

MANIPULATING THE DETERMINATION OF REALITY:

A Priori Neurocybernetics:

Determination of an Objectivity by Reciprocal Subjectivity (draft, May 1980)

answers to Study Problems # 1, 2

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I. The topic is determination of an objectivity (phantom or otherwise) by reciprocal subjectivity or coupled subjectivity—possibly an unwitting or illusioned coupled subjectivity. That an assortment of "unfolding situations" could be classified under this heading was suggested to me by a letter of Péter Berényi of May 1979. Further, such situations are of interest here only if they are proximate, tangible situations (situations whose elements are physical or psychological) and yet cannot be analyzed or assimilated in the ontology of natural science and logicism. (My catch-phrase is that they must "break the framework of objectivity.")

When I first began to reflect on this situation-type, I analyzed some of its possible features in the following checklist.

- a. Do the subjects cue each other by non-linguistic actions?
- b. If the subjects cue each other by tangible linguistic utterances, what kind of pre-established medium of communication is assumed? How much structure are the uttered linguistic elements required to have?
- c. Do the subjects interact exclusively through tangible linguistic utterances?
- d. Is the net result of the experiment a tangible objectivity external to both subjects, such as a printed text?
- e. Is the net result of the experiment two separate subjective impressions of a joint situation?
- f. Does the experiment require the subjects to act on the basis of false assumptions—false assumptions about the role of the other subject or about the prior existence of some objectivity? Who indoctrinates the subjects with the false assumptions?

It is perfectly plausible to conceive of the situation-type under consideration in terms of this checklist. Ironically, though, to approach the situation-type through this checklist probably hinders one from discerning a concrete situation which breaks the framework of objectivity. The checklist is extraneous to the "axial" insights which make the discernment of concrete framework-breaking situations possible.

II. Negative framework-breaking paradigms

A. Preliminaries

1. From the standpoint of scientific psychology and a number of other standpoints as well, what we know as perception is a heroic fantasy. In the first place, the psychological literature documents hundreds of perceptual illusions, many of them demonstrable with little or no equipment. (If this information presents any surprise, it is because overt perceptual anomalies challenge complacent notions of reality and therefore are usually repressed and denied.) Further, there are dozens of perceptual psychology experiments which suggest that when inputs to receptors are distorted, subjects unwittingly but demonstrably undergo changes in perception in order to maintain consistency or familiarity of experience or to regain motor coordination. One conclusion which these experiments suggest is that there is no clear demarcation between learned perceptual habits and hypnosis (suggestibility).

2. I will next make some observations about the inter-personal character of descriptive language. Since I have to start somewhere, for heuristic purposes let me start with the following.

a. Suppose that there is an individual who, because of an abnormality in the retina or visual cortex, transposes red and green in his perception. But this abnormality need not manifest itself in his use of language. As long as he can tell that red and green are different, he can use language in a competent conventional way if he says 'red' when he sees green and 'green' when he sees red. Neither he nor his peers need ever discover that he is abnormal.

b. Therefore, the circumstance that two people agree in verbalizing about "jointly observed" phenomena does not prove that they have the same perceptions. It only proves that their realms of perception are "networks with the same pattern." [Let me explain a little further, anticipating what follows. Some hypothetical transpositions of perceptions could be exposed by an analytical procedure which scrutinizes the individual's comportment to the jointly observed phenomena. If I perceive a table with four legs as an elephant, I am caught out if I am asked to count the "legs" and I count the trunk and tail as legs. But I am not exposed if I count only the legs of the elephant as "legs." If there are ways in which the perceptual realms of the normal and the deviant person can constitute networks with the same pattern, then transposition can go undetected. One way could be through a transposition of "isolated atomic perceptions"—perceptions relative to which the networks are perfectly decomposable. A second way could be through a pervasive transposition. Start by perceiving a table as an elephant, and then change everything else as well so that the deviant's comportment to the elephant-called-'table' conforms

to the normal comportment to a table—or go even further and let the perception of comportment be transposed also. There is even a third way: to avoid potential conflicts with the comportment of normal people by sly self-inconsistency. The deviant might lie about the number of "legs" he attributes to the elephant in order to agree with the number of legs normal people attribute to a table.]

c. To continue, it is not a generally accepted assumption that people can have each other's experiences (telepathy?). But it is a generally accepted assumption that people can report their experiences to each other. The circumstance that synonymous reports of a jointly observed phenomenon are given by more than one reporter is taken as proof that the jointly observed phenomenon is "objectively real." This type of proof is surrounded with many qualifications. Both reporters must know the language; coincident private experiences such as "ringing in the ears" following an explosion have to be set aside; mass hallucinations become a separate problem; etc. But these qualifications are secondary. What is crucial is that synonymous reports of experiences are the last resort for the claim that the "object of experience" is objectively real. The claim can have no stronger basis.

d. Suppose we accept reports of experiences which are not associated with joint observation. These reports include so-called reports of objective events which are not observed jointly, and reports of so-called private experiences (perceptual illusions, dizziness, dreams, hallucinations, etc. etc.). It may be objected immediately that without the constraint of joint observation, we cannot test whether these reports are lies. But it may just as well be said that we cannot test whether reports of jointly observed phenomena are lies either. The point is that synonymy of reports is the last resort in claiming the objectivity of a phenomenon. And why wouldn't one person lie about his perceptions in order to conform to what other people say they perceive? AGREEMENT PROVES NOT HONESTY BUT CONFORMITY. Thus "only the individual in question can know whether he is lying in describing any of his perceptions."

e. But let us recall 2.a and 2.b. How do people know what the correlation of words to perceptions is in the first place? If an individual is unknowingly transposing red and green consistently, then he will be telling the truth just when he and others all think he is lying.

[And the reason why investigations such as this one are resented so much is not because they are mere philosophy and don't change anything, but on the contrary because the change which they make tends to undermine societal regimentation at a very immediate level. My interest in "experience and language" must not lead me to be confused with Husserl or Wittgenstein, who were indeed philosophers and did not change anything.]

f. But having come this far, what basis do we have to speculate on whether an individual has transposed perceptions? Are there no means to establish or to refute this claim? When two people verbalize (about jointly observed phenomena) in synonymous ways, what is established is just that they verbalize in synonymous ways. Without telepathy (and what would telepathy mean and how would it be validated?), we cannot establish whether their perceptions are identical when their verbalizations are. Further, we cannot use the fact of agreement as a test of sincerity, because one person may be lying to maintain agreement.

g. The foregoing reflections abstract from, and simplify, the actuality of the inter-personal character of descriptive language. But all of the above observations are pertinent; it is just that they do not go far enough. One of the additional dimensions is that in order to achieve inter-personally consistent verbal behavior—networks with the same pattern—the most recent arrival in the community is "hypnotized," by intimidation, so that the heroic fantasy known as perception adapts to make the networks isomorphic. Here is where a language's compartmentalization of the world and human faculties is instilled—not only at the level of logical syntax, but at the level of perception itself. The coerced, hypnotic shaping of perception can cause accessible experiences to become just as inaccessible as supersonic music.

3. The above critique is concerned with the ramifications of synonymy of verbalizations as the last resort in claiming the objectivity of a phenomenon. But there are other conventional aspects of the topic of honesty and meaningfulness of reports of experiences which should be mentioned.

a. Once an individual has learned to use descriptive language under the supervision of the community, it is generally accepted that he can meaningfully report so-called objective events to which he is the sole witness. In cases in which the report is verbalized for the benefit of others after the events occur, further conventions are involved. It is generally accepted that it is possible for a past event to have been observed as it occurred, for the observation to have a sort of afterimage called a memory, and for the memory to be reported in the language of jointly observed phenomena. A number of assumptions about the past as a locale for objective phenomena and for experiences, and about the character of memory, are slurred together here. In connection with some of these assumptions, I may observe that any claim of "reality" for the past must appeal in the last resort to present "traces" or "afterimages" attributed to past sources. Such a claim can have no stronger basis.

As for the honesty of uncorroborated reports of past objective events, the law enforcement professions have not been content to remain helpless in the face of this issue. Interrogation techniques have been developed to test such reports. The witness is required to repeat his testimony several times, while being required to expand on details selected randomly by the interrogator. Leading questions are used to find if answers can be drawn which contradict previous testimony. The witness is pressed concerning vague or evaded areas in the testimony. The witness is challenged on conflicts in his testimony and on physiological signs of lying.

b. It is generally accepted that an individual can meaningfully report jointly observed events to which he is the only available witness. I refer to the participant in events in which the other participants were left behind, ran away, were killed, etc. Indeed, we accept many uncorroborated reports when corroboration is available but we have no motive to demand it. But when corroboration is not available, the testing of such reports involves the same principles as in 3.a.

c. The prevailing "determination of reality" classifies dreams as subjective phenomena of individual consciousness. Nevertheless, the world of a dream can have a "natural order" commensurate with that of the waking world. In the dream-world, I typically comport myself to stable object-gestalts, other people, past, future, etc.; that is the basis for the reporting of dreams, as practiced in many cultures. A dream presents a problem of description analogous to that of a journey to a foreign land. Thus, the reporting of dreams presents problems of meaningfulness and honesty which are within the range of the principles in 3.a and 3.b.

d. The prevailing culture also allows for the reporting of experiences which do not have the character of stable object-gestalts and which are not claimed to "mirror" objective events. The natural language has idioms for some of these experiences (I see spots; my ears are ringing; the room is swimming; the child's report that "the room hurts" instead of "I have a headache"); but in general this area is the most impoverished in the language. The culture presumes that validation can apply even to these reports when they are typical responses to known physical stimuli or substrates. Examples are perceptual illusions, afterimages, ringing in the ears following a loud noise, effects of sensory deprivation, effects of narcotic drugs, etc.

e. As we have just seen, "privacy" as a property of experience has many gradations. A memory of a jointly observed event is private in that it is not co-temporal with the event and is accessed individually. A dream is private in that even though it may have the character of an experience of jointly observed events, only one person reports it afterwards. Seeing spots is private in that it is not an object-gestalt and is not claimed to mirror an external event. These last two sorts of "private" experience constitute a classification which will be important in later discussions. Let me designate this classification as "SINGULAR EXPERIENCE." (A more precise but more cumbersome designation might be "idiosyncratic experience.")

f. 3.a-3.d raise the question of how there can be a shared vocabulary for experiences which are not matters of joint (present) observation. Two comments can be offered as answers. First, descriptive language in these cases is an extension of descriptive language in matters of joint observation; and some sort of objective test of veracity is available in every case. The second comment is a radical one. In the last analysis, the objectivity of reports in matters of joint (present) observation is as shaky as the objectivity of reports in matters other than joint observation--if for different and deeper reasons. The last resort in the justification of objectivity is synonymy of reports, and synonymy of reports is achieved in ways which multiply beg the question.

B. Paradigms

I will now present specific negative instances of determination of an objectivity by reciprocal subjectivity.

1. Suppose that a child is taught to perceive and to name colors as in English. Suppose there is a talisman which the child's elders agree is green. But suppose these elders deliberately conspire to lie and to tell the child that the talisman is blue. Suppose further that when the child naively reports his perception of the talisman as green, his elders severely ridicule and censure him. The child has two choices to escape lifelong persecution.

a. To lie. But the only evidence of the child's perceptions are his descriptive reports. Thus, his reports will publicly support the agreed lie and will therefore add weight to it. THROUGH COWARDICE AND HYPOCRACY, THE INDOCTRINATEE BECOMES AN INDOCTRINATOR IN RELATION TO THE NEXT ARRIVAL IN THE COMMUNITY.

b. To undergo a change in perception, so that he perceives the talisman as green. Nobody who has read the psychological literature I referred to in II.A.1 will doubt that this is possible: far more extreme adaptations have been coerced in voluntary subjects. In this case, the child becomes the creature that his elders demand him to be. His inner life adapts to support the lie. We may say that community intimidation has instilled a certain perception in the individual "hypnotically." HERE WE HAVE THE "HYPNOSIS" PROBLEM IN THE AGREEMENT OF PERCEPTION AND SHARED LANGUAGE. But we must go on to acknowledge that there is a component of hypnosis in all perceptions, all gestalts.

2. Let us take another step, and generalize about the learning of an inter-personal descriptive language. The child finds that in order to interact with other people, he must express himself within the compartmentalization of the pre-established language. He must mold his perceptions so that they fit the language's built-in compartmentalization of reality. This is the point made in II.A.2.g. But when the child begins to use the shared language in the approved way, then HE BECOMES NOT ONLY INDOCTRINATEE BUT INDOCTRINATOR AT A GENERAL LEVEL. His conformist behavior adds weight to the pre-established compartmentalization.

But there is more. As some individuals attempt to describe their perspective on things in the inter-personal language, they make statements unexpected by the community. (After all, for the community to achieve absolute conformity would be to forego all adaptability.) The statements I am concerned with arise in the attempt to report experiences which are incommensurate with the compartmentalization built into the language—experiences which are incommensurate with the imputed "order of nature." The statements turn the vocabulary against its built-in compartmentalization. By narrow criteria of meaning, the statements are absurd, and they must appeal to shared novel experiences rather than previous usage for their meaning. HERE WE HAVE THE PROBLEM OF VERBALIZATION OF OUT-OF-COMPARTMENT EXPERIENCES. To the extent that the individuals who make these statements can then intimidate the community, they can modify the language's built-in compartmentalization. There is now genuine reciprocity of the subjectivities which uphold the phantom objectivity. But the "private" perspectives still have to "rise to the level of objectivity" through the medium of the pre-existing language.

3. Let us compare the foregoing with an extreme case in which the impulse arises to verbalize an out-of-compartment experience. Take my (waking) "hallucination" reported on pp. 169-70 of Blueprint for a Higher Civilization. What happens here is that I wish to report a singular experience, and I am too intransigent to deform the experience uncritically into the compartmentalization of the inter-personal language. I find myself in conflict with the vocabulary I am forced to use, because the pre-existing descriptive language is with few exceptions a language of stable object-gestalts. The entities I experienced were, in their "reality cues," between mirages and objects. They pressed upon my body, but passed through me without tearing. They were thing-like in that they were located entirely outside of me, within my visual field, for part of the time (like balloons); but no known material spheres would consecutively and rapidly expand from the same point to press upon me and pass through me in the way these did. I refuse to deform this experience in reporting it to make it accord with the object-gestalt compartmentalization or the mirage compartmentalization or any other pre-established linguistic compartmentalization. In other words, I AM NOT WILLING TO PERPETRATE CONFORMIST INDOCTRINATION IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIDING BEHIND A CONFORMIST FACADE. On the other hand, I may not fairly claim that this experience is consequential for other people. I may not claim that I saw something "objectively real" which can affect others even though they fail to perceive it. The experience is not even objective in the sense that it is routinely associated with a physical substrate. Thus, in reporting the experience, I am using language in an abnormal manner. I am extrapolating the "objective" descriptive language to tell others about an idiosyncrasy which does not count for them. I can surmise that if others were functioning in an uncensored way, they would have idiosyncratic experiences to report also. But to communicate often about experiences which do not count for one another would begin to undermine the objective descriptive language and the "hypnosis" which sustains it.

Evidently there have been many historical cultures in which "waking dreams" and "hypnagogic hallucinations" have been admitted (and even required), so long as they are reported in the object-gestalt vocabulary as if they were consequential for other people. A bare-subsistence society hopes that these experiences are of instrumental import; and at the same time it cannot allow the experiences to escape (and to undermine) societal regimentation. When such reports of singular experiences are made in unscientific societies, it is of course the verbal protocols that survive. AND THE VERBAL PROTOCOLS BECOME AN ESTABLISHED NORM TO WHICH FURTHER EXPERIENCES MUST FIT. Here again the indoctrinatee, encumbered with a mythologizing compartmentalization, becomes an indoctrinator, a contributor to the next phase of the phantom objectivity.

III. II.B.1-II.B.3 are paradigms of determination of an objectivity by reciprocal subjectivity, and they are non-trivial. However, these paradigms fail to be fully framework-breaking and illuminating. Their limitation turns out to be as follows. The situation-type in question was suggested as a topic of investigation by Péter Berényi, and he approached the subject-area from the negative side. As he conceived it, the situation-type was a species of deceit and delusion. In his own words, his proposal was a "cruel experiment." Deluded reciprocal subjectivity cripples the subjects. Thus, it fails to energize the subjects; it fails to transcend the scientific framework unconditionally.

But the demand for a paradigm which is not centered on deceit, and which does energize the subjects, is a difficult and tricky one. Tentatively, it seems that any objectivity (certainly any phantom objectivity) determined by reciprocal subjectivities would, in plain English, be a lie. And when is a lie desirable--when does a lie do anything other than cripple the subjects and render them the inferiors of the scientific framework? We arrive at the central question for this entire investigation. When does an objectivity determined by coupled subjectivities not deserve to be branded a lie? When can such an objectivity withstand full disclosure--when can such an objectivity be fostered without apology? The question can be answered with a truism: any case in which a synthesis of the views and acts of many individuals produces a superior creation is such a determination. But this truism is not enough, because it begs the question it is supposed to answer, the question of whether the co-determined objectivity is superior. In the remainder of this discussion, I will go beyond the truism to expound a non-obvious paradigm based on certain of my previous writings. (Still another alternative should be mentioned. That is to contrive a maneuver--at the level not of theory but of social practice--which jams or fractures the deceit in a deluded co-determined objectivity.)

IV. An energizing framework-breaking paradigm

A. The paradigm which I propose is one which I first explained in "Dreams and Reality," and then extended in "Proposal for a Geniuses' Liberation Project." Roughly speaking, a group of people living together in a non-economic commune begin to attribute an equal degree of reality to waking experiences and dreamed experiences; or better, they abandon the distinguishing of different degrees of reality in experiences--a practice which moves them closer to literal empiricism than science and common sense are. Further, they include dreams among the commune's "current history." They tell their dreams to the collective, and specifically tell of their encounters with each other in dreams. They attempt to incorporate all of the members' dreamed episodes into the collective's current history.

Readers in whom the doctrine is deeply ingrained that waking perceptions are mental photographs of objective reality, while dreamed perceptions are subjective individual illusions, may find my proposal outlandish. But after so many years of my investigations, I cannot sympathize with this reaction. Am I writing for people who still have not learned the genuine lessons from the empiricist tradition? The notion of a reality-in-itself, autonomous from

experience, is not worth defending any more. Philosophers who, for example, wish to provide a rationale for natural science have long since realized that science must be justified as a collection of models which schematize experience and the connections therein. Even if the working scientist has a thingifying orientation which conflicts with empiricism, there is nowhere other than empiricism to look for a philosophical rationale for science. There is a modicum of understanding now that to posit experience as a derivative phenomenon --as a mistake and a delusion--is more problematic than to posit it as an immediate phenomenon. (Even the investigation of the hypnotic component in perception has to be conceived as a model which schematizes connections within experience rather than as a philosophy which makes experience literally derivative.) Given this background, it is not surprising that someone should finally advance the proposal to apprehend all experience (waking, dreamed, hypnagogic, hallucinatory) as no less and no more than itself. Of course this proposal is problematic; it runs into all sorts of incongruities. But these incongruities are far less refractory than the incongruities encountered by doctrines which dismiss experience as a mistake and a delusion. The incongruities which my proposal encounters can be substantially smoothed out--a project which I will explain in detail below. In short, I propose to refrain from attributing unequal degrees of reality to waking and dreamed experiences. Starting with established conventions of verification or of "evaluational processing of experience," I will weaken or modify these conventions in ways which do not represent an increase in credulity. Thus, my paradigm is a move away from deceit and delusion.

But why is the paradigm in question desirable? What we should ask is the following. Through what type of collective apprehension of the world shall a community gain the rewards of thought or consciousness? The answer of scientific thingification is through a type of apprehension which denies collective apprehension and which denies thought and consciousness. (And of course there is a conflict between scientific thingification and the empiricist rationale for science. This conflict symptomatizes a profound incongruity within the scientific project. But that is not our concern except insofar as it shows that incongruity need not prevent a world-view from having the reputation of being rational and viable. To construct a determination of reality which is different from science and no more flawed than science is an important achievement if only as a counterexample to the uniqueness of "rationality.") The ruling determination of reality has as its purpose impersonal manipulability; and it employs, as means to that end, mechanistic impairment of experience and human faculties, and censorship of singular experience. But this orientation, which turns us all into walking lumps of lard, is not one which unsubjected people would choose. Dreams provide us with anecdotal anomalies which are too prominent to be censored, thereby transcending any impersonal natural order. They provide us with exotic identities and adventures which are not affected or synthetic. They realize "transcendent inner escape" in the entire life-world. Further, the practices which my paradigm proposes will definitely cause people's dreams to come to reflect the dreams others tell them. A quite tangible coupling of subjectivities arises here. The full effect of the paradigm cannot be appreciated without the discussion which follows, concerning modification of the evaluational processing of experience. But I can already say that the paradigm leads to a shared experience-world which is non-impaired (holistic), which transcends impersonal natural orders, and which is exotic yet unaffected.

B. 1. When I propose that dreams are to be reported, I start from the conventional assumptions summarized in II.A.3.c according to which dreams can be reported. The natural order in dream-worlds is sufficiently commensurate with the natural order in the waking world that the shared language can be used to report dreams after they occur, on the analogy of reporting journeys to foreign lands. Interrogation techniques could even be used to test such reports.

2. On the other hand, the proposal to accept waking and dreamed experiences equally, as being no less and no more than themselves, leads to conflicts. As we begin, our dreams are characterized by the following. We typically comport ourselves toward accouterments (furnishings) as object-gestalts. We typically comport ourselves toward other people as object-gestalts. We typically comport ourselves toward pasts and futures presumed to be unique. In other words, our dreams typically incorporate CONTEXTS OF OBJECTIVITY: we are not literal empiricists in the dream-worlds. Conflicts thus arise when I attempt to collate all episodes, waking and dreamed, into a unique history. I find that I lost something in a dream which I still have when I awaken; or that I met somebody in a dream who in the waking world does not acknowledge the meeting; or that I conceive a past or future in a dream which is not the one I conceive upon awakening.

3. The circumstance that our dreams incorporate contexts of objectivity has several ramifications in connection with our refusal to take any waking episode or dreamed episode as the criterion of reality by which other episodes must be judged.

a. If a given dream-world incorporates a context of objectivity, it will incorporate elements such that I may confirm its "reality" internally using conventional rules of verification. E.g. I may conclude that a house in a dream is real if I and another person in the dream jointly observe the house. The point is, again, that dreamed episodes are as strongly self-confirming as waking episodes.

b. If a dreamed episode and the succeeding waking episode conflict, I may not conclude that the waking episode corrects the dreamed episode. I might just as well conclude that the dreamed episode corrects a preceding waking episode. There is no basis to make one episode more of a norm than another.

c. I have said that dreams typically incorporate contexts of objectivity, and that we are not literal empiricists in dreams. But the state of affairs is even more one-sided than this. In waking episodes, we have a faculty of self-consciousness which allows us to distinguish in principle between our sensations and our belief-interpretations of them. We can suspend our own acts of belief on various levels, from withdrawing our imputation of corporeality to an apparition when we are shown that it is produced with mirrors, to questioning whether the Empire State Building exists when we are not looking at it. But dreams typically unfold without the potentiality for such self-consciousness, detachment, or irony. In dreams, we can't distance ourselves from our imputations of corporeality to apparitions (unless there is a tangible violation of the standard natural order, as when I plunged through a solid surface without breaking it). An experience arrives with its context of objectivity, and recedes into the past without its context of objectivity ever being questioned.

This state of affairs has a further ramification. When Descartes and Hume introduced self-consciousness or suspension of belief as a method in philosophy, they provoked a hysteria among subsequent philosophers. Unfaith was condemned as a sort of original sin; credulousness was made the chief human virtue (actually it had already been made the chief human virtue in the Middle Ages); and hysterical attempts were made to "prove the world." The condemnation of unfaith as decadent, and the hysterical attempts to "prove the world," culminated with Husserl and Heidegger, who argued (to use my terminology) that we comport ourselves to a context of objectivity even in "pure experience" --and that our doing so proves the reality of the world (as prayer proves the existence of God?). But the experiences in which we are inescapably comported to a context of objectivity are just our dreamed experiences. If Husserl and Heidegger were serious that such comportment is proof of reality (and that any hint of unfaith is decadent), then they should have proclaimed that what we dream is the only real world, and they should have demanded the abolition of waking life. In any case, we have the option of annulling the context of objectivity in waking experience even as it persists in our dreams. Dream-worlds would then become the preferred reality.

d. In first proposing this paradigm, I gave a preferred place to the reporting of dreams to the collective in the waking world, after they occur. I also assumed that one's dream is like a jointly observed event to which one is the only surviving witness--so that one cannot appeal to other members of the collective in the waking world to expand on one's report of the dreamed event. (This assumption assigns dreams the status of singular experiences.) But it is possible that I might find myself reporting past waking and dreamed episodes to some collective in a dream-world. It is important to accept this option (and to accept the associated possibility of abolishing the preferred place of after-reporting of dreams to the waking collective).

From these observations, I can conclude that waking and dreamed worlds are extensively at parity with one another, yet fail to be symmetrical in certain peculiar respects.

4. With the preceding background, I can now characterize in more detail the conflicts or incongruities which arise when a collective attempts to accept waking and dreamed episodes equally, as being no less and no more than themselves.

a. The persona I have in dreams is significantly different in character from my waking identity. Specifically, my dream persona is much more limited: in some sense, I am not an adult in my dreams. However, this situation is not a "conflict of fact" and does not require resolution.

b. If I accept waking and dreamed episodes at face value, then within my own experience-world, I experience non-concordant existences. E.g. I dream that my violin has been stolen and then awaken to find that it has not been stolen. One of the sources of conflict is that I apprehend the violin as a stable objective entity in the dream. As I have already pointed out, this difficulty is symmetrical: a given waking episode may be contradicted by a following dreamed episode.

c. If I am to accept after-reports of dreams by other members of the collective in the waking world, then multiple existences which I do not even experience will likely be attributed to me. E.g. another member dreams that he saw me in a certain bar on Saturday at 11 p.m. when I remember that I was awake but at home then.

5. We may note that the scientific world-view is committed to a doctrine of other minds which engenders difficulties which may have points of analogy with the difficulties I have just listed. "Observation" is held to consist of many different private experience-worlds which have to be objectified for comparison through language, and reconciled through collation and censorship. Cf. A. d'Abro, The Evolution of Scientific Thought. The difficulty becomes worse in connection with "observation of the past," since the past's reality is only that of present traces or afterimages attributed to the past as source. Cf. Bernard d'Espagnat, Conceptual Foundations of Quantum Mechanics.

6. I can suggest three avenues of solution to the difficulties associated with accepting waking and dreamed episodes equally as being no less and no more than themselves.

a. On the basis of the contexts of objectivity already incorporated in dreams, abandon the demand that all episodes have to yield a unique history. Accept multiple worlds or existences or repetition of time. Accept that there can be persistence of identity without uniqueness. In comparison with the standard evaluational processing of experience, this avenue of solution represents credulity at an identical level but with a different content. This approach can be implemented specifically by accepting that people can have multiple existences; or that there can be multiple pasts or simultaneous presents; or that a given stretch of time can be replayed over and over.

b. Exploit the separable assumptions in the invocation of memory as an afterimage of observations of past events (as I first noted those assumptions in II.A.3.a). Since a memory of a so-called jointly observed event is not co-temporal with the event and is accessed individually, all memories may be apprehended as singular experiences. The avenue of solution is thus to apprehend all memories as "hallucinations." This approach would probably mean the weakening of the imputation of contexts of objectivity in memories, and would thus alter the evaluational processing of experience in the direction of literal empiricism. Conflicts of fact as between different memories would not require resolution because all memories would be apprehended as "hallucinations."

c. The most radical avenue of solution lies in the direction of apprehending all experiences as "hallucinations" or singular experiences, comparable to my experience discussed in II.B.3. More precisely, the approach consists in weakening our imputation of contexts of objectivity in all experiences. The destructive analysis of II.A.2 helps to establish that it is possible to evolve in this direction. What is more, I assume that the adoption of this approach can result in the weakening of the imputation of contexts of objectivity in dreams--in a change in dream content. All experience begins to have the quality of singular experience, and implicit presumptions that the events I undergo are consequential for other people begin to be weakened. Ultimately our attitude would be that even when we describe so-called jointly observed

phenomena in waking life, we are reporting private views which are not claimed to be consequential for others. The hint of decadence which Heidegger found in Descartes now expands to infinity and engulfs the entire experience-world.

This approach proposes the possibility of a community in which the regimentation of reality (as it now operates) has disintegrated. What is more, to communicate often about experiences which do not count for other people would undermine "objective descriptive" language and the hypnosis which sustains it. And insofar as language loses the built-in implication that it is interpersonally binding, it would become a vehicle in some mode other than language.