no general obstacle to the answer being 'Yes'. Being able to appreciate the proof at one's disposal *can* consist, e.g., in seeing the pig and being able to tell what one is seeing.

At Oxford Austin's view of language did not long outlive his death. Cook Wilson's conception of knowledge (usually minus accretion) survived, most notably in two landmark

essays by John McDowell (1982, 1995). McDowell's main concern there is to resist a 'hybrid' view of knowledge, that is, the idea that this is a construct out of some non-factive attitude of a subject towards the world (e.g., belief) and some further condition of the world, not guaranteed by the first factor, where the subject need take no attitude towards that condition obtaining. His view of what knowledge is lines up, accordingly, with Cook Wilson.

With Austin, McDowell sees that such a view can stick only if the argument from illusion can be resisted. But he does not accept Austin's view of language. He sees that the argument might break down with the right stress on particular cases—Pia's then seeing the pig approaching (an historical event), rather than Pia seeing the pig approaching (something that might happen). One can then insist that there are two kinds of historical event. There are those where Pia, seeing the pig approaching, thereby sees that the (a) pig approaches. She then knows this on grounds of what she sees. (A good case). And there are those where, e.g., it seems to Pia just as though a pig approached, but none does. She is merely under the illusion of having seen that this is so. (A bad case.) That there are bad cases does not mean, on this idea, that there are not, or even not recognisably, good ones. The power of ringers is thus broken.

Occasions for McDowell are thus ones on which a candidate knower finds himself—e.g., facing a pig; whereas for Austin they are ones for ascribing epistemic statuses. Which leads McDowell to write,

Whether we like it or not, we have to rely on favours from the world ... that on occasion it actually is the way it appears to be. But that the world does someone the necessary favour, on a given occasion, of being the way it appears to be is not extra to the person's standing in the space of reasons. ... once she has achieved such a standing, she needs no extra help from the world to count as knowing. (1995: 406)

One may be under the illusion of being in a good case. If not, that is a favour from the world. For all of which, viewing someone in a good case, we may say of him, truly, that he knows.

How, then, is the distinction between good cases and bad ones to be drawn? There is the case where no pig approaches, but Pia suffers an illusion. That, of course, is a bad case. But, for familiar reasons, and others, it cannot be that every case in which a pig does approach is, by contrast, a good one. As McDowell himself puts it, "the unconnected obtaining of" (e.g., the that a pig approaches) cannot "have any intelligible bearing on an epistemic position" (1995: 403). If a pig does approach, this makes available something for Pia to appreciate as to how things stand (and how she does). But to see *that* a pig approaches (or to know this on grounds of what she sees) she must take up what is thus on offer. Which requires that she have, and exercise, a certain capacity: one to tell, in a situation such as hers, *whether* a pig approaches. So drawing the right distinction between good and bad cases means saying when she has such a capacity.

Now Austinian considerations re-enter. Most of us *often* count as able to tell a pig when we see one. But suppose we are in a region rife with tapirs, and suppose that (though these are distinguishable from pigs by sight) one of us might easily mistake a tapir for a pig. In such circumstances, we might not count (so easily) as being able to tell a pig when we see one. On what, then, does our having or lacking the capacity turn? Does it turn on whether there *are* tapirs

about (or some other sort of obstacle to our identifying correctly)? Or is it rather that whether we would *count* as having such a capacity turns on whether *it is to be supposed* that there very well might be tapirs about (or is some other obstacle)—supposed, that is, on some occasion for counting us as with, or without, capacity? For Austin, it is this last. For McDowell, it must be the first, on pain of accepting Austin's core idea about language. Can one make a go of this? We leave this topic here.

**3. Perception** A concern for realism motivates a fundamental strand of Oxford reflection on perception. Begin with the realist conception of knowledge. The question then will be: What must perception be if it can, on occasion, afford us with *proof* concerning a subject matter independent of the mind? The resulting conception of perception is not unlike the conception of perception shared by the Cambridge realist. Roughly speaking, perception is conceived to be a fundamental and irreducible sensory mode of awareness of mind-independent objects, a non-propositional mode of awareness that enables those with the appropriate recognitional capacities to have propositional knowledge concerning that subject matter.

The difference between Oxford and Cambridge realism concerns the extent of this fundamental sensory mode of awareness. Whereas Oxford realists maintained that perception affords us this sensory mode of awareness, Cambridge realists maintained that this mode of awareness has a broader domain. Let sense experience be the genus of which perception is a species. Cambridge realists maintained that *all* sense experience, and not just perception, involves this non-propositional mode of awareness. Cambridge realists are thus committed to a kind of *experiential monism* (in Snowdon's 2008 terminology). Specifically, all sense experience involves, as part of its nature, a non-propositional mode of awareness. Even subject to illusion or hallucination, there is something of which one is aware. And with that, they were an application of the argument from illusion, or hallucination, or conflicting appearances away from immaterial sense data and a representative realism that tended, over time, to devolve into a form of phenomenalism.

Framing the discussion is the fundamental realist commitment common to Cook Wilson and Moore—that the objects of knowledge are independent of the act of knowing. This is a thesis about knowledge, not perception. What connects this thesis to perception is a doctrine that perception makes the subject *knowledgeable* of its object. In being so aware of an object, the subject is in a position to know certain things about it, depending, of course, on the subject's possession and exercise of the appropriate recognitional capacities in the circumstances of perception. The subject is knowledgeable of the object of perception in the sense that knowledge is *available* to the subject in perceiving the object, whether or not such knowledge is in fact activated (in Williamson's 1990 terminology).

Suppose, then, that perception makes the subject knowledgeable of its object. The objects of perception are then at least potential objects of knowledge. If, in addition, knowledge is always knowledge of a mind-independent subject matter, then it follows that the objects of perception are themselves mind-independent and so independent of the act of perceiving. In this way the doctrine that perception is a form of knowing allows the realist conception of knowledge to have

implications for how perception is properly conceived in light of it.

Working out the demands of the realist conception of knowledge on the nature of perception was subject to internal and external pressures.

Internally, the core features of the realist conception of knowledge get differently conceived by different authors, in a process of refinement and extension, and so the demands that conception of knowledge places on the nature of perception are themselves reconceived. Importantly, an independent aspect of Cook Wilson's conception of knowledge, *the accretion*, an aspect endorsed by Prichard and rejected by Austin, turns out to be inconsistent with the idea that perception makes the subject knowledgeable of a mind-independent subject matter. So the development of the realist conception of knowledge involved not merely refinement and extension, but elimination as well.

Externally, Oxford reflection on perception is subject to alien influences, in particular, Cantabrigian and Viennese influences. Thus Price comes to Oxford from Cambridge where he was Moore's student. Paul comes to Oxford from Cambridge as well but studied with Wittgenstein. And Ayer, given Ryle's encouragement, studied for a time with the logical positivists in Vienna. Incorporating the insights and resisting the challenges posed by these alien influences play an important part in the development of philosophy of perception in Oxford.

The main source of Cook Wilson's (1926, 764–800) views on perception is a letter of July 1904 criticizing Stout's (1903-1904) "Primary and Secondary Qualities". To highlight the connections between his realist conception of knowledge and his views about perception, it is useful to begin, however, with Cook Wilson's (1926, 801–808) earlier letter of January 1904 to Prichard. There, Cook Wilson discusses two variants of a fundamental fallacy concerning knowledge or apprehension.

The first variant is the idealist attempt to understand knowledge as an activity. If knowledge is an activity, then in knowing something a subject must *do* something to the object known. But this, Cook Wilson claims, is absurd. The object of knowledge must be independent of the subject's knowing it, if coming to know is to be a discovery:

You can no more act upon the object by knowing it than you can 'please the Dean and Chapter by stroking the dome of St. Paul's'. The man who first discovered that equable curvature meant equidistance from a point didn't supposed that he 'produced' the truth—that absolutely contradicts the idea of truth—nor that he changed the nature of the circle or curvature, or of the straight line, or of anything spatial. (Cook Wilson, 1926, 802)

The second variant is the representative realist's attempt to understand knowledge and apprehension in terms of representation. Whereas the idealist attempts to explain apprehension in terms of *apprehending*, the representative realist attempts to explain apprehension in terms of *the object apprehended*, in the present instance, an idea or some other representation. The problem is that this merely pushes the problem back a level:

The image itself has still to be *apprehended* and the difficulty is only repeated. (Cook Wilson, 1926, 803)

How are the fallacies of explaining apprehension in terms of apprehending and in terms of the object of apprehension variants of the same fallacy? Both attempt to *explain* knowledge or apprehension:

Perhaps most fallacies in the theory of knowledge are reduced to the primary one of trying to *explain* the nature of knowledge or apprehending. We cannot *construct knowing*—the act of apprehending—out of any elements. I remember quite early in my philosophic reflection having an instinctive aversion to the very expression ‘*theory* of knowledge’. I felt the words themselves suggested a fallacy—an utterly fallacious inquiry, though I was not anxious to proclaim <it>. (Cook Wilson, 1926, 803)

This is a clear statement of the anti-hybridism or anti-conjunctivism about knowledge that McDowell (1982) and Williamson (2000) will later defend. So conceived, knowledge is not a hybrid state consisting of an internal, mental state and the satisfaction of some external conditions. Cook Wilson’s aversion to the “theory of knowledge” is just an aversion to explaining knowledge by constructing it out of elements, and this skepticism will be echoed by Prichard, Ryle, and Austin and in precisely these terms.

Does Cook Wilson himself endorse anti-hybridism about perception? In his letter to Stout he does defend a conception of perception as the direct apprehension of objects spatially external to the perceiving subject. And in the letter to Prichard he does at one point speak indifferently of knowledge, apprehension, and perception. Neither consideration is decisive. More telling, however, is that the variant fallacies are echoed in the letter written later that year to Stout on perception. In particular, both idealist and representative realist accounts of perception are criticized in line with the two variant fallacies concerning knowledge or apprehension. Let’s consider these in turn.

First, like Moore (1903), Cook Wilson emphasizes the distinction between the act of perceiving and the object of perception. In perceiving an object, the object appears to the subject, and so the subjective act of perceiving is sometimes described as an *appearance*. Given the act–object distinction, an appearance, so understood, is necessarily distinguished from the object. However, Cook Wilson warns against a misleading “objectification” of appearing:

But next the *appearance*, though properly the *appearing* of the object, gets to be looked on as itself an object and the immediate object of consciousness, and being already, as we have seen, distinguished from the object and related to our subjectivity, becomes, so to say, a mere subjective ‘object’—‘appearance’ in that sense. And so, as *appearance* of the object, it has now to be represented not as the object but as the phenomenon caused in our consciousness by the object. Thus for the true appearance (= appearing) to us of the *object* is substituted, through the ‘objectification’ of the appearing as appearance, the appearing to us of an *appearance*, the appearing of a phenomenon caused in us by the object. (Cook Wilson, 1926, 796)

If perceptual appearances are “the appearing of a phenomenon caused in us by the object”,

then it would be impossible for a subject to come to know about the mind-independent object on the basis of its perceptual appearance and hence impossible to discover how things stand with a mind-independent subject matter by perceiving:

It must be observed that the result of this is that there could be no direct perception or consciousness of Reality under any circumstances or any condition of knowing or perceiving; for the whole view is developed entirely from the fact that the object is distinct from our act of knowing it or recognizing it, which distinction must exist in any kind of knowing it or perceiving it. From this error would necessarily result a mere subjective idealism. Reality would become an absolutely unknowable 'Thing in Itself', and finally disappear altogether (as with Berkeley) as an hypothesis that we could not possibly justify. (Cook Wilson, 1926, 797)

This straightforwardly parallels the fallacy of explaining apprehension in terms of apprehending.

Second, Cook Wilson criticizes Stout's (1903-1904) representative realism. The basis of his criticism involves negative and positive claims about the nature of representation. The negative claim is that nothing is intrinsically representational: "Nothing has *meaning* in itself" (Cook Wilson, 1926, 770). The positive claim is put as follows: "Representation is our subjective act. ... It is *we* who mean" (Cook Wilson, 1926, 770). According to Cook Wilson, then, representation is something that the subject does.

How, according to Stout (1903-1904, 144), might the sensation of extension "represent, express, or stand for" extension? Plausibly in two ways: by resembling extension or by necessarily covarying with the presence of extension. However, the natural relations of mimesis and necessary covariation are *impersonal*—they obtain independently of anything that the subject does. And since they are *symmetric*, this has the surprising consequence that external qualities represent sensations. However, if representation is something that a subject does, then the natural relations of mimesis and necessary covariation could not make a sensation represent an external quality (let alone make an external quality represent a sensation, for plausibly nothing does). At most, mimesis and necessary covariation are natural relations that *incline* us to represent things by means of them:

It is we who make the weeping willow a symbol of sorrow. There may of course be something in the object which prompts us to give it a meaning, e.g., the resemblance of the weeping willow to a human figure bowed over in the attitude of grief. But the willow in itself can neither 'mean' grief, nor 'represent' nor 'stand for' nor 'express' grief. *We* do all that. (Cook Wilson, 1926, 770)

In using the willow to represent grief, the subject must apprehend the content of that representation. And that, according to Cook Wilson, is what prevents representation from figuring in an explanation of perceptual apprehension. This straightforwardly parallels the fallacy of explaining apprehension in terms of the apprehension of a representation.

Thus the two fallacies of explaining apprehension in terms of apprehending and in terms of

the object apprehended (a representation) arise in the perceptual case as well. This raises the question whether in the perceptual case these fallacies are variants of the fundamental fallacy of trying to *explain* perception in more fundamental terms. Just as knowledge cannot be explained in terms of belief that meets further external conditions, perhaps perception cannot be explained in terms of, say, experience or appearance that meets further external conditions. Cook Wilson expresses his skepticism about such explanations in the case of knowledge by denying that there is any such thing as a theory of knowledge. Farquharson in the postscript to *Statement and Inference* reports a similar attitude in the perceptual case: “He came to think of a theory of Perception as philosophically preposterous” (Cook Wilson, 1926, 882).

Even if Cook Wilson accepted an anti-hybridist conception of perception, we remain unclear why the realist conception of knowledge requires this. A reason begins to emerge with later Prichard’s case *against* the idea that perception is a form of knowing. While later Prichard opposes the doctrine that links the realist conception of knowledge with the nature of perception, his discussion reveals some of what is required if one were to retain the doctrine that perception makes us knowledgeable of a mind-independent subject matter.

The central argument occurs in Prichard’s (1938) “Sense Datum Fallacy”. His main target is the sense-datum theory of Cambridge realists. Like their Oxford counterparts, the Cambridge realists held that the object of knowledge is independent of the act of knowing, and that perception makes the subject knowledgeable of its object. Cambridge realism departs from Oxford realism in its adherence to a further thesis: that there is something of which a subject is aware in undergoing sense experience whether perceiving or no. According to the theories of Moore (1953), Russell (1912), and Price (1932), sense data are whatever we are aware of in sense experience. This characterization of sense data is *neutral* in the sense that it assumes nothing about the substantive nature of objects that play this epistemic role. We have already noted how the sense-datum theory is committed to an experiential monism—all experience involves, as part of its nature, a non-propositional sensory mode of awareness. A further commitment is presently important. For so conceived, sense data are objects whose substantive nature is open to investigation independent of our acts of awareness of them. It is this consequence of the conjunction of the realist conception of knowledge, the conception of the objects of perception as potential objects of knowledge, and the sense-datum theory that is Prichard’s primary target. And Prichard’s central thought is that perception could not make one knowledgeable of its object, since the object of perception depends on the subject’s experience of it in a way that the object of knowledge could not.

Much of Prichard’s case is a variant of Berkeley’s (1734a; 1734b) critique of Locke (1690). However, two arguments go beyond the familiar Berkelean critique. Both present important morals for Oxford realism. The moral of the first argument is that the accretion must be abandoned if Oxford realism is to be sustained. The moral of the second argument is that the realist conception of knowledge and the conception of the objects of perception as potential objects of knowledge together require abandoning the Cambridge realist’s commitment to experiential monism (though it will take the work of Austin (1962) and Hinton (1973) to begin to vindicate this).

The first argument can seem like a variant of the argument from illusion though it really has

a very different character:

... if perceiving were a kind of knowing, mistakes about what we perceive would be impossible, and yet they are constantly being made, since at any rate in the cases of seeing and feeling or touching we are almost always in a state of thinking that what we are perceiving are various bodies, although we need only to reflect to discover that in this we are mistaken. (Prichard, 1938,11)

Suppose a pig is in plain view of Sid, and Sid can recognize as a pig the animal that he sees. It might seem that what Sid is thus aware of is incompatible with there not being a pig before him. In which case, perception affords Sid something akin to proof of a porcine presence. In this way, perception can seem to make the subject knowledgeable of a mind-independent subject matter. Prichard's insight is that this picture is incompatible with a further feature of Cook Wilson's conception of knowledge, *the accretion*. Knowledge admits of no ringers—a state indiscriminable upon reflection from knowledge just is knowledge. What would it take for perception to make us knowledgeable of a mind-independent subject matter if there are no ringers for knowledge? If Sid's seeing the pig makes him knowledgeable of the pig's presence, then Sid must recognize that what he is aware of in seeing the pig is incompatible with the pig's absence. But is Sid in seeing the pig in a position to recognize that? After all, there are situations indiscriminable upon reflection from seeing a pig that do not involve the pig's presence. Sid's hallucination of the scene would be indiscriminable upon reflection from his perceiving it. If what Sid is aware of in seeing the pig is not discriminable upon reflection from what, if anything, he is aware of in hallucinating the pig, then it could seem that he is not in a position to recognize that what he is aware of in seeing the pig is incompatible with the pig's absence. He would lack proof of a pig before him. Since perception admits of ringers, it could not be a source of ringerless knowledge.

This argument reveals a tension within the Oxford realism of Cook Wilson and early Prichard. If Cook Wilson and early Prichard were right in claiming that the objects of knowledge are mind-independent objects, and the objects of perception are at least potential objects of knowledge, then these claims can only be sustained by abandoning the accretion.

Prichard's second argument derives from Paul (1936). Arguably it has ancient roots as well. At the very least, it is a variant of Berkeley's interpretation of the *Theatetus* (*Siris* §§ 253, 304-5). On the Berkelean interpretation, the objects of perception are in a perpetual flux of becoming. In perception, every subject is aware of the sensible qualities whose coming and going constitute the flux since every subject is the "measure" of what they perceive. Though perception affords us with awareness of its objects, this mode of awareness could not constitute knowledge since knowledge pertains to *being*, not *becoming*. More prosaically, the objects of perception could not have a continuing identity through time, if every feature they manifest is relativized to a perceiver at a time. Nor could the objects of perception be publicly accessible to different perceivers. But this would preclude the objects of perception from being objects of knowledge if knowledge is to have a mind-independent subject matter (see Burnyeat, 1990, for further discussion). Paul's discussion of sense data is of a piece. Paul, and Prichard following him, emphasize our inability to decide key questions about the persistence and publicity of sense data. If sense data are meant to be objects open to investigation independent of our awareness of them, then such questions should be

settled by looking to the sense data themselves. But our inability to decide such questions belies this thought. At best, sense data are shadows cast by experiences that can be elicited by suitably affecting the mind. So conceived, open questions about the nature of sense data are resolved not by investigation but by linguistic decision.

Suppose that sense data do not have a substantive nature open to investigation independent of our awareness of them in sense experience. There are at least three alternative morals:

1. One might claim that sense data constitutively depend on our awareness of them in sense experience. Sense data would be in this regard like Berkelean ideas. (Though neither deploy the sense-data vocabulary, Berkeley and later Prichard endorse this alternative.)
2. One might deny that there are any substantive facts about the nature of sense data that are open to investigation independent of our awareness of them in sense experience. (Wittgenstein, Paul, and Ayer endorse this alternative.)
3. One might retain the conception of perception as a sensory mode of awareness that makes one knowledgeable of a mind-independent subject matter by abandoning the fundamental claim of the sense-datum theory—that there is an object of which we are aware whenever we undergo sense experience—and the experiential monism that came in its wake. (Austin and Hinton endorse this alternative.)

There have been relatively few takers for the Berkelean alternative (though see Foster 2000 for a recent defense). We will set it aside and focus, instead, on the second and third alternatives, as represented by the work of Ayer and Austin respectively.

In the *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, Ayer (1940) takes over from the logical positivists the general idea that there is no substantive metaphysics and that metaphysical disagreements are better understood as practical disagreements about what language to adopt. Ayer applies this idea to sense data and suggests that talk of sense data is just an alternative way of talking about facts that all of us can agree about, namely, facts about appearances.

Ayer understands the argument from illusion to establish not that there are sense data, distinct from material objects, that are the objects of sensory awareness, if this is to be understood as a substantive metaphysical claim; rather, the argument from illusion highlights the practical need to regiment our perceptual vocabulary. According to Ayer, “see”, “perceive”, and their cognates have readings that implicate the existence of the object seen or perceived *and* readings that fail to so implicate. Sense-datum theorists, as Ayer understands them, simply regiment in favor of the existential reading. The practical need for talk of immaterial sense data arises in the context of an epistemological project:

For since in philosophizing about perception our main object is to analyse the relationship of our sense-experience to the propositions we put forward concerning material things, it is useful for us to have a terminology that enables us to refer to the contents of our experiences independently of the material things they are taken to present. (Ayer, 1940)

That project involved two central claims:

1. Sentences about material objects are empirically testable but do not admit of conclusive verification while
2. Sentences about sense data are *observation* sentences—they furnish evidence for other sentences and are themselves incorrigible.

Each claim is an instance of a more fundamental commitment that is independent of Ayer's positivism. Moreover, each stands opposed to fundamental claims in Cook Wilsonian epistemology and philosophy of language, at least as extended and refined by Austin.

The first claim involves a commitment to a Lockean conception of knowledge:

I believe that, in practice, most people agree with John Locke that "the certainty of things existing *in rerum natura*, when we have the testimony of our sense for it, is not only as great as our frame can attain to, but as our condition needs." (Ayer, 1940, 1)

The Lockean conception of knowledge is opposed to the Cook Wilsonian conception of knowledge as proof. If knowledge only requires as much certainty as our frame can attain to and as our condition needs, then such certainty can, and most certainly will, fall short of proof (as Ayer acknowledges in conceding that material sentences do not admit of conclusive verification.) In this way, this dispute replays key elements of the early modern dispute between Hobbes and Boyle on the epistemic status of experimental philosophy (see Shapin and Schaffer, 1985, for discussion).

The second claim involves a commitment to a form of foundationalism according to which there is a subclass of sentences (sentences about sense data) that can be incorrigibly known to be true. Moreover, these sentences can serve as the basis of an inferential transition to less certain sentences (sentences about material objects) that can nevertheless be known to be true on the basis of the evidence they provide. However, foundationalism, so conceived, conflicts with a fundamental claim in Cook-Wilsonian philosophy of language, at least as extended and refined by Austin.

Suppose that Sid sees a pig in plain view. The pig that Sid sees is a material object, and for Ayer statements about material objects do not admit of conclusive verification. His thought seems to be this. Contrast Sid seeing a pig in plain view with Sid seeming to see a pig but where there is no pig to be seen and where the Sid's seeming to see a pig is, at least in this instance, indiscriminable upon reflection from seeing a pig. While the statement "There's a pig" is true in the good case, it is false in the bad case. Since from Sid's perspective the bad case is a ringer for the good case, Ayer concludes that the possibility of Sid's mistakenly judging that a pig is before him in the bad case means that he cannot be certain that there is a pig before him in the good case. At most, he can have inconclusive evidence for there being a pig. But there is an incorrigible judgment that Sid can make in both cases, a judgment about how things appear to Sid in his experience. (For Ayer, this a judgment about sense data, but even philosophers who deny that there are sense data can, and do, accept the more general claim.) And this incorrigible knowledge of appearances constitutes the evidence for the truth of material object sentences.

Ayer is supposing that there is a type of sentence, an observation sentence that represents how things appear in Sid's experience, that can be incorrigibly known to be true by Sid independently of the occasion of his expressing this knowledge. Against this claim, Austin insists that the truth of a claim is only determined by the standards in play on the occasion of utterance. Thus, there could be no sentence that is true independent of an occasion of utterance, and, hence, no such sentence could be incorrigibly known to be true.

While no sentence can be incorrigibly known to be true independent of an occasion of utterance, that's not to say that there are no occasions of utterance where Sid can speak with certainty. But recognizing that there are occasions where things can be incorrigibly known undermines the thought that what can be incorrigibly known is restricted to reports about how things appear in sense experience. If circumstances are propitious, Sid can just know that there is a pig before him by seeing the pig and can express this knowledge by saying "There's a pig". This is not undermined by there being other circumstances or other occasions where the very same sentence could be used to say something false and so fail to express knowledge. That there are other possible circumstances where Sid would speak falsely and fail to express knowledge is consistent with Sid, in the present circumstances, speaking truly and expressing knowledge of a pig before him. (It is on these grounds that Austin rejects the accretion.)

We are now in a position to appreciate the emerging need for an anti-hybridist conception of perception. Nothing short of Sid's encounter with a pig in sight could make Sid knowledgeable of the pig if this is akin to the availability of proof. It is the presentation of the pig in perceptual experience, an object whose existence is incompatible with there not being a pig, that makes Sid knowledgeable. The relation to the object of perception that makes a subject knowledgeable of that object simply couldn't be present in a case of hallucination. This is at the very least in tension with the idea that the subject could be so related in part by undergoing an appearance that can obtain independently of the material object that it is taken to present.

Anti-hybridism about perception is a thesis about the nature of perception—that perception cannot be reductively explained in terms of a hybrid state consisting of an internal mental component and an external non-mental component. Experiential monism, in contrast, is a thesis about the nature of sense experience understood as the genus of which perception is a species—that sense experience has a unitary nature. Despite being conceptually distinct in this way, the emerging debate reveals a tension between these doctrines, at least when set against a concern for realism. Oxford and Cambridge realists share a conception of knowledge where the objects of knowledge are independent of the act of knowing and a conception of perception where perception makes the subject knowledgeable of its object by affording sensory awareness of it. Cambridge realists, however, further held that the sensory mode of awareness was not distinctive of perception but characterized sense experience more generally. If the non-propositional mode of awareness characterizes sense experience generally, and if the arguments from illusion, hallucination, or conflicting appearances lead one to conclude that the objects of awareness are not ordinary material things like pigs, then it would be increasingly difficult to retain a common sense realism according to which Sid's seeing the pig puts him in a position to know that there is a pig before him. While Austin is not explicitly committed to the denial of experiential monism, he may be implicitly committed to its denial insofar as experiential monism

is in tension with the common sense realism that he sought to defend with anti-hybridist conceptions of perception and knowledge. It will take the work of Hinton (1973), specifically his reflections on the semantics and epistemology of perception–illusion disjunctions, to make the denial explicit. Disjunctivists are experiential pluralists. Part of the point of such pluralism is to acknowledge what’s distinctive about perception. And according to the present tradition, adequately conceiving of perception requires acknowledging what’s distinctive about perceptual experience if it can make us knowledgeable of a world without the mind.

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