

SPACES AND TIMES

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WE are accustomed to thinking of space and time as particulars or individuals—even if we should hesitate to describe them as things or objects or substances. We say ‘space has three dimensions’, ‘material things occupy space’, ‘the debris has disappeared into space’ and we talk in a comparable fashion about time. Not only do we think of space and time as individuals but, in many connections at any rate, we think of them as *unique* individuals. When we talk about spaces and times in the plural, when we say ‘fill up the spaces on the form’, ‘it could go in the space between the lamp and the door’, ‘there were peaceful times in the early years of their marriage’ we think of these multiple spaces and times as parts of the unique all-encompassing space and the unique all-encompassing time. Kant believed that we could not help thinking of them in this way. We do, at any rate, in fact think like this and it is this conviction that I want to examine. What, I shall ask first of all, does the belief that space and time are unique individuals come to? Secondly, is the belief in either case true? Finally, if it is true in either case, is it necessarily true or is it simply a matter of fact?

1

What, to start with, does it mean to say that space is a unique individual? We could say instead that all real things are contained in one and the same space. Two things are in the same space if they are spatially connected, if there is a route connecting them, if each lies at some definite distance and in some definite direction from the other. The relation of spatial connection is clearly symmetrical. If I know the route leading from A to B, I must also know the route leading from B to A. It is also transitive. Given the route from A to B and the route from B to C the route from A to C is unequivocally determined. Now it does not follow from these properties of the relation of spatial connection that everything is in one and the same space, that everything is spatially connected to everything else. What does follow is that if A and B are spatially connected then everything spatially connected to A is spatially connected to B and vice versa. Spatial connection is analogous in form to identity in colour, which is also symmetrical and transitive. Provided that A and B are identical in colour everything identical in colour with A is identical in colour with B. But there are, of course, many distinct

colours and so many pairs of things which, while identical in colour with some things, are not identical in colour with each other. So far, then, it is an open possibility that spatial things should be arranged in spatially connected groups—just as coloured things can be arranged in colour-identical groups—all of whose members were spatially connected to each other but none of whose members were spatially connected to any of the members of any other group. To say that everything is in one space is simply to deny this possibility and to assert that all things are spatially connected. Naturally this assertion applies only to things that are in some sense spatial, things to which spatial predicates can intelligibly be ascribed. But this qualification does not affect the situation. The unity of space is not involved in the conception of a spatial thing. To say that a thing is spatial is to say either or both of the following: (a) that it is extended, that its parts are spatially connected to one another and (b) that it is spatially related, that it is spatially connected to something distinct from itself. It does not follow from either of these or from both of them taken together that it is spatially connected to everything. It does not follow, then, from the mere conception of a spatial thing that space is a unique individual. So far the formal possibility of a plurality of spaces remains open.

The same thing holds for time, as can easily be shown. Let us call two events temporally connected if there is a time-interval between them or if they are simultaneous. This relation, like that of spatial connection, is clearly symmetrical and transitive. So it allows for self-contained and exclusive groups of temporally connected events. Nor does the unity of time follow from the conception of a temporal thing or event. A temporal thing is something that occupies a lapse of time, that has temporally connected parts or phases and/or is something that is temporally connected to something else. From neither of these conditions does it follow that a temporal thing is temporally connected to everything.

But although the unity of space and the unity of time are not formally deducible from the concepts of spatial and temporal connection or the concepts of spatial and temporal things we do appear to believe that space and time are unities. Our direct information about the spatial and temporal connection of things is comparatively local. We observe the spatial disposition of things—the tree beside the barn, the mountain on the other side of the river—and we observe their temporal succession—the egg-white turning into a meringue, the bruise following the blow. Cartographers and chronologists piece these facts together in a single system of spatial and temporal positions. Provided that they can be answered at all, questions as to where things are or were and when they happened

can always, it seems, be answered in terms of a system of positional references in which all positions are connected. As things are if a thing cannot be found a home in this unitary system of positions we conclude that there is no such thing.

The belief in the existence of one all-embracing space and one all-embracing time has not gone unchallenged. Bradley, in his determination to show the merely apparent character of space and time, addresses himself to the question at various points in his writings.¹ He argues that the unity of space and of time is not only no necessity but that it is not even a fact. Why, he asks, should we take time as one succession and not as a multitude of series which are altogether temporally disconnected and separate although the members of each such series are temporally related to one another? In support of this proposal he draws attention to the relation between events in dreams and stories. In these imaginings events occur that are indisputably temporal entities since they are temporally related to other events in the same imagining. Yet these events cannot be located in the framework of public or historical time. Bradley rejects the suggestion that they should be dated by the time of their appearance in the mental history of the imaginer which can, we may assume, be located in ordinary public time. His argument is characteristically summary: it would be absurd, he says, to date the events of a novel by the date of its publication. The point he is making can be more persuasively developed. We can understand having good reason for saying that a dream lasted for thirty seconds or less of the dreamer's mental history while the content of the dream occupied a much greater tract of time. Here the events of the dream and the process of dreaming it are at least in the same order though the intervals between the things ordered are different. But we could also have reason for saying that the things I dreamt about on Monday were subsequent to the events I dreamed about on Tuesday. For on Monday I might have dreamt about myself as I am now and on Tuesday about myself as a child at school. Similarly it is quite possible for novelists to think up and for novel-readers to read what would naturally be called the later part of a story before the earlier part. Isherwood's *The Memorial* and Fitzgerald's *Tender Is The Night* are familiar examples of the latter possibility. Bradley goes on to suggest that even if all the events of which I am aware do fit into one all-inclusive temporal scheme it does not follow that there could not be events entirely unrelated to my time-series. But this is an empty proposal since he does not suggest any circumstances in which we could have any reason to think that there were such series. He attempts to dispose of the unity of space in a more cursory way. At

¹F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, chapter 18, pp. 186-9

first glance the order of extension seems to be one whole. But if we reflect we can see that extension is manifested in dreams: the trapeze I dream that I am swinging on is an obviously spatial thing but it is connected by no spatial route whatever to the familiar spatial contents of the common world.

Bradley's arguments for plurality all derive from the spaces and times of imagination. But since Russell's first works on the theory of knowledge we have become familiar with another source for arguments of the same kind—the spaces and times of sensation. My visual sense-data are extended, spatial entities, occupying positions and spatially interrelated to other things in the space of my momentary visual field. To the extent that my sense-data are veridical and have been obtained under normal conditions of observation they will at least correspond to the contents of common, public space. But they are not located in it. For I am the only person in the world who is even tempted to suppose that they are to be found there. And I need not give way to this temptation. If I look at a mountain and then close my eyes I do not suppose that anything at all has happened in the part of public space that is occupied by the mountain. To the extent that my sense-data are not veridical they do not usually even correspond to anything in public space. At best they have some sort of causal determinant within it. To take an example whose existence at least is uncontentious: my after-image is plainly a spatial thing, it occupies at any one moment a definite position in my visual field, but it has no real location in the public world.

There is a short but not entirely convincing answer to Bradley's arguments from the spaces and times of imagination. It could be said that imaginary objects and events, the contents of our dreams and fantasies, are nowhere at all. The contents of our imaginings are simply unreal. They can raise no problems of spatial and temporal location because they just do not exist. But to this it could be replied that although the trapeze I dreamed about last night has never hung in any actual, publicly observable circus tent, there really was something, a private entity, an image or dream-element, of which I was aware shortly before I woke up this morning. The remarks I produce at the breakfast table are not free and spontaneous creations, mere playing with words. I make earnest efforts to get my descriptions right, to leave nothing out, to set out the events dreamed of in the exact order in which I dreamt them. Bradley's argument can only be countered in this way if one is prepared to adopt a theory of dreaming like Professor Malcolm's which takes them to be no more than the utterance of sentences which, though just like the sentences we use to give genuine descriptions of our past experience, are not in fact being used for this purpose and are not intended to

be understood as if they were. If this is accepted we do not have to worry about the spatial and temporal character of whatever it is that the report of a dream describes because such reports do not describe anything.

The most straightforward way of bringing out the implausibility of this theory is phenomenological: one has only to point to the experienced difference between making a story up out of one's head and reporting a dream or an earlier product of the imagination. There are two sides to the activities of the imagination: the story and the experience. The story is the words, written or spoken, in which a dream is reported or a piece of fiction is told. The experience is the body of images or private elements that the dreamer was aware of while he was dreaming, that the novelist was aware of while he was working out his book and that the reader is no doubt intermittently aware of as he reads. Only if we can eliminate the experience, by regarding it, for example, as no more than the disposition to produce a story, can Bradley's argument be summarily disposed of. Even if we do eliminate experience from our account of imagination there is still the spatial and temporal character of sensation to be dealt with. Bradley's argument for a plurality of spaces and times can be said to rest, then, on the spatial and temporal character of private experience—of images, dreams and sense-impressions. In private experience we are aware of things that are spatially extended and temporally enduring. These things are spatial and temporal in virtue both of the spatial and temporal relations between their parts and of the fact that they are spatially and temporally related to other spatial and temporal things. The dream-trapeze has ropes stretching away above the bar and the whole thing hovers above the sawdust surface of the dream arena. If we cannot show private experience to be the disposition to speak in a peculiar way we must either accommodate its contents in the unitary space and time of the common world or concede Bradley's point—that there is in fact a plurality of spaces and times.

We should perhaps reconsider this first alternative that Bradley so rapidly brushed aside. Can the tiger I am now picturing in my mind's eye be accommodated in public space? It cannot be accommodated at the place at which it looks as if it were. In the first place it may not look as if it were anywhere in particular. The background against which I am now experiencing it may be too dim and vague to provide any clue to location or it may be entirely unfamiliar. In these circumstances there can be no such activity as trying to find out where it is imagined to be. All I can do is to imagine it to be definitely somewhere, perhaps on the steps of the Albert Memorial and thus against a definite background located in public space.

But in doing this I have not so much found out where it was as moved it there or, should one say, imagined another, no doubt very similar, tiger to be there. The situation is no better if the tiger does definitely look as if it were at some known and familiar place. For even if I dream of a tiger on the steps of the Albert Memorial, the real steps of the real Albert Memorial are not occupied by the tiger I am aware of in my dream. I can perfectly well have such a dream and accept reliable testimony that no tiger has been seen anywhere near the place I dreamt of. Even if, by some wild chance, there was an escaped tiger on the actual steps at the moment I was having my dream, we do not have to say that it is the very tiger I was dreaming of, however close the similarity. If my dreams turned out to be consistently correct representations of what was currently going on in the places I was dreaming about we might come to regard them as visions or cases of long-distance perception. But in that case they would no longer be dreams and it is characteristic of dreams that they do not exhibit any reliably attested correspondence of this kind.

The only other alternative is to locate the dreamed-of or imagined tiger at the place where I am, as, for example, quite literally, in my head. But this is an obviously hopeless manoeuvre. When I dream of tigers there generally are no tigers anywhere near where I am, my head is not large enough to contain tigers, the possible pattern of electrical activity in my brain associated with dreaming of tigers is not identifiable with the tigers I dream of since I know that I have dreamt of tigers but the electrical activity is an unstable compound of hearsay and guesswork. We cannot literally identify the places *in* my experience with the places *of* my experience.

2

Is the same thing true of time? Earlier, developing a rather sketchy argument of Bradley's, I suggested that the lapse of time someone dreams of might be much greater than the interval between the time at which he began to dream of it and the time at which he stopped doing so and I also suggested that one could dream of events happening in an order opposite to that of the events of dreaming of them. It might seem that these suggestions could be resisted. Could we not say that the estimate of time made in the dream is just a mistaken one, that the dreamed-of fall from the top of the building and the dreamed-of splash into the river are really only a fifteenth of a second apart even though they seemed in the dream to be separated by an interval of several seconds or even minutes? Again if I dream on Monday of taking off bandages to find my wound almost healed and on Tuesday of receiving the wound with a great deal of associated connecting tissue to link the two dreams together

am I not compelled to say that the time in the dreams is in reverse order to the time of dreaming them? The wound I dream of on Tuesday could be said to be a new wound in the same place, if we felt compelled to link the two dreams together. In the first example the determination to identify the time of the dream with the time of dreaming is rather gratuitous. The correlation of dreams with their manifestations in the public world is tentative and infrequent. My audible cry of 'help' does not have to be taken as simultaneous with my dreaming of a fall from the building nor my visible shudder with the splash. In most cases there is nothing even to suggest to us that the time of the events dreamed of is anything but what it appears to be. In the second example the situation is not so clear. In the first place the temporal propriety being defended is of a more fundamental kind. The topology of time-order is more sacred than the geometry of time-intervals. All the same it would seem unreasonable to deny that there was a difference between the time of the dream and the time of dreaming it if on a series of twelve nights one dreamt and remembered in precise detail a series of occurrences whose content could only be naturally arranged in exactly the reverse order to that in which they were dreamed. My general conclusion, so far, then is that we do have reason for admitting the existence of a plurality of experiential spaces over and above the space of the common world and that we could have reason for a similar admission about experiential times. There is no obvious contradiction in saying that there is such a plurality and, given the implausibility of strictly verbal accounts of private experience, better reason for saying that they do exist than that they do not. However if we consider the character of these experiential spaces and times more closely it will appear that they are so different from physical space and time that the concession we have made to Bradley's line of thought involves only a small modification of the common conviction of spatial and temporal unity.

3

There are two fundamental differences between physical and experiential space and time. Where the physical is vast and systematic, the experiential is small and fragmentary; where the physical is public, the experiential is private. These are not exactly contingent features even though comprehensiveness and publicity could vary in degree. Consider the space of dreams. There is ordinarily no ground for saying that the space of Monday night's dream has anything to do, or is any way connected, with the space of Tuesday night's dream. We often have several spatially disconnected dreams in one night. And in the course of one more or less continuous dream it is

only the comparatively momentary spatial relationships of the dreamed-of things, the spatial relationships revealed in a temporal cross-section of the whole dream, that are at all definite. First I am on the trapeze. Below me I see a familiar face. Shortly afterwards my friend and I are seated side by side in a boat. Such continuity as there is is provided by the familiar face but it is not sufficient to establish any spatial relation between the trapeze and the boat. Many dreams are more coherent than this, of course, but it would seem that the constructibility of non-momentary spaces, spaces that endure as the scenes of comparatively protracted change, is the exception rather than the normal case in the experiential realm. We do have dreams where temporally successive incidents occur against a fairly definite and persisting background and there can be enough correspondence between the spatial contents of two quite distinct dreams for it to be reasonable to regard both as relating to one and the same spatial order. But as things are this is about as much in the way of system and coherence as our dreams ordinarily yield. It is plain that the same thing holds for our imaginings which, being so much more interrupted, so much more exposed to the solicitations of the external world, are perhaps even less coherent than dreams. It is also to some extent true of our sensations which only become coherent as a result of a good deal of suppression and filling-in. Privacy is as obvious a feature of the experiential realm as fragmentariness or incoherence. Nobody, as things are, can tell what our dreams or imaginings are unless we tell them. In the case of sensations reliable inferences can be made on the basis of well-established correlations between sense-experience and the condition and environment of the observer. If such correlations were available for inference to the other domains of experience they would have to rest in the end on the admissions of observers. We can imagine circumstances in which the correspondence between the dreams of two or more people was so extensive as to lead us to say that they were dreaming the same dream, especially if in the event of some marginal disagreement between two corresponding dreamers one of them subsequently admitted that he was mistaken. If there were many more blind people than there are the remarks of the sighted about clouds and sunsets might well appear to be the by-products of a widely-shared dream. This is not altogether unfamiliar ground. The raptures of mysticism and musical appreciation incite, in rather different ways, just such a response amongst the less respectful of the uninitiated. Only if the correspondence becomes general enough to count as normal can dreaming come to be accounted as observation.

These differences between physical and experiential space and time are substantial enough as things are for the thesis that space and

time are unitary to survive Bradley's arguments almost intact. Instead of saying that there is only one space and only one time the defender of unity must say that there is only one space and only one time that is coherent or public or both. Coherent and/or public space and time are, he might say, the only real space and time. Other spatial and temporal entities are fragmentary and private, a sort of ontological litter to be bundled into the wastepaper basket of the imaginary. He could argue that we only count those things as real that can be fitted into the one coherent and public space and time, that such locatability is a criterion of being real. For what is a dream or a fantasy or an illusion of the senses but an experience that fails to fit into the unitary spatio-temporal scheme? From this it follows that Descartes' hypothesis that perhaps everything is a dream is illegitimate. It cannot be significantly affirmed since to call a tract of experience a dream is to say that it fails to conform to the standard of coherence and publicity exhibited by the greater part of our experience. So to say that all our experience is a dream is to say that none of it comes up to the standard of most of it, a straight self-contradiction. Here is one case, at any rate, where the paradigm-case argument works. It does not entirely dispose of the Cartesian hypothesis. A man might have acquired a standard of coherence from somewhere else, perhaps a religious experience, though this would not show that the present distinction between waking and dreaming was improper, only that it should be differently named. More important is the fact that even if life hitherto cannot all have been a dream it does not follow that the whole structure will not come to pieces in the next few minutes, that from then on none of our experience will attain the standard we have come to expect and all will be as incoherent as what we have hitherto regarded as dreams.

4

The position we have arrived at, then, is that even if it is not true that absolutely everything can be located in one space and one time, everything real, provided that it is spatial and temporal at all, can be so located. If the suggestion that such locatability is a criterion of being real is correct, it follows that the thesis of unity in its revised form is a necessary truth. Now this is essentially the opinion of Kant.² Space and time, he said, are not discursive or general concepts of the relations of things in general but pure intuitions. In other words they are not universals but particulars and unique particulars at that. His argument is that we can only conceive limited spaces and times as parts of one all-inclusive space and one all-inclusive time. These unique particulars are not literally composed of perceptually

²*Critique of Pure Reason*, A25, B39.

observed spatial extents and temporal durations, are not constructions from these extents and durations as elements, because they are somehow presupposed by these elements.

The logical status of arguments from conceivability is always insecure and in this type of case especially so, for we are concerned with a very primordial feature of our experience. Our habits of thinking about space and time are so early acquired and so deeply ingrained that their extreme familiarity can easily look like logical indispensability. It is clear anyway that we do in fact take all real spatial extents and temporal durations to be parts of the one space and the one time. But Kant is claiming more than this and to assess his claim we must ask whether we are compelled to think in this way. We can even concede that on our present interpretation of 'real' the statement 'everything real is in one space and in one time' is analytic. The question still remains whether there are any conceivable circumstances in which it would be reasonable to modify this interpretation. For it can be maintained that there are, in a sense, degrees of analyticity. That we have a certain concept at all can often be explained by referring to facts which might not have obtained. With any one concept there may be a number of such explanatory facts which can be arranged in some order of importance. The essentials of the concept would remain if some of the less important facts did not obtain and if, therefore, the conventions that depend on them did not exist. Let us take a very simple example, that of brotherhood. Our existing concept of brotherhood is determined by facts of biology and sociology. Men are borne by women, as a result of sexual intercourse between those women and other men, and pass the helpless years of infancy in a group commonly led, protected and provided for by their parents. Now imagine a society in which women were elaborately promiscuous or in which all conception came about through artificial insemination by anonymous donors. Suppose also that the family group consisted of the mother and her children alone. In these circumstances we should presumably count children of the same mother as brothers and the statement 'all brothers have both parents in common' would be no longer analytic but contingent and false. It is too narrow to describe this situation as one in which we should use the word 'brother' to mean what we now mean by 'maternal half-brother'. For what is really important about the concept of brotherhood, that it relates persons who share both a biological inheritance and certain fundamental loyalties and affections, is still retained by the revised concept. Now suppose that children were taken from their mothers at birth and brought up in institutions. Even here there might be some point in having the

concept if the institutions in which children were brought up had something of the emotional structure of the ordinary human family as it now exists.

Let us look at a more complicated and perhaps more philosophically interesting example considered by Professor Ayer, which concerns the privacy of pain.³ As things are, the causal conditions of pain are commonly found in the body of the sufferer. If I am in pain it is not usually the case that anyone near me has a similar affliction and I cannot generally get rid of the pain by moving about. Now suppose that circumstances were different, that everyone whose body is in a certain region of space during a certain period of time feels a pain of much the same sort, that the intensity of this pain uniformly diminishes as they move away from a determinable point in the region and that it disappears altogether when they are at a certain distance, roughly agreed upon by all, beyond this central point. In these circumstances, Ayer suggests, we might well cease to think of pains, as we now do, as being private and might come to accord them much the same sort of status as we now give to material things. 'Look out', we might say to a man walking in a certain direction, 'there's a pain there'; and we might say this with good reason even if there were at the time no one in the region in question and therefore no one suffering the pain. If this were to come about people might cease to speak of 'my pain' and 'your pain' and there would be no question that different people could feel the very same pain. In other words the statement 'no one but me can feel the pain I am feeling' would no longer be analytic. The same thing would happen to the statement 'all pains are felt by somebody'.

It would still, of course, be open to philosophers to talk about pain-data and they might well be encouraged to do so if there were perceptible differences of sensitivity between people or if some people felt pain in places where nobody else did. They would have the same reasons for talking about pain-data and pain-hallucinations as they now have for talking about sense-data and hallucinations of the senses. Ayer's supposition reveals the contingencies on which our current convictions about the concept of pain rest. If it came true it would be reasonable to alter these conventions and to regard many statements as synthetically true or false which we now regard as analytic or contradictory. The essentials of the concept have not been tampered with; under his supposition there are still experiences which people generally and instinctively dislike having.

Can we construct a myth that will reveal the ultimately conventional character of the Kantian thesis that real space and time are unitary? Do our current convictions about the unity of space and

³A. J. Ayer, *The Problem of Knowledge*, chapter V, section iii, pp. 228-9.

time rest in the end on contingencies which we can conceive as ceasing to obtain? I believe that there is an important asymmetry in this respect between space and time and I shall argue that a coherent multi-spatial myth can be envisaged but not a coherent multi-temporal one. So I shall begin with space.

5

Now suppose that your dream-life underwent a remarkable change. Suppose that on going to bed at home and falling asleep you found yourself to all appearances waking up in a hut raised on poles at the edge of a lake. A dusky woman, whom you realise to be your wife, tells you to go out and catch some fish. The dream continues with the apparent length of an ordinary human day, replete with an appropriate and causally coherent variety of tropical incident. At last you climb up the rope ladder to your hut and fall asleep. At once you find yourself awaking at home, to the world of normal responsibilities and expectations. The next night life by the side of the tropical lake continues in a coherent and natural way from the point at which it left off. Your wife says 'You were very restless last night. What were you dreaming about?' and you find yourself giving her a condensed version of your English day. And so it goes on. Injuries given in England leave scars in England, insults given at the lakeside complicate lakeside personal relations. One day in England, after a heavy lunch, you fall asleep in your armchair and dream of yourself, or find yourself, waking up in the middle of the night beside the lake. Things get too much for you at the lakeside, your wife has departed with all the cooking-pots and you suspect that she is urging the villagers to sacrifice you to the moon. So you fall on your fish-spear and from that moment on your English slumbers are disturbed no more than in the old pre-lakeside days.

There are some loose ends in this story but I think they can be tidied up. What, first of all, about your lakeside life before the dream began? Either the lakesiders will have to put up with the fact that you have lost your memory, and we can leave it open whether they are in a position to fill in the blank for you or not, or you might find 'memories' of your earlier lakeside career spontaneously cropping up. The most immediately digestible possibility is perhaps a version of the latter in which your lakeside past gradually comes back to you after an initial period of total amnesia. But complete loss of memory is the easiest to handle. Next, how are the facts that you are awake sixteen hours and asleep eight hours in each environment to be reconciled? How can sixteen hours of England be crammed into eight hours of lake and vice versa? Well, why not? As long as there is some period of sleep in each day in each place there is room for the waking day in the other place. We often say, after all, that dreams

seem to take much longer than they actually do. The same principle could be applied to our alternative worlds. To make the thing fairly precise we could correlate hours in England with hours by the lakeside, on the basis of nocturnal mumblings and movements, so that midnight to eight a.m. in England is eight a.m. to midnight at the lake and vice versa. This would have mildly embarrassing consequences but not contradictory ones. If I stay up till 4 a.m. in England I cannot wake up beside the lake until 4 in the afternoon. If an alarm clock wakes me two hours early in England, i.e. at 6 a.m., then I shall find myself dropping irresistibly off at eight p.m. by the lake. One embarrassment is common to both hypotheses: if in either place I stay up all night I must sleep all through the day in the other. Some of these embarrassments can be avoided by supposing that the lakeside day is normally eight hours long and the lakeside night sixteen hours long. To imagine such a comatose manner of life is perhaps easier than having to put up with the embarrassments of rigid correlation.

Now if this whole state of affairs came about it would not be very unreasonable to say that we lived in two worlds. So far it may seem that only one of the properties of physical space as we understand it has been added to the space of dreams, namely its coherence. But it only takes a small addition to equip it with publicity, an addition already implicit in the fable as I have told it. For I am not alone at the lakeside, there is my wife and the moon-worshipping villagers, whose statements and behaviour may confirm all the spatial beliefs I form at the lakeside, with the usual minor exceptions. It might be argued that this sort of publicity is bogus, that it is only dream-publicity. But as it stands this is just prejudice. At the lakeside, on my hypothesis, we have just as good reason to take our spatial beliefs as publicly confirmed as we have in England. However, a less questionable type of publicity can be provided if we suppose that the dreams of everyone in England reveal a coherent order of events in our mythical lake district and let everyone have one and only one correlated lake-dweller whose waking experiences are his dreams. (In this case we should have to correlate the clocks of England and the lakeside, either by the rather embarrassing proposal of elastic time-intervals or by that of the eight-hour lakeside day. For otherwise I could drop off at the lakeside on Monday, wake up before you go to sleep and tell you a whole lot of things about Tuesday in England before, from your point of view, they had happened.) There are various ways in which we can suppose that people who know one another in England could come to recognise one another at the lakeside, for example, by the drawing of self-portraits from memory or by agreeing, in England, to meet at some lakeside landmark.

I shall not pursue the hypothesis of a dream that is public in this strong sense since it becomes imaginatively too cumbersome, though not, I think, self-contradictory. One special difficulty is that in such circumstances some measure of causal interpenetration by the two worlds would be natural. Even if physical causation cannot, *ex hypothesi*, operate from one region into the other, psychological causation presumably would. The injury I do you at the lakeside may be revenged not there but in England. I think, in fact, that my original one-man hypothesis is sufficient for the purpose in hand. But we can publicise this a bit further without going all the way to publicity in the strong sense. It might, for instance, be the case that everyone's dream-life was coherent but that no one person's dream-life corresponded with anyone else's. In this case everyone would inhabit two real spaces, one common to all and one peculiar to each. This residual asymmetry can, of course, be eliminated by requiring that the same be true of all the lakesiders. On this supposition the worlds we have some reason to believe in fray off into infinity. Each of my lakeside acquaintances has his other life, in which he comes across people, each of whom has his and so on. But this infinity does not seem to be a vicious one.

It might be said that if this myth were realised we should either have to say that the dream-place was somewhere in ordinary physical space or else that it was still only a dream. Both of these alternatives can be effectively disputed. Suppose that I am in a position to institute the most thorough geographical investigations and however protractedly and carefully these are pursued they fail to reveal anywhere on earth like my lake. But could we not then say that it must be on some other planet? We could but it would be gratuitous to do so. There could well be no positive reason whatever, beyond our fondness for the Kantian thesis, for saying that the lake is located somewhere in ordinary physical space and there are, in the circumstances envisaged, good reasons for denying its location there. Still suppose we do find a place, in New Guinea let us say, exactly like the lakeside. I, the dreamer, lead the expedition into the village, brandishing trade goods. Friendly relations having been established with the elders of the place, we are led to the longhouse to meet the populace and there, to my amazement, is the face I have often seen in my dreams while bending over the pools at the lake's edge in pursuit of fish. Now if the owner of this face is fast asleep and cannot be woken up until I go to sleep this village and the place of my dreams can be identified. But suppose he is wide awake and we get into conversation. He turns out to have coherent dreams about my life in England and in fact to have dreamt last night of my progress towards the village on the preceding day, just as I dreamt last night

of what he was doing the day before. The natural conclusion will be that we are connected by a kind of delayed cross-telepathy and that what the Kantian insists are still only dreams are at any rate in the same order of reality as dreams. If, then, we do find what is to all intents and purposes the place of my dreams, the Kantian's dilemma—either in the one real space or just a dream—does apply. But if we do not there is no reason to insist upon it.

If, failing to find the scene of my coherent dream in ordinary physical space, we insist that it is, then, only a dream we are neglecting the point of marking off the real from the imaginary. Why, as things are, do we have this ontological wastepaper basket for the imaginary? Because, approximately, there are some experiences that we do not have to bother about afterwards, that we do not, looking back on them, need to take seriously. Dream-events, where they have consequences at all, do not have serious consequences. If I dream of cutting somebody's throat my subsequent dreams will in all probability be entirely unrelated to him and to my act. Even if they are, when I am haled into court I am as likely to be given a bunch of flowers as a death-sentence. But beside the lake there is a place for prudence, forethought and accurate recollection. It is an order of events in which I am a genuine agent. There is every reason there for me to take careful note and make deliberate use of my experience. Reality, I am suggesting, then, is that part of our total experience which it is possible and prudent to take seriously. It is, of course, because I am ultimately interpreting reality in this way that I can envisage dispensing with locatability in one physical space and time as a criterion of it. My conclusion so far, then, is that it is a contingent matter that the experience we can and prudently should take seriously can all be assigned to one space. Kant's unity of space is not an unalterable necessity of thought.

6

Let us turn finally to the case of time. Can an analogous myth be constructed here? Can we conceive of living in two distinct orders of spatial extension? The lakeside story did present some peculiar temporal features, in some of its versions a sort of time-stretching, but at least the proprieties of temporal order were respected. And, with the eight-hour day, it was possible to do without time-stretching. Another avoidable difficulty was the temporal status of the events 'remembered' by me at the lakeside after I have started, *nel mezzo del cammin*, consciously living there. Here again temporal order is all right. The trouble arises about the correlation of my 'remembered' twelfth birthday and initiation ceremony at the lakeside with events in my English life. However this is not a serious problem. Either we can say the date of my initiation in English terms is unknown, apart

from being before such-and-such a date on which my lakeside experiences started or we can extrapolate with the help of rules of correlation we have established in the directly experienced parts of my lakeside life. Our multi-spatial myths are not, then, also multi-temporal myths.

So for a multi-temporal myth we must begin again from the beginning. What we are in search of, in general terms, is this: two groups of orderly and coherent experiences where the members of each group are temporally connected but no member of either group has any temporal relation to any member of the other. Such a search seems doomed from the start. How can these experiences be my experiences unless they constitute a single temporal series? This will become clearer if we consider some examples of possible multi-temporal myths.

Consider first the myth that results from a small complication of the original myth about England and the lakeside. Suppose that my memories become, so to speak, disconnected, that I can remember the relative temporal situation of English events and the relative temporal situation of lakeside events but not the temporal relations of any English events to any lakeside event. I can remember that I got on the bus after I had spoken to Jones about our favourite television programme. I can remember taking part in the fertility-rite after setting the fish-traps. What I cannot remember is whether getting on the bus occurred before or after setting the fish-traps. The trouble with this obstacle to unitary dating is that it is too easily circumvented. At the beginning of day 1 in England I write down in order all the lakeside events I can remember. On day 2 in England I cannot remember whether the events of day 1 follow or preceded the lakeside events in the list. But the list will be there to settle the matter and I can, of course, remember when I compiled it.

A desperate shift that might suggest itself at this point is the supposition that I cannot remember lakeside events at all when I am in England nor English events while I am at the lakeside. But this is self-destroying. For unless I have memories of one series of events while experiencing the other there can be no reason for saying that I am involved in both of them, that both are experienced by one and the same person. *Ex hypothesi* the lakeside can have no physical, observable traces in England, so my memories of it in England are the only reason there can be for me, in England, to think that the lakeside exists.

Another line of approach requires us to suppose that the experience of dreaming coherently about the lakeside is general or at least widespread. It might be thought that we could all pass in and out of the coherent dream-world, or the alternative reality, at different

times. But suppose the salient events of the day for two people in England are kipper for breakfast and steak for lunch, while the salient event for the approximately corresponding day at the lakeside is a distant volcanic eruption. The two people breakfast together in England, so their kipper-eating is simultaneous. After breakfast one of them drops off and witnesses the volcanic eruption. He awakes for lunch and over their simultaneous steaks tells his partner about the eruption. After lunch the second man falls asleep and witnesses the eruption for himself. At first glance this might seem to suggest that the eruption cannot be fitted at all into the English time-sequence. But on reflection it is clear that we can fit 'the eruption' in only too well. For it happened, to A, before their simultaneous lunch and, to B, after it. What happens before an event, happens before everything that happens after that event. Therefore the eruption happened before itself. The only consistent conclusion from the data is that two eruptions took place and for each of these there is a perfectly unequivocal position in the English time-series.

The moral of these unsuccessful attempts to construct a multi-temporal myth is the same in each case. Any event that is memorable by me can be fitted in to the single time-sequence of my experience. Any event that is not memorable by me is not an experience of mine. This second proposition is not equivalent to a Lockean account of personal identity which holds my experiences to be all those experiences that I can remember. For the memorability to which it refers is memorability in principle not in practice. All that is required for an experience to be mine is that I should be logically capable of remembering it. But from the fact that, at a given time, I am logically capable of remembering a certain experience, it follows that the experience is temporally antecedent to the given time, the time of my current experience, and so is in the same time, the same framework of temporal relations, as it is. Thus if an experience is mine it is memorable and if it is memorable it is temporally connected to my present state. The question we are raising—is it conceivable that we should inhabit more than one time—answers itself. For what it asks is: could my experience be of such a kind that the events in it could not be arranged in a single temporal sequence? And it seems unintelligible to speak of a collection of events as constituting the experience of one person unless its members form a single temporal sequence. This view of the concept of a person's experience is supported by another consideration. It is possible to imagine that our experience might not be spatial. As Mr Strawson has shown, if our experience were all auditory, although it might contain features and differentiations which could be used as clues to spatial position with the aid of correlations with the deliverances of other senses,

these features would have no spatial import on their own.⁴ On the other hand it is not possible to imagine an experience that is not temporal. We should, of course, have no sense of the passage of time unless our experience exhibited change. But an unchanging experience is no more intelligible than a non-temporal one. An experience of one unvarying sound, or even of an unvarying mixture of sounds, would not be an experience at all. A high, thin, metaphysical whistle sounding in one's mind's ear from birth to death would be in principle undetectable, like the impression of the self that Hume rummaged unsuccessfully around in his consciousness for.

I conclude, then, that we can at least conceive circumstances in which we should have good reason to say that we knew of real things located in two quite distinct spaces. But we cannot conceive of such a state of affairs in the case of time. Our conception of experience is essentially temporal in a way in which it is not essentially spatial.

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⁴P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, chapter 2.