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J. J. Valberg: Dream, Death, and the Self

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Philosophical Discovery and Philosophical Puzzles

Int.1 Discovering What We Already Know

Anyone who has acquired the hang of philosophical dialogue and reflection, who has (so to speak) learned to play this “game,” will recognize that it is possible in philosophical reflection to make discoveries; but he¹ will also recognize that such discoveries differ from what counts as discovery in other areas of intellectual endeavor (science, mathematics, history, economics, etc.) as well as everyday life. The main difference is this: what we discover and thus come to know outside philosophy is something new, something we do not already know (how else, one wants to ask, could we *discover* it?), while it seems that in philosophy we discover only what we already know.

On the surface this is puzzling; yet it is an old and familiar idea. You can find it in Plato, Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and many other philosophers. It is part of philosophy’s image of itself. And it deserves to be. However we explain it, there is such a thing as discovering what we already know. As anyone who has philosophized knows.

The possibility is not confined to philosophical reflection. If someone draws my attention to the fact that I feel pressure on my back from the chair on which I am sitting, or that I am kidding myself about so-and-so’s intentions, I may discover something. But what I discover, what comes to light, does not come as a surprise. In the first case, I discover a fact about how things are within my experience; in the second case, a fact about how things are within my life. But in both cases what I discover is something I already know. The same possibility—that which exists in the phenomenological and self-knowledge cases—exists in the philosophical case. In fact, as will be clear, the three cases are connected.

Philosophical reflection differs in that it is impersonal. In realizing that I feel pressure on my back, or that I am kidding myself, my interest is restricted to my experience, my life. Of course, experience and the self (my life) are themselves legitimate topics of philosophical reflection; but insofar as they become topics of philosophical reflection, I regard myself—my experience, my life—only as a representative of the general case.

¹ Apart from cases where it refers to specific individuals, “he,” etc., is always meant in a gender-neutral way.

I am, you could say, impersonally interested in myself: impersonally interested in what is “mine,” in what is first personal. Insofar as self-reflection and phenomenological reflection are impersonal, they are philosophical.

To repeat: in philosophy we discover what we already know. Indeed, this is (or may be) itself something we discover philosophically. If we have acquired the hang of philosophical reflection but have yet to reflect on the nature of such reflection, the fact that in philosophical reflection we discover what we already know will, when it comes to us, come to us as something we already know. We will make a philosophical discovery about philosophical discovery.

Int.2 The Socratic Conception of Philosophical Discovery

If philosophical discovery is possible, it seems there must be a way of knowing, a kind of knowledge, that makes such discovery possible: a way of knowing, etc., that allows for the possibility of discovering what we already know. Let us distinguish three cases here. We may be in the position (1) of having already made a philosophical discovery, that is, of having reflected and explicitly spelled out what we know, or (2) of being ready to begin reflecting but without yet having carried through our reflections. Finally, in contrast to both of these cases, (3) it may be that we not in a position, that we do not have the wherewithal, to begin reflecting. Corresponding to (2) and (3), there are different senses of “not knowing”: a sense that (3) entails not being in a position to begin reflecting, and a sense that (2) entails being in a position to begin but without yet having carried through our reflections. It is in the latter sense that we do not know at the outset of philosophical reflection.

Thus, at the outset of philosophical reflection there is, as philosophers have long observed, a sense in which we “know” and a sense in which we do “not know.” The sense in which we do not know is that we have not yet spelled out or made explicit to ourselves what we know. But in what sense, or way, do we know? What kind of knowledge is it that puts us in a position to make a philosophical discovery?

This is the question that Socrates attempts to answer in Plato’s *Meno*. For Socrates, the aim of philosophical reflection is to spell out, to make explicit, the content of a Form or concept. With this aim, we put to ourselves a question of the schema “What is Φ ?” (“What is virtue?” “What is justice?” “What is knowledge?” and so on.) Socrates’ idea is that at the outset of philosophical reflection we know the answer to such questions in the way that someone can be said to “know” what he has learned but finds himself unable to recollect. Philosophical reflection is the process (for Socrates, a dialectical process) of provoking ourselves to recollect

what we once learned but are now (when the question is raised) unable to recollect. Obviously, this raises the further question of how and when we originally learned the things that we are unable to recollect. It is not likely that we shall accept Plato's view that we have had, in a disembodied state, a prior confrontation with the Forms.

But there is a more immediate problem. In whatever way we gain the relevant knowledge, recollection does not seem like the correct model for the philosophical discovery of what we thereby know. For example, it can happen that at the very moment when we cannot recollect something we are nonetheless confident that we know it. "Wait, it will come to me." Such a reaction seems totally out of place in philosophical reflection. Again, whereas the content of a thought that prompts a recollection may—via the psychological mechanism of association—be more or less anything, the content of a thought that opens the mind to a philosophical discovery must be related in a very particular way to the content of the discovery (say, by illustrating the possibility or impossibility discovered). Recollection is one thing; philosophical discovery is something else.

Int.3 Wittgenstein: Insidership and Philosophical Discovery

We need a different model, a different conception of philosophical discovery. In fact, we have (I think) in passing indicated the conception we need. Consider our example of philosophical discovery about philosophical discovery: that in philosophy we discover what we already know. Not everyone is in a position to discover this. If you tell someone who has never engaged in philosophical reflection that in philosophy we discover what we already know, that person may be puzzled, or accept it without understanding it, or reject it as nonsense. But he will not recognize it as true: he will not make the relevant philosophical discovery. To do that, he must have (as we put it) acquired the hang of philosophical reflection: he must be an "insider" of this type of activity or game. We who are insiders—let me assume that I am addressing insiders—were drawn into the game, the activity of philosophizing, by others who were already insiders. As insiders, we know what it is to philosophize. We know it in a way that only insiders can know it, and whether or not we have ever reflected on what we know.

This idea—which comes from Wittgenstein—the idea of being an insider of a game, an activity governed by rules in which we are mutually engaged with others, is philosophically fundamental. We can get a handle on the idea by reflecting on ordinary games, on what it is to be drawn into and gradually master the rules of ordinary games (chess, ball games, card games, etc.). We all know what it is gradually to get drawn into such a game, to pick up the rules, to catch on, to get the hang of things. We all

know then what it is to become, and to be, an insider. It is by becoming an insider of a system of games, the system of what Wittgenstein calls “language-games” (the games whose rules govern the use of expressions in our language), that we master concepts, that we become thinkers. And we all find ourselves now in the position of insiders. We find ourselves with others on the inside of our system of language-games. We find ourselves thinkers.

Language-games are evidently not ordinary games: they exist at a more basic level. Our becoming insiders of ordinary games presupposes, at least for sophisticated games (say blackjack or chess),² that we are already insiders of a system of language-games; insidership in the latter presupposes only that we have the natural capacities (memory, perception, the ability to imitate, etc.) essential to the process by which others, those who are already insiders, draw us into the game. At the ground level, this happens without our being given explanations. (It has to, since we are not yet in a position to understand explanations.) We imitate the insiders and are corrected and encouraged by them. Gradually we ourselves become insiders—“with” the others who are already on the inside. Gradually we master concepts. Gradually the world acquires meaning: we become thinkers. The world acquires meaning by our becoming insiders. Apart from this, the world might be there, but it would have no meaning.

Consider, for example, a child’s coming to grasp the concept of color or number. The child must be able to react to the different appearances of objects, to distinguish objects as separate, to remember and repeat the numerals, and so on. If we knew enough about the brain, we might correlate different stages of the child’s conceptual development with different stages in the development of its brain, or identify certain stages of brain development as necessary or sufficient for certain stages of conceptual development. In this sense, we might “explain” the child’s acquisition of the relevant concepts. But there is at the ground level no way of gaining insight into the child’s conceptual development—in the way that we gain insight into the mind of a fellow subject; for that presupposes that we can already impute a grasp of concepts to the child, that the child is already with us on the inside, etc. It presupposes the very insidership that the development we are describing is meant to realize.³

² The games we play with infants (like peek-a-boo) are themselves part of the process by which infants become insiders of the system of language-games.

³ This is what is wrong with the notion that we learn concepts by abstraction from particular cases: we imagine that the infant figures something out, or solves a problem (“If this is Φ and that is Φ , then being Φ must be . . .”). There is, certainly, such a thing as abstracting a concept from particular cases, but the capacity to do this presupposes a relatively sophisticated level of conceptual development.

First the world has no meaning, then it has meaning: first we are outside the system of language-games, then we are inside. And once we are inside, our situation is in a sense inescapable. In the case of an ordinary game, we can choose to withdraw from it, to put ourselves back outside the game—from where entered it—or to play a different game. But we cannot, just like that, choose to be inside a different system of language-games, nor, except by a radical act that would deprive the world of meaning altogether, put ourselves outside the system. We did not consciously put ourselves inside the system but were drawn inside and now *simply find* ourselves here; and given that we are here, there is nowhere else to be.

The thought, then—to return to the Socratic question—is that what we discover or bring to light in philosophical reflection is our insider’s knowledge, that is, the knowledge we have picked up in becoming insiders of our system of language-games. The sense in which at the outset of philosophical reflection we “know” the answer to the question we have posed is that in which insiders of a system of language-games know what they have picked up (the rules of the games) in being drawn into the system: we have insider’s knowledge. The sense in which we “do not know” is that we are not yet *open* to what we know—in the way that a self-deceived subject is not open to what he knows, or that a subject may not be open to how things are within his experience. In becoming open to our insider’s knowledge, in making this explicit to ourselves, we make a philosophical discovery.

It is thus our insider’s knowledge that puts us in a position to philosophize. This holds, note, for the special case of philosophical discovery about philosophical discovery. If we tell someone who is not yet a philosophical insider (who has not studied philosophy, or hung around with philosophers) that in philosophical reflection we discover what we already know, he may understand our words, but he will not recognize the truth of what we tell him. He will not will not recognize this—he will not philosophically discover its truth—until he too becomes a philosophical insider, that is, until he is drawn into the game and is thus with us on the inside.

Notice, in picking up the system of language-games, we do not thereby pick up the meta-game of philosophical reflection. This constitutes a further step, which is not essential to being an insider of the system, and which we might never make. (The philosophical game, the activity of philosophizing, might strike us as eccentric, ridiculous, or just a waste of time. Or it might just never come our way.) Being insiders of the system puts us in a position to philosophize; but being in a position to philosophize does not automatically make philosophers of us.⁴

⁴ The ubiquitous “we” of philosophical discourse is ambiguous: sometimes it has in view a wider, sometimes a narrower, audience. Thus sometimes it is intended (narrowly) to include only those who are with us as insiders of philosophy, but other times (widely) to

Int.4 Philosophical Discovery and Resistance

The Socratic question is: In what way do we know what we know at the outset of philosophical reflection? That is: In what way do we know what we then discover? Our answer is that we know in a way that insiders know. But one might wonder why, if we already know what we discover philosophically, such discovery should be difficult—why it should require work or effort. (Think of how philosophers rack their brains devising thought experiments concerning personal identity, freedom of the will, causation, and so on.) Why does not that which is discovered present itself effortlessly to the philosophizing mind? Why should there be resistance to our being open to what we already know?

Consider self-deception (to which we have, in passing, already referred).⁵ In this case, what is discovered is personal: I discover, i.e., become open to, a fact about myself, about something internal to my life. But not only that, a particular motivation is involved: the fact to which I become open is a fact that I want not to be true (that is why I hide it). In the philosophical case we have no motive for not being open to what we already know. The resistance in this case comes from a different quarter.

The world, we said, emerges as meaningful for us only insofar as we become insiders of our system of language-games. This process depends not just on the guidance and example of those already on the inside but on our having, right from the start, a primitive involvement with the world. Thus as we are drawn into the system, as the world acquires meaning, it is the world itself, with its meaning, not the system of language-games from within which the world has its meaning, that occupies or engrosses us. The world is the locus of meaning. We look to the world—and in doing so look right past that from within which it has meaning. To convert the system of language-games into an explicit topic of reflection, to place it rather than the engrossing world at the focal point of our attention and thereby let ourselves become open to what we (in virtue of being insiders of the system) already know, requires an attitude or effort of mind that not only is not essential to the immediate business of everyday affairs, which is out in the world, but runs counter to it. This—i.e., our engrossment in the world—is the source (or at least one source) of resistance. It is what makes philosophical reflection and discovery difficult.

include all those who are with us on the inside of our system of language-games—the community (one might say) of thinkers.

⁵ Cf. the discussion in 2.4–6 of my *The Puzzle of Experience* (Oxford University Press, 1992).

Int.5 The Presumptuousness of a Claim to Philosophical Discovery

The present conception of philosophical reflection and discovery (let us call it the “insider conception,”) seems to fit what philosophers often refer to as conceptual analysis. The aim of conceptual analysis is to bring to light the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities implicit in our concepts. What does this mean?

Generally, from within a game certain things are possible (necessary, impossible). The game sets the limits on what is possible, etc., from within it. We, insofar as we are insiders of the game, cannot but grasp these possibilities. Moreover, by reflecting in the right way we can become open to what we thus grasp. It is, on the insider conception, the same with conceptual possibilities (necessities, impossibilities). Conceptual possibilities are possibilities, etc., that are internal to, and thus set by, our system of language-games. If we reflect in the right way, we can become open to these possibilities—to the possibilities that, as insiders, we cannot but already grasp. In this way, we discover what is conceptually possible (impossible, necessary).

If this appears to trivialize conceptual analysis, it is because we have failed to take on board the earlier point that our language-games—the games that set the limits on conceptual possibility; the games inside of which we simply find ourselves and outside of which there is nowhere for us to be—exist at a different level from ordinary games. (We have failed, you might say, to radicalize our model.) The rules of an ordinary game can, in principle, be altered at will. Of course we do this not from within the game, as a “move” in the game, but only from a position outside the game. We thereby alter what is possible within the game, or, perhaps, if you say that it will no longer be the same game, we create new possibilities by creating a new game. In the case of our language-games, however, we have no external vantage point from which to contemplate alternatives; no vantage point, then, from which we might decide to alter or create new possibilities. (They may evolve; but evolution is not decision.) Hence the possibilities that hold from within our language-games, conceptual possibilities, figure not as holding “from within” but as holding absolutely; that is, as simply holding; as holding *period*. We discover these possibilities by letting ourselves become open to how things are from within the games in which the possibilities hold; but the possibilities we thereby discover figure with us as holding absolutely.

Something else. The resources of a language-game have a richness, a depth, absent in the case of ordinary games. There is always more to them than we ever bring to light. (Thus analytical truths and lexical definitions

do not scratch the surface of the knowledge possessed by insiders of a language-game.) Moreover, any putative discovery of a conceptual possibility, etc., is, in principle, open to being overthrown by further reflection. (A clever person may always come up with a counterexample, which brings to light a previously unremarked possibility, etc.⁶) In contrast to the possibilities internal to an ordinary game, reflection on conceptual possibilities is open-ended. Of course at some point we stop reflecting; but there is no point that reveals itself as the final stopping point. Herein lies the true meaning of Socratic modesty.

But modesty in this case involves a kind of double-mindedness. If we take ourselves to have philosophically discovered something, to have brought it into the open, then “there it is”—in the open. How can we be modest? On the contrary, there is a certain presumptuousness inherent in laying claim to a philosophical discovery. We are referring now not to the familiar point that it is rare to come up with anything new in philosophy (everything is a “footnote to Plato and Aristotle”), but to the fact that in making such a claim we put ourselves in the position of speaking on behalf of those to whom we address the claim. In effect, we are saying to someone: “Here is what we have discovered—and you already know it.” Suppose the response is: “We do not see what you claim to have discovered.” Then, of course, neither will these people accept that they already know it.

What can we say, or do? We can only say something else. There is no substitute for talking, and thereby trying to get those we address to see what we think they already know.

In fact it may turn out, if we keep talking, that it is we who are wrong. This may be our philosophical discovery, that we were wrong. So we were wrong about what those we were addressing knew. And, it seems, *we* already knew this: that we were wrong; that we were wrong about what they, and perforce we, knew. How do we know when we know? Again, there is no secret formula. We do the best we can. We keep talking.

⁶ Consider the following example. Since Hume, most philosophers have accepted as a conceptual necessity that a singular causal fact entails the existence of a covering law (or generalization); but this apparently settled and “evident” conceptual truth has been shaken by Elisabeth Anscombe’s inviting us to reflect that in the case of the behavior of subatomic phenomena, we seem prepared to judge that, say, a collision of particles caused one to move in a particular way, at the same time that we acknowledge the absence of a covering law. “Causality and Determination,” in *The Collected Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe* (Blackwell, 1981). Even if we think that this does not settle the issue, even if we remain a partisan of Hume’s original intuition, Anscombe’s thought experiment illustrates the possibility of drawing upon the resources of our concepts, our language-games (in this case, of causation), to overturn a previously accepted conceptual truth: the possibility, we might say, of one philosophical discovery overturning another.

Int.6 Conceptual Analysis and the Communal Horizon

The insider conception answers, I believe, the Socratic question of how philosophical discovery is possible. Or rather, it answers this question insofar as philosophical discovery is a matter of conceptual analysis. Is all philosophical discovery a matter of conceptual analysis?

One thing seems clear. Whatever we say about discovery, conceptual analysis does not exhaust philosophical thinking or reflection. Thus we must at least acknowledge as belonging to philosophical reflection the construction of arguments and reasoning: the drawing out of consequences, implications, entailments. Thus, once we bring to light the philosophical possibility of discovering things we already know, we may draw the general conclusion that not all discovery involves surprise. In contrast to the discovery itself, this may seem surprising. The reason is that when we draw the conclusion—that is to say, when, in light of the discovery, we see that we are rationally forced to accept the possibility of discovery in the absence of surprise—we go beyond what we already know, what we have philosophically discovered, viz., that in philosophy we discover what we already know.

In philosophical reflection there is a constant interplay between reasoning (argument, inference) and discovery. It can happen also that what has the form of an argument opens us up to something and thus serves as the instrument of discovery. (We shall give an example later in the book.) Yet in principle, the two are different: seeing that such-and-such follows from what we already know, that we are thereby rationally forced or required to accept it—this is different from the kind of opening up that constitutes philosophical discovery. In the first case we move, because we are forced to move, to new ground. In the case of philosophical discovery, we mark time. We end up where we begin, with what we already know—except that now we are open to it. Nor are we forced. We may be in various ways prodded, jogged, urged, reminded, directed, and so on, but in the end we must *let ourselves* be open to what we already know. The contrast between philosophical reasoning (argument) and philosophical discovery is like the contrast between external constraint and our own will.⁷

⁷ Wittgenstein's advice not to "think" but to "look" means that we should think, reflect, in the way of letting ourselves be open to what we already know. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell & Mott, 1958), 66. Becoming open to a conceptual possibility is (in terms of the "looking" metaphor) opening our eyes to what goes on in this or that language-game, i.e., looking rather than forming a hypothesis or making an inference. Yet it should be clear that argument or reasoning also belongs to philosophical reflection. It is not everything, but it is something.

Our question, however, is not whether conceptual analysis exhausts philosophical thinking (reflection), but whether conceptual analysis exhausts philosophical discovery. Here it may occur to us that our present reflections on the insider conception, by means of which we have attempted to gain insight into the nature of conceptual analysis, themselves bring to light a fact that transcends anything that might be discovered by conceptual analysis, viz., the fact that there *is* such a subject matter as our system of language-games. This fact expresses not another possibility (necessity, impossibility) internal to the system, another conceptual possibility, but the existence of *that from within which* any such possibility holds: the “horizon” (as we shall say) of conceptual possibility. That there is such a subject matter, when it dawns on us, is a discovery not of a conceptual possibility but a fact, a fact of existence—of the existence of the very subject matter to which conceptual possibilities are internal.⁸

If there is such a subject matter, a horizon to which conceptual possibilities, etc., are internal, there must be truths about it to which, like the possibilities that hold from within it, we can become open; that is to say, truths which, like the conceptual truths (the possibilities, etc.) that hold from within it, can be discovered philosophically. Thus the system of our language-games, the horizon, is revealed, or uncovered, as the system into which we are drawn gradually, and not piecemeal but (to use the jargon) holistically; as the subject matter of which we simply find ourselves, inescapably, on the inside with others, i.e., the horizon that is “ours” (the communal horizon); as the subject matter, the horizon, that sets the limits on possibility and from within which the world means what it means. These are truths about the communal horizon, about our system of language-games, truths of which we already know and to which we can, if we reflect in a certain way, become open.

Generally, if there exists such a thing as X, X must have its own essence or way of being. So there must be truths that hold of (about) X. In the case where the existence of X is discovered philosophically, the truths

⁸ Our use here of the term “horizon” to refer to this subject matter is suggested by the dictionary definition of a horizon as “the boundary line of one’s vision on the surface of the earth . . . hence the limit of one’s experience, knowledge or observation” (see *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, unabridged). Husserl uses “horizon” in a related way to refer to the space of possibilities implicit in our grasp of a material object. See, e.g., *Cartesian Meditations* (Kluwer, 1995), sections 9, 18; *Ideas* (George Allen & Unwin, 1958), section 44. Again, in Heidegger, the term “horizon” also refers to an implicitly grasped structure of possibilities—though for Heidegger these possibilities are not perceptual but “ontological,” i.e., possibilities essential to what he calls our “Being.” See *Being and Time* (Basil Blackwell, 1973), 116, 365. In the next section we shall introduce a further use of the term “horizon.” This further use of the term—which we shall employ throughout the book, and for which I hope the reader will gradually acquire a feel—retains the underlying notion of a limit but redirects our attention from a communal to a personal subject matter.

that express the essence of X and thus hold of X—the truths that, so to speak, come with X's existence (being)—must be such that they too can be discovered philosophically. However, these truths are not conceptual truths. They are not, once again, truths expressing possibilities (impossibilities, necessities) internal to the communal horizon, our system of language-games. In fact, in the present case, they are truths that hold of (about) the communal horizon itself, the horizon of conceptual truth. They are not conceptual truths, yet, like conceptual truths, they are discoverable philosophically.

Int.7 The Personal Horizon

Thus far, our reflections on philosophical discovery have revolved around the subject matter that is “ours,” the communal horizon. It is now time to point out that our main interest in the book, though it will, inevitably, keep referring us back to the communal horizon, concerns not what is “ours” but what is “mine”; not the communal but, as we shall initially call it, the “personal” horizon. This, the personal horizon, is the subject matter that in the course of our reflections will emerge as the subject matter of the dream hypothesis, and of death: the subject matter, the horizon, that is (in a certain sense) the self.

The personal and communal horizons stand at the same level. In fact they have a way of competing with one another. There is also a way in which they depend on one another. On the one hand, it is only from within the communal horizon, the horizon that is “ours,” that anything has meaning. If nothing had meaning, nothing would be “mine”: there would be no personal horizon. On the other hand, the fact that the communal horizon is “ours,” that it is communal, entails a multiplicity of subjects (those who are together on the inside of it). At the same time—anticipating an idea that we shall discuss at great length later in the book—it is only by being “at the center” of the personal horizon, of the horizon that is “mine,” that something (a human being) is a “subject.” Without the horizon that is “mine,” then, there can be no horizon that is “ours.”

But drawing attention to its interdependence with the communal horizon does not yet bring the personal horizon into the open. If there is a personal horizon, a horizon that is “mine” and that stands in interdependence with the communal horizon, it needs itself to be philosophically discovered. And here, I think, we encounter more difficulty, more resistance, than in the case of the communal horizon.

In part, the resistance has the same source as in the communal case: our engrossment in the world. Given that we are engrossed in the world, we tend to pass over that from within which the world is present and

appears—just as we pass over that from within which the world has meaning. The world appears from within my horizon (my consciousness, my experience, my life), while that from within which it appears, the horizon that is “mine,” passes us by.

There is something else that contributes to resistance in the case of the personal horizon. The communal horizon is our system of language-games. It actually consists in the activity, the communal life, of the system. In contrast, there seems to be nothing in which the personal horizon consists. The horizon that is “mine”—my consciousness, my experience, my life—is in a sense *nothing*: it is nothing *in itself* (something else we shall have to explain). Hence the extra resistance in the case of the personal horizon. Not only do we habitually look to the world, the subject matter from which we look away, and thus tend to pass by, i.e., the personal horizon, is, being nothing in itself, by its very nature such that we tend to pass it by. By its very nature, the personal horizon tends to remain a hidden subject matter.

In part 1 of the book, we shall pursue a line of reflection about the dream hypothesis whose main purpose is to bring the hidden subject matter, the horizon that is “mine,” into view. In a way, this will be our purpose throughout the book. As we go along, we shall be discussing many familiar philosophical problems. In each case, we shall try to show that the correct analysis of the problem requires reference to the personal horizon. But while in each case our focus will be on this or that problem, there will always be the background agenda of enhancing our grasp of the hidden subject matter, the horizon that is “mine.” It, the personal horizon, might be described as the subject matter of the book.

Perhaps we can now indicate in outline how the book is organized and hint at the main topics that will be discussed.

We said that in part 1, for the purpose of bringing into view the personal horizon, we shall consider the dream hypothesis (the hypothesis that this might be a dream). But once the hypothesis is raised, the challenge of dream skepticism is unavoidable. In part 1, then, in addition to inquiring into the meaning and subject matter of the dream hypothesis, we shall be required to confront dream skepticism and to formulate a response to it.

Part 2 deals not with a hypothesis but with a fact, the fact (faced by each of us) that: I will die. What is the meaning of this fact, the meaning of my death? Death holds up the prospect of a ceasing to be, i.e., of the ceasing to be of something that is “mine.” The ceasing to be of what? And in what sense is it “mine”? The answer to the first of these questions points back to the subject matter that comes to light in our reflections on the dream hypothesis, the personal horizon. The answer to the second question points to solipsism: the thought that my horizon is (in a certain sense) *the* horizon. Solipsism, as it appears in the context of death, is

not a quirky philosophical “view” to be refuted or dismissed out of hand, but something that we all know to be true and thus believe, and to whose truth we can—by reflecting on the meaning of death—become philosophically open.

Part 3 builds on the first two parts. Here we shall attempt to come to grips with a wide range of philosophical questions: about the first person and first-person reference; about imagination and possibility; about the self and the self in time (the problem of personal identity). This is the longest and most complicated part of the book. However there is an underlying unity. Everything turns around the same hidden subject matter, the horizon that is “mine” in the way that nothing else is: the subject matter of the dream hypothesis and death. The more we use and develop our conception of this subject matter, the more the conception should take hold. But remember, however much we go on about it, nothing can rationally force us to accept that there is such a subject matter. Nothing can guarantee that it comes into view—except our being open to it.

Becoming open to the existence of the personal horizon, to the fact that there is such a subject matter—this is a philosophical discovery in the same sense that becoming open to the existence of the communal horizon, to the system of language-games, is a philosophical discovery: it is the discovery of something we that already know. In the communal case, we distinguished two categories of philosophically discoverable truths: first, conceptual truths, truths expressing possibilities (impossibilities, necessities) that presuppose (in that they hold only from within) the communal horizon; second, truths that hold of or about the horizon. A similar distinction can be drawn with respect to the personal horizon, except that the truths of the first category, precisely because they are internal not to the communal horizon (the system of language-games) but to the personal horizon, are not conceptual truths. Here again, we need a distinction, viz., between phenomenological truths (these will be important later in book) and ontological truths (we shall briefly comment on these in following section).

Int.8 Philosophical Anticipations of the Personal Horizon

The personal horizon is, of course, not unanticipated in philosophy. How could it be? The personal horizon figures (as we shall attempt to spell out; see part 3) in our conception of ourselves. In that case, how could it fail to play a role in philosophical reflection? Yet, as the hidden subject matter, it plays for the most part a hidden role.

Kant’s Transcendental Idealism is good example of what I have in mind. The starting point of Transcendental Idealism is the idea of something,

an X, appearing and thus figuring within our experience or consciousness. All we can possibly know of the X is based on this, on the way the X appears from within our consciousness. It follows, for Kant, that we can know nothing of what the X is “in itself,” i.e., apart from the way it appears. Thus what we conceive as the world in space and time is not the X as it is in itself but only the X as it appears. This contrast between the X as it appears versus is in itself is the core of Kant’s Transcendental Idealism. All the transcendental arguments in the “Analytic” as well as the resolutions of the puzzles raised in the “Dialectic” depend on the contrast. But the contrast itself depends on a conception of consciousness or experience that Kant never makes explicit, on the conception of consciousness as the “that within which” the X appears/figures as the world in space in time; on what we shall call the “horizontal” conception of consciousness.

There will, as we proceed, be occasion to discuss in detail the hidden role played by the horizontal conception of consciousness both in Kant’s views and in the views of other philosophers. But, leaving Kant aside, let us mention a few examples where the conception is pretty much out in the open.

The horizon that is “mine,” we said, tends to remain out of view not just because of our preoccupation with the world but because of its own nature, its peculiar nothingness: the fact that it is nothing in itself. Such a characterization is reminiscent of Sartre’s characterization of consciousness, the “for-itself,” in *Being and Nothingness*. The nothingness of the for-itself is a central theme of Sartre’s book. Consider, for example, the following statement from the conclusion: “The for-itself is not nothingness in general but a particular privation; it constitutes itself as the privation of *this* being . . . it is in no way an autonomous substance.”⁹ This, it will be clear, pretty well fits our conception of consciousness as the personal horizon. The reason the for-itself, consciousness, cannot be described as “nothingness in general” is quite simply that there *is* such a thing as consciousness. Yet there is such a thing only insofar as something is present/appears from within it and thus figures from within it as demonstratively given: as *this* being. Apart from the presence, the demonstrative givenness, of something within it, there is no “it”—no such thing as consciousness. Consciousness, in short, is nothing in itself.

However, the above quote contains an element that jars with our conception of consciousness as the personal horizon. Sartre says that the for-itself “constitutes itself” as the privation, etc. This suggests that the for-itself is itself active (it must, in fact, keep constituting itself anew—another theme in Sartre’s book). Now, we may accept that without the personal

⁹ *Being and Nothingness*, trans. H. Barnes (Methuen, 1969), p. 618.

horizon there would be no such thing as reason-grounded activity, as will, in that there is such a thing only from within the horizon (see part 3); however that which is active (that which wills, which constitutes itself) is not the horizon, which is nothing in itself, but the one at the center of the horizon, the subject. And the subject is the human being. If anything is rationally active it is the human being, who is part of the world and therefore not nothing in itself.

The second philosopher we shall mention in this regard is Heidegger. In Heidegger's work there are two closely related conceptions with which, for different reasons, we might be tempted to identify that of the personal horizon, the horizon that is "mine." The first is the conception, articulated at great length in *Being and Time* (this is really what the book is all about), of what Heidegger calls "Dasein's Being"—the kind or way of being that we, we human beings, have: the way in which we "be."¹⁰ What suggests the identification with the personal horizon is that Heidegger repeatedly characterizes Dasein's Being as the way of being that "is in each case mine."¹¹ But as he gets further into the working out of this way of being (that to be in this way is to be "in the world," "with others," "ahead of oneself," and so on), the richness of the subject matter, the potentially endless detail, makes it evident that, in contrast to the personal horizon, it cannot be described as something that is nothing in itself.¹² (Perhaps this should have been evident just from the fact that it is "a way of being.")

In this respect, Heidegger's subject matter in *Being and Time* resembles not the personal but the communal horizon, our system of language-games. Like our system of language-games, the way of being that is Dasein's way of being (that is Dasein's Being) constitutes an inexhaustible subject matter for philosophical discovery. In one case what comes to light are the possibilities and necessities internal to the communal horizon (our system of language-games), in the other case, the structures essential to Dasein's way of being. We might then regard Dasein's way of being, the way of being that is in each case "mine," as the first-person singular counterpart of the life or activity of the communal horizon. Or to put it the other way around, we might regard our life as insiders of the communal horizon, of our system of language-games, as the communal counterpart of Dasein's Being.¹³ But in that case, as we said, Dasein's

¹⁰ Here "be" must be taken as an activity verb, for which we might substitute (not as an exact synonym, but to give the flavor of Heidegger's idea) a verb like "live" or "carry on."

¹¹ See, e.g., H 41, 42, 43, 53.

¹² Thus the question of what Dasein's Being consists in, so far from being the most general, is said to be "the most basic and concrete." Ibid., H 9.

¹³ Notice, though, it is part of Dasein's being to be "with others," just as from within our system of language-games each of us acquires the conception of "myself."

Being cannot be identified with the subject matter that is nothing in itself, the personal horizon.

There is, however, another conception in Heidegger—of which we get an occasional glimpse in *Being and Time* but which becomes more prominent in his later writings—that seems cut out to be the conception of a subject matter that is nothing in itself, viz., his conception of “the clearing (*die Lichtung*).” Thus in “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” he suggests that even in thinking of those philosophers (he is here discussing Husserl and Hegel) whose aim is to uncover, to bring things into the open, there remains something that “conceals itself precisely where philosophy has brought its matter to absolute evidence [Hegel] and to ultimate evidence [Husserl],” viz., a “free region” an “openness that grants a possible letting appear.” This subject matter, this free region from within which alone things appear, Heidegger calls “the clearing.”¹⁴ It is, he says, “the open region for everything that becomes present and absent.” In itself the clearing, as a free region, is nothing—i.e., it is nothing apart from things figuring from within it as present or absent. The clearing, in other words, is nothing in itself.

It is worth noting that, whereas Dasein’s Being “is in each case mine,” there is no mention here of the “mineness” of the clearing. Yet if it is not “mine,” what distinguishes the clearing from *space*, i.e., the space that spreads out endlessly around me and that might in its own way be described “the open region for everything that becomes present and absent”? Space, the space around me and in which I move about, is not “mine” or anyone else’s. In contrast to the impersonal nature of space, the clearing is personal: it is the personal horizon, the horizon that is “mine.”

We must ask, then, about the relation between the clearing and Dasein’s Being. The clearing is the horizon of Dasein’s Being. That is to say, there is such a way of being, the way of being whose structure is uncovered for us in *Being and Time*, only from within the clearing; only from within the subject matter that is nothing in itself, the personal horizon. This is the source of the “mineness” of Dasein’s Being. Dasein’s Being “is in each case mine” by virtue of being internal to the horizon that “is in each case mine.” Of course we do not yet know in what *this* “mineness” consists. Heidegger never tells us.

Thus the truths that elaborate the structure of Dasein’s Being are truths that hold only from within the personal horizon, the clearing. They are truths about Dasein’s Being that hold only from within the personal horizon. Such truths, which Heidegger calls “ontological” truths, are therefore to be distinguished from truths that are internal to the personal hori-

¹⁴ *Basic Writings, Martin Heidegger*, ed. D. F. Krell (Routledge, 1994), p. 440ff.

zon but do not concern Dasein's Being, that is, from "phenomenological" truths. (See the final paragraph of Int.7 above.)

Wittgenstein—that is, Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*—is the last philosopher we shall mention in this regard. Wittgenstein's conception of the "metaphysical subject," the subject that is not part of the world but its "limit,"¹⁵ is, I believe, the conception of the personal horizon, the subject matter with which we shall be occupied in this book. The details of Wittgenstein's view will be considered in part 2, when we come to grapple with questions about solipsism and the meaning of death. But perhaps we might in advance enter a general observation about Wittgenstein's philosophy.

The often remarked upon shift between the earlier and later Wittgenstein may be viewed in light of the contrast between the personal and communal horizon.¹⁶ In the *Tractatus*, the deepest truths, like the "truth" in solipsism,¹⁷ are truths that have reference to the personal horizon, to the "limit" of the world (the metaphysical subject). In the *Investigations*, as we have pointed out, the focus is on our system of language-games, on the communal horizon.¹⁸ The conception of the personal horizon, of the metaphysical subject, etc., seems no longer to play any role—as if it embodied a philosophical mistake. What happens then to the truth in solipsism? Is this to be reevaluated as a mistake? In that case, what death means to us is a mistake. No, we may philosophically turn away from it, but the personal horizon, the metaphysical subject, will still be there for us.

The following remark from *On Certainty* is of interest in this connection: "You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there—like our life." What is "there like our life" is the system of language-games. But what is it to which the system is being compared when Wittgenstein says that the language-game (i.e., the system of language-games) is there like our life? What is "our life"? It is what for each of us is "my life." It is the subject matter that is "mine" in the way that nothing else is (life in the horizontal sense). It seems to me

¹⁵ *Tractatus*, 5.632–33.

¹⁶ Cf. Bernard Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism," in G. Vesey, ed. *Understanding Wittgenstein*, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, vol. 7 (Macmillan, 1974).

¹⁷ *Tractatus*, 5.62.

¹⁸ This is indirectly evident in countless remarks and by Wittgenstein's procedure throughout the book; but the thought is also directly expressed, e.g., in the advice to "Look at the language-game as the primary thing" (656; see also 654–55), and again, to "accept the everyday language-game, and to note *false* accounts of the matter as false." He continues: "The primitive language-game which children are taught needs no justification; attempts at justification need to be rejected" (p. 200).

that Wittgenstein, in reaching for an analogy with the communal horizon, takes hold of the subject matter that he thinks he has left behind, the personal horizon: the metaphysical subject, the “limit” of the world.

Int.9 Two Types of Philosophical Puzzle

There is an idea that reoccurs throughout the book, a theme (you might say) that is interwoven with the other material, to which we have yet to draw attention. It relates to a certain general type of philosophical puzzle. The puzzles of this type have various structures; but they have in common that, though they are all philosophical, they are also, in a way, “extraphilosophical,” and as such contrast with “intrapilosophical” or “purely philosophical” puzzles.¹⁹ All philosophical puzzles (i.e., both extra- and intraphilosophical puzzles) depend on philosophy for their articulation and analysis. Intrapilosophical puzzles, however, are philosophical in the further sense that without philosophical reflection there would be no relevant puzzlement. In the case of the extraphilosophical puzzles, on the other hand, we may be puzzled in the absence of philosophical reflection. These are puzzles that may come over us, as it were, in the course of everyday life, without any philosophical preparation: without arguments, analyses, thought experiments, and so on.

The clearest examples of purely or intraphilosophical puzzles are Zeno’s paradoxes about motion. Apart from something like Zeno’s arguments, I do not think anyone would be puzzled about motion. (Would it ever occur to us, just like that, that it is impossible that anything should move?) A few other examples: Russell’s paradox about classes, Goodman’s “grue” paradox, the various paradoxes of confirmation (e.g., the ravens paradox), the surprise examination paradox, the sorites paradox, the preface paradox, Kant’s antinomies of space, time, and matter. Obviously, this list is not exhaustive or systematic. There is, however, a unifying element. In all these cases it is essential to our actually being puzzled that we actually follow a certain argument or thought experiment, etc.; otherwise we will not be puzzled, at least not in the right way.

In leading us into puzzlement, philosophy exploits unclarity present in our concepts or language-games; unclarity that enable us to construct arguments that lead to conclusions that are self-contradictory, or patently false. Naturally, we assume that the arguments contain mistakes, fallacies. It falls to philosophy, through further analysis, to expose the mistakes and thereby to lead us out of the puzzlement into which it has led us.

¹⁹ See *The Puzzle of Experience*, 9.3.

In the case of the intraphilosophical puzzles, everything—the generation, analysis, and solution of the puzzles—is philosophical business.²⁰

In the case of the extraphilosophical (philosophical) puzzles, however, the puzzles that we bring to light philosophically have a way of making themselves known outside philosophy—that is to say, without any philosophical argument or analysis, without, as we put it, any philosophical preparation; a way of breaking into and disturbing everyday consciousness from a level where they exist whether or not we are disturbed by them.

Thus, for example, the fact that I (each of us for himself) will die, when it hits home, may strike us as incomprehensible. The incomprehensibility of death is the incomprehensibility of something intrinsically puzzling, of something that is impossible yet a fact: an impossible fact. If we are ever to get to the bottom of the impossibility (that death is a fact is all too evident), we need philosophy; but the elements of the impossibility, and thus of the puzzle itself—in other words, the very things we must attempt philosophically to uncover and analyze—these things are already there for us, independently of philosophy. Thus, whereas philosophy is required to expose the elements, to bring them to light and make clear how they give rise to the puzzle, our prior unarticulated grasp of puzzle may make itself known to us outside philosophical reflection, i.e., without any argument or analysis whatever. And once everything is out in the open, there is nothing more (philosophically) that we can do. The puzzle has no solution.

Not all the philosophical puzzles (problems, difficulties, etc.) discussed in the book have the extraphilosophical dimension that puts them beyond the reach of a philosophical solution, and in a number of cases we shall in fact propose “solutions” (e.g., in the case of certain familiar puzzles about first-person reference and personal identity; part 3). Now there is no doubting the fascination that such (intra- or purely philosophical) puzzles can exercise on the philosophical mind; they are, in fact, a mainstay of philosophical reflection. However, it is the extraphilosophical puzzles that can really get to us (though, admittedly, not all to the same degree²¹).

²⁰ The fact that philosophical reflection generates the intraphilosophical puzzles does not mean that philosophical reflection will find it easy to expose the mistake and thereby solve the puzzles, as the huge literature on Zeno’s paradoxes will testify. Or consider Russell’s paradox about classes, or the liar’s paradox, or the paradoxes of confirmation, or the surprise examination paradox, or the preface paradox, etc. Are the solutions to these puzzles obvious? A particularly interesting case is the sorites paradox. Here, I think, we have a puzzle that not only makes itself manifest in everyday life, but does so in manner that almost mimics the philosophical formulation of the puzzle. The philosophical puzzle in this case appears extraphilosophically. But the sorites not only appears extraphilosophically, when it thus appears we know how to deal with it. You could say that it both appears and is solved extraphilosophically (although we overlook this when we deal with the puzzle philosophically). Of course these assertions require backing up and explanation.

²¹ Puzzlement about death is, no doubt, the most immediate and easy to relate to—which, of course, is why I have chosen it to illustrate the conception of an extraphilosophical puzzle.

Thus these are the puzzles that offer philosophy the opportunity of pursuing its ancient task. For although in bringing into the open the source of our puzzlement we do not solve anything, we may come to understand something—something about ourselves. Has this not always been conceived as a philosophical task, to understand ourselves?

Insofar as they depend on unclarities in our language-games (concepts), the purely philosophical puzzles might be described as “puzzles of the communal horizon.” The extraphilosophical puzzles, on the other hand, are all “puzzles of the personal horizon.” They depend not on unclarities but on difficult truths, i.e., on difficult truths whose expression in one way or another requires reference to the personal horizon. Let us conclude our introductory remarks by offering a brief characterization of the extraphilosophical puzzles, and indicating how the personal horizon figures in each case.

Int.10 The Extraphilosophical Puzzles

Note, to begin with, when we speak in this context of extraphilosophical puzzles we refer not to the surface puzzlement but to the underlying puzzle that philosophical reflection aims to articulate. The surface puzzlement, if it occurs (it need not occur; we need never be thus puzzled), takes the form of incomprehension, a sense of something uncanny or impossible. “How can this be?” The underlying puzzle takes the form of an antinomy or contradiction. The idea is that the surface puzzlement manifests an unarticulated grasp of the underlying puzzle. If we are able to bring the puzzle to light (with everything on which it depends), then we will have discovered something, viz., why we are puzzled. We will have made a philosophical discovery. (Of course, this cannot be expected on the basis of the preliminary characterizations we shall now offer—which merely hint at the puzzles.)

*The puzzles of death.*²² There are two puzzles that find their way to the surface in our sense that death—“my” death—cannot be comprehended. The first is the “solipsistic puzzle of death”: the prospect of my death looms as the end of everything and in that sense as *the* death; yet I know it is like that for everyone. How could a multitude of deaths each be “the” death? The second puzzle may be called the “temporal puzzle of death.” The subject matter of death is the personal horizon: the personal horizon is what ceases to be in death. The personal horizon, however,

²² See chapter 11.

emerges (in our reflections on the dream hypothesis) as a subject matter that is outside time and therefore cannot cease to be.

*The puzzle of the causation of consciousness.*²³ In this case, the extra-philosophical manifestation of the puzzle requires knowledge that consciousness depends on the activity of our brains: that there is such a thing as my consciousness because of what is going on in my brain. This is a fact—but how could it be? If we are puzzled in this way it is, I think, because we have a sense of the personal horizon. The personal horizon, i.e., consciousness in the horizontal sense, cannot itself be included in time. Causation, however, presupposes temporality: only what is in time can be caused to be. Consciousness (in the horizontal sense), since it is not in time, is not a possible term of the causal relation—and yet, right now, because of what is happening in my brain, there is such a thing as my consciousness.

*The puzzle of experience, and the puzzle of memory.*²⁴ These puzzles, like the puzzle of the causation of consciousness, depend on our knowledge of the causal role of the brain, except that what concerns us now is the causing to be of what is available from within the personal horizon rather than the causing to be of the horizon itself. Thus the puzzle of experience concerns the experiential presence of objects from within the horizon (experience in the horizontal sense), and the puzzle of memory, the availability of past events from within the horizon. At the surface, it can seem baffling that something happening “up here” in my brain should cause the presence in my experience of something “out there” in the world, or that something happening “now” in my brain should cause the availability (givenness) of something that no longer is, something that happened “back then.” The underlying puzzle (roughly) is this: the presence/availability of what is caused cannot be the object “out there” or the event “back then,” since that would mean that events happening in my brain bring the world/the past into being. What is caused by the brain must rather be some kind of internal object (a sense-datum, a memory image); yet (we know) it is precisely the world and the past that are present/available from within consciousness.²⁵

²³ See chapter 11. To avoid confusion, we should stress that the puzzle we are concerned with here has nothing to do with what philosophers call the “qualitative character of experience” or with what has recently come to be known as “the problem of the explanatory gap.”

²⁴ See chapter 21.

²⁵ Since I have discussed it at length elsewhere, our discussion of the puzzle of experience will be perfunctory (see *The Puzzle of Experience*). Its main purpose in the present book is to serve as an object of comparison for the puzzle of memory.

The puzzles of experience and memory, like the puzzle of the causation of consciousness (and the puzzle of division, which we will come to in a moment) depend on what we might call our causal entrapment in the world, on the fact that both the existence of the personal horizon and the way things are from within it are the causal upshot of what is happening right now in that bit of the world that is my brain. In contrast, the puzzles of death depend solely on the status of the personal horizon: on its claim to uniqueness, on its nontemporality. On the other hand, since causal entrapment depends on temporality, the temporal puzzle of death seems close to puzzles of causal entrapment in contrast to the solipsistic puzzle of death, which stands apart.

That we are causally entrapped in the world is something we all know. We know too, about the same world that causally entraps us, that this world and its past are given from within the personal horizon. We know these things—but we are not yet open to them: we have not yet philosophically discovered what we already know. Now, as we pointed out in Int.4, philosophical discovery presupposes resistance. The peculiar thing about the puzzles of experience and memory is that in these cases the resistance comes from philosophy itself, viz., from philosophical arguments whose conclusions (that objects in the world and past events cannot be what is given from within the horizon) conflict with what we know. Thus in expounding the arguments that (by creating resistance) put us in a position philosophically to discover the givenness of the world and past, we at the same time philosophically discover the puzzles. But the puzzles we thereby discover are already there for us, implicit in the fact of our causal entrapment and the facts of availability.

In contrast, however, to the purely philosophical puzzles, philosophy does not enter in these cases as a necessary preliminary to our puzzlement. It enters rather as part of the reflections by means of which we explicate a puzzle that may make itself known to us without any need for philosophical reflection.

*The puzzle of division.*²⁶ The puzzle of division, which is related to the puzzle of the causation of consciousness, is an imperfect example of an extraphilosophical puzzle (a puzzle of causal entrapment): it does not have its own extraphilosophical manifestation. The puzzle the causation of consciousness concerns a fact about the personal horizon, that it is causally maintained by the activity of my brain. The puzzle of division, however, concerns not a fact but a possibility about this subject matter:

²⁶ See chapter 23.

the possibility of its dividing, of my horizon (my consciousness, experience, life) becoming two horizons.

The puzzle is that whereas from the standpoint of experiential possibility division seems impossible, given the brain's role in maintaining the horizon, and given further the metaphysical possibility of splitting the brain in such a way that each half (appropriately enhanced) could maintain my horizon, from the standpoint of causal and metaphysical possibility, there seems to be nothing that excludes the possibility of division (of my horizon doubling); nothing, in other words, that excludes something that I cannot make sense of as a possible experience; nothing that excludes a possibility that conflicts with what Kant called "the necessary unity of consciousness."

Of course, what we have just described (helping ourselves to philosophical jargon) is, if our description is correct, the underlying puzzle rather than a kind of puzzlement that is not apt to break in upon everyday consciousness without special philosophical prompting. The existence of my horizon (consciousness, experience, life); that it will cease to be (death); that it is causally maintained in existence by my brain; that the world and the past are given from within my horizon—these are all facts. They are, you might say, facts that we live with. Thus the puzzles that attach to these facts have the ever-present potential of breaking through the surface of everyday consciousness. The puzzle of division, in contrast, concerns (as we remarked) not a *fact* but a *possibility*—a possibility that we evoke with the aid of arguments and thought experiments (about brain-splitting, etc.). Hence there is no extraphilosophical symptom of the puzzle.

Yet once we are prompted by the puzzle of the causation of consciousness to look beneath the surface, the essence of the puzzle of division is very close at hand. The puzzle of the causation of consciousness concerns the singular and remarkable (and ultimately problematic) fact that my consciousness, the subject matter that is the horizon of the spatio-temporality totality I call the world, is itself maintained in existence by one tiny bit of that totality, one tiny bit of matter. My brain. ("How can this be?") To get the essentials of the puzzle of division—i.e., the metaphysical possibility of an experiential impossibility—we need only add to the puzzle of the causation of consciousness the fact that the brain, as a bit of matter, is divisible. The conflict in this case is merely potential and thus does not manifest itself extraphilosophically (apart from thought experiments, etc.). But it is there for us, implicit in our causally entrapped situation, waiting to be philosophically discovered.

It will not go unremarked that the puzzles of causal entrapment (of experience, memory, consciousness, and division) to one degree or another resemble well-known (and much discussed) puzzles in the philo-

sophical literature. It is, however, important to appreciate that we are regarding these puzzles in a particular way. Our aim is not that of solving the puzzles (we are saying they have no solution), but of getting to the bottom of them, of exposing their elements. This is, as we put it, the philosophical aim of understanding our situation, of understanding ourselves.