



Fall Debate School Book 4
A Textbook of Debates

Fall Debate School

Book 4

A Textbook of Debates

Refuting the Theories of Others

& Responding to Critiques of Our Native Theories

2023 Edition

Sera Jey Monastic University

Authors: Losang Donyo, based on the textbooks of Phurbuchok and Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltzen

Acknowledgements: Jampa Sherab, Jeffrey Hopkins, Daniel Purdue, Atisha Mathur

Published by Sera Jey Monastic University

Debate School

2023, Bylakuppe

This is a draft text, not to be copied or shared in any form (print, digital, or otherwise) without the express consent of

Sera Jey Monastery.

Table of Contents

1. An Examination of Speech and Language
2. ---
3. ---
4. The World of the Senses
5. The Consequences of Speech
6. The Nature of Mind – Experience, Clear and Aware
7. ---
8. ---
9. Objects – Establishing Reality
10. ---
11. The Complexities of Cognition

About This Book

The 3 R's: Refute, Reveal, and Respond

The primary way that content is taught in Tibetan philosophy textbooks is by using illustrative debates. The illustrative debates are presented in two sections – the first of which is oriented around refuting the positions of earlier scholars, or opposing contemporary scholars; in this textbook, these sections are called simply *Refute*. The other section with debates that illustrate the issues being investigated is structured around responding to potential critiques (or sometimes actual, formally levied counterpoints). Thus, these sections are called *Respond* in this textbook. *Refute* is the first section of each chapter and *Respond* is the second section. In the middle of these two is the section where the textbook authors reveal our own preferred positions and theories – thus, these sections are called *Reveal*.

In the structure of the Fall Debate School textbooks, these sections are all in the separate textbook titled “Fall Debate School Book 3 – A Flower for Nalanda, Logic for Life.” Because *Refute* and *Respond* are comprised of debates, while *Reveal* is a list of definitions with explanation, they have been separated into two distinct books; one with debates, and one with explanations. Book 3 and Book 4 together give us **The Three R's: Refute, Reveal, Respond**.

This style of pedagogy is extremely effective and is also largely consistent with the process of knowledge creation used in modern science and academia. Many new scientific theories are developed in the wake of a series of new observations that contradict the pre-existing theories. These kinds of observations are called anomalies, because they are events or phenomena that shouldn't be possible if the currently held theory is genuine and true. Contemporary scientists have a responsibility to identify the flaws in the pre-existing theories, in light of such anomalies, before positing their own theory. Without doing this, there's no reason for other members of the scientific community to consider their new theory – why bother inventing a whole new theory when the old one works just fine?

Only after clearly showing the flaws in the pre-existing theories or interpretations of the data does it make sense for them to go on to posit their own more refined theory, which now should be able to explain any known anomalies without contradiction. However well they do this – even with clear reasoning and strong evidence – their colleagues and contemporaries may not immediately accept the new theory. They will critique it and suggest other ways in which it contradicts the data. The authors of the new theory must respond to such critiques. Thus, the model of progress in science is very similar to the *Refute, Reveal, and Respond* model used by the Nalanda Tradition philosophers and authors.

An example of this kind of anomaly that contributed to the creation of the new physics of the 20th century (Quantum Mechanics) was observations of the spectrum of electromagnetic radiation absorbed and emitted by black bodies. The actual amounts of radiation emitted would not be as they were if electromagnetic radiation existed as a contiguous gradient. The observations – both mathematically and those seen by empirical experimentation – implied that radiation is only emitted and absorbed in discrete amounts, called quanta. Max Planck, making these observations, found a flaw in the pre-existing theory, as did Einstein with his observations of the photo-electric effect. Their job, then, was to first acknowledge this flaw, and then go on to suggest a new theory or approach to interpreting the data. Scientific papers often include these sections, even though they are not called *Refute, Reveal, and Respond*. While the exact layout of a scientific paper is somewhat flexible, they often address the issues in pre-existing theories in the Introduction section, posit their theories and interpretations in the Conclusion section, and address critiques in the Discussion section.

Out of the Three R's, both *Refute* and *Respond* contain debates. *Reveal* consists simply of declarative statements – the definitions and categories to be learned are listed and described. For the sections with debates, though, one may wonder, “Where do these debates come from? Who is debating whom?” As you saw in section **1.3 Two Parties of a Debate** of the **Fall Debate School Book 1 – Introducing Nalanda Debate**, the entire Nalanda Debate structure depends upon an interaction between two people. In the real-life scenario of two living,

breathing, thinking debaters facing one another, every interaction is unique and distinct from the previous one. Once you begin to debate, you will quickly discover that even if you debate the same topic with the same person as you did the day before, the way the debate unfolds will inevitably take you down a different path from where it went the last time.

For this reason, we cannot attempt to fully capture every possible response that a Defender might give to a Challenger when structuring an illustrative written debate. The written debates that you will find in this textbook, then, are idealized debates that start from an actual qualm or statement from someone who contradicts the positions of the textbook authors. Because they do not represent with perfect accuracy what a real, breathing human who holds the view being challenged will say when being debated in real-time, it is sometimes thought that these debates are Strawman arguments; that they do not genuinely address the opposed view, but present instead a similar argument and then go on to challenge that.

Of course it would be impossible to perfectly capture how the opponent would respond to each and every question or reason without having the actual person present before us. But, luckily for you, you do have an actual person before you – your debate partner! These written debates included in this book, then, are best taken in the following ways: 1) as learning aids to clarify the theories being

presented as correct in the textbook, and 2) as mock debates to use as a starting point for your own debates. And since we cannot in good faith wholly deny the claims of the Strawman fallacy, the opponent in all the debates in the *Refute* and *Respond* sections of this textbook has been named **Strawni the Strawman**. Like a scarecrow put in a cornfield to scare away the birds, Strawni is planted here to scare away any ignorance and bias that may try to settle in between these pages!



Chapter 1

Examination of Speech and Language

Refute

Strawni says... Speech is used to communicate. Communication means conveying some meaning. Communication is only done when a person *wants* something – it is by nature goal-oriented. All speech has the four properties of realistic speech.

☞ | If it is speech, then it necessarily has the four properties of realistic speech.

Take the subject: **the drunken rambling of a louse saying “Oh, Grandma Crow – what big teeth you have!”** It follows that **it has the four properties of realistic speech**, because **it is speech**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it is fictional speech**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it is intelligible sound that does not have a real-world referent**.

I accept. (also accepting the root thesis)

Take the subject: **the drunken rambling of a louse saying “Oh, Grandma Crow – what big teeth you have!”** It follows that **it does not have the four properties of speech**, because **it does not have a real-world referent**; because (Reason 1) a crow with teeth is its referent and (Reason 2) a crow with teeth doesn't exist in the real world.

Strawni says... People interpret meaning in all sorts of sounds. It's not only speech that communicates, but all sounds express meaning.

☞ | If it's sound, then it necessarily expresses a meaning.

Take the subject: **the sound of a bell**. It follows that **it expresses meaning** because **it is a sound**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it is an object heard in the domain of the auditory consciousness**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **in dependence on the sound waves emitted from a vibrating bell contacting one's hearing organs, an experience of hearing it is created**.

I accept. (also accepting the root thesis)

Take the subject: the sound of bells. It follows that **it does not express a meaning** because **it does not elicit a meaning**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it does not communicate a meaning**.

Reason not true.

because **it is not communication**.

Reason not true.

because **it does not trigger an aligned thought**.

Reason not true.

Because **it does not arise from a wish to communicate an aligned thought**.



Strawni says... All speech has some truth to it. There is some understandable meaning being expressed by every form of speech, therefore it is all realistic speech.

☞ | If it is speech, then it necessarily is realistic speech.

Take the subject: **the sentence: "This sentence is not true."** It follows that **it** is **realistic speech, because it is speech.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **a collection of words.**

I accept.

Take the subject: **the sentence: "This sentence is not true."** It follows that **it** is **not realistic speech, because it is not true speech.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **untrue speech.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **speech whose meaning is not aligned with reality.**

Reason not true.

Take the subject: **This sentence being not true.** It follows **it** is **aligned with reality.**

I accept.

Take the subject: **This sentence.** It follows that **it's** not true speech.

I accept.

It follows that **it's** true speech because **it** is **speech whose expressed meaning exists.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **speech that expresses that all phenomena are selfless and empty.**

Reason not true.

It follows that this sentence expresses that all phenomena are selfless and empty, because **that sentence expresses that all phenomena are selfless and empty;** because **the sentence expresses that all phenomena are selfless and empty;** because **a sentence expresses that all phenomena are selfless and empty;** because **the sentence: "All phenomena are selfless and empty" is a sentence, the sentence, that sentence, and this sentence.**

Reason not true to all those reasons.

That follows because **the statement “Because this exists, this emerges. Because this arises, this arises...” expresses that causes give rise to their results, and the sentences, “Ya gotta do what ya gotta do,” and “It is what it is,” are not redundant.**

Please debate along these lines!

Strawni says... If people are speaking non-fictional speech, then they must mean what they say. The meaning expressed by the words is just what is explicitly said by the words. That’s why the Buddha is not the greatest spiritual teacher - he said some unusual things, like the advice to kill your father and mother!

☞ | If it’s the meaning of the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother”, then it’s necessarily the explicit meaning of the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother”.

Take the subject: **elimination of ignorance and compounded karma**. It follows that **it** is **the explicit meaning of the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother,”** because **it’s the meaning of the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother.”**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **the implicit meaning of the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother.”**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **expressed implicitly by the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother.”**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **what the speaker of that statement intends to express and what the listener intends to hear, but is not expressed directly.**

I accept (also accepting the root thesis).

Take the subject: **elimination of ignorance and compounded karma**. It follows that **it** is **not the explicit meaning of the Buddha’s statement “Kill your father and mother,”** because **it’s the implicit meaning**

of the that statement. That follows because **it** is **implicitly expressed by that statement.** You accepted the reason already.

Strawni says... Words are speech, so Buddha's Word is naturally Buddha's speech.

☞ | If it is the Buddha's Word, then it's necessarily the Buddha's speech.

Take the subject: **the words of the Heart Sutra, "How should a son of the lineage who wishes to practice the profound Prajnaparamita train?"** It follows that it is **Buddha's speech**, because **it** is **Buddha's Word.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **Sutra.**

I accept. (Also accepting the initial thesis that those words of the Heart Sutra are Buddha's speech.)

Take **that subject.** It follows that **it** is **not Buddha's speech**, because **it** is **a sentient being's speech.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **Shariputra's speech.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **speech that was produced from the mouth, air movements, and vocal cords of Shariputra's body.**

An Examination of Speech and Language

Respond

Strawni says... How can all fictional speech be unrealistic? Of course fictional stories can have the four qualities of realistic speech – your position is ridiculous.

☞ | If it is fictional speech, then it necessarily does not have the four qualities of realistic speech – that’s what you’ve accepted.

Take the subject: **the words of the story *Cinderella***. It follows that **they do not have the four qualities of speech**, because **they** are **fictional speech**.

I accept.

It follows that **they do not have the purpose of imparting the moral that kindness and virtue are rewarded**, because **they do not have a purpose**.

Reason not true.

It follows that **they do have a purpose**.

I accept.

It follows that **they don’t have a meaning**.

I accept.

It follows that **they have a meaning**, because **they express the story of Cinderella**; because **they communicate the story of Cinderella**; because **the events of Cinderella’s life appear to their aligned thoughts (e.g., to the conceptual mind that follows from them)**.

No pervasion at the first reason.

Strawni says... You are saying that for something to be communication, then it must arise from a wish to express a meaning and have an aligned thought that the communicator intends to communicate. The sound of bells most obviously has this! People only ring bells to communicate something. According to you, ringing a school bell is not intended to convey the message that it's time to go to class.

Take the subject: **the sound of a school bell**. It follows that **it does not arise from a wish to communicate the aligned thought, "it's time to go to class."**

Why?

Because **it** is a sound of a bell.

No pervasion.

Now we take the role of Challenger to point out the flaw in Strawni's thinking – that acceptance of the thesis "The sound of bells does not have a meaning" implies acceptance of the pervasion that "If it is the sound of a bell, then it necessarily does not convey a meaning."

Take the subject: **the movement of a hand**. It follows that **it has a meaning**.

I accept.

It follows that if **it's** the movement of a hand, then **it** necessarily has a meaning.

I accept.

Take the subject: **the movement of a hand triggered by an involuntary reflex**. It follows that **it has a meaning**.

Why?

Because **it** is **the movement of a hand** – you just accepted that pervasion.

Takeaway:

Even though people can communicate through hand symbols, expressive physical movements and other symbols that represent some other referent, movements and non-verbal sounds in general do not have meaning. The existence of phenomena which are a Joint Hub between the sound of bells and a sound that conveys a meaning does not imply the pervasion that if it is the sound of bells, then it necessarily conveys a meaning.

Strawni says... If words, letters, and phrases are all speech acts, then it follows that books are sounds, too! According to you, the Torah, the Bible, and the Quran are all sounds – nonsense!



Take the subject: **the Quran**. It follows that **it's not a sound**, because **it is solid matter**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it's a book**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it's the Holy Book of the Muslim faith**.

No pervasion.

Now we take the role of Challenger to point out the consequence of accepting that words, phrases, or letters have a joint hub with books...

Take the subject: **the Quran as it's being spoken by the Archangel Gabriel to Mohammed**. It follows that **it's solid matter**, because **it's a book**; because **it's the Holy Book of the Muslim Faith**. You accepted that pervasion and that reason.

Strawni insists that words can be visual forms, because we can see them! Whoever is reading this is seeing the letters and words right now! We respond...

It follows that if **it's a letter**, then **it's necessarily a visual form**. This is what you're insisting.

Accept.

Take the subject: **the word "tree."** It follows that **it is a visual form**.

Accept.

Take the subject: **the written marks indicating the word "tree."** It follows that **they are the word "tree."**

Accept.

Take: **The Chinese character for a tree**. It follows that **it's the word "tree."**

Accept.

Take: **A drawing of a tree**. It follows that **it's the word "tree."**

Accept.

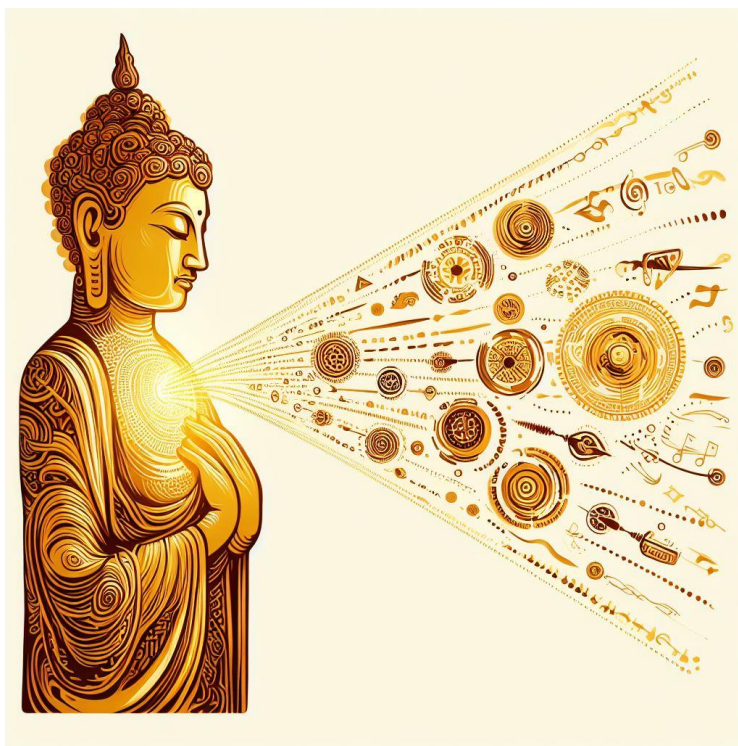
It follows that if **someone** has visual knowledge of a drawing of a tree, **they** necessarily know the word “tree.”

Accept.

Take: **a child who has not yet learned the word “tree.”** It follows that **they know the word “tree,”** because **they have visual knowledge of a tree.**

Debate along these lines using your own logic!

Strawni says... Buddha taught things that are not true, like in the Sandhinirmochana Sutra (Sutra Unraveling the Thought) where he taught about the three natures and said that the dependent and thoroughly established natures are truly established. According to you, that makes it fictional speech, and therefore not the Buddha’s Word.



Take the subject: **the Mind-Only School Sutra that teaches that dependent natures and thoroughly established natures are truly established**. It follows that **it** is **not the Buddha's Word**, because **it** is **not non-fictional speech**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it does not have a real-world referent**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **the true establishment of dependent and thoroughly established natures is its referent, and that does not exist in the real world**.

No pervasion.

Now we take the Challenger's position and point out the consequences of Strawni's position.

Take the subject: **the phrase "horses and unicorns."** It follows that **it does not have a real-world referent**, because **unicorns** are **its referent and they don't exist in the real world**.

I accept.

It follows that **it does have a real-world referent**, because **horses** are **its referent and they do exist in the real world**.

Now Strawni takes the reins as the Challenger again.

Take the subject: **horses and unicorns**. It follows that **they exist** because **horses exist**. If you accept... It follows that **unicorns exist!** You accepted the reason!

No pervasion.

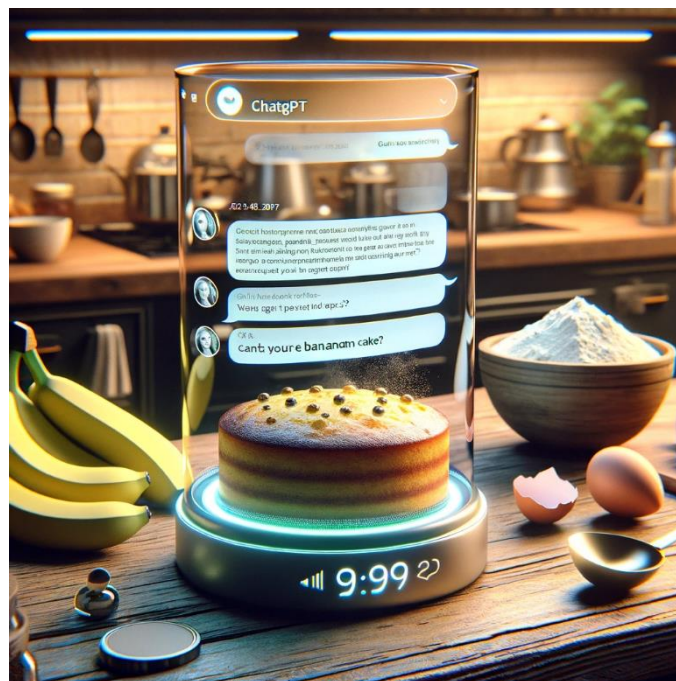
Once again, it's our turn as the Challenger.

Take the subject: **The sutra teaching that dependent and thoroughly established natures are truly established.** It follows that **it** is **non-fictional speech**, because **its speaker knows its intended meaning with certainty.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **we can posit its intended meaning as - although in reality dependent and thoroughly established natures aren't truly established, the belief that they are established truly, acting as a temporary method to progress in virtue and wisdom for the Chittamatra disciples who would be harmed by the belief that nothing truly exists.**

Strawni says... Chat-GPT can communicate a variety of meanings, in many cases more clearly than humans can! But according to you, if it does not arise from a wish to communicate a meaning, then it's necessarily not communication: you earlier asserted that pervasion when debating about the sound of bells.



Take the subject: **a recipe for banana cake generated by Chat-GPT**. It follows that **it does not communicate the method to make banana cake**, because **it is not communication**.

That follows because **it doesn't arise from the wish to communicate a meaning**. You've accepted this pervasion.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it's generated by neural nets and algorithms**.

No pervasion.

Now we take the Challenger's position and try to give some other perspectives on the question.

Take the subject: **that recipe by Chat-GPT**. It follows that **it does not have a cause which is a wish to communicate a meaning**.

Accept.

It follows that **it does not have a cause which is a wish to communicate in the mind of programmer, or a cause which is a wish to communicate in the mind an author of the text that on which it was trained**.

Once again, it's our turn as the Challenger.

Take the subject: **a song of realization generated by Chat-GPT**. It follows that **it expresses the realization of Chat-GPT**, because **it's communication being communicated by Chat-GPT**. It follows that **Chat-GPT has realizations**; it follows that **Chat-GPT has consciousness**.

Chapter 4

The World of the Senses

Refute

Strawni says... White is the collection of all colors, all frequencies unified into one. White is all colors, and all colors are white.

∞ | If it's a color, then it's necessarily white.

Take the subject: **the color of a ruby**. It follows that **it's white**, because **it's a color**. You just asserted that pervasion.

Reason not true.

It follows that **it's a color**, because **it's reasonably described as a hue**.

OK, I accept the root thesis.

Take the subject: **the color of a ruby**. It follows **it's not white**, because **it's not the color white**.

Reason not true.

It follows that **it's not the color white**, because **it's not a white color**; because **it's a red color**; because **it's one with the color of a ruby**.

Reason not true.

It follows that **it's one with itself** because **it exists**.

Takeaway:

Take a minute here to think over what the above brief debate highlighted. It emphasizes that statements of pervasion may work in one direction, but not necessarily in the other direction. If something is white, it is necessarily a color. However, if something is a color, it isn't necessarily white. The Defender in this case seems to have gotten mixed up; it may seem ridiculous that someone could think that whatever is a color is white, but if you're in

the heat of a debate it isn't so hard to get tripped up. Questions come fast and there's not a lot of time to think things through.

Another value of this debate is that it reduces the notion of being one with something. We learn that if it exists, it's necessarily one with itself. While this reason may seem so obvious as to not need any explicit mention, this is the very issue that Nalanda Debate is designed to address – our conceptual proliferations take us beyond what is real and there right in front of our face. This reason cuts the confused proliferations and forces the Defender to look right at the color of a ruby itself.

Strawni says... When we talk about the form of a sculpture, we're talking about the shape of the sculpture. Form, then, just means shape and nothing more.

☞ | If it is a form, then it's necessarily a form which is a shape.

Take the subject: **the blue color of the ocean**. It follows that **it's a form which is a shape**, because it's a **form**.

Reason not true.

It follows it's a **form** because it's **matter**.

Reason not true.

It follows **it's matter** because **it's something that's established as particle-like or composed of particles**.

No pervasion.

It follows **there is a pervasion** because **something that's established as particle-like or composed of particles is the definition of matter**.

Fine, I accept the root thesis.

Take the subject: **the blue color of the ocean**. It follows that **it's a not form which is a shape**, because it's a **color**.

No pervasion.

It follows **there is pervasion**, because **color and shape are coReason not trueadictory**; because **they are different phenomena which have no joint hub**.

Takeaway: Here was another brief debate that looks deceptively simple, but there are several important things going on. For one, it's just helping us, as new debaters, get used to the debate format and how to posit a good reason. Here, a reason which is a definition is given. Another thing to notice in this debate is how the meaning of words is being teased out, and conventional understandings of terms are challenged. Form, as in the statement "That sculpture has such a beautiful form," is the shape of the sculpture. But here the debate is encouraging us to stretch our conception of form to go beyond just shapes – to understand that there are multiple aspects to form, to the contours of a thing.

Strawni says... Everyone learns the shapes from the first day of kindergarten; squares, triangles, circles, and the like are the most important shapes. These must be included as categories of shape.

☞ | If it's a two-dimensional shape, it's necessarily a shape.

Take the subject: a red square. It follows that it's a shape.
<i>Why?</i>
It follows that it's a shape , because it's a two-dimensional shape .
<i>Reason not true.</i>
It follows that it's a two-dimensional shape because it is a flat object defined by only length and width but has no height .
<i>I accept the first thesis.</i>
Take the subject: a red square . It follows that it's not a shape , because it's not a form ; because it's not matter ; because it's not something that's established as particle-like or composed of particles .
<i>Final reason is not true.</i>
It follows it's not something that's established as particle-like or composed of particles , because it's not (Reason 1) particle-like or (Reason 2) composed of particles .
<i>Reason 2 is not true.</i>
It follows that it's not composed of particles ; because it is not composed of three-dimensional particles .

Takeaway: The type of shapes being explained in this lesson – those which are objects experienced in the domain of eye consciousness – are actual shapes of actual objects. In other words, they must be composed of real particles, and not mere mathematical abstractions. Thus, they do not include 2d shapes.

Strawni says... Color is light. Not just any light, but a specific part of the electromagnetic spectrum that we call visible light.

👁️ | If it's a color, it is necessarily found somewhere within the visible light spectrum of EM waves.

Take the subject: the color of a black hat. It follows it's an electromagnetic wave with a wavelength in the spectrum of visible light, because it's a color. You just accepted that pervasion.

Reason not true.

It follows it's a color because it's a secondary color; because it's a color that arises from a blend of primary colors; because it's the color black.

OK fine, I accept the root thesis.

Take the subject: the color of a black hat. It follows it's not an electromagnetic wave with a wavelength in the spectrum of visible light because it is not an EM wave in the region between 400nm and 700nm; because it's not violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, or red; nor is it a color between those colors and their respective wavelengths.

Takeaway:

Have you heard a view like this expressed before? “Color is light. Not just any light, but a specific part of the electromagnetic spectrum that we call visible light. So, whatever is color must necessarily be found somewhere within that spectrum of EM waves.” It sounds reasonable enough, doesn't it? That is, until we start questioning it.

This type of debate points out is that even if we have a general understanding of some phenomenon – here, color – there is always room to probe more, to question ourselves, to question conventions and popular beliefs. There are many ways of thinking about color – it’s your task to determine which is best supported by logic.

Strawni says... Water’s fundamental characteristic is the fact of its chemical composition as H₂O – everyone knows that water has two hydrogens and one oxygen. That is what makes it water. Therefore, something wet and fluid is not the definition of the water element. Something mainly comprised of H₂O should be posited as the definition of liquid.

∞ | Something purely comprised of H₂O is the definition of the water element.

Take the subject: **ice**. It follows that **it’s the water element**, because **it is purely comprised of H₂O**.

I accept.

It follows that **liquid and solid have a Joint Hub**; because **ice is both a liquid and a solid**; because **it is both wet and fluid as well as hard and obstructive**; because **it is both the water element and the earth element**.

Or...

Take the subject: **liquid mercury**. It follows that **it is composed of H₂O**, because **it is the water element**; because **it is a liquid**.

Or... Take the subject: **the Earth and the human body**. It follows that they’re **not primarily composed of water**, because **they’re not primarily composed of a substance that is purely H₂O**; because **the water they contain is mixed with salts, blood cells, and many other substances**.

Likewise –

Take the subject: **carbonated water**. It follows that **it’s not water**.

Furthermore...

It follows that being comprised of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom is the defining characteristic of the water element, as you have asserted.

I accept.

Take the subject: a collection of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. It follows that it is the water element, because it is comprised of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom.

I accept.

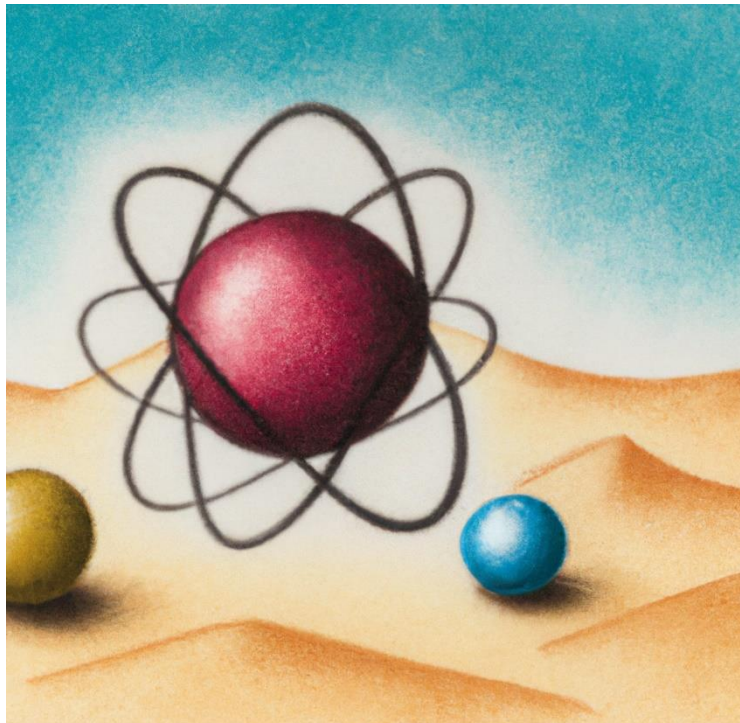
Take that subject. It follows that it is water; because this is your assertion.

I accept.

It follows that where there is a collection of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, there is necessarily water.

I accept.

Take the subject: a region with water shortages. It follows that it is a region with hydrogen and oxygen shortages; because it lacks collections of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom; because it lacks water.



The World of the Senses

Respond

Strawni says... If blue, yellow, white, and red are the primary colors of subtractive color mixing, then how can inkjet printers make all possible colors by mixing cyan, magenta, yellow, and black?

Subject: **blue, yellow, white, and red**. It follows **they** are **not the primary colors**, because cyan, magenta, yellow, and black are the primary colors.

There is no coReason not trueadiction between these two lists of primary colors, because cyan is blue; magenta is red; yellow is yellow; and black is a mixture of them.

Strawni says... if even and uneven are categories of shapes, then everything must be a shape, because if it exists its necessarily even or uneven. Those two are a dichotomy.

Subject: **object of knowledge**. It follows **it's** a **shape**, because it's **either even or uneven**.

No pervasion.

(If someone else responded "*Reason not true*" we would become the Challenger and say...)

Subject: **object of knowledge**. It follows **it is either even or uneven**, because **it's uneven**.

Reason not true.

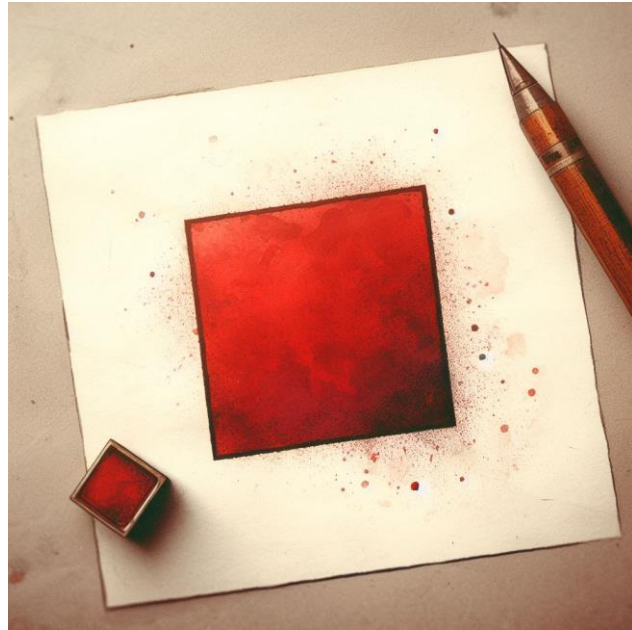
It follows it's **uneven** because **it is not even**.

Ok, then I accept the root thesis.

Take the subject: **object of knowledge**. It follows **it's not a shape** because **it's a permanent thing**.

Strawni says... You assert that squares and triangles are not shapes, because they have only two dimensions. Yet we can clearly see them on screens, drawn on flat pieces of paper, etc.

We respond by debating...



Subject: **a drawing of a red square on a piece of paper**. It follows that **it is a red square**. That's your assertion.

I accept.

Then it follows that **it's a 2d object**.

I accept.

Then it follows that **it has no third dimension, a dimension of height**.

I accept.

It follows that **it is not composed of atoms**.

Why?

It follows that **it is not composed of atoms**, because **it is not composed of objects with length, width, and height**.

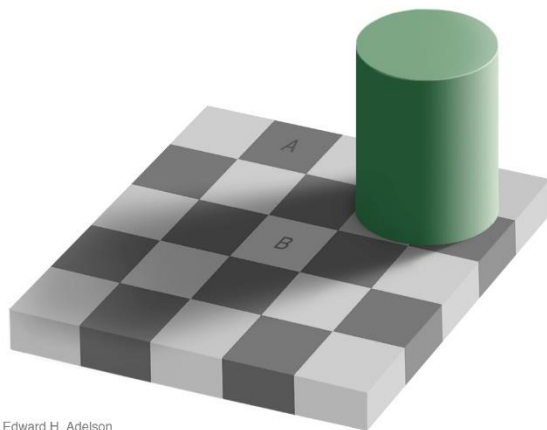
No pervasion.

Subject: **the atoms which comprise the ink which comprises the drawing of a red square**. It follows that **they are completely flat and have no height or thickness**.

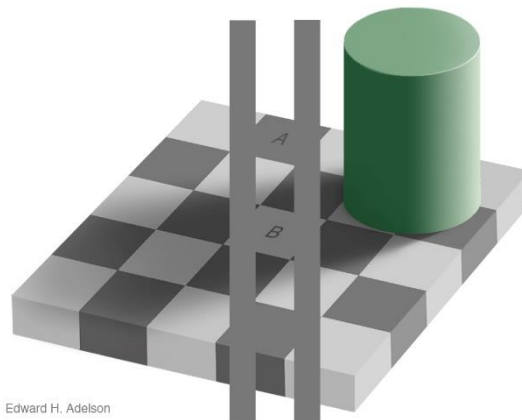
I accept.

It follows that **they** have thickness, because **they** have a thickness of about 0.1 nanometers; because **they're** atoms.

Strawni says... Colors should not be included as external matter, because they do not exist external to living beings; they are created in the brains and minds of living beings. This can be seen through examples like The Dress, where we see that the interpretation of a color depends upon an individual person's perceptual system. Also, optical illusions like the Checker Shadow Illusion show us that two colors which are exactly the same appear differently due to the brain's interpretative mechanisms.



Edward H. Adelson



Edward H. Adelson

Take the subject: **colors**. It follows that **they're** not external form, because **they** are not physical causes giving rise to sense impressions which are not found within the continuum of a conscious organism.

Reason not true.

That follows because **they** are **found within the continuum of a conscious organism.**

Reason not true.

That follows because **they** are **found within the brains and minds of conscious organisms.**

Not true.

That follows because **they** are **formed in the brain and don't exist in the world.**

Not true.

That follows because **perception of them depends on brain activity.**

No pervasion.

Now switching roles (so we become Challenger)...

Take the subject: **the brain**. It follows **it is formed in the brain and doesn't exist in the world**, because **perception of it depends on brain activity.**

Or –

Take the subject: **the particles and fields of the Standard Model**. It follows **they are formed in the brain and don't exist in the world**, because **perception of them depends on brain activity.**

Strawni responds – those are completely different cases. The perception of the brain and the particles of the Standard Model corresponds to actual objects out there in the world; colors don't correspond to anything out there in the world. They are not stable objects – just fleeting perceptions subject to slight changes in environment or sensing modality.

It follows that the reason for why colors don't correspond to anything in the world is because perception of them is easily altered by shifts in the environment or in the perceiver's continuum.

I accept.

Take the subject: **the particles of the Standard Model**. It follows that **perception of them is not easily altered by shifts in the environment or in sensing modalities of the perceiver's continuum.**

I accept.

It follows that perception of **them** is not altered by changes in available data and reasoning.

I accept.

It follows that the perceptions of the photon and electron of Einstein and Bohr were not altered by changes in available data and reasoning.

Furthermore...

Take the subject: **the Higg's Boson**. It follows that the perception of **it** was not changed by **its** discovery by CERN in 2012.

Or –

Take the subject: **an electron**. It follows perception of **it** is not subject to shifts in the environment.

I accept.

It follows that **it** does not at times behave like a wave and at other times like a **particle**; because **perception of it does not depend on the measuring apparatus being used to measure it**; because **perception of its behaviors does not easily change**; because **it is a real, stable object out there in the world**.

This line of debate and the questions raised here, of course, deserve continued analysis...

Chapter 5

The Consequences of Speech

Refute

Strawni says... A product is not one with product, because product is the only thing that's one with product. A product, the product, and products are all different from product; because they are different in name and they are different in meaning. Products are plural; the product and a product are singular. The terms "a product," "the product," "products," and "product" simply have distinct referents.

Subject: **church bells**. It follows **they** are **not a product**, because **they** are **not the referent of the term expressing a product**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **they** are **not the referent of the term "a product."**

Reason not true.

That follows because **they** are **the referent of the term "products."**

Reason not true.

That follows because **they** are **products and are plural**.

I accept (and accepting the initial thesis as well).

Take the subject: **church bells**. It follows **they** are a product, because **they** are a **product of their causes**.

Or similarly...

Take the subject: **orangutans**. It follows that **they** are **not products**, because **they** are **the product**; because **they** are **the referent of the term “the product.”** That follows because **they** are **the referent of the term “the product” in the statement “Orangutans are the product of a long chain of evolution.”**

Strawni says... Not just any old thing can be used as a reason. Reasons must be relevant to the topics at hand, and be able to act universally such that anyone who looks at the proof can follow the line of reasoning and understand the thesis.

☞ If it is a reason proving that red is a color, it is necessarily a universally effective proof proving that red is a color.

Take the subject: **a bumblebee**. It follows that **it** is **a universally effective proof proving that red is a color**, because **it** is **a reason proving that red is a color**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **there exists a syllogism where it's used as the reason to prove that red is a color**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **the reason that's used in positing the syllogism, “Take the subject: red. It follows that it's a color, because it is a bumblebee.”**

I accept.

Take the subject: **a bumblebee**. It follows that **it** is **not a universally effective reason proving that red is a color**, because **there does not exist a person for whom it is an effective reason proving that red is a color**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it** is **not a flawless reason proving that red is a color**; because **it** is **not a property space in the proof proving that red is a color**;

because **it** is not ascertained by a gauge mind within the basis of the debate, **red.**

Chapter 6

Nature of Mind

Refute

Strawni says... Physics is the most accurate understanding we have of how the world works, and in physics it's undeniably evident that the only way for one object to exerting an influence on another object is via direct contact. Any idea of a non-material entity exerting an influence on or being caused by physical entities is absurd on the face of it, since there is no mechanism for their interaction.

∞ | It follows that if it exerts an influence on a human body, then it necessarily exerts an influence on a human body via a mechanism of direct contact.

Take the subject: **the gravitational force of the Sun**. It follows that **it exerts an influence on a human body via a mechanism of direct contact**, because **it exerts an influence on a human body**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it is a force that pulls a human body towards it**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it is a force that keeps a human body in orbit around the Sun**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **it keeps a human body that's on the Earth and at rest with respect to the Earth in orbit around the Sun**; because **it keeps the Earth in orbit around the Sun**.

I accept (also accepting the initial thesis; that the gravitational force of the Sun exerts an influence on the human body via a mechanism of direct contact).

Take the subject: **the gravitational force of the Sun**. It follows that **it does not exert an influence on the human body via a mechanism of direct contact**, because **it does not directly contact a human**; because **it is an action-at-a-distance force that is exerted without contact**.

Takeaway: In the materialist philosophical paradigm, everything in existence is essentially a billiard ball knocking into other billiard balls. It may seem totally obvious, given the power

and pervasiveness of this paradigm, that things which interact and influence each other must then directly contact one another; and if so, then the issue of mind-body dualism that there is no identifiable mechanism of interaction, makes total sense. However, even in that paradigm where the Laws of Physics rule as the most fundamental and lucrative laws of the universe, there in fact are action-at-a-distance forces. These are forces that carry causal influence across gaps in space without direct contact between two physical objects, and gravity is a prime example of such a force.

Strawni says... Gauge minds discover something anew – they are newly non-deceptive awarenesses. Making a discovery means to learn something that’s never been known before by anyone.

☞ | If it’s a gauge mind, it’s necessarily the first mind to know its object in all of existence.

Take the subject: a true direct perception apprehending blue in the mind of a child. It follows it’s not a gauge mind, because it isn’t the first mind to know its object in all of existence.

Not true.

That follows because the prior true direct perception apprehending blue in the mind of the mother apprehended its object first.

Not true.

That follows because 1) blue is its object, and 2) the mother apprehended blue before it apprehended blue.

Reason 2 not true.

That follows because the mother apprehended blue before it was created; because the mother apprehended blue before the child within whose continuum it arose was born; because the mother is the cause of the child.

Ok, I accept the initial thesis.

Take the subject: **a true direct perception apprehending blue in the mind of a child**. It follows **it's not a gauge mind**, because **it** is an awareness that is newly non-deceptive.

Strawni says... You're defining gauge mind as an awareness that is newly non-deceptive, but also asserting that it is not the first awareness to know, or discover, its object.

Take the subject: **Christopher Columbus**. It follows that **he discovered the Americas**, because **he** has a gauge mind in **his** continuum that knows the Americas.

If you accept...

it follows that **the Americas** were **not discovered by the people living there before Columbus arrived**, because **Columbus** newly discovered **them**.

We respond, saying: "No pervasion."

Then we switch roles (with us as the Challenger)

Take the subject: **the Americas**. It follows **they were not discovered by the people living there before Columbus arrived**, because **they** were discovered by the dinosaurs living **there** before the people arrived. That would be the consequence of your position.

Or for a similar consequence –

Take the subject: **calculus**. It follows that **it wasn't newly known by a mind in the continuum of Sir Isaac Newton**, because **it** wasn't discovered by Newton; because **it** wasn't invented by Newton; because **it** was invented by Leibniz before **it** was invented Newton.

Nature of Mind

Respond

Strawni says... The notion of gravity you referenced above is not the modern conception; Relativity returned contact to all forces. In the modern understanding of physics, the laws of the universe do not allow for action-at-distance or any kind of causal mechanism without direct contact. This is true for all bodies, large and small, from the galactic scale of the planets all the way down to the fundamental particles.

☞ | It follows that if it exerts an influence on electrons, then it necessarily exerts an influence on electrons via a mechanism of direct contact.

Take the subject: **an observer**. It follows **they exert an influence on electrons via a mechanism of direct contact**, because **they exert an influence on electrons**.

Reason not true

That follows because **the position and momentum of electrons depends on them**.

Reason not true

That follows because **that fact is the position of Quantum Mechanics founder Werner Heisenberg; because he said, "The path of the particle comes into existence only when we observe it."**

I accept (including accepting the initial thesis; that the observer exerts an influence on electrons via a mechanism of direct contact).

Its **an observer**. It follows that **they do not exert an influence on electrons via direct contact**, because **at the time of exerting an influence on the electrons they do not contact the electrons**.

Reason not true.

That follows because **at the time of exerting an influence on the electrons, the position of the electrons is unknowable**; because **at the time of exerting an influence on the electrons, the electrons are in a superposition of many possible positions**; because **at that time the electrons are in a superposition**; because **at that time the wave-function describing the electrons' position has not collapsed**; because **at that time they are just initially observing the electrons**; because **the electrons' positions and momenta only come into existence at the time of being observed by them**; because **the paths of the electrons' come into existence only when they observe them**.

Takeaway: Even if one wants to argue that the earlier cited (from view of gravity is outdated and was replaced with the view of Einstein's General Relativity Theory, in which the gravitational force is localized by virtue of it being owed to a geometric shift in space-time, there are still issues that come up with this extreme view of local interaction in Quantum Mechanics. There are many reasons that such a view is at odds with the findings and theories in Quantum Mechanics. One of them is that the state of an electron (its position, for instance) is dependent on an observer, yet the observer does not directly contact an electron to lock it into a definition position. This is because when the observer is interacting with the particle, the particle itself has not yet been locked into a definite position, because it is in a superposition. Since it has no ascertainable position, we cannot say with certainty how close or far away it is from the observer (this is the case no matter how we choose to define "the observer.")

Chapter 9

Objects – Establishing Reality

Refute

“...Consciousness is not a thing. It’s not an entity. It’s a process.”

- Carlo Rovelli¹

What is a thing, really? Must it be something static – a solid entity with its own unchanging thingness?

Strawni says... Things and processes are contradictory. Things are solid and remain stable over time, while processes are shifting and dynamic.

∞ | If it is a thing, it is necessarily a frozen entity that is not a dynamic process.

Subject: The White House. It follows **it** is a **frozen entity that is not a dynamic process, because it is a thing.**

I accept.

It follows **it** is **not impermanent.**

Why?

Because **it** is not momentary; because **it** is not disintegrating on a moment-to-moment basis; because **it** is not dynamically changing; because **it** is a frozen entity that is not a dynamic process.

Similarly, take the subject: **The White House.** It follows **it** is **not composed of molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles.**

Why?

Because **it** is not composed of dynamically shifting parts. Because **it** is not composed of parts in a dynamic process. Because **it** is not in a dynamic process. Because **it** is a frozen thing that is not dynamically changing.

TAKEAWAYS

1. If it is a thing, it is necessarily a dynamic process.
2. If it is composed of parts which are changing, it is necessarily changing.

Strawni says...

☞ | If it's an object, it's necessarily a thing.

Subject: **Unformed space**. It follows **it** is a **thing**, because it is an **object**.

Reason's not true.

It follows **it's** an **object** because **it** is **objectively true**.

Reason's not true.

It follows **it** is **objectively true**, because **it** is **objectively known**.

*Well, then, Strawni retorts, "Take the subject: **Unformed space**. It follows **it objectively exists**, because **it is objectively true**."*

To which the *Madhyamikas* respond, "No pervasion."

TAKEAWAYS

1. Being objectively true is posited in terms of the way knowledge about some object or thesis is obtained and its potential or being further verified or denied. Being objectively existent is posited in terms of the nature of the object or thesis; primarily, having an objective reality that is independent, "out there." Someone can accept something as objectively true without believing that it is objectively real.
2. Unformed space, uncreated space, unconditioned space are equivalent.

∞ | If it is without self of persons, then non-it is necessarily not it.

Take the subject: **singular object**. It follows that **non-it is not it**, because **it is without self of persons**.

NT

That follows because **it is empty of being established as a self-sufficient, substantially existent person or as something experienced by such a person**.

I accept.

Take the subject: **singular object**. It follows that **non-it is not not it**, because **non-it is it**.

NT

TS singular object. It follows that non-**it** is **not a singular object**.

I accept

TS non-singular object. It follows that **it is a singular object**, because **it is a phenomenon and is not diverse phenomena**.

Strawni says... Not X and non-X are exactly the same. Besides a small grammatical shift, there's no difference at all in meaning or use.

∞ | If it is without self of persons, then non-it and not-it are necessarily equivalent.

Take the subject: **vegetarian food**. It follows that **non-it and not-it are equivalent**, because **it is without a self of persons**.

NT

That follows because **it exists**.

I accept.

Take the subjects: **non-vegetarian food and not vegetarian food**. It follows **they** are **equivalent**.

I accept

TS **a rainbow**. It follows that **it** is **non-vegetarian food**, because **it** is **not vegetarian food**.

I accept

It follows that **it's food!**



Objects – Establishing Reality

Respond

Strawni says... a self of persons exists, because Mariah has a self of persons; because she is a person, and she has a self.

The response? *No pervasion.*

By your logic:

Take the subject: **French fried dough**. It follows that **it's French fries**.

Why?

because **it is French, and it is fried**.

The following debates are debates which arise because of unique features of the English language. These questions may not have been a major focus for practitioners of Nalanda Debate in Nalanda's native setting because the Sanskrit and Tibetan languages themselves do not readily raise the doubts raised below. Yet, you will see that these kinds of issues will arise as you debate using the English language.

Debates with a, the, no article, plural

Strawni says... Bowl is equivalent with one with bowl. Bowl is just an abstract category; a bowl is an actual instance.

☞ | If it's bowl, it's necessarily one with bowl. If it's *a bowl*, it is not necessarily one with bowl.

Subject: Bowl , it follows it is not a definiendum .
<i>Why?</i>
It follows it's not a definiendum because it doesn't have a definition .
<i>The reason is not true</i>
It follows it doesn't have a definition because 1) a hollow, hard, rounded object meant primarily for holding food is not its definition, and 2) nothing else is suitable to posit as its definition.
<i>Reason 1 is not true.</i>
It follows that bowl and a hollow, hard, rounded object meant primarily for holding food have the eight doors of pervasion of a definition-definiendum pair .
<i>I accept.</i>
It follows that if it is a hollow, hard, rounded object meant primarily for holding food then it's necessarily bowl .
<i>I accept.</i>
Subject: a porcelain bowl . It follows it is bowl .
<i>I accept.</i>
It follows a porcelain bowl is bowl .

But that sounds very strange, doesn't it?

Let's look at another issue that arises with the above thesis...

Take the subject: **bowl**. It follows it is an **abstract category, but not an actual, physical object**. It follows it is a **category which has subdivisions**. It follows it's a **generality which has instances**. It follows it has **instances which are actual bowl**.

And:

Take the subject: **plastic bowl, ceramic bowl, wooden bowl**. It follows that they are **instances of bowl**.

I accept.

It follows they **satisfy the three requirements for being an instance of bowl**.

I accept.

It follows that they **1) are bowl; 2) are related to bowl as one essence; and 3) there exist many other things which are bowl but are not those three**.

Strawni says...

1. Bowl
2. A bowl
3. The bowl
4. Bowls

Are all equivalent; they are interchangeable.

Subject: a **wooden bowl and a ceramic bowl**. It follows they are **a bowl, because they are bowls**.

I accept.

It follows they are **an established base because they are established bases**.

I accept.

We cannot accept this, because they are **multiple objects, not a singular object**.

Well then, Strawni says... it follows they (a wooden and a ceramic bowl) are not a collective generality, because they are not a generality.

We can respond, **"No pervasion!"**

Or we can say,

Subject: bowls. It follows that they're one.

Why?

Because 1) a bowl is one and 2) a bowl and bowls are interchangeable.

Strawni accepts – bowls are one because they are non-differentiated phenomena; because the word which expresses them is one and the conceptual mind apprehending them is one.

TAKEAWAYS

A wooden bowl and a ceramic bowl are not: a phenomenon, an established base, a thing, an object, or one.

They are: a collective generality, a pair of things, different, instances of bowl, the objects of an eye consciousness perceiving a wooden bowl and a ceramic bowl.

Bowl is a physical object, not an abstract object. It has a joint hub with each of a bowl, bowls, and the bowl, but is not equivalent with any of them.

To follow the language conventions of subject-verb agreement, we have to use plural forms of verbs if we have a plural subject like bowls. How then do we determine which qualities exist on the basis of a subject with a plural marker? For instance, are bowls one or different? These questions are in need of further analysis.

Debates with Nouns vs Adjectives

Strawni says... The word expressing impermanence is a noun, while the word expressing impermanent is an adjective. Therefore impermanence and impermanent cannot be equivalent.

∞ | Impermanence is the quality of momentariness itself, while impermanent can be defined as momentarily changing. If it's momentarily changing, it is not necessarily the quality of momentariness. Thus, if it is impermanent, it is not necessarily impermanence; like, for instance, a cup.

To which we respond...

Subject: a **lightning bolt**. It follows that **it is not impermanence**, because **it is not the quality of momentariness itself**.

I accept.

It follows that **it is the quality of momentariness itself** because **it is the quality of momentariness**.

The reason is not true.

It follows that **it's the quality of momentariness** because **the quality of momentariness exists on it**, in such a way that its identity is formed as **momentary**.

The reason is not true.

That follows because 1) **it is empty of the quality of permanence** and 2) **and it is empty of permanence not in the way that an empty glass lacks water but in the way that its very entity is established as non-permanent**.

The reason is not true.

That follows because 1) **the way people are empty of true existence is not like an open field being empty of buildings, but their very nature is established as empty** and 2) **those are analogous reasons**.

(If Strawni still doesn't accept that the lightning bolt's identity is formed as momentary...)

Subject: the **lightning bolt**. It follows that **its identity is formed as momentary**, because **merely by being created by its causes – without depending on any future condition - its identity becomes one of disintegration**.

If Strawni comes back and says: None of those matters. The quality of momentariness means just the moment by moment change itself. The physical object which is changing is not the change itself; it is not the impermanence itself.

Subject: **impermanence**. It follows that it is **not a generality**.

Why?

Because **it does not have any instances**.

The reason is not true.

It follows **it** doesn't have any instances because **there do not exist many phenomena which are it.**

The reason is not true.

“The quality of momentary change of a cup, of a house, of a person, etc. are all instances of impermanence. Cups, houses, people, etc. are not instances of impermanence; yet they are instances of impermanent phenomena.”

Subject: a **lightning bolt**. It follows **it** is **not just the moment by moment change itself.**

I accept.

It follows **it** is **not changing.**

Why?

Because **it** is **not going through the process of disintegrating and giving rise to a newly created result in its continuum of moments.**

The reason is not true.

It's not, because **it** is **not in process of disintegrating and giving rise to results.**

The reason is not true.

That follows, because **it** is **not a process of disintegrating and giving rise to results.**

The reason is not true.

That follows because **it** is **not change.**

If Strawni says “No pervasion” to the prior reason – accepting that a lightning bolt is not a process of disintegrating and giving rise to results, yet **it** is in that process...

Subject: a **lightning bolt**. It follows that **it's not a process.**

I accept.

Subject: a **mug**. It follows that **it's not a process.**

I accept.

Subject: **perception**. It follows that **it's not a process.**

I accept.

It follows that if it's a thing it's necessarily not a process.

I accept.

It follows that if it's a process then it's necessarily permanent.

(Strawni returns with more debate, now acting as the Challenger...)

Well then, take the subject: **Socrates**. It follows that **he is energy**, because **he is the potential to do work; because he is capable of doing work; because he is formed as an entity of doing work; because doing work is a quality that is established on him as the basis for the quality, not in the way in which a color exists as a quality on an object but in such a way that he is formed as an entity of doing work; because he is doing work.** Isn't this analogous to the reasons you just gave?

To which we say: *this indeed deserves continued analysis during your debates.*

If you think that the reasoning above proves that Socrates is not energy...

Subject: a **lightning bolt**. It follows that **it is not energy**.

I accept.

It follows that **it's the aspect of red as it appears in conscious perception of a red apple.**

Please get creative in thinking of many debates along these lines!

Strawni says... The way you're talking about causality implies that anything at all that arose before a cup is a cause of the cup. That is absurd on the face of it.

Subject: a **dog that existed the day before the cup on the other side of the world**. It follows that it's **a creator of the cup**, because **it existed the day before the cup**.

The reason is not true.

It follows that that's true because **it's that subject**.

I accept the initial thesis.

Subject: it follows that it's a **cause of the cup**.

I accept.

It follows it is **not a cause of the cup**, because it is **neither 1) the direct cause of the cup nor 2) the indirect cause of the cup.**

Reason 1 is not true.

It follows that it is **not a direct cause of the cup** because **1) it was on the other side of the world in the day before cup, and 2) causes and effects separated by space take time to travel.**

Ok, I accept these reasons. Then, the Reason 2 from earlier is not true.

It follows that it's not the indirect cause of the cup, because **1) there is no pathway of influence from it to the cup, and 2) the cup would not be counteracted through the force of the dog being counteracted.**

(Debate along these lines to find the most sensible response.)

Strawni says...

Take the subject: **the teaching of the Buddha**. it follows **it is a cause of migrating sentient beings**, because **it is a benefiter of migrating sentient beings.**

The reason is not true.

That follows, because **it benefits migrating sentient beings.**

No pervasion. (The reason is established, because it eliminates the sufferings of migrating beings.)

