

DISCUSSION

SOME REFLECTIONS OCCASIONED BY CLACK AND CHISHOLM ON THE SELF

R. Jerold Clack¹ has advanced considerations against both Chisholm and Hume on the self, maintaining that "one is acquainted with his self, not by perceiving the various ways in which it manifests or presents itself to him; he is acquainted with it primarily and fundamentally by *being* it." Clack alleges that Hume perfunctorily presupposed the I but did not go on to investigate that presupposition. "Had he done so I think he would have been forced to acknowledge that, observable or not, the self cannot be reduced to a bundle of sense perceptions."² Clack, however, fails to see that there are three questions about the self involved here, and that when they are distinguished there is a version of the bundle theory that adequately answers them all.

The first question is this. In a perceptual act, such as is expressed by 'I see that this is red,' what is it that the 'I' refers to? On analysis, the act per se contains one particular and two universals, the latter accounting for its being an act of visual perception and for its intending the fact that this is red. In the context of the act, the 'I' refers to the particular which instantiates the two universals. The universals are repeatables; many different acts are visual perceptions; many different acts (perceptions, memories, beliefs, etc.) may intend this same fact, exhibit the same thought or content. But that which instantiates the universals, which accounts for the "thisness" of the act — its numerical distinction from every other act — is particular and simple, not repeatable and for that reason not continuous from one act to another.

The second question is this: In our use of 'I,' whereby we speak of my having done something yesterday, perceiving something today, planning to do something tomorrow, what does this 'I' refer to; or, what am I that exists through time? Clearly the answer to this ques-

¹ "Chisholm and Hume on Observing the Self," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 (March, 1973), pp. 338-348; his paper comments on Rodgerick Chisholm, "On the Observability of the Self," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (September, 1969), pp. 7-21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 342.

tion, unlike the answer to our first one, requires the referent to be continuous from one act to another. But need it be simple? Why cannot we explain that which is continuous from act to act as the collection of which a given act is a member? The requirement is that the self be continuous through time: it is, by virtue of the fact one can intend past members, at a later time, in memory. We thus have two senses of 'I' which are often used so interchangeably as to promote their conflation. But each answers a different question.

Consider an analogy. A committee is a collective entity of which we may make predications that range through time; we may say of one and the same committee that it voted up a report last week but tabled it until its next meeting; that the committee opened discussion on the report this week but deferred action on it until next; and that the committee will vote to accept the report at its next meeting. This is perfectly consistent with our not regarding the committee as a simple entity not reducible to its members and their interrelations. And it is perfectly possible for us to say that one and the same committee has met during these three weeks, even though some members of the committee present next week at the vote may not have been present earlier (indeed, may not have been members earlier). So it is with the bundle self — the self which is a bundle of particular acts. They are acts of that self, but in the sense of being parts of it, not in the sense of it being one of their constituents. It is the particular, momentary selves which are the constituents. But there is no simple, particular constituent of such acts which recurs in more than one. It is such a recurring, constitutive self that Hume could not find. To invoke such a self is to conflate the two selves already distinguished, one singular and particular, one a bundle of facts. Just as the members of one and the same committee may change from meeting to meeting, old ones leaving it, new ones coming to it for the first time, and some members not being present at given meetings, so there may be a loss of old components of the self (as in forgetting), a gain of new ones (as in new experiences), and absences (as when I have some past experience of which I am not aware at this moment, although I could be).

The third question is this. If each of us is a bundle of acts, what is it that constitutes a given set of acts into a discrete bundle? Consider the following: suppose that Jones' bundle self consists of the facts

$$(f_1, f_2, f_3, \dots, f_n),$$

and that Smith's bundle self consists of the facts

$$(g_1, g_2, g_3, \dots, g_n).$$

Why is it that the set of facts

$(f_1, g_2, f_3 \dots)$

does not constitute another self-bundle? Or, what is it that keeps the members of Jones' bundle from being members of Smith's bundle, and vice versa; what prohibits intermixture of the self-constituting facts of individual bundle selves?

A fully developed bundle theory of the self, especially in light of the great amount that has been written on the relation of the body³ and of memory⁴ to an adequate analysis of the self, is beyond the scope of this brief note. But the following may indicate one relevant line of consideration. First we should note that (to speak in the common idiom) one may be aware not only of various external objects of perception, but also of his awarenesses of those objects. I can remember not only how my mother looked when last I saw her, but also remember my awareness of her then; I can not only see that this paper is white, but be aware that I am seeing. We may express the kernel of a theory of personal identity for the bundle self by saying that I am all the acts of awareness of which I may be aware (where the first 'I' is used in the sense of the bundle self, the second in the sense of the particular self in a single act of awareness). The bundle self which I am through time is constituted by all of the acts of awareness which this given awareness, which I am now, could intend. The particular self I am, now, is this particular awareness; but the bundle self which I am, and have been, is all the awarenesses which this particular awareness might intend. Being aware of an awareness is sufficient (whether it is necessary is a more complex question) for its inclusion in the bundle which I am; no other bundle contains or may contain any of my awarenesses (unless one accepts certain characterizations of particular psychic phenomena such as the mindreading of empaths). What makes f_1 and f_3 parts of Jones and g_2 not part of Jones is that there is an awareness which can be of f_1 or f_3 but not of g_2 ; what makes g_2 a part of Smith is that there is another awareness which can be of g_2 but not of f_1 or f_3 . That which puts a given act into a given bundle is its accessibility to some awarenesses of awarenesses, but not to others. So far as I can tell, no transcendent, substantial, simple constituent self is required for answering any of

³ E.g., P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, Garden City (1959).

⁴ E.g., S. Shoemaker, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity*, Ithaca (1963).

these questions, and both Clack's and Chisholm's objections to the bundle theory are based on conflations of these questions and their answers.

RICHARD T. HULL.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO.