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**A SCEPTICAL EXAMINATION OF  
CONTEMPORARY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY**





**A SCEPTICAL EXAMINATION**  
*of*  
**CONTEMPORARY**  
**BRITISH PHILOSOPHY**

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*“ I wish to express my sincere thanks to Doctor J. E. Turner of Liverpool University for the help I have received from him in the preparation of this book for publication. For the matter of it he is, of course, in no way responsible ; but his reading of the manuscript has enabled me both to revise the form of the whole, and to reconsider many points of detail.”*



The will of heaven is far off, but that of men is near ;  
how can one claim knowledge of that which is beyond one's  
reach ?

*Confucius.*

Some inquiries are about facts, others are a mere  
matter of words.

*Epicurus.*

Now, had Tashtego perished in that head, it had been  
a very precious perishing ; smothered in the very whitest  
and daintiest of fragrant spermaceti ; confined, hearsed,  
and tombed in the secret inner chamber and *sanctum  
sanctorum* of the whale. Only one sweeter end can readily  
be recalled—the delicious death of an Ohio honey-hunter,  
who seeking honey in the crotch of a hollow tree, found  
such exceeding store of it, that leaning too far over, it  
sucked him in, so that he died embalmed. How many,  
think ye, have likewise fallen into Plato's honey head,  
and sweetly perished there ?

*Herman Melville.*



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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE title and contents-table sufficiently indicate the form of this book : it is a criticism of ten out of the twelve contributors to *Contemporary British Philosophy : Second Series*. I need hardly explain however that my object is not a mere wholesale attack upon every kind of British contemporary philosophical theory, as represented at least in this particular volume : the volume is rather my stalking-horse than my target ; I have used it to attack certain philosophic theories and certain methods of philosophizing, and at the same time to set up in exchange certain theories and opinions of my own. It was the peculiar suitability of this volume (as it seemed to me) for such a purpose—the various authors dealing in turn with so many important questions, so variously, and in so provocative a way—that determined me to adopt this somewhat unusual way of submitting certain views to the public. The advantages of the plan were : first, that the subject-matter and its arrangement were to a large extent fixed for me in advance, so that instead of having to develop a ‘ system ’ from the few central convictions which determine my general attitude, I was compelled to apply this ‘ attitude ’ and develop it in relation to problems and arguments which were posed from without ; secondly, that I was able to present my views polemically ; thirdly, that in arguing against other theories I had the assurance that the questions under

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discussion and the arguments I was opposing were 'live' questions and arguments ; and, lastly, that for some of my arguments I could claim the support of such writers as Professor Moore and the late James Ward. The disadvantages of a mere parasitic commentary I am indeed well aware of ; yet I cannot help feeling that if the book I have produced has any merit at all, its merit will not be seriously impaired by the form into which it is cast ; and as to the extent to which the understanding of what I have written depends upon a previous acquaintance with the volume I have used for my quarry (let the word be left ambiguous), I both doubt whether such acquaintance is necessary, and think it just to assume that most if not all of those who may open this book will indeed have it.

The 'attitude' I have adopted might be called 'common-sense pluralism', and the matter of the book be summarized as follows : In chapters I and II I am concerned chiefly with the inter-relations of philosophy and science ; in the next three I deal with ethical problems, in chapters VI and VII with 'metaphysical philosophy' and the question of Meaning ; and in the last three chapters I try to develop the logical and epistemological bases of my 'common-sense attitude'. I think I may say that my main interest is an ethical one, and the conclusions I have argued for in my third and fifth chapters are those which I present with the most confidence ; but no part of philosophy can be treated adequately in isolation from the other parts, and in spite of the apparently unsystematic form of the

book I would claim that it presents, in successive chapters, the application to the main problems of philosophy of a single, clearly-defined 'general attitude'; and it is by such application that this attitude is explained and justified.

As however it is my method throughout to develop my own views in relation to the views of a particular writer, so now I propose to consider the points raised by Professor Muirhead in his Introduction to this *Second Series of Contemporary British Philosophy*, and make them the topic for my own introductory remarks.

1. His first point (and it is an extremely important one) is made in defence and explanation of his statement, in the introduction to the former Series, that philosophy, being instinct with the author's personality, is in that respect more comparable to a work of art than to a scientific discovery or invention; and the argument he develops is that "there is no ground in philosophy any more than in sense preception or scientific investigation to believe that the personal equation must vitiate any claim to objectivity in knowledge."<sup>(a)</sup> I have spoken of his 'argument', but I must confess that I altogether fail to see how what he says here can in fact reconcile his earlier statement, contrasting philosophy with science and assimilating it to poetry, with the philosopher's claim to 'scientific' objectivity. (The only way of reconciliation would seem to be by claiming that poetry does no less than science, but

N.B.—Here and throughout the book references to *Contemporary British Philosophy, Second Series*, will be given by page alone, and in lettered instead of numbered foot-notes.

(a) p. 12.

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in a different way, represent or interpret to us some kind of 'external reality' ; but Professor Muirhead, whatever may be his view of the 'objectivity of values', seems definitely to reject the view that "an effort of the creative imagination" could in any way interpret or represent to us any kind of 'reality'.) All he says is that whereas the special sciences deal "with some one particular department of experience, philosophy is condemned to concern itself with all departments and with experience as a whole" ; (a) and while in the case of a philosopher "any gap or one-sidedness in his actual experience is inevitably reflected in a distortion of the view he is likely to take of the reality which is revealed through it," (b) and that therefore in respect of "comparative open- or close-mindedness . . . it is true enough to say *quot personae, tot sententiae*," this is not to maintain that "it may not be possible for individuals to . . . rise above their limitations" ; nor does it affect "the instinctive assumption . . . that the Cosmos . . . has created us with the power to know it as it is." (c) But statements of this sort seem beside the point ; for we may admit that the scientist can and does 'rise above his limitations' and 'know the Cosmos as it is', and yet deny that (most) philosophers do so, whether they 'can' or not ; and the fact that philosophy deals with experience as a whole, not a special department of experience, is no explanation of why philosophy should, even by philosophers themselves, be assimilated to poetic creation. Professor Muirhead repudiates the

idea that philosophy is in any sense 'subjective' ; yet the saying of Fichte that " the kind of philosophy that a man chooses depends on the kind of man he is " (a) certainly suggests something quite different from saying that unless a philosopher is ' open-minded ' his ' view of reality ' will be distorted : it quite definitely suggests that philosophy is or may be ' subjective ' in a way that science is not, and so supports the view of Positivism. And what shall be said of Bradley's famous *mot* that : " metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe on instinct " ? Such a confession, from one generally accounted the most brilliant metaphysician England has produced, has always seemed to me the most extraordinary ' give away ' in the records of belief. It may be conveniently dismissed by philosophers as a witty half-truth ; which is as much as to say : We can accept it (with a smile) as true, or ignore it as false, as the occasion demands ; but if and so far as it is true, this confession that the whole structure of metaphysics is reared on no surer foundation than that of ' instinctive ' belief is (it seems obvious to me) a confession that metaphysics cannot be scientific, and must be mythopoeic. Can we imagine a scientist—or for that matter a theologian—making such a statement about the study which he has made his profession ? When the metaphysicians so speak of their own work, there would seem to be some excuse for the opinion of Positivists and others that metaphysics is something ' merely poetical ' : there would seem to be need for investigating and explaining,

(a) p. 10.

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more thoroughly than Professor Muirhead does, the reasons of this general dubiety. Because, as I started by saying, the question is fundamental. We need certainly to discover *how far* philosophy is or can be scientific, how far it is or may be 'poetic'.

And there are, I think, two ways in which Professor Muirhead's treatment of the question disallows of his finding any satisfactory answer to it. In the first place he contrasts "an effort of the creative imagination" which gives satisfaction to the emotions with an "effort to think clearly for the satisfaction of the reason," (a) as though artistic creation were entirely an 'emotional process' altogether divorced from 'clear thinking'; and, secondly, he assumes by implication that philosophy as a whole must be *either* 'like poetry' or 'like science', that it must either be *entirely* the one or *entirely* the other. But both these assumptions are, I think, unjustified. We have surely got past the stage of regarding 'the reason' and 'the imagination' as two separate and opposed 'faculties' (selves within the self); and there is in fact just as much hard and clear thinking involved in many works of art—not in the songs of Burns perhaps, but certainly in the building of St. Paul's Cathedral, or even in Pope's *Essay on Criticism*—as in works of science or philosophy. (1) Again, may it not be that philosophy is *sometimes* poetical, *sometimes* scientific, and that owing to this *partial* contamination many people are inclined to dismiss *the whole* of philosophy as being 'merely poetical'? May not this be the 'half-truth' which

(1) Cf. below, p. 181. (a) p. 10.

Bradley's epigram expresses ? Take for instance two contributions to the volume under discussion, that of Professor Dawes Hicks and that of Professor J. A. Smith. The former concerns himself almost entirely with the nature of sense-perception ; and whatever we think of the conclusions the author reaches and of his method of argument, we can hardly dispute that *what* he is discussing is a matter of fact. But in the case of the latter it can, I think, be disputed whether the discussion is really *about* any definite matter of fact ; because although the author seems to be discussing 'self-consciousness', he uses language in such a way (it may be argued) that he is not really referring to anything definite at all. How this can be I shall consider more particularly in my seventh chapter ; but I would suggest here that philosophy *may be* of two sorts : the one sort or method is scientific, and the other sort is ' poetical ' or metaphysical ; and the difference depends on whether language is used in a scientific and common-sense way, or in a poetical and metaphysical way.<sup>(1)</sup>

2. Professor Muirhead tries to show, in support of his claim that philosophy is ' scientific ', that, in spite of the apparently great divergency in contemporary philosophic opinion, there are " some definite points on which, if there is no general agreement of interpretation, there is among thinkers a far more sympathetic understanding than ever before

(<sup>1</sup>) I should like to refer here to Messrs. Ogden and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning*, a copy of which I procured only when most of the following pages had been written. If I had read the book earlier I might have made fuller use of it than I have done ; but I venture at any rate to claim its powerful support for one of my chief arguments, namely that directed against the *method* of the metaphysical philosophers.



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of the problems to be solved, and a far deeper conviction of the necessity of reaching the ' synopsis ' in which, according to Plato, true philosophy consists " : (a) he argues by implication, that is, that philosophy is making progress in a certain definite direction. The particular points he singles out as evidence for this are : (i) the controversy between Realism and Subjective Idealism is a thing of the past ; (ii) the controversy between materialism and spiritualism is also now out of date ; (iii) there is " the growing recognition of the necessity to assume the operation of an underlying *nîsus* or urge in Nature not only to maintain itself at any particular level which it may have reached . . . but to advance to ever higher levels " ; (b) and (iv) a general widening of outlook as to the content of experience and a general willingness to find room for " the reality of the supersensible." (c) These particular claims he makes for contemporary philosophy I believe to be highly disputable, but to dispute them here would be unprofitable. But there are certain observations I wish to make on the general argument.

(a) It is of course a matter of historical fact that the philosophy of any particular age has certain recognizable characteristics. It would indeed be impossible that men should continue from century to century to dispute the same problems in the same way. But the mere fact that the problems of yesterday are no longer the problems of to-day is in itself no proof of progress along any definite path.

(b) Progress in philosophy must be sharply

distinguished from progress in the special sciences. That *they* have progressed no one can dispute ; and it is, in modern times, their progress which has perhaps more than any other factor controlled the course of ' pure ' speculation. As the scientific discoveries of Kepler and Galileo gave to the speculations of Descartes and Spinoza their mathematical form, so the Materialism of the last century was the direct result of the progress of biology ; and the death-blow to that Materialism was dealt not by the idealists who from the first opposed it, but by the scientist, Einstein : at the present time speculation is (at any rate negatively) controlled by the work of the physicists, mathematicians and psychologists.

(c) But while it must be admitted that philosophy has progressed with the progress of the sciences, can it be said that in regard to the central problems of philosophy there is at the present day any more agreement of opinion than there ever has been ? By the ' central problems ' I mean such problems as these (they may of course be formulated in various ways) :

How and what do we know ?

Is ' reality ' to be found in the sensible world or in a ' supersensible ' world ?

Can we believe in God ?

What do we mean by ' Goodness ' and ' Beauty ' ?

I would suggest that in regard to these problems there is little if any more agreement to-day among thinkers (I use the word generally to include all those who have seriously considered these questions, whether they be philosophers, scientists, or ' ordinary

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men ') than there ever has been among the thinkers of any age.

'But,' it may be objected, 'if such is your opinion of philosophy, how can you undertake to write philosophy yourself?' The answer has already been hinted at: that philosophy is of two kinds, and that the one kind is, or may be, scientifically valid, but the other, the metaphysical, is and must be, scientifically, invalid; and it is due to the preponderance of the metaphysical method among philosophers that progress has been, relatively, so disappointingly slow.

To this method I oppose throughout this volume what I have called the 'common-sense' method or attitude. The term 'common-sense' is notoriously a vague one; and therefore, although it is impossible to define in a few lines a point of view which it is the aim of this volume to expound and validate, I ought perhaps to give here some preliminary indications of what I intend my attitude to be.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) In a general way my use of the term 'common-sense' corresponds with the usage of Professor Moore in the volume under discussion—and, rather more loosely, with the usage of Reid. By 'common-sense' experience or beliefs I mean such experience and beliefs as are *shared by all human beings with normal senses*; and the appeal to 'common-sense' means an appeal to the common basis of experience and to the beliefs which this experience involves. Such beliefs I hold to be necessarily true since every normal person does in fact assume them to be true:

<sup>(1)</sup> For the logical basis of the common-sense argument I must refer the reader to my last chapter, especially the summary on pp. 244-246.

on this common basis of experience and belief all language and all abstract thought depend.

(2) I do *not* mean (and of course Reid did not mean) to appeal to the so-called 'common-sense' of the man in the street against the reasoned conclusions of the trained thinker. A common-sense belief (in my sense of the word) is a belief which is held not by a *majority* but by the *totality* of mankind ; and the contrast I draw is between the metaphysical opinions and common-sense beliefs of one and the same man.

(3) This contrast is very largely a question of the use of language, and my general argument and assumption is to this effect : as long as language is used in a common-sense way (*i.e.*, as long as its use is found to be in accord with common-sense experience and beliefs) the meaning it conveys is unambiguous ; but when it is used in such a way as to contradict that experience and those beliefs, it no longer conveys a factual but only a 'poetic' meaning. I hold, in fact, with Dr. Broad, that " what can be said at all can be said simply and clearly in any civilized language or in a suitable system of symbols, and that verbal obscurity is almost always a sign of mental confusion." <sup>(1)</sup> By 'metaphysical method' I mean a method of argument that depends on an ambiguous use of language.

(4) I have described my attitude as 'common-sense pluralism', but I think I ought to state also that it is fundamentally sceptical. Complete Pyrrhonism must needs be both barren and self-contradictory ; but I hold that many philosophers share the common human failing of suiting their beliefs

<sup>(1)</sup> *Cont. Brit. Phil.*, 1st Series, p. 81. The question of metaphysical ambiguity is discussed in chap. vii, especially pp. 174 sq.

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to their desires and preconceptions, and that any attempt to rationalize traditional beliefs is doomed to failure. The common-sense basis of experience and belief is of necessity an irreducible minimum ; and it is the task of philosophy to establish on that basis, with a minimum of hypothesis and a minimum of ambiguity, a rational core of opinion that will supply an apt criterion for all judgments of fact, and not hinder the expression of our moral and æsthetic ideals.

A word, finally, of apology. For the criticism of persons and the manner of it no defence is made, nor, I think, needed : I have written what I thought and felt : as I hope and believe that I have avoided ill manners and ill nature, so I have not disguised myself under a smooth cloak of suavity and sweet reasonableness. These are earnest questions : to pretend to the formal courtesy of indifference were a kind of foppishness. But for all intellectual failings, for abuses of language, superficiality, ignorance, I do apologize. No one can expect to make no mistakes ; but the amateur (and what terrible examples of amateurism the very volume I criticize presents us with !), entering the field against professionals, must be especially conscious of his shortcomings, the gaps in his knowledge, the deceitfulness of words and trickery of self-esteem. Mere sincerity is no excuse for slipshod thought and silliness. And, confessing that, and submitting this book to be castigated according to its demerits, I do yet send it out convinced that some of the things said in it are worth saying, and need to be said.

## CHAPTER I

### MR. JOAD'S 'REALISM'

**M**R. JOAD describes his opinions as a 'realist philosophy'; but I think that many who call themselves realists would find very little resemblance between their realism and his, and for that reason I have inserted quotation marks into the type of my chapter-heading. Realism, as the term is ordinarily used in present-day philosophic discussion, denominates the view that objects have a real existence apart from the mind apprehending them, or apart from 'Mind'. . . . But let us consider the quality of Mr. Joad's realism.

He starts by accepting Mr. Bertrand Russell's analysis of physical objects into a series of sense data and of consciousness into a collection of sensations and images, thus dispensing with both objects and consciousness as "entities existing in their own right." The individual mind is to be regarded as a cross-section of "neutral particulars or events"; and these events are the "fundamental constituents of the universe." (a) This theory of knowledge he holds to be a realistic one, because he regards the sense data as being independent of the mind and observed by it.

Mr. Russell's philosophy, however, though he accepts it wholeheartedly and unreservedly, he finds

(a) pp. 159-160.

nevertheless "a somewhat arid and unsubstantial form of diet" <sup>(a)</sup>—(I agree with him there); and so, in spite of his eagerness to apply to the universe "the principle of Occam's razor", he finds himself obliged to admit certain additional conceptions, particularly the notions of a "vital force" and of an immutable "form of beauty" lying outside the evolutionary process. In support of these notions of his he then delivers an attack on the "mechanical conception of the universe", <sup>(b)</sup> and argues that evolution is to be regarded as a process by which this 'vital force' seeks to express itself in more varied and complicated forms.

His arguments may be summarised, under five heads, as follows :

(1) The general process of evolution and the particular behaviour of organisms cannot be adequately explained in mechanical terms.

(2) The mind has been proved by experiment to be independent of the brain.

(3) The emotion of fear is connected with the adrenal gland, which excretes fluid when fear is felt; but since the emotion of fear can vary qualitatively to an almost infinite extent, whereas the excretion of fluid can vary only quantitatively, the gland excretion, though it may accompany it, cannot be the sole cause of fear.

(4) And so in general, if the mind is a form of matter, all mental changes must ultimately be reducible to rearrangements of negative electrons and positive nuclei; but since such rearrangements

(a) p. 160, (b) p. 161.

are merely quantitative, they cannot account for qualitative changes.

(5) Modern physics has reduced matter to a spatio-temporal configuration expressed in terms of point-instants ; and it is impossible to imagine that a matter of this sort can produce mind.

But having followed Mr. Joad so far, I think it is time to call a halt, and recover our breath. Truth to tell, I am beginning to wonder who it is that he is attacking, and what it is that he is defending. He is attacking, it seems, a mysterious set of people who believe, or perhaps rather believed, that "mind was only a rarefied form of body . . . envisaged as a sort of environing mist like the halo round the head of a saint." <sup>(a)</sup> But does Mr. Joad believe, and does he ask us to believe, that beliefs of this sort were entertained by men like Spencer and Huxley, and Haeckel ? <sup>(1)</sup> Cabanis, <sup>(2)</sup> I seem to remember, said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile ; but that is rather different from "the halo round the head of a saint" ; and that was not thirty but one hundred and thirty years ago. It is true, for that matter, that the philosophy

(1) Can it be that Mr. Joad is somehow confusing the opinions of Spencer and Huxley with the opinions of Madame Blavatsky and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle ?

(2) James Ward, I notice (*Naturalism and Agnosticism*, pp. 7-8), attributes the saying to Karl Vogt (1817-1895) ; but Cabanis (1757-1808) has the prior claim to it. In *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*, Vol. I, p. 124-5 (pub. in 1824, but written in 1796-7), he writes : " Pour se faire une idée juste des opérations dont résulte la pensée, il faut considérer le cerveau comme un organe particulier, destiné spécialement à la produire ; de même que l'estomac et les intestines à opérer la digestion, le foie à filtrer la bile, les parotides et les glandes maxillaires et sublinguales à préparer les sucs salivaires."

(a) p. 162.



of Spencer is equally ‘ *vieux jeu* ’ with the physiology of Cabanis.

As for what Mr. Joad is defending—let us consider these arguments of his a little more closely, taking them, for convenience and variety’s sake, in inverse order :

(5) Mr. Joad thinks that as long as matter was regarded as a solid, tangible something, it was at least a “ tenable conception ” that matter can produce mind, but that now that matter has been dematerialized the conception had ceased to be tenable. ‘ But is it the fact that recent physical speculation has made things actually less solid and tangible, and is the abstraction of solidity more likely to “ produce mind ” than the abstraction of point-instants ? <sup>(a)</sup> And what, in any case, is meant by ‘ matter producing (or not producing) mind ’ ? I sincerely doubt whether such a phrase means anything at all ; and, unless it does, it is certain that this argument has no meaning either. However, as we shall see in the sequel, this convenient word ‘ matter ’ enables Mr. Joad to perform all sorts of conjuring tricks : a wonderfully capacious hat of a word.

(4) In this argument he says several things :

(a) That mental changes are not “ ultimately expressible ” in terms of physical change. If this means that behaviour cannot be adequately described in the terminology of physics, it is undoubtedly true.

(b) That physical rearrangements of electrons and

(a) p. 166.

nuclei cannot account for the emergence of qualities new in kind. This is rather an obscure saying : I do not know but what it might not be taken as a denial of the fact that living things did somehow and at some time evolve from the non-living (it being understood that the words ' living ' and ' non-living ' are used without prejudice, according to their usual sense). But as I am not clear what it means, I will not dispute the saying, but only add to it the rider : an historical process cannot be ' accounted for ' (except in the sense of ' described ') by means of any hypostatized abstraction.

(c) That matter is spatial and can be weighed (though it seems rather surprising that we can weigh a " spatio-temporal configuration expressed in terms of point-instants "), (<sup>a</sup>) whereas mind is not spatial and cannot be weighed. In other words he insists that matter is matter, whereas mind is not matter, but mind. This, I think, might be granted, though, strangely enough, this is an opinion that Mr. Joad himself forcibly contradicts in the sequel, arguing that mind is *really* material.

(3) This supposed attack upon the so-called James-Lange theory of emotion, like most of Mr. Joad's arguments, simply misses the point. This theory that " the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur *is* the emotion " has long since been thrown overboard by all competent psychologists—so at least I confidently hope and believe. The arguments directed against it by

(a) p. 166.

## ‘ *Realism* ’

James Ward are unanswerable.<sup>(1)</sup> But I am afraid that the same cannot be said of Mr. Joad’s argument. I do not see, for instance, why the gland secretion should not be held to vary qualitatively in its chemical constitution as well as in amount, and why this qualitative chemical variation should not be held to ‘account for’ the various shades of emotion. But the trouble is that Mr. Joad assumes, with James, that there is some meaning in saying that a gland secretion can *cause* the emotion of fear, in fact he concludes that the excretion cannot be the *sole cause* of the emotion, so that he apparently believes that it might be *a cause* : whereas the truth is that, while we may speak of a physical cause (in a certain sense) of a bodily change, which we may interpret in terms of emotion, to speak of a bodily change *causing* an emotion is found to be, on analysis, simply absurd. And this is just the point that Mr. Joad does not seem to have realised.

(2) This argument proceeds as follows : since there is a part of the brain which is the seat of memory, and since persons in whose heads that particular part of the brain is occupied by a tumour can exhibit “feats of memory” it follows that people can remember without having a ‘seat of memory’ ! In other words, Mr. Joad first assumes something to be true, and then proceeds to prove that it is false. If the “mass of evidence produced

<sup>(1)</sup> James, *Principles of Psychology*, II, p. 449. Cf. *Psychological Principles*, pp. 270-275. Ward writes : “Emotion is *always* the expression of feeling, and feeling—for the subject that feels—has always some objective ground.” James’ phrase “perception of the exciting fact” stands for an obvious confusion of thought.

by Bergson and others " (a) is all of this kind, I do not think the hardened materialist need be seriously alarmed. Our knowledge of the ' local centres ' of the brain is notoriously incomplete ; but to assume the possibility of such localization is to assume that there *is* a necessary connection between brain and ' mind ' ; and for this latter assumption there is such a " mass of evidence " as I doubt M. Bergson or any other will ever explain away : it is a postulate on which depends the whole subject-matter of the sciences of psychopathology and psychophysiology. Of course, if Mr. Joad could produce the case of a person able to ' exhibit feats of memory ', who had no brain at all, then indeed he would be justified in denying all connection between mental states and brain states ; but if he admits that there are ' local centres ' of the brain, then he has already admitted that there is a connection. And of course, to admit that is something altogether different from holding that " mind is a mere reflector of the brain." (1) Nor, finally, does he seem to realise that phrenology is not a science because (among other things) it is based on an outworn ' faculty ' psychology.

(1) This argument, as I have summarised it, is unexceptionable ; but it is interesting to notice the form it actually takes in Mr. Joad's exposition of his views. What he says is that living creatures " behave not merely as mechanisms reacting to some external change, but as the instruments of some force which, acting through them, seeks to achieve a

(1) Cf. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, pp. 8 sq., etc. Also below pp. 195-7.

(a) p. 165.

purpose by their agency.” (a) Now if we wanted to define ‘ machine ’ or ‘ mechanism ’, might we not define it just in some such terms as Mr. Joad uses to describe his own view ? are not machines “ instruments of some (human) force which seeks to achieve a purpose by their agency ” ? I do not know that I have ever seen this obvious fact pointed out : that the ‘ mechanical view ’, according to the strict and original meaning of the word, is essentially *teleological* and *creationist* : the most strictly mechanical view of the universe I can think of is to be found in the theology of Calvin. Of course that is not what is meant by the ‘ mechanical view ’ ; if we try to discover what *is* meant we find only a welter of confusion. But we can, I think, at any rate be sure of this : that those who uphold this view intend thereby to deny the reality or efficacy of the individual’s will and consciousness, and to assert that human and animal behaviour is ‘ caused by ’ the ‘ action ’ of impersonal and abstract ‘ forces ’. And this is exactly what Mr. Joad does, except that his ‘ force ’ is given all those attributes of personality which are denied by him to persons.

I have examined these arguments rather to illustrate the confused character of Mr. Joad’s philosophic thinking than for any other purpose. In general it seems to me that the type of naïve materialism which he rebuts is quite out of date and philosophically negligible ; and that while his arguments are negatively a work of supererogation, they are entirely

lacking in the positive force he ascribes to them. The alternative he sets up between a naïve materialism and a no less naïve 'vitalism' is factitious and illusory: his own views are no less superficial than the views he is attacking. Vitalism of a sort I think there are excellent arguments for; but, as we shall see in our next chapter, the vitalism which the facts require us to postulate is by no means Mr. Joad's type of vitalism.

And if we turn away from these points of detail and take a more general view of this 'realist philosophy', we find throughout the same confusion and the same superficiality.

The 'realism' which he starts by dogmatically asserting, I do not propose to discuss, though I believe it to be based on a fallacy and to conclude with a contradiction. The fallacy consists in supposing that the logically simpler must be the more real, that an 'entity' (concrete experience) which can be 'analysed' must be less fundamental than the simple abstractions to which by analysis it is reduced—in a word, that whatever can be explained is thereby explained away; and the contradiction consists in declaring that objects do not exist independently, but that the momentary appearances of objects which are different for each individual, do exist independently of the mind.

Suppose, however, we accept this form of realism without more discussion than Mr. Joad gives it. But, having accepted it, how in the name of wonder can he go on to discuss 'mind' and 'matter' in the way that he does? We are told on successive pages that matter is "a logical construct from some-

## ‘ Realism ’

thing more fundamental,” (a) that it is “ a curvature in space-time,” (b) that it can be weighed, that it is “ a sort of brute ὄλῃ or obstruction,” (c) with which the vital force comes into collision, and that life is an independent force “ working in and through matter and moulding it to its ends.” (d) All this is sufficiently confusing, but confusion is worse confounded when Mr. Joad, having in one section stoutly argued that the mind is not a mere reflection of the brain but can function independently of it, states half a dozen pages further on that “ an idea, for all we know to the contrary, is simply a collection of movements in the larynx. The existence of the mind is . . . an inference which, since we can get on without it, it is safer not to make.” (1) (e) And, having argued that a quantitative rearrangement of physical elements cannot account for qualitative changes (p. 166), he decides (on p. 180) that the phenomena of the universe are to be interpreted as the result of the infusion of a vital force into a fundamental non-living material, and that it is not necessary to postulate as a result of this infusion anything more than a *certain highly specialized arrangement of the material !* (f)

Mr. Joad speaks of his aim as being to render “ compatible a number of beliefs which, though frequently held by themselves, are rarely entertained in company.” He does not seem to realise that the logical atomism of Mr. Russell and the vitalism of

(1) Mr. Joad, it is true, does not explicitly state that this is *his* view : it is given rather as Mr. Russell's. But he obviously regards it with approval. In his eyes, apparently, Mr. Russell can ‘ do no wrong.’

(a) p. 179, (b) p. 166, (c) pp. 171-2, (d) p. 164, (e) p. 178, (f) p. 180.

M. Bergson contradict each other axiomatically and *ab initio*, that Mr. Russell is in fact the logical heir and inheritor of that nineteenth century materialism he (Mr. Joad) wastes his time in attacking, and that his 'reconciliation' can only be effected by a merely verbal identification of radically opposite ideas, and at the expense of implicitly denying opinions he has explicitly defended.

Let us briefly review the characteristics of Mr. Joad's 'vitalism', when considered apart from his 'realism': let us see how he develops the famous Bergsonian hypothesis in his own way.

In contradistinction from Bergson and Schopenhauer, he postulates an absolute duality<sup>(1)</sup> of two opposing elements or principles, the 'vital force' and the obstructive matter with which it comes into collision. The universe he conceives as being originally "purely material"; after which the principle of life "appears" and "struggles to express itself in the endeavour to achieve an ever higher degree of consciousness."<sup>(a)</sup> However, "there is no reason to think that we are all of us for all our time fulfilling the purpose for which the life force created us," and to "the fact that the substratum of matter of which we are composed interposes itself as a kind of barrier between ourselves and the main stream of life" is to be attributed "the emergence of individuality and the belief in free will. This belief, though not wholly illusory, seems to be true in a negative rather

<sup>(1)</sup> For reasons best known to himself Mr. Joad calls this ontological dualism of his "pluralism".

<sup>(a)</sup> p. 172.



than in a positive sense.” (a) That is to say, we are free to defeat the purposes of life we are “ created to serve,” but insofar as we serve these purposes we are not free. The complete overlaying of the original impulse of life by the material substratum accounts for the imbecile, the ascetic and the pervert, while on the other hand “ the genius is sent into the world to give conscious expression to the instinctive purposes of the life force.” (b) Another “ device (of the life force) to ensure advancement . . . (is) the creation of the unconscious to act as a transmitting medium for those thrusts and intimations with which the force seeks to animate its creatures,” and “ by this means the life force continually renews the stream of life within us, yet allows us to remain in ignorance of its source.” (c)

Here are some sufficiently astonishing conclusions. The life force is always struggling to achieve a higher degree of consciousness, and yet our human personality and will are due entirely to the obstruction of the life force by a ‘ brute matter ’ “ without energy or purpose, and devoid of life ” ; (d) while the character of our freedom is such that we are free to do the wrong thing, but compelled to do the right thing. How then comes it that an individual does have purposes, that in fact all conceivable purposes are individual purposes? And has the man of genius *less* personality, the imbecile *more* personality than the ordinary man? And is there any meaning at all in saying that we are ‘ free ’ to assert ourselves against a ‘ force ’ whom we are

(a) p. 173-4. (b) p. 174, (c) p. 175-6, (d) p. 172.

compelled to serve? And how does Mr. Joad manage to tell us all these interesting secrets, if the 'life force' keeps us in ignorance of its own nature?

But—to cut a long story short—what is to be said of the 'life force' itself? It is a 'principle' which creates us for its own purposes, which adopts devices in order to improve the effectiveness of men, which sends the man of genius into the world to give conscious expression to its own instinctive purposes. To say that a stone falls owing to the force of gravitation, or that a clock works owing to the principles of horology is as nothing compared with this. How can a "principle", one would like to know, have "instinctive purposes" and "send people into the world"? Have we here anything but a meaningless collocation of words? It will not do for Mr. Joad to say that he is using metaphorical expressions that are not to be taken literally; because his whole argument is a metaphor: remove the metaphors and what is left of the 'life force'? If, instead of 'life force' and 'matter', he had made use of those old-fashioned conceptions, God and The Devil, his "essay in constructive speculation" would have gained in clarity no less than in picturesqueness—though its entire lack of originality would also perhaps have been emphasized thereby. But Mr. Joad is too modern for that sort of thing. After describing how the 'life force' wages unceasing war against the "brute obstruction of matter", he finally resolves these two opposing "elements" or "principles" (matter apparently is an "element" and the life force a "principle") into a single

## ‘ *Realism* ’

undifferentiated substance, in which the difference between dead and living things is reduced to a difference in the arrangement of the material particulars : in other words, the principle immanent in living creatures, which creates and purposes, has instincts and adopts devices, is simply a particular kind of configuration—and so the grand reconciliation of realism and vitalism and ‘ pluralism ’ is achieved !

To follow Mr. Joad in his discussion of teleology and the “ form of beauty ” would only be a waste of time. It is sufficient to say that his vitalism is founded on the oldest and commonest of all philosophic fallacies, the hypostatization of abstract ideas—to use Mr. Joad’s own terminology, it is the principle of hypostatization that works through him to find conscious expression of itself and ensure for itself greater popularity—; that his attempt to combine the speculations of Bergson with the theories of Mr. Russell and of the Behaviourists and of Freud, results in nothing but incoherence and confusion ; and that, in short, his whole philosophy amounts only to a not very dexterous jugglery with the counters of current opinion. Not by this kind of “ somnambulistic speculations ” <sup>(a)</sup> can the problems of philosophy ever be solved ; indeed, judging from this contribution of his, one is inclined to doubt whether Mr. Joad has ever realised what those problems are : I cannot find a single useful, original or memorable idea in the course of it.

(a) p. 233. The phrase is Prof. J. A. Smith’s.

## CHAPTER II

### PROFESSOR THOMSON'S BIOLOGY

**P**ROFESSOR THOMSON gives the impression that he is a little nervous at making his appearance in such philosophic company : he is a naïve naturalist walking warily in the vicinity of so many logical lions. (I doubt they are all such fearfully logical lions, after all.) It is a general characteristic of his contribution that it is less a biologist's philosophy than a biologist's biology : the writer is exceedingly modest in drawing general, philosophic conclusions. This seems to me not a defect but a conspicuous merit ; he is wise in his discretion ; and the conclusions which the biologist draws within the limits of his special field have important philosophic implications. Here is an aspect of reality that no philosopher can afford to neglect.

#### I. ' ASPECTS OF REALITY '

Professor Thomson starts by postulating three great orders of fact : (1) the domain of non-living things, the cosmosphere ; (2) the realm of organisms, the biosphere ; (3) the kingdom of man and his societies, the sociosphere. I will not stop to quarrel with this terminology, though when Professor Thomson writes of " the boundaries of the three spheres or ellipses as swaying and inter-oscultating,"

and declares that " when the white ants build a great termitary . . . they are taking part of the cosmo-sphere into their realm," and that " when the animal gets the upper hand in man, when the biosphere is allowed to encroach on the sociosphere . . . there is degeneracy and abbrutisement "(a) when he writes like this it seems to me that he has fallen a victim to his own phrase-making. But it is a matter of some philosophic importance to decide what this recognition of three different ' orders of fact ' implies. That there are such orders we may provisionally accept, in the sense that there are three different sorts of subject-matter for the three different branches of scientific inquiry : the physical and chemical, the biological and physiological, and the psychological and social. But what do we mean by ' orders of fact ' ? We surely do not mean, what Professor Thomson's terminology seems sometimes to imply, that Nature, like Gaul, is divided into three parts, which, though their boundaries may be vague, are yet in the main separate provinces or ' kingdoms ' ; rather they are what he calls them elsewhere, different *aspects of reality*. " Everyone agrees," he writes, " that there is a chemistry and physics of the living body " : (b) we can in fact treat one and the same being from a chemical or from a physiological or from a psychological point of view. It would seem *prima facie* then to be a case not of " inter-osculating spheres " in the natural order, but of the point of view we adopt.

If, however, we dispense with Professor

(a) p. 309, (b) p. 308.

## J. Arthur Thomson

Thomson's neologisms, we are still left with the two-fold (not three-fold) division of external Nature into the organic and inorganic ; and if we analyse a little more closely these ' three aspects of reality ' we may reach the conclusion that the distinction between ' vital ' and ' mental ' is to some extent ambiguous, and that all three aspects reduce ultimately to a single scale between two extremes.

It is true that, subjectively, we distinguish between ' I am ' and ' I think ', and that many of our actions are not in themselves intrinsically mental. But this is just where ambiguity is likely to arise. For although, subjectively, we should regard walking, say, as a bodily rather than a mental activity, yet objectively we should ' interpret ' these bodily movements in terms of mind : that is to say, a biologist, observing a similar type of behaviour in an animal, would (justifiably) assume that such movements evidenced a certain degree of purposive intelligence in the animal ; and it is clear that, from the objective standpoint, not only walking but many even more ' automatic ' movements might be regarded as purposeful. We must distinguish then between the *intrinsic mental activity of thought*, known immediately by the subject in self-consciousness, and *observed behaviour* in others which appears to be purposeful, and so to have a ' mental aspect '. We find in fact that the distinctively biological categories which Professor Thomson claims as necessary to establish biology as an autonomous science—the capacity for enregistering experience, and the capacity for purposive behaviour—are essentially

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' mental ' in the latter sense ; for purpose without some kind of intelligence is something quite inconceivable, and the " capacity of enregistering experience " (a) is surely only an ' objective ' name for memory.

But, it may be argued, in such characteristic vital processes as growth and reproduction there is not a vestige of ' mind ' or ' purpose '. That is true ; but here again we have to realise that the very word ' vital ' or ' living ' can only mean ' living in the sense that I am conscious of being alive,' and that when we speak of a plant or animal being alive we are so far treating it as a ' subject ' :<sup>(1)</sup> the vital category no less than the mental, involves ' subjective interpretation ' ; and without such interpretation we are left with the bare formulas of chemistry and physics. Whether we take the case of muscular contraction, of breathing, or the growth and life-movements of plants, insofar as we treat the observed phenomenon as a vital process we are so far assuming the existence of a ' self ' : only so and in no other way can we distinguish the organic from the inorganic : the very words ' growth ' and ' reproduction ' have no meaning when separated altogether from their human-subjective background. And so my second conclusion is this : That as there are only two divisions of external Nature, so our way of looking at things ranges between the two extremes of completely subjective interpretation and completely abstract or phenomenal description.

(1) Or ' eject,' to use Ward's term. Cf. *infra* pp. 193 sq., where this question is discussed more fully.

(a) p. 319.

But in that case there can be no valid ground for Professor Thomson's assumption that, by distinguishing the 'vital' from the 'mental' we can mark off a 'human' sphere which is distinct from the non-human in the same way as the latter is from the inorganic. His statement that "man is a new synthesis compared with even the highest mammals" (a) does not in fact accord with his statement that "from the Amœba on the hunt to the elephant working with the forester, there is a recognizable mental aspect which counts," (b) nor with his saying that in birds and mammals there is intelligent behaviour and there are "tides of feeling," and that in the case of chimpanzees "it seems impossible to doubt their power of perceptual inference." (c) The trouble is of course that, being human, we can only interpret the behaviour of others humanly : we can understand our fellow-men just because we are men, we can understand the sub-human only insofar as it resembles ourselves ; and insofar as it differs—as in the case of bird migration, and still more of insect behaviour,—although we may talk glibly of 'instincts', our capacity for *understanding* is (almost) nil. It is not only that 'mind' diminishes : it is different. Human mentality is without doubt enormously more rich and powerful in range than the mentality of the highest sub-human mammals, such as the horse and dog ; but the difference after all seems to be on a par with that between the rudimentary vocabulary which the chimpanzee possesses and the richness of human speech : it is adjectival, not



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substantive. And on the other hand the difference *for us* depends on the fact that the one we know from within, the other only from without.

While accepting then Professor Thomson's *three aspects of reality* as a methodological convenience, I would suggest (a) that objectively in Nature there are but two spheres or kingdoms essentially different in kind, namely the organic and the inorganic; (b) that the 'vital' no less than the 'mental' categories of biology involve subjective interpretation; and (c) that the apparently specific *human* character of the mental is a necessary corollary of the human relativity of all knowledge.

### 2. PAMPSYCHISM

Professor Thomson, being anxious to avoid such "metaphysical labels" as "entelechy" or "*élan vital*", claims (at first) for biology only a "methodological vitalism".<sup>(a)</sup> Here I think he is too modest: the vital (and mental) categories of biology have a more than methodological justification; as will appear if we contrast the attitude of the 'vitalist' with the opposite attitude of the 'behaviourist'. As long as the latter says that *for his purposes* 'mind' does not count, there is nothing to be urged against him: 'Behaviourism', that is to say, is a possible method among others, the validity of which depends on the results it achieves. (It may be doubted whether such a method can produce valuable results: it will delight the man who delights in card-indexes: it is barely conceivable the method will not vitiate

(a) pp. 318-9.

the user, making him regard his fellows as slot-machines.) But when and if the behaviourist goes on to deny that 'mind' is an appreciable factor in behaviour, to claim that his a-psychic description is a complete one, then he is talking nonsense and can be shown to be doing so. On the other hand the assumption that animal behaviour is purposive is an assumption which is necessary not only in practice but logically.

I have already argued that to speak of 'living' organisms involves the assumption that such organisms are, in some sort, *selves*; and Professor Thomson also does in fact go on to support, though very tentatively and one might almost say bashfully, what he calls "the heresy of panpsychism".<sup>(a)</sup> He argues (1) that 'mind' and 'matter' are both in themselves mere abstractions; (2) that 'mind' emerges with extreme gradualness in the realm of organisms; (3) that it emerges with equal gradualness in individuals; and concludes (4) that "if living organisms evolved from the not-living, then there must have been in the not-living the promise and potency of mind as well as of life."<sup>(b)</sup> This argument, which, as we shall see in a later chapter, has the powerful support of James Ward, seems to me a perfectly sound one, as far as it goes; and I should like to work it out a little farther, from the more or less biological point of view. Also I think we must raise the question, what this answer we have provided to the question of how life originated *means*. Perhaps it means nothing at all!

(a) p. 325, (b) p. 326.

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(1) One might say that, objectively, the difference between 'matter' and 'mind' is that in one case we are taking objects in the mass and in the other case as individuals. Thus the biometrician who deals with human beings in the mass is able to discover laws of average which are no less exact than the laws of the physicist: for the biometrician the human being is not an individual behaving uniquely, but a unit behaving according to a law of average. Now I suppose the smallest individual thing we are acquainted with is the single-celled protozoon. But the atoms and molecules of the chemist and physicist, not to speak of electrons and protons, are hundreds of thousands of times smaller than the cell, which is the biological unit; so that, owing to the limitations of our human sense organs, we cannot possibly become acquainted with atoms and molecules as individuals, but only as units of 'matter'. In spite of the vastly extended range afforded by the instruments of modern science, human vision still remains restricted within certain fixed limits. And our knowledge is restricted accordingly.

(2) Common opinion would admit the presence of 'mind' in the higher mammals, but would probably deny it to the lower orders of living creatures, and more certainly to the vegetable kingdom.<sup>(1)</sup> And yet for the biologist the world of organisms is a single whole, and it is impossible for him to put his finger on any spot and say: here 'life', or here 'mind' emerges. And the fact of this unity, which

<sup>(1)</sup> Except perhaps in the case of those who are acquainted with the fascinating work of Sir J. C. Bose.

presents what Professor Thomson calls an "inclined plane" of behaviour, justifies the conclusion: wherever there is an organism there must be something which corresponds to what in ourselves we call 'mind' or 'consciousness'. The difficulty here, as I have already pointed out, is that the only 'mind' we are acquainted with is our own human mind, and that the farther we remove from the human sphere the less human and therefore the less 'mental' the organism appears to us. Trees we suppose to be in some way alive, to possess some kind of internal psyche; but the quality of that psyche we are quite unable to imagine. And when we pass from the organic to the inorganic the gulf becomes still more unbridgeably wider. And so here not only the limitations of our sense organs but the limitations of our 'internal knowledge', the finiteness and qualitative particularity of the human mind, prevent us from 'recognizing' something which may nevertheless be there. Even if we were able to observe the 'individual behaviour' of an atom, we should almost certainly be quite unable to interpret it as such, should treat it only as the exemplification of some physical 'law': all but the external aspect would remain hidden to us.

(3) It is hardly necessary to point out that the invisible minuteness of the particles of matter with which the physicist deals is purely relative, that there is no necessary connection between size, as judged by human standards, and mental potentiality. Every human being develops from a barely visible egg cell, and we suppose that all the characteristics

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of the adult are 'potentially' present in the cell. And since the protoplast from which that cell has 'descended' originally developed from 'inorganic matter', it would seem to follow also that all the characteristics of all living beings must have been 'potentially' present in the original from which they sprang. If we accept potentiality in the one case, there seems to be no reason why we should boggle at it in the other. In a word, if we accept the Aristotelian dictum that there can be nothing in the end that was not present in kind at the beginning, the theory of pansychism is inevitable.

But can we accept this dictum of Aristotle? Does it mean anything to say that, before living beings of any kind were, all the capacities of all living beings of every kind were 'potentially present' in the "dust of the labouring earth"? This seems to me an extremely difficult question to have to answer; and like most particular questions of any sort, it involves, if we start to analyse it, all sorts of fundamental questions of philosophy. Some of these questions I hope to deal with somewhat in subsequent chapters: here I will content myself with remarking that the difficulty, here as elsewhere, depends on the necessarily human-centred character (the relativity) of all thought and language. For if we thus scatter 'mind' broadcast, what is the 'mind' we scatter? Not 'our mind'. But then what is 'mind' which is not 'our mind'?<sup>(1)</sup> We may perhaps be allowed the abstraction of a mini-

<sup>(1)</sup> We can however avoid this dilemma by saying, not that everything real must have a 'mind', but that everything real is a 'self'. See below, the discussion in Chapter VIII, especially pp. 205 sq.

num which is almost and yet not quite contentless ; but it is a chill, unsatisfactory notion we are left with. We must dwindle our light down to the merest glimmer : if the glimmer is below the level of our sensibility, shall we still say that the light remains ? That is one face of the difficulty. And another is that while we inevitably picture the macrocosm in terms of the microcosm, ' Nature ' is *not* an existent, as you and I are.

And so I prefer to mix my pampsychism still with a pinch of modest doubt. Nor should I allow that this hypothesis must needs clash with the opposite hypothesis of epigenesis or ' emergent evolution '. Let us agree at least with Croce that the real is a history (πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει, as Heraclitus said) ; and add to that that only the individual can be a real cause. ' Pampsychism ' and ' emergent evolution ' are only two different ways of looking at this single reality. We are real and history is real ; but this latter must be, either a history of individual acts, or a history of phenomena ; and there may be more than one way of ' saving the appearances.'

### 3. ANTHROPOMORPHISMS

The criticisms of Professor Thomson's opinions which I have heretofore advanced, have been, at least in intention, constructive rather than polemical. His conclusions within the sphere of biology, of which science he is among the recognized authorities, should not, of course, venture to question. Those conclusions he presents clearly and forcibly, and I think also that he thoroughly justifies his claim, in

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of the adult are 'potentially' present in the cell. And since the protoplast from which that cell has 'descended' originally developed from 'inorganic matter', it would seem to follow also that all the characteristics of all living beings must have been 'potentially' present in the original from which they sprang. If we accept potentiality in the one case, there seems to be no reason why we should boggle at it in the other. In a word, if we accept the Aristotelian dictum that there can be nothing in the end that was not present in kind at the beginning, the theory of pampsychism is inevitable.

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general, to have steered a clear passage between a metaphysical Scylla and a materialistic Charybdis. Yet, especially towards the end of his paper, he does, I think, allow himself a certain number of unjustifiable ethical anthropomorphisms. And although he advances these views only tentatively and with an acknowledgment of their hypothetical character, none the less even as hypotheses I believe them to be most dangerous to clear thinking, and as such proper to avoid and condemn.

(1) He says that "physico-chemical pre-conditions were very suitable for the rise and progress of life," that "there was a friendly conspiracy, which in man's preparations we should call well-thought-out. But 'preparation' is not a scientific idea." (a) Elsewhere he says that "in many ways, from the first, inorganic Nature has been extraordinarily 'friendly' to organisms." (b) Professor Thomson guards himself with inverted commas; but I think we ought to be extremely careful to avoid the common logical error of treating a circumstantial as a final cause. (1) It is indeed obvious that unless the pre-existing conditions of inorganic Nature had been such that organic life could develop in the way that it has developed, then organic life would not have developed in the way that it has developed. That is all we mean—or all we *should* mean—when we say that the pre-existing conditions were "favourable" to the emergence of life. In other words it seems a fallacy to suppose that life, or 'organic Nature' could *only* develop in the way that it

(1) See below, pp. 107 sq. (a) p. 328, (b) p. 332.

actually has developed on our earth, and that therefore it could not have developed at all except under just those inorganic conditions which did prevail and have prevailed, and that *therefore* there is evidence in the suitability of those conditions, of 'design'. I think, on the contrary, that we ought to suppose that the actual character of organic Nature depends only *in a negative way* on the inorganic conditions that have prevailed, and that many different types of inorganic conditions might equally allow the evolution of living creatures, though each type of conditions would limit that evolution in a special way. Thus, for instance, the course of evolution on the planet Mars would, owing to the widely different inorganic conditions prevailing there, lead to a widely different '*systema Naturae*' from that we know, possibly excelling, possibly falling short of it, in variety and potency.

(2) Though remarking that "the reader is not likely to be a believer in the objectivity of beauty," (a) yet Professor Thomson at the end of his contribution states that "Animate Nature is all for beauty, and the exceptions prove the rule." (b) To which I would reply that, as a matter not of fact but of value, (1) great sections of animate Nature—fishes, insects, reptiles, amphibians—have in them much more of ugliness than beauty. I cannot here discuss the general question of the 'objectivity of beauty'—we shall be concerned with that in the next chapter—but besides protesting dogmatically that the statement "Animate Nature is all for beauty" is

(1) See below, pp. 69 sq. (a) p. 327, (b) p. 333.

æsthetically indefensible, I would point out that it is no more defensible logically. The phrase "Animate Nature" must mean either 'the sum total of animate creatures', or, more loosely, 'the principle of life, or common characteristic which enables us to distinguish such living organisms from the not-living'. But we cannot attribute æsthetic purposes either to the individual worm, or to an abstract 'principle'. This statement then that "Animate Nature is all for beauty" I would call an illegitimate ethical anthropomorphism.

(3) "It often looks as if Nature were Nature for a purpose." (a) "The term Progress is no doubt bound up with man's ideals, but there is something analogous to it in organic evolution—something that must be called the advancement of life. There have been blind alleys, wanderings in a circle, and actual retrogressions, but the large fact is something like progress." (b) As ever, Professor Thomson treads cautiously. But here again such sentences as these seem dangerous; more especially as, apart from remarks of this sort, we are given, as far as I can see, no *general clue* as to how we should regard the evolutionary process.

I have already argued that the attribution of purposes to 'Nature' is logically indefensible. But there are also *a posteriori* arguments that can be advanced against such a way of regarding the facts. In the first place we have to recognize that the whole evolutionary process falls within a time frame of the inanimate. Although the discovery of radium has

enormously extended our conception of the length of time during which the earth will be able to support organic life upon its surface, yet the fact remains, that, from the astronomical point of view, the whole process of evolution is but an episode in the vast cycle of stellar history—an episode which will also, at some time, end where it began, and perfect the great circle of organic change. Now this consummation is practically so remote that it can no more affect our human purposes or the human ideal of progress than can the anticipation of our individual death affect our daily plans and purposes. Yet this fact does compel us to realise that the word ‘Progress’ falls within a purely human category, and that to apply it to the processes of Nature is a piece of false analogy. Whether the tide of Life be yet at the full we cannot say ; but we do know that one day it must ebb ; and a circular process can have no ‘purpose’.

Again, though it is true that the ‘ascent of life’ means more than an increase in differentiation, that man is a higher form of life than any previously evolved, it is, I conceive, a false anthropomorphism to regard the evolutionary process as directed to a particular end, which is more completely realised in man than in any other creature. Although there was a time when man was not, there can never be a time, while organic life remains, when fishes and vegetation cease to be. The trees and grasses can live without man ; but man cannot live without the trees and grasses. We no longer regard the ‘brute creation’ as made solely for *our* purposes : neither should we look upon the sub-human species

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as in any sense frustrate or incomplete 'expressions of Nature's purposes'. Dryden speaks of

"The diapason closing full in Man";  
but the last note is only one among others, though it be the highest.

### 4. FORMULAS OF EVOLUTION

The position I am trying to establish may appear more clearly if I try, in some sort, to provide an answer to the question: in what general way are we to regard the process of evolution? This is something which, as far as I can see, Professor Thomson does not attempt. And yet surely the question is a fundamental one, for philosophy no less than for biology.

I have criticised severely in my first chapter the type of 'vitalism' that thinks it necessary, in order to answer this question, to postulate an abstract 'creative principle', to which is given all the attributes of godhead. Equally unsatisfactory is the 'mechanical' explanation that the course of evolution is determined by the law of Natural Selection, working on the material of chance variation: it is indeed no explanation, but a mere confession of ignorance parading as what it is not. Some writers indeed seem to use the word 'chance' as though they regarded it as a 'principle' which 'accounted for' things; but when we speak of an event happening by chance we can mean nothing other than that we are unable to include this particular event under any general formula. To say that variations occur by chance is in fact only to say that we cannot say

how they occur. "Noteworthy," says Professor Thomson, "is the degree in which the fortuitous has shrivelled in biology. Variations are often definite and congruent with the past; the random is rare." (a) In other words biologists know more about the manner of variations, succeed better in relating them into a general account, than they did formerly. (1)

But however biologists may correlate particular emergences and adaptations, of the general evolutionary process I think all we can properly say is this: organic Nature is of a certain sort and so develops along certain lines, when and according as external circumstances permit. Both external circumstances and the 'struggle for existence' are only limiting agencies: all the positive characteristics of living beings depend (logically) on the fact that 'Nature' in spite of its myriad-sidedness is of a certain *definite* sort. I have already noticed that there seem to be two ways of regarding the historical process, which are complementary to one another rather than mutually exclusive: the one attitude we may call pampsychism or evolution, and the other epigenesis: the one is the static and the other the dynamic aspect of the same single reality. Now Mendelian experiments have shown that in certain cases the emergence of new varieties may be interpreted as

(1) Darwin, in his usual clear-sighted way, remarks that "chance" is "a wholly incorrect expression," but that it "served to acknowledge plainly our ignorance of the cause of each particular variation." The danger is of course that the scientist will give this mere negation some positive significance, or else regard it as the antithesis of 'purpose', which is a concept lying within the subjective human category.

(a) p. 330.

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due to the 'unpacking' of an original composite inheritance, the contrasted factors of which neutralize each other ; so that the loss of one factor in the inheritance results in the emergence of some positive new characteristic : the germinally (or potentially) more complex, that is to say, is actually less developed than the germinally more simple. It seems to me that we have here, not of course a *general explanation* of the evolutionary process, but a formula or *model*, which enables us to envisage this process as a whole with perhaps a minimum of analogical distortion : <sup>(1)</sup> as the actualization of one single vast inheritance, which can be realised only in the varieties of innumerable species—and then not completely. Not that this inheritance is to be thought of as carried materially in the separate factors or genes—for that would be almost if not quite inconceivable ; but rather that the actualization of the germinal factors allows the germinal actualization of further germinal potentialities : which we may regard as a new product, and yet at the same time as in some sense (not a material sense) related to the germ in the same way as the genes are to the organism in which they are actualized. The 'sport' or new variety is something *new in kind*, and yet at the same time *congruent with its special inheritance*. Congruence and Newness (evolution and epigenesis) seem to be the two most general characteristics of the mirror-drama that we watch. And only can we call the drama real,

(<sup>1</sup>) Darwin of course notoriously envisaged the process after the model of the fancier's and gardener's selective breeding. But 'Natural Selection', it is not necessary in these days to emphasize, is a conception which can properly be applied only to the *survival*, and not to the *origin* of new species.

and not mere shadow-play, if we assume that there are actors whose actions we do, obliquely, watch.<sup>(1)</sup>

But, to return to my former point, the 'goal of evolution' we must regard as the actualization of this inheritance or potentiality within the limits which its environment allows. And although the fullest and 'highest' actualization is naturally the latest in time, it does not follow that only in *one* direction lies the goal of the whole process; its goal is rather to be found wherever there is actualization rather than potentiality. Thus (speaking under correction as a layman of the science) I imagine that the giant saurians of the carboniferous age—which I suppose Professor Thomson is referring to, when he speaks of "blind alleys"—only became extinct owing to the change in climatic conditions during the successive geological ages; that if the world reverted to such conditions as were unfavourable to the survival of warm-blooded creatures, it might revert again to an age of saurians; and that if the conditions of the carboniferous age had remained permanently the same, the course of evolution would have followed still a saurian instead of a warm-blooded path, actualizing as far as possible what potentialities the circumstances allowed. Such an actualization along saurian lines would (I suppose) have necessarily

(1) This is perhaps a clumsy metaphor; and I am aware that my supposed 'formula of evolution' needs a lot of logical propping. I hope however to be able to supply some such a scaffolding in my concluding chapters, and that read in the light of *that* explanation *this* explanation will become more intelligible. The point I wish to make here is, roughly, this: Biology, like all other sciences, is a 'mirror-watching', and rests on the assumption that the mirror reveals the action of real existents—that is, of 'selves.' What in the mirror does not reveal such reality is 'shadow-play', a 'that' whose 'what' cannot be separated from the 'how' of our perceiving it.



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been on a lower plane than that we have ; but I do not see why it should be regarded as a " blind alley " ; nor can I conceive that we have any guarantee that the present conditions are such as allow the most complete actualization of the highest potentialities of living beings.

### 5. TELEOLOGY

There is one final point I should like to make, or perhaps rather, re-make :

Professor Thomson points out that, though it is often emphasized that science has nothing to do with the question ' why ? ' yet the bio-psychologist, where he has to deal with purposive individuals, does have to ask and answer this question. That is quite true. And he adds : " It is granted at once that we ask a scientific, not a transcendental ' why ? ' . We do not inquire into the ultimate significance of events ; there is no attempt at philosophic interpretation." (a) Now what he calls the scientific ' why ? ' is, of course, the ' why ? ' of ordinary life, which, as he says, comes to be asked whenever we deal with purposive individuals. But I should like to say just a little more about this ' why ? ' .

It is true that when he is studying individual behaviour the biologist finds it necessary to interpret that behaviour purposefully. But as a scientist he studies the particular only with a view to the general ; and when he passes from the particular to the general, then also he passes from the sphere of final causes. Professor Thomson seems to assume that it is when we are " taking the large evolutionary

(a) p. 316.

view " that we need to raise the question ' why ? ', need to assume the existence of final causes. But on the contrary it is just when we take the " large evolutionary view " that the question of final causes becomes meaningless. We can and must interpret individual behaviour purposefully : we must not and cannot describe the general processes of Nature in such a way. The commonest and most specious of all anthropomorphic hypostatizations is to attribute purposes to ' Nature '. To the individual, and to the individual alone, can we attribute designs and purposes, except when we speak in the way of admitted metaphor. It is a vain dream to imagine that we can ever discover, biologically or in any other way, the *cause* (that is, the final cause) of life, or of evolution. <sup>(1)</sup>

The question of ' why ? ' then is not really scientific, except accidentally : it belongs to the material of those sciences which deal with individual behaviour, but it is foreign to the method and object of those sciences. Professor Thomson seems to believe that there is another kind of ' why ? ' than the scientific, a philosophic ' why ? ', which is presumably in some way even more ' final ' and ultimate. I think that that belief is a delusion. It is a delusion which the philosophers have too often fostered and the scientists too often meekly submitted to. Philosophy is in a sense more ' ultimate ' than any particular science, but not in the sense that it can answer the question ' why ? ', where the mere scientist cannot answer it.

(1) Cf. below pp. 107 sq. for a general discussion of causation.

## CHAPTER III

### PROFESSOR SORLEY AND THE CATEGORY OF VALUE

#### I

**I**N his paper on 'Value and Reality' Professor Sorley attacks the fundamental problem of Ethics. And the conclusion which he reaches is that value is an objective characteristic of the personal life and has a place in the objective order of reality, and that we require a synoptic view of experience which will allow an equal validity to the causal and the moral order. For this Naturalism is inadequate, and we can solve the difficulty only by regarding the unity of the Universe as depending on a Supreme Mind or on God, who is the essence and source of all values, and of whom the visible world is the temporal image.

Such in brief is the thesis he develops. But let us now consider more closely the form of his argument.

He starts by placing side by side the two judgments : " the sky is blue " and " the sky is beautiful." *Prima facie*, he argues, there is " no ground for saying that the blueness is a quality of the object, but that the beauty has nothing objective about it." (a) And yet it is a common opinion that the latter judgment is derived from our experience of being pleasantly affected by the sight of the blue sky and that the judgment is therefore subjective. This

(a) pp. 249-250.

opinion however is based on a failure to distinguish between the origin of a judgment and its reference. When we make a value-judgment we do not mean simply that we, the judging subject, experience pleasure or desire, but we mean that the object judged *is* good or beautiful ; and if our meaning has no justification in fact, then we are all of us constantly blundering in all our value-judgments by giving them an objective reference to which they have no claim. Moreover if the appreciation of value arises out of affective-conative experiences, it is equally true that our apprehension of things arises out of sensation. In this respect appreciation of value is on the same level as perception of things, and " the relation of genesis to validity is the same in both cases." <sup>(a)</sup> The difference between the two kinds of judgment lies simply in this, that in one case we adopt an affective and conative attitude towards the objective world and in the other a purely cognitive attitude.

But to this sort of argument the first and most obvious objection is, that since sensation is at the root equally of affective and cognitive experience, there is no parallel between the relation of sensation to perception and that of ' feeling ' to ' appreciation '. The judgment " the sky is beautiful " originates no less than the judgment " the sky is blue " in a visual sensation : in that respect they have an identical origin.

Nor does the difference between them seem to depend on the psychological distinction between

(a) p. 251.

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affection and cognition. This distinction, as Professor Sorley himself says, "is not primitive and it is never complete";<sup>(a)</sup> and although we may distinguish these elements in experience by abstraction, in concrete fact all three are usually, if not always, present. The experiencing subject is the one and indivisible self. The gambler who watches the roulette ball come to rest on an odd, or on an even number, does not regard the thing perceived as an "independent other" which makes no appeal to his feelings: the value-judgment of an art connoisseur would probably be much more 'cold' and 'impartial'. Again, if the difference between the two kinds of judgment were merely one of degree—more of *A* and less of *B*, or more of *B* and less of *A*—there would be 'middle' judgments which might be classed *either* as value-judgments *or* as fact-judgments; but there are no judgments of this sort; and a difference in kind cannot be reduced to a difference of degree.

Professor Sorley's explanation then of the difference between the two categories seems inadequate inasfar as it concerns their respective origins; and inasfar as it concerns their respective 'reference' it is no more satisfactory. His whole argument is in favour of the view that the value-judgment is 'objective'. Yet he never makes clear what this supposed objectivity means or consists in. The parallel established between 'things' and 'value' seems to me no less factitious and illusory than that between 'sensation' and 'feeling'. "Experience,"

(a) p. 251.

he declares, " is always of something other than the experience itself." (a) Certainly ; but what we experience, for example, when we hear a piece of music, is not ' value ' but the sound of the music : it is the music, not the beauty (value) of the music, that we appreciate and pass judgment upon (value). Just as all sensible experience originates in sensation, so also it all ' refers ' to some object of sense. To argue that we appreciate, and value, ' value ' seems to be on a par with saying that we perceive, not objects, but percepts. If the judgment " the sky is beautiful " is equally objective as the judgment " the sky is blue," surely that ought to mean that the ' beauty ' is no less an objective quality of the thing judged than the ' blueness ' is.

But this, plainly, is not Professor Sorley's opinion, since he holds that " the appreciation of value *may* depend upon feeling and desire," (b) and that ultimately value attaches only to persons. But in that case what can be meant by saying that the judgment " the sky is beautiful " is objective ? Professor Sorley never tells us, but proceeds instead to discuss how ' value ' is objective ; and this change of emphasis from value-judgments to ' value ' really begs the question at issue, by assuming that ' value ' can be discussed as an independent entity apart from any judgment of value ; but if it is such an entity (within the category of fact) then obviously it must be ' objective '. The question at issue is in fact just this : when we speak of a judgment of value are we referring to the *quality* or *category* or to the

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*object* of the judgment? By changing the form of his argument, Professor Sorley takes it for granted that we refer to the object, and so assumes what he has to prove.

Such a *petitio principii* as this is rendered possible by the fact that the term 'value' is an ambiguous one: it may refer either to '*my*' valuation or to some *external* valuation, that is to say to public opinion and 'morality' in the strict and original sense of the word. When Professor Sorley writes: "Persons must be regarded as belonging to the objective order, the order of reality; and they are the bearers of value,<sup>(1)</sup> for values are to a certain extent manifested in their lives and characters" (a)—it seems to me that here he is confusing under this word 'value' the reputation or morality of a man with '*my*' opinion about him. Often of course '*my*' judgment agrees with the general judgment: but it *may not*; and on the fact of such a possible disagreement the main problem of Ethics hinges. Professor Sorley writes that "the goodness of the good man is as objective as the man himself." (b) The actions, principles and character of a man are certainly objective; and so also is every judgment about him which is not '*mine*' objective to '*me*'; but neither sort of objectivity can have any bearing on the validity of '*my*' judgment. The truth of the matter is that, as long as we keep within the category of fact, we cannot get 'value'. Professor Sorley, trying to give objectivity to the value-judgment by

(1) Note the vagueness of the phrase "bearers of value," in which the ambiguity lies concealed.

(a) p. 254, (b) p. 255.

assimilating it to the judgment of fact, succeeds only in obscuring the essential nature of the value category. The 'goodness' of the 'good' man is something differing *toto caelo* from the reputation he bears in the world ; and the validity, for me, of my own value-judgments *never* depends upon their agreeing with the general opinion.

Professor Sorley then proceeds to argue the case of 'moral laws', which he claims have a similar kind of objectivity to that which is claimed by natural laws. But the two kinds of laws differ in that those of science are descriptive, those of value imperative. Natural laws apply to existing things, and their validity depends upon their accuracy : values apply to personal life, and their validity consists in expressing an ideal which people ought to realise.

But is it not evident that this form of argument contradicts his earlier one ? What is the relation between the imperative law of value and the particular instance of value which "experience reveals" to us ? and how can *what is* ever be identified with *what ought to be* ? If "the goodness of the good man is as objective as the man himself," that must surely mean that when we judge his actions to be good, we are recognizing some quality or aspect which we describe as 'good'. But, according to the second argument, "values apply to personal life ; and their validity consists not in describing how persons comport themselves, but in expressing an ideal which they should realise." (a) I fail to see how these different points of view are to be reconciled.

(a) p. 256.



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It is to be observed in the second place, that after claiming for moral laws a similar objectivity to that possessed by natural laws, Professor Sorley claims in the next sentence that the validity of a moral law is no more affected by its violation in actual life than is the validity of the law of non-contradiction affected by people contradicting themselves. I must confess that such a method of argument seems to me somewhat disingenuous. The law of non-contradiction falls within a class of 'laws' which is no less distinct from the class of 'natural laws' than is the class of 'moral laws'; by no stretch of the imagination can it be called an 'objective' law; and just *because* it is not objective, its validity is not affected by its violation in practice. But a 'law of nature', which *is* objective, as soon as it is found to be violated by any natural fact, *ipso facto* loses its validity.

Again, in the case of natural laws validity and objectivity are closely related, almost identical terms; and so we should suppose also that in the case of moral laws, since they are (according to Professor Sorley) objective in the same way as natural laws, validity and objectivity would be closely connected, and in realising how such laws are valid we should realise at the same time how they were objective. The whole purpose, surely, of trying to establish value on an 'objective' basis, is that such value (the moral law) should have a 'universal validity' which is independent of any particular individual's feelings or ideals, and on a par with the 'universal validity' of scientific generalizations.

And yet after all the pother we find at the conclusion that the moral law expresses an ideal which people should realise and that *its validity consists in expressing an ideal that people should realise*. And so the concept of objectivity is in the final resort dropped quietly overboard, and we discover that moral laws are valid just because they are moral laws, that I ought to do what I ought to do because I ought to : in other words, it is impossible to ' get behind ' the conception of ' oughtness ', which is fundamental. I quite agree. But what has happened to the ' objectivity ' ?

II

Up to the present I have been criticizing Professor Sorley's argument without having stopped to analyse the presuppositions on which it is based ; but now I wish to attack the problem in a more fundamental way. The assumption which Professor Sorley takes for his starting-point is that the judgment of value must be *either* ' subjective ' or ' objective ' ; and the one argument in favour of the view that such judgments are ' objective ' which can always be triumphantly enforced against any attempt to construct an ' Ethics of Naturalism ', is that values *cannot be* ' subjective '. But the point I now desire to raise is whether there is any meaning in this alternative which is proposed, whether in fact the subject-object relation can properly be applied to the category of value. Professor Sorley begins his paper by attacking the ' intellectualists ' who ignore the ' reasons of the heart ', and he protests against

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the 'objectification of thought'; but this is precisely the mistake which he and all other idealists make, in trying to assimilate everything to the form of a sense-perception. Thus the whole philosophy of Plato, which discovers 'reality' in a 'realm of ideas' which transcends the knowing subject, wholly depends upon the transference of the subject-object relation from the perceptual to the conceptual sphere, the sphere of 'pure thought'; and not only is this transference a piece of false analogy, but the very notion of transcendence is itself derived from that sphere of sense-perception which is afterwards declared to be mere appearance, and as such productive only of error. Just in the same way modern idealism, which is centred on the refusal to "take the physical objects of sense-perception as the type of the real world,"<sup>(1)</sup> yet (at any rate in the person of Professor Sorley) tries to establish the 'validity of values' by assimilating them to these same objects of sense.

The subject-object relation belongs to the sphere of sense-perception. The question of the proper analysis of that relation I need not enter into here: we shall be concerned with it in Chapters VIII and IX; but at any rate it can hardly be disputed, I think, (a) that as long as we confine ourselves to the sphere of sense-perception we can have no doubt of what we mean when we say that an idea (image) is merely subjective:<sup>(2)</sup> we are quite clear what we

(1) The phrase is used by Prof. Muirhead in his Introduction to the volume under discussion, p. 15.

(2) I need not point out the difference between 'knowing what we mean by a statement,' and 'knowing what the correct analysis of a statement is.' See below, p. 237.

mean when we speak of 'illusions' and contrast such illusions with perceptions ; (b) that the *criterion* of objectivity in such a case is the *general norm of perception* : what is seen or heard under 'abnormal' conditions, or by only one person out of many (the sight or sound being within the compass of the senses of all) is judged to be 'merely subjective'.

This relation then exists in the sphere of sense-perception, and also in the sphere of what we may call 'indirect perception', that is, where we have a belief, based on memory or information, about some particular fact ; and there also the criterion of the truth of our belief is the general opinion. But the farther we remove from the sphere of direct perception the less effective this criterion becomes ; and in the realm of abstract ideas it is wholly inadequate. Science supposes, for its own purposes, that it is dealing with an 'independent other' ; yet the truth of a scientific generalization depends not at all on the general belief : it depends for its particulars on the objective world of 'common-sense', but for its validity *qua* generalization only on the logical adequacy of its method. In the case of the more abstract sciences moreover, it may be doubted whether many of their concepts are objective at all : the 'independent other' is found in the final resort to be but 'the mark of our own footsteps in the sand.'<sup>(1)</sup> And mathematics lies altogether outside the sphere of objectivity.

(<sup>1</sup>) "We have found a strange foot-print on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the foot-print. And lo ! it is our own." Eddington, *Time, Space and Gravitation*, p. 201.

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Even within the category of fact then validity (truth) is not always and necessarily associated with objectivity ; and what reason have we for supposing that in the category of value validity depends on objectivity, or in fact for supposing that the subject-object relation applies here at all ? It is true that according to the forms of language the particular value-judgment of the form ' this is good ' resembles a particular perceptive judgment, while the general judgment of value resembles the scientific ' law ' ; but these are superficial resemblances, and what we have to do is not try to bridge the difference between fact and valuation by a process of verbal assimilation, but discover what this difference essentially consists in. I have already argued that the difference depends neither on the respective (psychological) origins of the two forms of judgment, nor on a different ' reference ' (object judged), but that it is intrinsic, the difference between ' what ought to be ' and ' what is ', between ' worth ' and ' fact ' ; and the thesis I now wish to develop in opposition to Professor Sorley is that *the subject-object relation belongs only to the category of fact, and that the category of value is autonomous.*

The judgment of value *qua* judgment is the judgment of someone about something, or someone : in the terminology of Professor Sorley, it is both subjective and objective, according as one regards its origin or its reference. But when we consider its specific character as a *value*-judgment we pass beyond the category of fact, and the subject-object relation no longer has significance. To say that any

judgment is 'merely subjective' implies that the person judging is a victim of an illusion of the senses (or suffers from a failure of memory); and therefore to say that judgments of value are subjective is plainly absurd. But those who argue that a judgment of value must therefore be 'objective' are guilty of a double confusion: they confuse the object about which the judgment is made with the category of the judgment—think that a judgment about a fact is a judgment *of* fact; and, secondly, confuse 'objectivity' with 'generality'.

Let us consider the three types of judgment:

(a) This picture was painted by X.

(b) I like this picture.

(c) This is a good picture.

All these three judgments are equally objective in their reference—they all refer to a picture. But while the first is a judgment of fact about the picture, the second is a judgment of personal value—such a judgment, I hold, expresses the judger's affective attitude to the thing judged, not the *fact* of having adopted such an attitude—, and the third is a true judgment of value, being *dogmatic* and *general*. What I mean when I judge 'this is a good picture' is: this is a picture which everyone *ought* to appreciate—a very different thing, it need not be said, from 'this is a picture which everyone may or does appreciate'. This then is the specific character of the judgment of value, that it is *normative*, not recognizing something but affirming something, or, as one might say, creating something.

And this distinction between recognizing fact and

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affirming value is an absolute one. It is impossible to go behind it, and useless to apply to the value-judgment notions which lie outside its category: to say that such a judgment is 'merely subjective' is on a par with saying that a work of art is 'merely subjective'—the statement is meaningless. The true value-judgment<sup>(1)</sup> is not the recognition of some already existing reality, but rather an effort towards the creating a new reality. From this it follows that, as soon as we start to discuss 'values', as distinct from judgments of value, we immediately pass from the category of fact to the category of value, that as soon as we start declaring what worth or goodness *is*, we are dogmatizing. And this is the function of Ethics, which insofar as it goes beyond mere logical and psychological analysis and attempts some positive constructive formulation, is itself a moral judgment of a special sort, a dogmatic moralizing and not a 'recognition' of some 'aspect of reality', and as such differing *toto caelo* from any form of science. Historically, moral philosophers have always been the *prophets of their age*, and necessarily so. The ethical philosopher is a practical man trying to produce a practical effect: he is not asserting 'eternal verities' but trying to affect the

(1) By this I mean a judgment which is meant to be, and realised to be, a general one. Here again we must distinguish the form of words from the meaning which underlies the form. There are, for instance, many judgments of the form 'this is good', which do not mean to assert anything more than 'I like this'. If a person says 'this is good soup' he does not, unless he is very foolish indeed, mean 'this is a soup which everyone ought to like'; and the fact that many judgments of this kind have only a personal meaning has perhaps given greater plausibility to the view that all dogmatic judgments are 'merely subjective'. But that the true dogmatic judgment can be perfectly well distinguished from the personal valuation is seen in such remarks as the following: "This may not be a good picture, but I like it."

society of men in a special way : he ranks, or should rank, with the priest and the statesman, moulding, as he may, the world according to the light that is in him.

But before proceeding to develop this thesis further, there are two final arguments of a very general kind I would urge against the view that 'value is objective'.

1. This opinion can only mean one of two things : (a) that goodness and beauty are qualities of things (and persons) which are revealed immediately in experience, or (b) that goodness and beauty are transcendental 'forms' which stand over against experience. Professor Sorley tries to combine these two different points of view without definitely adopting either of them ; but it seems to me equally difficult to reconcile these two opinions, and to defend either of them singly. The general difficulty, I would express in this way :

(a) No 'aspect' of experience can in itself ever give us the category of 'oughtness', that is to say, of value.

(b) If this category of oughtness or value is something transcendental, in what way can this transcendental 'form' be revealed to us, and what is its connection with experience ?

Professor Sorley concludes that values have their ultimate source in the mind of God ; and this seems to be the only possible conclusion of the idealistic position. But the mind of God cannot be said to be revealed in experience. And so the ethical philosopher is driven back on an intuitionism which,



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according to his own argument, is essentially 'subjective'. It is in fact a weakness common to all ethical systems which claim to discover the 'eternal and immutable laws of morality' that they result either in purely formal imperatives like those of Kant, or else in *ex cathedra* pronouncements, which we are required to accept as 'true' on no other grounds than their author's personal intuition of their truth. The fact that we can treat ethical systems historically, and show how the practical conclusions of the moralist shadow forth, in a perhaps transmuted but nevertheless recognizable form, the ethical ideas of his age and country, is in itself sufficiently strong evidence that no one has *as yet* discovered such eternal and immutable laws; and it belongs to the very nature of such laws that their recognition must be a matter of faith rather than of reason.

II. Professor Sorley speaks only of 'positive value', that is, of beauty and goodness: he says nothing about badness or ugliness. But if goodness is 'objective' it is equally certain that badness must be. This admission gives rise to two difficulties:

(a) If there is an action which one person judges good, another bad, then it must be that the one whose judgment is wrong not only fails to recognize an aspect that is there but 'sees', or mis-'sees', an aspect which is not there. The natural explanation of such a case is that the two persons apply to the same thing different standards of valuation. But this explanation is inadequate, if one or other of these contradictory predicates is a 'recognizable aspect' of the object judged.

(b) If the reality of goodness depends ultimately on a Divine Mind which is the source of all values, it seems necessary to argue either that evil is not real, or that there is an opposing transcendental Evil which stands over against the transcendental Good which is God. Of these alternatives the latter has been accepted as true by many ages and peoples, but I do not think it would be acceptable to modern philosophical or theological opinion. But the alternative argument that evil is not real is tantamount to denying the reality of the ethical problem : it is a type of argument that I think the plain man would rightly dismiss as metaphysical nonsense.

### III

In what sense then, if the conception of 'objectivity' does not belong to the category of value, can we speak of moral judgments as 'valid', and in what sense can we speak of a 'moral law'?

Our answer to this question must depend upon what we mean by 'validity'. In the case of judgments of fact, validity seems to be the same as 'truth'. Though there may be different kinds or orders of truth, and although it may be exceedingly hard to define what 'truth' is, yet I think we know quite clearly what we mean when we use the word in reference to an opinion about a matter of fact. But in the case of the category of value I believe that 'validity' must be given quite a different meaning, or rather several meanings :

A. It may be argued that 'there is no reason'

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why a man should 'obey his conscience' or recognize any moral obligation, if that 'obligation' is merely a product of the imagination, if 'what I ought to do' is nothing more than 'what I feel I ought to do.' Now this form of argument really amounts to denying that there is such a thing as a category of value; and it rests partly on a false intellectualism which regards every noun as the 'name of something' (of an 'entity' within the category of fact), and partly on a mistaken psychology which regards a self or individual as a congeries of sentiments and impulses presided over and controlled by the 'reason'. But this is not the case. The normal adult individual is not (in spite of Freud and Pirandello) a battlefield of warring appetites more or less 'inhibited' by a censorious 'reason', but possesses an organized character—that is to say, he possesses *principles of conduct*, which are rational inasmuch as they are consciously realised and formulated, and 'subjective' only in the sense of being unique. The 'recognition' by the individual of such principles is as far removed from recognition of an objective fact as it is from mere feeling; and their validity depends simply on the fact that they are possessed and acknowledged. To express the same idea in another way, we might say that the category of value is absolute. Though I may be able to explain why (I think that) a certain course of action is *right*, I cannot possibly reduce this 'rightness' itself to anything else. Herein, and nowhere else, lies the 'absoluteness' of morality: the categorical imperative is categorical because it is

recognized as such. This is in fact just what Professor Sorley himself concludes, when he declares that the validity of values consists in expressing an ideal which people (realise that they) should realise. Values are valid to the person who recognizes their validity simply because they *are* values. (A person may, of course, start to question the values he has heretofore accepted, and so cease to recognize their validity ; but insofar as he questions them they are no longer values for him.)

But this is not enough. For although the question of the 'validity of values' is, with reference to the person who recognizes those values, really a meaningless one, yet this does not give us any kind of validity for *general*, as opposed to *individual* values, nor for judgments of value ; for when we speak of the validity of a judgment of value, we mean 'validity' not in reference to the person making the judgment, but validity apart from the person making it. Again, it is obvious that 'what someone thinks right' may not *be* right—that is, I may not judge it to be right. It is indeed the conflict of 'rights' which constitutes the *raison d'être* of ethics.

B. In what sense then can we speak of a 'moral law' which is not merely 'my idea of what people ought to do' ? Now while Beauty and Goodness are generally assumed by philosophers to be similar in kind, and to have a similar validity, I believe that many people who had not considered the question deeply would admit that beauty is not an objective quality or aspect of things, but would stoutly maintain that the 'moral law' was objective ; and the

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reason for this I conceive to be simply that people do in fact disagree more fundamentally and completely over æsthetic than over moral questions. The curious divagations of æsthetic fashion, the wide and apparently ever increasing separation between the tastes of the masses and of the cultured few, the furious discussions of the experts and the absurd pretensions of rival coteries—all these things tend to make us suspicious of those who claim for their æsthetic judgments an absolute or 'objective' validity. In the sphere of morals also there is plenty of disagreement, and the sceptical writers of all ages have taken pleasure in pointing out how the virtues of one age and country are the vices of another age and country. But although such contradictory standards of judgment do undoubtedly exist, most markedly perhaps in the sphere of sexual morality, yet there is in some matters of morality such a general unanimity of opinion, that if all cases where disagreement were discovered were set aside there would be left a certain residuum of cases where the opinion of all peoples would be found to be identical. Envy, hatred and malice are universally condemned ; and though I doubt there is a single work of art whose excellence would receive a universal acknowledgment, there are virtues which have been always and everywhere sincerely and unfeignedly respected and admired.

Now I have argued as against Professor Sorley that the objectivity he claims for value is nothing more than the objectivity of current morality, whereas it is of the essence of 'value' that it lies

outside the subject-object relation, and that when we say 'this is good,' we mean, not that everyone *does* find it good, but that everyone *ought* to find it good. If however, the value I assert is asserted universally, then so far the distinction between 'is' and 'ought' can no longer be made; and what I assert may be called 'the moral law'.

Man is a social animal, and a society cannot exist without some kind of law. In every society, national or sectional, there must be certain common values which are 'recognized' by a majority of the members of that society, and which have their sanction in the general will of the majority. This is what people have in mind when they speak of the 'moral law', or at least here is the chrysalis and incunabulum whence their 'moral law' has risen to spread its wings under Heaven. If we ranged together all the legal and moral codes of humanity and cut off from each whatever was not common to all, we should be left with a common factor or residuum: this is the fundamental moral law which we all *must* accept and acknowledge; and whoever does not becomes the enemy and outcast of humankind.

Such a law is of course a minimum; it will be in the main negative and prohibitive: it is to the latter five prohibitions that the Mosaic Code has now dwindled down. Westermarck, in the sixth chapter of his "The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas", distinguishes between the moral law and the moral ideal. Duty he defines as a minimum of morality, the moral ideal as a maximum.<sup>(1)</sup> He

(<sup>1</sup>) *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 153-4.

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goes on to say that by confining morality to the sphere of 'right and wrong' these two different ideas are confounded, and that those who constantly concern themselves with people's duties are apt to become hard and intolerant. We should do well to recognize and enforce this distinction between a minimum which is imperative because universally recognized as such, and a maximum which we might say was 'imperative inwards, dogmatic outwards.' In the same way we may distinguish between two kinds of 'ought'; though the word is usually taken by philosophers in a strictly imperative sense. In reference to duties and wrongs which are 'fundamental' the word has an imperative or universal validity, in reference to ideals and æsthetic values it has only an individual or dogmatic validity. When I say that the judgment 'this is a good picture' means 'this is a picture which everyone *ought* to appreciate' it is evident that I am using the word 'ought' in a dogmatic but not imperative way; but it is the common error of zealots to confound the kinds, grow furious over mint and cummin.

Again it is necessary to insist that though validity here is related to a kind of objectivity, there is no case of 'recognizing' some external or transcendental fact: this validity is after all similar in kind to the validity of personal values: it depends on the common will of society as the other on the individual will. It might be shown that unless the moral law is obeyed any kind of society or social life is impossible; but such a demonstration would be useless against the hypothetical evil-doer who acts on the principle,

“ Evil, be thou my Good.” (In fact such a person would be a moral imbecile,<sup>(1)</sup> and so outside the sanctions of the law ; it is according to the law necessary that a (social) criminal should recognize that he has done wrong in order for him to be a criminal.) The concrete, as distinguished from the rational basis of the moral law, is the common will of humanity. But where there is no common will there is a conflict of ‘ rights ’ and ideals, and ‘ I ’ refuse to accept the verdict of the majority, and assert my individual values against the general values.

C. I have considered the validity of the category of value as such, and the concrete validity of the moral law ; now I have finally to consider a third kind of validity, the logical validity of the judgment of value : what justification have I for asserting my values against the general values ? This question is really equivalent to the question : what sort of validity can be claimed by an ethical system ? for I have already insisted that any ethic is only a generalized type of value judgment ; so that the question of the validity of dogmatic judgments includes that of the validity of any ethical system.

Now although my whole argument rests on the assumption that there is an absolute distinction between the categories of fact and of value, yet we must admit that this is a logical and not a concrete absoluteness. Professor Sorley rightly insists that there is never a complete separation between the equivalent psychological attitudes, and neither in

(<sup>1</sup>) N.B. that we never speak of an ‘ æsthetic imbecile ’ : morality is more fundamental than artistic creation or appreciation.



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ordinary speech nor in the forms of language are they clearly distinguished. It is to this formal resemblance between the two different kinds of judgment, and to the fact that the traditional logic has taken the perceptual as the type of all judgments that we must attribute the common failure, not only among ordinary men but even among philosophers, to distinguish adequately the kinds. James Ward, in his "Psychological Principles",<sup>(1)</sup> points out how terms of value are used descriptively even by scientists, as in such flower-names as *nasturtium officinale* and *lilium speciosum*. And on the other hand we have the moral significance attaching to many descriptive words, such as 'white' and 'black'. Again there are not a few words that it seems impossible to assign definitely to either category. So we must admit that though the two categories are absolutely distinct in logical analysis, yet in concrete thought they tend constantly to overlap one another.

There is a preliminary conclusion I wish to draw here. Since the two categories, especially in our general views of life and reality, so readily blend into each other, it must be the first task of the ethical philosopher to distinguish them in the texture of his own thought. This is a logical discipline which the majority of moralists have omitted, and which is yet the necessary propaedeutic of any valid ethic. In order to judge what is valuable, what 'ought to be', we must first judge correctly 'what is', and that is impossible unless we clear our view of 'what is' from moral preconceptions. Again, whenever we

(1) p. 386, note 2.

make a judgment of value we ought to realise that we are not 'recognizing' but dogmatizing. Thus in the present discussion I have tried as far as possible to keep within the category of fact ; but in distinguishing between 'imperative' and 'dogmatic' values I have evidently transgressed into the other category—I am myself dogmatizing, not arguing about what is or is not. Indeed, to discuss the moral law (as distinguished from 'the moral law'—*i.e.*, what is generally thought of as such) without dogmatizing is a logical impossibility.

But my major conclusion is this : that although we cannot argue directly from fact to value, yet it can be shown that ethical opinions do depend, indirectly, on facts. I have already distinguished between *concrete* and *logical* validity, arguing that the moral law can be shown to have a rational basis in the very constitution of human society, though it cannot be *proved true* on that account, but must be "taken or left", as the saying is ; I have argued also that every value judgment presupposes a perception or acquaintance of some sort, which supplies the object of valuation. It is plain then that a valuation which claims to be rational, or *logically valid*, needs to be based on correct perception and adequate acquaintance. A person who has only a superficial acquaintance with the history of the period, is hardly likely to pass a valuable judgment on the respective characters, say, of Cæsar and Cicero ; and in actual experience we find it is the person with the scantiest appreciation of the factors involved who is usually the readiest and most absolute with his verdicts of

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praise and condemnation : the more deliberate and doubtful verdict claims my greater respect. So it is with the general judgments which form the matter of ethics. Take, for example, the hedonistic principle : Pleasure is the only good. That principle, as long as it is stated simply and dogmatically, cannot be refuted by an appeal to facts, any more than it can, as the hedonists imagined, be induced from the facts. We cannot say that the principle is not true ; we can only dogmatically reject it. But when the hedonist tries to develop that principle into an ethical system we can show that the assumptions made are in all sorts of ways not in accordance with facts.

The classes of fact which ethical discussion particularly involves are the sociological, the psychological, and the logical or metaphysical. The sociological contact we have already had a glimpse of ; while it is clear that the ' problem of free-will ', which is of paramount ethical importance, itself lies strictly within the category of fact. Again our view of the ' ultimate nature of reality ' must, it is needless to say, profoundly affect the character of our moral judgments ; and the question of the relationship between the two categories is itself an important question of logic. Such matters I cannot discuss here. In other chapters I shall deal with the question of free-will and the question of ' reality ' ; here I would only say that the one point where I do entirely agree with Professor Sorley is in his insistence that ' people are real '. The category of value depends for its meaning and validity on the existence of the individual. Materialism and transcendental

Monism, both of which deny 'ultimate reality' to individuals, do not allow of an ethical construction : they are from the ethical standpoint equally impossible.

So far then for the possibility of rational ethics ; and it is on grounds of rationality that any ethic must claim validity. But it remains that 'validity' is still a conception which lies itself within the category of value. When we think within the category of fact, we suppose that there exists a *common objective continuum or reality*, which we are referring to and which it is the task of science to describe. Whatever justification there may be for that view of 'the facts', it is a conception which, when we turn to treat of values, we must banish from our minds, and think rather of a 'Universe of Selves', each self contributing his part to the forging of future reality ; and the ethical philosopher contributes his part of 'rational valuation'.

#### IV

In the foregoing pages I have tried to suggest an alternative to the view that 'values are objective,' since that seems to me an opinion that is logically untenable. My fundamental argument—that when I make any judgment of value (whether of the form 'this is good', or of the form 'goodness is so-and-so') I am not stating a fact but valuating a fact, or dogmatizing—seems to me nothing less than a truism ; and I have shown also that to insist on this fundamental difference between cognition and valuation by no means leads to a denial of all validity

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to moral judgments, but rather to a definition of that validity in terms of the category of value instead of in terms of the category of fact : it involves the conclusion that ethics is not and cannot be a science, but is or should be a rational dogmatizing, having for its aim not the discovery of values but the creative affirmation of values. If the ethical philosopher has no desire to alter the accepted code of values, then he has no reason for being what he is ; for he belongs to the class not of scientists but of artists and prophets. The closest analogy to an ethical system within the category of fact would seem to be a system of geometry—though such an analogy must not of course be pressed home : no analogy should be. But ethics resembles geometry in its indirect relation to the sphere of objective fact, and in that no ethical system can claim an absolute validity : as there are competing geometrical systems which are inconsistent with each other, <sup>(1)</sup> so also there are rights and ideals which cannot be reconciled. The moralist, like the artist, can only body forth what is in him : he is not a Great King publishing immutable decrees, but a member of the Republic of Souls, proclaiming his ideals of state in the Ecclesia.

(1) Not that there is any *actual* contradiction between such systems, since they are all 'logical constructs' with no determinate reference to objective fact, and they all of course fall within a basic logical frame ; but each system is incommensurable in terms of the others : that is all I mean here. Cf. below, note to p. 181. I might add two sentences from Prof. Whitehead's article 'Geometry' in the *Enc. Brit.* (11th ed., XI, 730) : "A set of formal geometrical axioms cannot in themselves be true or false, since they are not determinate propositions, in that they do not refer to a determinate subject matter. . . . The enumeration of the axioms is simply the enumeration of the hypotheses (with respect to the undetermined subject matter) of which some at least occur in each of the subsequent propositions."

Such a conception as this of the method and aim of ethics will doubtless be utterly repugnant to all kinds of Absolutists, who suffer no raw edges nor untidiness, and are content with nothing less than The Whole. Yet I would suggest that (apart from the fact of its being true) such a theory, and such an attitude as this, might have their advantages. In the first place we are relieved from the hopeless task of finding a 'Reality' which will include both what is and what ought to be, both the real and the ideal. Such a task, the whole task of metaphysics as it is usually conceived, is an utterly vain one to attempt, ordained to failure. This reduction of valuating to knowing leads only to the emptying out from Reality all fact and all value : we are left with the bare husks of language. By holding the two categories apart we are left free both to conceive Reality as it is and model it to what we judge it ought to be : we need not deduce our ideals either from the forms of thought nor from the facts of evolution or of any other sort : we need not search the natural world for the signs of a Divine Order, nor yet fall into pessimism because the object of our search evades us : we are ethically autonomous. As the artist must study the shapes of things, so the moralist must study the 'moral facts', that his design may be apt to his material ; he must know in order to create well, yet in creating do something more than know. As the basis of this view is but a common-sense truism, so also it seems capable of development to practical conclusions. The social questions of to-day, or any day, can be decided by no vision of

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'Timeless Reality': the 'things that matter' (morally) are in time; and the 'eternal and immutable laws' become in practice a man's dogmatizing, for which is claimed an extra-temporal authority it cannot logically possess: who shall decide the rights and wrongs of modern divorce laws by such a rule? The idealist who so mistakes his own opinions is not likely to escape an autocratic conservatism. It is well that we should always doubt a little our moral competence. There is a world of difference between denying the imperative of value (which is mere illogicality) and holding that value-judgments have but a dubious validity: goodness does not consist in judging others; and to hold that any theory of ethics can lead to 'amoralism' or to 'moral decay' is a plain absurdity. Herd sanctions and supernatural sanctions may decay, and hypocrisy grow less; but it is curious that, in spite of pulpit and study, there is in England of to-day less crime, less vice, less drunkenness, than in the days when each was taught his duty. Bentham as a logician was sadly to seek, yet has his place of honour.

There is a last word I would add. The moralist, I have argued, is a practical man, a prophet. Yet prophets are of two sorts. I distrust 'eternal values', but the basis of the moral law is indisputable: evil proceeds from malice and selfishness, the moral ideal (there are other ideals besides the moral) is benevolence—this needs no great philosophizing to discover: the moral law, I have argued already, is 'known' already to all. Prophets then are of two sorts: those who work directly to improve the

springs of action, whether will or circumstance, and those who rouse the intellect to think—as the moralist should do. Ignorance is brutal, hasty and violent. All social theory and social actions are based, sometimes obscurely enough it is true, on ethical valuations, and as often as not the most active partisans are the most confused thinkers : there is need enough for the solvent of deliberate thought. Here is the field of the constructive ethical philosopher, who claims that only those valuations are valid which are in accordance with the facts and unselfcontradictory, who should be convinced that a more rational will be a better world. Perhaps his work may be more analytic and dissolvent than constructive ; but even in these present times there is plenty of prejudice parading as morality which needs to be exposed. There is room also for a destructive-constructive ethic which would supply the place for the modern sceptic mind of older outworn sanctions, claiming for itself only a dogmatic rationality and free of all metaphysical ‘objectivity’.



## CHAPTER IV

### PROFESSOR WEBB AND THE BELIEF IN GOD

THE book which I have undertaken to write is of its essence polemical: it is not merely critical, but in some cases deliberately hostile and challenging. And yet I admit to opening the present chapter with some reluctance; partly because there is of necessity a certain futility about an argument which involves a difference of religious convictions, partly because the candour with which Professor Webb expresses his views seems to demand of itself a sympathetic treatment of them. "Nothing," he declares, "is to me more unlovely, when detected, than apologetic masquerading as philosophy";<sup>(a)</sup> and anything remotely resembling apologetic or special pleading he carefully avoids.

But however much I may sympathize with the manner of its presentment, the philosophy of monistic theism which he presents is itself entirely alien to my beliefs and sympathies; and although I have no desire to enter into a formal controversy on theology, nor challenge in detail the logic of beliefs I do not share, it does seem necessary to my general purpose to present 'the other side of the medal.' And so what I propose to do in the present chapter is, first, to give a brief summary of Professor Webb's opinions, emphasizing (though I hope not unfairly exaggerating) the difficulties which he him-

(a) *Ip.* 342.

self makes no attempt to minimize—to some of which he suggests a solution, others of which he admits to be insoluble—; and to follow this by certain arguments which represent my ‘personal reaction’, not indeed to the beliefs of any individual, but to a certain general type of philosophizing.

Professor Webb’s exposition of his philosophy starts with two fundamental propositions : (a) that there is an *absolute* standard of truth, and that this absolute standard implies that the world which we know is rational ; and (b) that the acceptance of our æsthetic, moral and religious experience as genuine experience and not illusion involves the recognition of Beauty, of Goodness, and of Divinity as realities. These are the twin inexpugnable bases on which the whole structure of theistic idealism is built.

But, regarding these bases as firmly established past all argument, Professor Webb goes on to discuss certain problems which this attitude involves, and which we may briefly review under ten heads :

(1) Philosophy cannot, without committing suicide, abandon the quest of an ultimate unity embracing all the regions of Reality, and yet the attempt to construe this unity in terms of any one of the forms of experience would seem to fail. Perceptive knowledge can give us no explanation of Morality, nor can ethical principles supply a starting-point for scientific deduction. Such abstractions as ‘Order’ or ‘Being’ are inadequate, since they fail to cover the intrinsic differences of experience.

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Plato's 'Form of the Good' gives us a more satisfactory notion of this unity or 'supreme principle of existence', which philosophy is in search of.

(2) Modern idealism is founded on the *cogito ergo sum* of Descartes. But this principle involves the identification of the object of knowledge with the self, and so leads to an identification of the human with the divine, and denial of any transcendental divinity, and to the impossibility of the characteristically human attitude of *worship*. It is for this reason that the Roman Catholic Church adheres still to the scholastic realism. Religious experience requires an object and a rational ground for *worship*; but Cartesian idealism (as exemplified in our own day by Croce) leads to a rejection of any God but the *Deus in nobis et nos*.

(3) What is the relation between the God of religious experience and the Absolute of philosophy? Professor Webb has to confess that he can offer no satisfactory suggestion.

(4) How are God's omniscience and sovereignty compatible with man's freedom? and what is the origin of evil? These are questions one cannot hope to answer.

(5) In philosophy we have the paradox of the Absolute: how can the ultimate unity which resolves the antithesis between subject and object, be itself the object to a subject which is included in itself? And philosophy answers the question by recognizing in philosophic contemplation the self-knowledge of the Absolute. So the religious man may recognize

his own worship as the divine activity within his soul. Yet religion cannot dispense with a transcendental object of worship. And how can we reconcile the 'creation' of finite persons with the eternal perfection of the Divine Majesty, if the 'Son' is an integral factor in the divine life? To make him a finite person surrenders the very advantage which the doctrine of such a factor in the Godhead seeks to secure for Christian theology; and to distinguish him as 'Creator' from them as 'creatures' is to make their whole existence superfluous. No purely rational considerations can help us here; but Plato's saying that the Creator, being good, grudged existence to nothing, and the Christian doctrine that God is love suggest a point of view from which the relation of 'finite centres' of intelligence to the Absolute appears no longer as merely paradoxical and enigmatic.

(6) Croce's objection that Theism sets over against the real historical process, in which alone moral discrimination has meaning and application, the phantom of a perfect being wherein all has been from eternity actual, which notwithstanding is being accomplished over again in time, is answered by the paradox 'to be realised because real'. In fact, belief in the eternal reality of perfection in God does not tend to discourage moral zeal.

(7) What is the object of our faith, and our ultimate justification for it? Our intercourse with God we may compare with our social intercourse; but from God there is no response. But though there may be "no voice, nor any that answers," we

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experience the divine response "through our own feeling that devotion to God . . . carries with it its own satisfaction." (a)

(8) Can we affirm *personality* in God? Not if that implies that the relation between the personality of God and of one of ourselves is mutually exclusive, in the way that the relation between two human personalities is; nor if it implies that God has a private life of feeling, will and knowledge. Though the doctrine of personality is a legitimate development of the doctrine of 'divine transcendence' which is essential to religion, it must not be so taken as to be inconsistent with the immanence of God in the human soul, or with the absence of direct response from God. And we must not admit a 'duty to God', a class of duties in the discharge of which God is especially interested: a religious duty may transcend, it cannot ignore a moral duty.

(9) The doctrine of personal immortality Professor Webb finds to be not only in conflict with all appearances, but personally uncongenial; and yet where stress is laid on personality in Religion the belief seems naturally to arise, and a religious view of the world where multitudes die without even a religious vision of the Good accomplished in the evil of their lot, is not easily compatible with the acceptance of death as the end of all being. It is difficult to resist the impression that only in exceptional cases can religion coexist with the conviction that all men and all nations and all civilizations and the race itself are doomed to perish out of the universe; and yet of

(a) p. 353. This is in part a quotation from Prof. Alexander.

their survival there seems, to say the least, no probability.

(10) The very notion of an eternally perfect Being is rendered difficult by a thorough-going acceptance of evolution. For if this Being is itself in process of Evolution, it cannot be eternally perfect ; and if it is eternally perfect independently of the world which is being evolved, it is hard to conceive a ' sufficient reason ' for the creation or existence of the latter. This would be true of evolution in any case, it is still more obviously so with evolution as we actually find it. And this is more markedly so in the sphere of Religion, where at least one would expect truth and goodness to be directly revealed apart from their opposites. But viewing the history of Religion one is compelled to admit that here, no less than elsewhere, evil has been mixed with goodness ; even if we do not go to the length of saying with Lucretius :

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

Viewing these various problems and Professor Webb's treatment of them, we must, I think, admit equally the extreme candour of the writer and the extreme difficulty of the position he maintains. I realise, though I cannot adjust myself to such an attitude of mind, that all these difficulties may be regarded as powerless to invalidate the fundamental religious conception of the world and ' Reality ' ; but then I cannot for a moment accept the two propositions in which that conception finds its logical expression ; and I suppose that all idealists would admit that, *if* those propositions were false, the whole structure

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of idealistic theism would fall to the ground. I do not propose to criticise those two propositions at length here : I have already dealt with the second in my previous chapter, and the question of ' absolute truth ' I shall grapple with in later chapters : here I will only summarize my attitude towards them, as follows :

(a) To say that ' the world we know is rational ' is to confuse the ' that ' with the ' what ' of things. Whatever we know must be rational, in that all knowledge is ' rational ' ; but just insofar as we can distinguish ' the object ' from ' what we know of the object ' the latter is *not* ' rational '. In other words I believe that the ' what ' of things and the ' how ' of our perceiving them are one and the same thing, but also that all thought and perception and reality depend on the postulate that the object<sup>(1)</sup> is an independent other. Our knowledge of the world is a ' system ', but while we can and must conceive of ' the world ' as existing apart from our knowledge of it, it is a mistake to suppose that the *system* (which is created in our minds) can exist independently. The only independent, self-subsistent reals are individuals.

(b) Æsthetic and moral experience is certainly genuine experience and not an illusion ; but it is not the case that in æsthetic and moral experience we have experience of something which is not the object of cognitive experience : the *object* is in all cases similar, but it is the kind or *category* of experi-

<sup>(1)</sup> Or rather, ' that people and things are independent others.' Cf. below, chapters IX and X.

ence which varies. To speak of Goodness and Beauty as realities is mistakenly to assimilate all kinds of experience to the cognitive kind.

My purpose, however, in this chapter is rather to present some 'common-sense' objections to the results achieved by idealism, rather than to criticise the logic of its foundations. The first and last paradox of theistic monism is that it is based on 'the demands of our moral nature', and produces a system which is *practically* and *morally* unsatisfactory and repugnant; and it is mainly from this point of view that I wish to criticize it. But before starting my criticism let me say again that what I am attacking are not the views which Professor Webb holds as an individual, but the views of what I may call 'orthodox idealism'.

My first criticism, from the standpoint of 'common-sense' is, I suppose, a very stale one; and yet I do not know that it has therefore lost any of its force. It is that modern idealism discovers perfection by creating a vacuum, which it calls 'reality', while what is concrete and significant is dismissed to the limbo of 'appearance'. Paradox has been the especial delight of the dialectical philosophers from the time of Zeno onwards. There is something fascinating in the very nature of a paradox; it is very unvulgar and aristocratic to hold opinions which so contradict (without explaining) the opinions of the vulgar that the latter are confounded in all their cherished beliefs (but in no wise enlightened). It seems to be a postulate of this



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school of thought that the paradoxicality of any opinion is in itself a guarantee of its truth. Yet that, at least, is a supposition which stands in need of proof ; and it might be argued that ' paradox ' is but another name for a contradiction in terms—as when we are invited to contemplate the ' paradox ' of history as the ' realisation ' of an already existing reality, of an ' Absolute ' which transcends the subject-object relation and yet falls within it, of a transcendental Being who is yet immanent, of a Person who is yet without an inner life of thought and feeling, capable of being worshipped, yet capable of being identified with an ' Absolute ' which unites in itself the whole of reality. Idealism starts by contradicting all our common-sense beliefs, it continues by contradicting itself.

And one's dissatisfaction is ethical no less than intellectual. Professor Webb, we have seen, inclines to find in Plato's ' Form of the Good ' the most satisfactory notion of the unity of Reality ; and he goes on (after making the *proviso* that ' Good ' in this phrase means something much wider than ' *morally* Good ') to suggest that the world is " better " (in this sense of the word) for including the system of rigidly deterministic natural law, and for " the presence within it of moral struggle and heroic effort." <sup>(a)</sup> In other words—slightly to change Voltaire's notorious words—' Reality is the best of all possible Realities.' And yet, as surely many besides Gissing must have exclaimed, what is history but the record of the crimes and miseries of

(a) p. 346.

mankind ! The " poetic justice " which, according to Professor Webb, would be no less hypothetically undesirable than it is in fact unthinkable as an ordering principle of the universe, is but the inevitable protest of our consciences against life as we too often find it. We cannot bear that in a play or book goodness should continue suffering, and evil to triumph till the end : that is not the imbecility of our feelings but the strength and warmth of our moral temper : if we could tolerate it unmoved, we should not hate injustice. And when we find in life pain, and the triumph of the worse, we cannot be fobbed off with a ' *sub specie aeternitatis* ' paradox. We are bidden to perceive " the soul of goodness in things evil " : is this an answer that shall satisfy the accusations of Job, and quell the heart of Prometheus ? For me, I confess, a concrete view of the agelong mass, not of human evil but of human suffering, makes this sort of intellectualism an impossibility. Orthodox Christianity still teaches, I suppose, that there is a life after death where the balance of this world will be redressed, and so solves the problem only at the cost of depriving morality of its basis, turning it into a mere prudential calculation of pleasures and pains. But I do not imagine that this doctrine is now held by many idealist philosophers ; and Professor Webb only suggests that if those whose life is suffering could but realise that their suffering accomplished a Good, one might more easily accept mortality as compatible with religion. This suggestion seems so perilously near a parody of itself that I am fatally reminded, again,

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of the infidel author of 'Candide'. A man who suffers, voluntarily, for some belief or ideal for which he, although defeated, foresees or fancies he foresees an ultimate victory, has indeed a consolation ; but such consolation we must distinguish from the ' consolation ' of a man who, struggling vainly under the oppression of circumstances, learns that his pain and failure are necessary to the realisation of a perfection which, before time was, is already real and perfect. Such an one might, in the midst of his resignation, at least wonder whether his existence were not a superfluous addition to such perfection.

And the idealist view of the real historical process as a mere unrolling and repetition of an already eternally existing actuality, is equally open to another objection : that it denies the ' ultimate reality ' of the personal human will no less than the assertion of its perfection denies the ' ultimate reality ' of all suffering and evil. In actual fact, so Professor Webb argues, such a belief by no means tends to discourage zeal for the improvement of the world. To which the obvious answer is, that a person who is content with such a paradox one would expect to be possessed of more zeal than discretion. It is a commonplace of observation that a man of active temper does not seek to analyse the logic of his convictions, and his sanguine temperament will naturally incline him to an optimistic creed. But this psychological fact provides no philosophic argument for any particular form of optimism ; nor does Professor Webb's appeal to its practical effects do anything to substantiate the paradox, which he

accepts but Croce rejects. If a 'philosophy of religion' is unable to offer any solution to the problems of the origin of evil, and of man's freedom, what kind of validity can it have? and what sort of appeal can it make to our 'moral nature'? Here is yet another paradox we are asked to accept: that idealism should seek to resolve its paradoxes by a pragmatic test.

And there is another form of the moral objection, though its force may not be felt perhaps by most or many. According to Professor Webb, God is immanent in human souls. The nature of this immanence he does not define: he admits the difficult implications of this doctrine. But while he disagrees with Bosanquet's opinion that human personality is merely *adjectival*, he cannot on the other hand admit a distinction into 'Creator' and 'creatures'. This theory of immanence then I understand to be certainly something more than the doctrine of 'mystical communion' as a thing possible only rarely and to rare people. But where am I to recognize this Godhead in the vast mass of toiling ignorant humanity, of all races and colours, with their petty lives and thoughts and superstitions, not evil but unawakened as the animals? How am I to recognize it, for that matter, in my neighbours and myself? Triviality is the rule of life in this world where God is immanent. I shrink equally from holding every act, however vile or cruel, to be an integral part of the 'realisation of the real', and from attributing only to the immanence of God whatever is good in man, leaving to our individual humanity

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only the evil sediments of all the passions and vices. To me, I must confess, the dualism of Mediaeval Christianity or of the creed of Zoraster is more satisfactory, logically and ethically, than this modern idealism which discovers perfection by shutting its eyes and seeing patterns in the dark. "Mr. Bosanquet," remarks Professor Webb, "has powerfully urged that the 'moralism', as he calls it, which depends upon taking Time to be ultimately real, is essentially irreligious." (a)

Modern idealism is the product of modern scientific progress, which has driven metaphysics from the field of observable fact, and at the same time compelled a reaction to the 'ethics of naturalism'. Just as the strongest basis for the argument that 'values are objective' consists in the negative argument that 'values cannot be subjective', so the strongest argument that Idealism has is that Naturalism, its alternative, is impossible. Professor Webb, like Professor Sorley, insists on the polar importance of personality, and that Naturalism is inadequate as a philosophy because it minimizes and fails to account for personality. One might indeed argue that the Idealism which concludes that time is not real and that personality is only adjectival—and I think these are both very logical conclusions from the premises of Idealism—also minimizes personality, and in fact ends, no less than its alternative, by denying its substantive reality. But here again, in any case, one may deny the force of the alternative choice: a rejection of Naturalism does not involve an accept-

(a) p. 356.

ance of Idealism ; the same arguments can be used with equal force against both the one and the other. I believe that personality, which neither Naturalism nor Idealism allows among their 'ultimate realities', can only be accounted for and realised by a common-sense Pluralism, the arguments for which I hope to develop in my later chapters ; and I believe equally that the category of value is autonomous, and that the facile perfectionism of the idealists and of the neo-Bergsonian-evolutionists is, in both cases, a false result of projecting 'values' into the category of fact. This quest of an 'ultimate reality' for all the projections of experience, which Professor Webb declares to be the justification and *ultima ratio* of philosophy, I hold to be its fatal obsession and *ignis fatuus* ; and the result is a bundle of paradoxes, a unity in disparity, a solution that solves nothing and contradicts itself : the only 'ultimate unity' is in the experiencing self. Kant's claim for the autonomy of the 'moral consciousness' is perfectly consistent with a 'common-sense' denial of idealism, so long as we do not mistakenly reduce the 'moral consciousness' to a form of sense-perception : that is equally the error of the idealists and the naturalists.

But Professor Webb, referring to Kant's subordination of religion to ethics, attributes this attitude of his to "a certain temperamental deficiency".<sup>(a)</sup> Here we reach the fundamental and inarguable cleavage of opinion, between those who regard religion as an 'apprehension of reality' and those who do not. We have seen that Professor Webb

(a) p. 355.

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bases his philosophy of religion on the threefold objectivity of Beauty, of Goodness, of Divinity. This claim, with regard to Beauty and Goodness, I have disputed the force of ; but in regard to the third I cannot dispute, I can only state the fact of my disagreement. I am quite prepared to admit that I am ' temperamentally ' unsuited to appreciate the religious attitude, and it is fruitless to argue a question which is ultimately a matter of temperament ; although of course for me the very fact that religion or the lack of it can be ' a matter of temperament ' is evidence of its invalidity. But however much I may respect, in a practical way, an attitude to life I am myself incapable of appreciating, I do hold, in spite of the recent fashion of discovering that Science and Religion after all, like the wolf and the lamb, are able to feed together, that the religious attitude and the rationalistic attitude are contradictory and that a ' philosophy of religion ' is therefore in itself a contradiction in terms. Here also I prefer to agree with Kant, rather than with Professor Webb.

Some final observations I would allow myself of rather a different sort.

Professor Webb quotes Bosanquet, with approval, to the effect that : " you only get zeal and effective ' works '—social and historical progress—where you have religious faith," and " the fullest work where you have the deepest and highest faith." (a) Now this statement, insofar as it implies (which I conceive

(a) p. 352.

it does) that there is a necessary connection between 'works' and religious faith, I hold to be definitely, and I might add dangerously, false. Nowhere, I suppose, is religious faith more strongly operative on practice than in the deserts of Arabia, among that people which, in the words of Doughty, "sit to the eyes in a *cloaca*, and with their brows touching heaven"; and their society has scarcely progressed, rather perhaps retrogressed, in these thousand years or more. To deny religious faith to the Mohammedan world is to twist the plain meaning of words; and yet it would seem that only the loss of faith has allowed again the possibility of "social and historical progress." And if theirs is not the "highest" type of faith (though one could hardly deny I think, its 'depth'), then are not this "highest faith" and these "fullest works" to be found only among the members of a vigorous and highly-developed race, whose religion and whose 'works' are parallel expressions of that vigour and high development? In the temperate countries of North Europe and America religion expresses itself largely in the form of 'works', in most tropical and semi-tropical countries it expresses itself in the form of fatalistic apathy and dreamy contemplation. On the other hand, one might perhaps proffer Japan as an example of a country which has made great social progress, of a rather limited kind perhaps, without possessing any practically effective faith which could be called, specifically, religious. Taking a world view, we cannot but conclude that social effectiveness depends not at all on religious faith, but entirely on racial



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characteristics, ultimately, perhaps, at least to some extent, on climatic conditions.

But this statement of Bosanquet was intended perhaps in reference to individuals as he found them about him, in England. And with such a reference it has a far more plausible air ; and one might admit it to be partially true ; though even here I think that its truth is highly disputable, and that there are many now in England, vigorous in ' social works ' of one kind or another, but with no definite religious faith. But we may admit it as a rough generalization that the man of deep religious convictions is more likely to be active in ' works ' than the infidel ; because the latter, being probably of a sceptic and doubting frame of mind, will show his hesitancy practically in his actions no less than intellectually in his beliefs. But here is the half-truth which is ' dangerous ' ; because it leads to the wholly *false* conclusion of a necessary connection between religious faith and practical morality ; whereas the connection is not necessary but incidental. What may be true with reference to a belief in the existence of God at the present day might perhaps have been said with equal truth of some other belief—say, in the literal inspiration of the Bible—some eighty or a hundred years ago ; but the loss of that belief has led to no diminution or disintegration of morality (as some of the zealots of that time no doubt thought it would) : it is possible to suppose that a hundred years hence some purely ethical and social faith, a faith lying entirely within the category of value, will have largely taken the place, for educated people,

of a belief in God ; and also without the demoralization of the country. In a word, it is not the faith that gives zeal, but the zeal that demands, and creates, a faith ; and there can be other inspirational faiths besides those of religion : the according to present standards extreme doubting and sceptical conclusions of an infidel could well under other conditions provide the inspiration and ' Yea ' of the time's prophets and moral gadflies. I sometimes suspect that the upholding of old faiths is but the fear of new values.

It may be granted impossible to foretell the future of religious belief, though its present tendency to decay seems to be generally admitted. I hold it important to insist that moral values and religious faith are not so connected that the decay of the one involves the debasement of the other, to proclaim as against those clerical moralists who opprobriously couple the infidelity and immorality of the age, that the population of England one-hundred years ago, as it was more devout in its beliefs, was also more brutal, savagely ignorant, full of misery and violence. Though, with a general loss of faith, some of the sterner, more barbaric virtues may be lacked, there will be a shifting of values, with compensation of gain for loss : may we not expect at that time more of human gentleness ?

## CHAPTER V

### PROFESSOR TAYLOR AND ' THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL '

**P**ROFESSOR TAYLOR is one of the leading English moral philosophers of the present day ; and he has chosen for treatment a subject which perhaps more than any other has divided and perplexed the philosophers and theologians of all ages, from the time when Epicurus first tried to reconcile materialism with common-sense. Discussion of this problem has of late years languished, largely because the modern development of the social sciences has made the arguments of the libertarians less and less convincing ; so that, as Professor Taylor starts by confessing, recent idealist philosophers have generally abandoned the position held by Kant and have tended to ' reconcile ' the ethical with the scientific point of view. But Professor Taylor will recognize no truce : he constitutes himself the champion of the mediaeval mind against the secularism and science of to-day. Of all the contributions to the volume under discussion, I think that his is perhaps the most completely wrong-headed and unphilosophic in temper.

The problem is, admittedly, a complex one, and can be boarded from many different sides : it is at once a theological, a psychological, an ethical, a legal and a logical one. But, fundamentally, the problem seems to be logico-psychological : it depends, in the

last resort, on our answer to the question of *what we mean* by 'cause', and *what we mean* by 'will'; until we have answered that question, it is, I think, useless to discuss whether the human will is 'free' from 'the law of cause and effect'. I propose therefore, since Professor Taylor himself does not touch on this aspect of the question, to preface my criticism of his argument by a general discussion of 'causality' and 'character'. We shall then be in a position, I hope, to understand the factors of the problem and what the libertarian argument amounts to.

#### I. CAUSALITY

There are two propositions, which constitute what are generally spoken of as 'The Law of Causation' and 'The Uniformity of Nature', but which I prefer to speak of simply as constituting our *idea of causality*. These propositions we may express, in their simplest form, as follows :

- (a) Everything must have a cause.
- (b) The same cause must always produce the same effect.

Both of these propositions are (it is generally held) universally true ; they are *a priori* and not based on experience ; and to deny them is to deny the possibility of thought. They are not two separate propositions, but rather two forms of the same idea. The first, from one point of view, we might say was involved in the nature of our experience ; which is a continuum. " Nothing in the world is single," as Shelley proclaimed : it is impossible to conceive any

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event which is not historical, is not an event occurring under certain circumstances, which has no relation to anything else. But, if we want to discover all that is implied in asserting that every event has a *cause*, we must turn to the second proposition, which we find is nothing else than a definition of what we mean by (phenomenal) causality : to speak of a cause which is not uniform is a contradiction in terms. Our idea of a cause is of a ‘ necessary and universal relation ’ ; if a cause were not a necessary relation it would not be a cause. And again this assertion of uniform or necessary causation is itself no more than asserting the ‘ law of identity ’ : a thing which under certain conditions produces a certain effect, *must* do so in virtue of its nature ; it could only produce a different effect if it was itself different. We know objects only in terms of universals, of qualities which describe what they are ; and ‘ what they are ’ includes ‘ what effects they produce under given circumstances.’<sup>(1)</sup> Therefore to question the Uniformity of Nature amounts to denying that a thing can only be what it is, to admitting that :

*e mare primum homines, e terra oriri  
squamigerum genus et volucres erumpere caelo ;  
armenta atque aliae pecudes, genus omne ferarum,  
incerto partu culta ac deserta tenerent.  
nec fructus idem arboribus constare solerent,  
sed mutarentur, ferre omnes omnia possent.*

So far then causality can be reduced to ‘ uniform

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. H. W. B. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic*, pp. 374 sq.

(or necessary) relatedness', the relatedness depending on the nature of our experience as a continuum, and the uniformity on the 'law' or logical principle of identity.

But this analysis by no means exhausts our *idea of causality*. Suppose we take some concrete event, such as the following: there are two vases, one of china and one of bronze, standing on a table, someone who has been in the room goes out leaving the door open, and, the window being open, the strong draught blows the china vase over and it is smashed. Now if we had to account for this catastrophe we should probably declare, first, that the vase broke because it was blown down by the wind—this I will call the *circumstantial cause*; secondly, that it broke because it was made of china (for the bronze one would not have been broken even if it had fallen down)—and this I will call the *physical cause*: these two causes evidently involve each other and express the twin aspects in which every concrete event is presented to us, as a link in a 'temporal chain', and as an instance of the 'timeless' general nature of things.

But suppose we discovered that *X*, the person sitting in the room, heartily disliked the china vase and had left the door open with the intention of letting it be blown down and smashed. We are introduced now to quite a different set of causes. We should say that *X* left the door open because he wanted the vase to be broken—here we have a *final cause*; and that *X* was responsible for the breaking of the vase—we might call him the *active cause* or

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*causa causans*. Causes of the latter kind, it is clear, can be present only in the case of human actions, or of animals’ actions so far as they can be interpreted by human measure ; and they may be called *real causes*, whereas the former two were only *phenomenal causes*.<sup>(1)</sup>

Science deals only with phenomenal causes, with the ‘ how ’ and never with the ‘ why ’ of things : it seeks to acquire the most accurate possible knowledge about the general nature of things, and not merely of isolated ‘ things ’ and events, but about whole masses of things and whole cycles of events. The more uniformity there is in the series of things or events under consideration, the more exact become the formulas in which the scientist expresses his knowledge, and the more closely ‘ the circumstances ’ and ‘ the nature of things ’ are brought together ; so that in the case of astronomy the whole circumstances can, in some cases, be reduced to exact formulas.

There are however two ways in which the ‘ laws ’ of science are limited in their application. Science proceeds by abstraction and subsumption : its object is to attain the maximum of accuracy (or ‘ necessity ’) with a minimum of unexplained terms ; and the more abstract the science, the closer this ideal is approximated to. But however close the

<sup>(1)</sup> To these four kinds we might perhaps add a fifth, the *formal causes* of mathematics and the syllogism. But though these too fall under the logical principle of identity, and there is an obvious formal resemblance between the argument “ wood floats because it is lighter than water ” and the argument “ the angles of these two triangles are equal because their sides are equal,” yet these are not causes which have effects but only premises which have (logical) conclusions.

approximation, the minimum can never become a zero and the laws of science can never be self-evident in the way that the deductions of mathematics are : if there were no unexplained terms there would be nothing for the ' laws ' to explain ; however far the process of abstraction be carried, the abstraction always presupposes the experience. And, secondly, the explanations of science must always be general. In a previous chapter I distinguished between ' things in the mass ' and ' the individual ', and pointed out that the inorganic world we know only as ' things in the mass ', whereas organisms we can consider *either* in the mass *or* as individuals. Hence it follows that in the inorganic sphere the scientific description is complete, in the sense that it is co-extensive with our knowledge ; but where there is individuality, science cannot describe or explain completely. Thus bodily movements may be described to some extent physiologically, in terms of chemistry and physics ; but it seems to me obvious, and it is a point particularly insisted upon by such modern biologists as J. S. Haldane and J. A. Thomson, <sup>(1)</sup> that such a description can only be of ' such a movement ', never of ' this movement '.

One of the commonest mistakes is to confuse real with phenomenal causes, and this, I believe, is largely due to the unfortunate use of the word ' law ' for generalization. For although it is a commonplace of knowledge that these ' laws of nature ' are merely descriptive, the original associations of a word always tend to survive its transference to another context.

(1) Cf. *Cont. Brit. Phil.*, 2nd Series, p. 319.



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Here lies the root fallacy of materialism : that it confuses a phenomenal with a real cause, and hypostatizes the ‘ forces ’ of physical science on the analogy of the ‘ laws of the realm ’, and so reaches the conclusion that all our actions are ‘ necessitated ’—by our own abstract ideas. A physical ‘ law ’ can exert no compulsion, external or internal ; and when we say that we are ‘ subject to physical laws ’, all we can logically mean is that we, as bodies, have certain characteristics which we share with other bodies : if we say that we fall ‘ owing to the force of gravity ’, it is equally if not more correct to say that there is gravitation because we fall down. If such ‘ laws ’ or ‘ forces ’ exerted any *compelling* power, a change in the formulation of a physical law ought to produce an immediate effect on the nature of our concrete experience—there are some people who appear to think that since the physicists have discarded ‘ matter ’ material objects have somehow become less solid.

So much for the causes of science : there are a few additional observations to be made on the nature of *real causes* ; and first, about the relation between *final* and *active* causes. I suppose that in the case of our own actions the *final* aspect is usually the one we most attend to : it is the ‘ reason ’ we give for it, to ourselves, and to others ; and insofar as the purpose of the action appears ‘ reasonable ’ to others, or as they at least recognize it as congruent with their conception of the agent’s character, no further causal explanation is demanded. Yet I am of course conscious that this action is *my* action, that I am the

*causa causans*, that all my actions, past, present and future, derive from and express my personality. Again, in the case of other people's actions, the mere statement of the final cause may not always suffice. If we are told that '*A* had such a purpose,' we may want to know *why* *A* had such a purpose, either because knowing *A*, we are unable to fit that particular act into our conception of his character, or because, not knowing *A*, we want to learn more about him, in order that we may understand better this particular action of his. So that final causes are not necessarily 'final' in another sense of the word; and even here we are given the general rather than the particular cause of the action. There is a certain common basis to our humanity, there are certain 'reasons' and 'purposes' which need not to be explained because they are common to all of us; but the particular purpose must always be referred to the particular circumstances and the particular agent in order that we may understand it: the agent is the efficient cause, and in his personality is to be found the unique and active cause of this or that unique event.

I think we can have no doubt that our *root idea of causality* (as something more than mere uniform relation) is derived from the consciousness of our own *power of purposive action*. This is why in popular language and thought we single out the most 'active' of the antecedent conditions of any event and regard it alone as the 'cause' of that event; and it is why we so readily regard the generalizations of science as 'forces' exerting compulsion. I believe

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that it would be a great advantage to clear thinking if we confined the word ‘cause’ to this type of *real cause* ; but whatever the terminology we use, it must be insisted that only a person can be a *causa causans*. We are ‘compelled by circumstances’ only in the sense that we have purposes and are able, to some extent, to compel the circumstances to suit our purposes ; and it is the limitation of our power of control and the frustration of our purpose that we feel as compulsion. But as compulsion exists only in being felt (we can be compelled against our will, but what has no will cannot be compelled), so in the consciousness of our purposive activity we have an internal knowledge of causality such as no perceptual experience can supply us with. Herein lies our ‘freedom’, and the consciousness of our freedom.

Yet again we must not make the mistake of supposing that this *causa causans* is not also itself a *necessary relation*, because it is something more ; because we have seen that this idea of uniform relatedness underlies *all* causality. It is indeed obvious that the very assertion of self-hood or individuality involves the idea of a personal identity ; and the ‘law of identity’ applies here no less than elsewhere : the self or personality is a something, which is what it is and must therefore act according to what it is. It is not, certainly, an altogether fixed and unchangeable something, but organic, capable of growth and variation according to circumstances ; but it must be at the moment of each particular action a fixed something, else it would not be anything. The ‘character’ which we attribute to a

person is nothing else than the schematization of their behaviour, interpreted through our own knowledge of ourselves : if we ask ' why had *A* such a purpose? ' we are asking either for *A*'s history, an account of his previous behaviour, or for a schematization of that history in the form of character-description ; but in either case we are assuming a ' necessary relation ' between *A* and this particular action of his.

## 2. CHARACTER

Our discussion of causality has already brought us into the sphere of psychology, and this aspect of the question I wish now to consider rather more fully.

Let me begin with a few rough definitions, though first premising that in the concrete real there are no watertight compartments, and abstractions, however useful and necessary, produce almost inevitably an air of false simplicity and definiteness. I use the word ' personality ' then to denote the whole of a person's mental characteristics, whereas I use the word ' character ' to describe the organised and unified personality, and the word ' will ' for the dynamic aspect of this same mental organization, ' character ' being used for its static aspect. A personality may be said, roughly, to consist of appetites, instincts, emotions, sentiments, habits, principles and ideas. By ' principles ' I mean intellectualized emotions : for instance a person may be ' naturally affectionate', but to say that he is ' benevolent ' implies that the feeling is intellectualized into a principle of action, that he recognizes a certain general end as good and right to pursue. It is a

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man's principles and habits that more specifically constitute his character. Whether a person who has only a system of habits can be said to have a character is a question not worth discussing ; nor to what extent ' the unawakened masses ' can be said to possess principles as distinct from habits : there is an ' inclined plane ' of self-consciousness from the habit which ' functions ' without seeming to be realised at all to the principle which has been realised into what appears a ' purely rational ' motive of conduct. It is in virtue of his possessing principles of conduct that a man claims to be a rational being in a practical sense : it is this that makes his behaviour teleological instead of being merely ' instinctive '. Yet it is to be observed that such principles may be ' bad ' as well as ' good ' ; and although I think we must admit that the person who says " Evil, be thou my Good " does not exist, yet it is no defence of an action to say that it is ' principled '. Ambition of the most selfish sort may be a principle of conduct no less than the highest type of altruism. When clashes occur between a man's principles and his appetites and emotions, it does not follow that the principle must be worthier than the emotion.

These sentiments, habits and principles form an organic system, and the more complete the organization, the more definite and mature will a person's character be.<sup>(1)</sup> It is not of course always the case that a single organized system is formed, and in extreme cases we have the phenomenon of dual

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. Rivers, ' Freud's Conception of the " Censorship " ', in *Psychology and Ethnology*.

personality, the organization of the personality into two distinct systems instead of into one system ; but in a general way we may say that it is this unified organization with the consequent power of purposive and organized action which distinguishes the civilized adult from the child and the savage.<sup>(1)</sup> We may observe however that the active force of a principle depends on the original force of the emotion or sentiment on which it is founded, and when we speak of a man of ' strong character ' what we usually refer to is the vital or emotional basis of his character: the thorough intellectualization of emotions, which tends rather to weaken their force, may perhaps only be possible where the original force was not so great. But what we recognize as a man of ' rounded ' or ' balanced ' character will be neither a Hamlet nor a Tamerlane, but one who can act deliberately but without hesitation, who neither claims for his actions and principles a monopoly of righteousness, nor is suffering always from a sense of his own sinfulness, who can act harmoniously and without contradiction under the most diverse circumstances, whose character develops like an unencumbered tree, growing to a natural beauty, symmetrical, neither stunted of spiritual growth nor without roots in the earth of the body. . . .

It is of the essence of character that there is a recognizable consistency about it. This point I have

(1) Ethnologists may query the statement that savages are without character. I have no personal experience, but it seems to me, judging from what I have read, that the savage is rarely, if ever, capable of acting as a moral *individual* ; he is so far controlled by external custom. It is all a matter of degree and definition : a dog has ' character ' of a sort.

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already argued from the logical point of view, and the fact is equally evident from the standpoint of common experience. It is clear that when we say that a person ‘ might have ’ acted otherwise we mean that *conceivably*, from what we knew of him, he might have acted otherwise than he did ; but to maintain that he might *actually* have acted otherwise is to deny the fact of personality, and to contradict the ‘ law of identity ’. We say that several things *may* happen, several things *are possible*, when we have sufficient knowledge of the circumstances to be able to foresee the event *within certain limits*, but not so accurately as to say : “ this, and this only, *must* happen.” And so, in the same way, when the event is over, we express this same fact of incomplete predictability in the form “ this *might have* happened.” But if, again, ‘ might ’ is used in the sense of ‘ ought ’ to express a judgment of value, then it expresses not the limits of our knowledge with regard to the action, but our valuation of it.

A voluntary action then we might say is an action which truly expresses the character of the agent ; it is rational in the sense of being deliberate, and representative of the unity of the self, not the diversity of the self. And for his voluntary acts the agent is, in the fullest sense, legally and ‘ morally ’ responsible ; but for acts which are involuntary he is not altogether, or perhaps at all, responsible.

But this word ‘ responsibility ’, it must be understood, I use in a strictly limited, Utilitarian sense : ‘ responsible ’ means ‘ liable to punishment ’, and

punishment I regard not as an end in itself, but as a means to another end, the general good of the community. There is, of course, another view of responsibility and punishment, which would define the former rather as 'liability to moral condemnation' and regard the latter as an end in itself. Here is a contrast which I regard as *the* most practically important 'vexed question' which philosophy has to deal with. On the ethical problem I shall have something to say at the end of the chapter: here I limit myself to a few plain statements of fact.

It is a common-place of anthropology that the criminal law was in its origin a substitute for private vengeance; but as civilization progresses there is a continually growing tendency (*a*) to substitute a preventive and reformatory view for the original retaliatory view of punishment, (*b*) to transfer attention from the result of the action to the motives and character of the agent. Hence arises the modern legal conception of responsibility, which is that a man is responsible for his own character but not (altogether) for acts not truly representative of him; while a lunatic, who cannot be said to have a will or character, cannot be held responsible at all. Such a conception of responsibility is plainly in accord with the psychological account I have given, and can be justified on Utilitarian grounds. Yet the notion of responsibility is frequently shown in practice to be vague and unsatisfactory, and there is in fact an irresolvable contradiction between the common opinion that a person who steals because he is hungry



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is less guilty than one who steals without reason or excuse, and the opinion that a person who acts on an ‘ incontrollable impulse ’ is less guilty than one who acts deliberately. (They ordered these things differently in Erewhon.) Psycho-pathology has established the fact that there are diseases of the mind no less than of the body, that the criminal, unless he is a criminal of circumstance, frequently if not always has a constitutionally abnormal mentality ; so that there is no hard and fast line, if indeed there is any line at all, between the ‘ responsible ’ and ‘ irresponsible ’ agent. Crime is abnormal, and the abnormality is either in the character of the criminal or in his circumstances. And so, starting from the medical point of view, we should reach the conclusion that only the criminal of circumstance is responsible in the sense of being a normal individual—a conclusion which, from the legal and moral point of view, is obviously absurd.

### 3. DETERMINISM AND ‘ FREE WILL ’

The position I have outlined in the previous pages must be called ‘ determinist ’ in the sense that it insists that human action falls within the scope of the ‘ law of causation ’ in the same way that every event does, although at the same time I have argued that the individual is the only real *causa causans*, whereas the causes of science are merely descriptive. The ‘ libertarian ’ on the contrary denies that there is a necessary causal relation (of any sort) between an act and the character and circumstances of the agent

at the time of willing, and claims that a man is (sometimes at any rate) 'free' to choose without his choice being in any sense determined by what he *was* or by what his circumstances were before the time when the choice was made. This I take to be the essence of the libertarian position; and the arguments against it are, in sum, these:

(a) This denial of causality amounts to a denial of the law of identity, and, when analysed, is found to be simply meaningless.

(b) The separation of a man's acts from his character and environment is wholly against both science and common-sense, and deprives the words 'personality' and 'character' of all meaning.

(c) Although this theory of 'free-will' is supposed to be based on the needs of our moral nature, the logical result of the theory is moral chaos, so that we cannot define either 'responsibility' or 'goodness' or any other term within the moral category.

These criticisms I shall develop when I come to examine Professor Taylor's argument. I want first to consider briefly the question: if the libertarian argument amounts ultimately to a denial of the laws of thought, how did people ever come to adopt such a theory? The answer must be, that they were driven to it by some false supposition, the practical ill consequences of which they could only escape by this denial of the law of identity. This false supposition is that there exist *real causes* apart from the will of individuals.

The 'problem of free-will' presents itself charac-

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teristically in one of two forms, the theological or the materialistic. Theologically, the problem is to explain the relation between the human will and the all-knowing and all-powerful First Cause which is God. If man is the creature of God the all-foreseeing, must not all the acts of man have been from the first foreseen and ordained by God ? and is not God alone ‘ responsible ’ for all the acts of men, since He made them what they are ? The problem is in fact an insoluble one, as we have seen in the previous chapter that Professor Webb admits. But the solution is attempted by supposing in man a ‘ *liberum arbitrium* ’, a power of ‘ free ’ choice, by which man, although created good, has the power of choosing ‘ freely ’ for himself either good or evil. Materialism, which is based on the assumption that ‘ matter ’ and ‘ force ’ are ultimate realities, is faced with the same dilemma in a different form. For if physical causes are real causes (and the only kind of real causes), then our actions are determined in the ultimate analysis by the ‘ laws of Nature ’, and there is no distinction between human actions and mechanical processes. To escape this dilemma, Epicurus, who wished to found an ethic on the materialistic system of Democritus, gave the answer that ‘ the atoms decline,’ that there is a ‘ principle of indetermination ’ in Nature which, in the case of conscious beings, becomes the power of free choice. This is the form of argument which has been used by all those who, while accepting the logical basis of materialism, revolt against its practical conclusions ; and we find not only Haeckel but ‘ anti-materialists ’ like Bergson

expressing themselves in thoroughly Epicurean language.<sup>(1)</sup>

Thus both Deism and Materialism lead equally to a demand for a 'freedom' which is logically meaningless. And one might go farther, and say that any monistic philosophy is faced with this dilemma : it must either sacrifice the reality of the individual will to an abstraction, or else assert the claim of personality at the expense of a logical fallacy: the idealists can only expose the root fallacy of materialism by cutting the ground from under their own feet. On the other hand, from the standpoint of Pluralism, there is no problem to solve. If persons are the only 'ultimate reals', there can be no question of an antinomy between the individual will and something lying over against it and restraining its freedom. If only persons are existents, their wills are the only kind of real cause ; and the assertion of that reality in no way conflicts with the 'law of causation', which is simply 'the way we *cannot help* looking at things'.

#### 4. 'LIBERUM ARBITRIUM'

Let us now turn to consider Professor Taylor's arguments in favour of the now very discredited theory of indeterminism.

The position he undertakes to defend is the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas that the will is a 'contingent cause', not limited to producing one

(1) *L'Énergie Spirituelle*, pp. 15 and 17. Dr. Schiller in his *Studies in Humanism* (XVIII, §§ 10 and 11), also defends indeterminism by representing it as a minimal force. Cf. J. M. Guyau, *La Morale d'Épicure*, Livre II, ch. 2.

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effect, but able to produce either this or that effect. This does not mean, he goes on to explain, “ motiveless choosing ” ; for “ that would amount to pure haphazard or caprice, and would thus be only another name for downright irresponsibility.”<sup>(a)</sup> What it means is that “ when I am ‘ deliberating ’ between *A* and *B* . . . while I am still making the comparison of their respective goodnesses on which my act of taking the one and refusing the other will ensue, my will is ‘ indetermined to either alternative ’ .” “ In other words, what is demanded as a minimum condition of moral accountability is that I shall be able to make an *impartial* estimate, correct or otherwise, of the two relative values.” All sorts of prejudices may exist to hinder such an estimation ; but “ admit simply that the elimination can sometimes be achieved, that sometimes at least we act as we do because we have made an impartial comparative judgment about the relative value of two goods of which we cannot have both, and in principle you have admitted all that clear-headed libertarians mean by the ‘ freedom of the will ’ .”<sup>(b)</sup>

Such is the argument ; and its hollowness is most soundingly betrayed by the example he looses off by way of salvo. Suppose, he says, a man is offered the choice of continuing at his present post or accepting a new one. “ Before weighing the relative goodness of the alternatives proposed to him he is honestly unable to say which course he ‘ likes best ’ . There may be attractions, there are certain to be repulsions to overcome, on both sides, and . . . at

(a) p. 282, (b) p. 283.

the outset you can only say indeterminately, 'I should like to take the course which on consideration I think most to the glory of God and the good of man, but as yet I do not know which course that is'." (a) But, one objects, this is not a case of moral choice at all, that is, if 'moral choice' means a choice of ends—which by all writers on ethics it is taken to mean. This is not a case of 'which end ought I to pursue, *A* or *B*?' but, 'since *A* is the end I ought to pursue, is *x* the best means to that end, or *y*?' Obviously in such a case as this we can speak of an impartial choice, meaning a choice which is determined by the nature of the end in view, not by any consideration extraneous to it; and this seems to be the root idea of an 'impartial' choice of judgment, that it depends on the strict application of an accepted end or criterion. But the specifically moral choice consists in making a particular end the decisive factor on this or any other occasion. Professor Taylor speaks elsewhere of an "unprejudiced estimation of good and bad," (b) and identifies impartiality with 'rationality'; but what we want to know is: how, when we are presented with alternative courses of action which involve contrary ends (as in the case of a choice between 'duty' and 'ambition') we can choose between them 'impartially'? and if 'impartial' choice means 'rational' choice, how can we rationally choose the worse instead of the better?

This dilemma is rendered more absolute by the statement that *libertas arbitrii* is the "minimum

(a) p. 287, (b) p. 284.

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*necessary* condition of even beginning to live the specifically moral life . . . (the) minimum of equipment which entitles its possessor to rank as a ‘ moral ’ being.”<sup>(a)</sup> That is to say, all acts which are not ‘ free ’ are not immoral but simply amoral, like the “ merely spontaneous ” acts of animals. So we have the syllogism :

All acts which are free are rational ;  
No act which is not free is blameworthy ;  
therefore  
All blameworthy acts are rational.

And yet we find that a rational choice implies the elimination of all bias and prejudice and desire ; and if we seek for a further definition of ‘ rational ’ we reach the conclusion that it is after all but another word for ‘ right ’ ;<sup>(1)</sup> so that we ultimately reach the conclusion that :

All blameworthy acts are right.

This is no merely verbal criticism. Professor Taylor, in his enthusiasm to establish the ‘ freedom ’ and ‘ rationality ’ of his own conduct, simply ignores the question of *wrong* choice, and ignoring that burks the whole problem of responsibility and produces mere confusion. If a man is able to eliminate ‘ all sources of prejudice ’ he will doubtless act rationally and ‘ freely ’. But clearly when he has succeeded in eliminating these sources of prejudices

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. the note on p. 287, and the quotation from Sidgwick on p. 285 : “ the perception or judgment that an act is *per se* the right and reasonable act . . . ” etc.

(a) p. 281.

the 'moral struggle' is at an end : he is 'free' just because his *end* is determined. What we want to get at is the 'freedom' which allows a man to be 'indetermined' to the alternative of eliminating or not eliminating all sources of prejudice. According to Professor Taylor, "a prudent man sets himself to discover these sources of prejudice and to eliminate them." (a) And conversely, I suppose, an imprudent (or 'bad') man will not discover or eliminate them. In other words, their elimination or non-elimination depends on the character of the agent. But to admit that is to admit determinism.

Of course this whole conception of choice is a psychological myth. There is no justification in experience for this dichotomy between the 'reason' and the 'passional nature', between 'rational appetite' and 'mere *libido*'. It is typical of Professor Taylor's method and attitude that he should appeal to Plato's threefold division of the soul, each with its characteristic ἐπιθυμία, as supporting his contention. But

*vixere fortes ante Agamemnona,*

and there have been psychologists since Plato. The phrase 'rational act', if it is to have any meaning within the category of fact, must mean an act which is deliberate, the product of realised principles and truly representative of the agent. But such a rational act may be either 'right' or 'wrong': that is the very essence of the idea of moral responsibility. An ambition to become rich is no more a 'prejudice'

(a) p. 283.



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or ‘ bias ’ than the desire to serve ‘ the glory of God and the good of man ’ ; they are both ends which supply a criterion of conduct, capable of being ‘ rationally ’ and ‘ impartially ’ applied.

Professor Taylor further argues that in judgments of all kinds we are prone to fallacies of various sorts, and that if the argument of liability to bias is pushed to its extreme conclusion, “ it should yield the consequence that no one has ever been convinced of the truth of *any* proposition by an impartial consideration of the evidence for it. . . . On the whole, then, there is no more serious reason to doubt our ability to form impartial judgments of the goodness of divers objects of pursuit than to doubt our ability to form such judgments in general.” (a) That “ on the whole ” seems to hint that even Professor Taylor feels his argument may not be very reasonable *in parts* : it amounts in effect to a denial of any difference between cognition and volition, with the Socratic conclusion that wrong-doing is merely ‘ ignorance ’. Although I think that Professor Taylor’s indeterminism is disproved by the strength of my reasoning, I by no means expect him to be convinced by it ; because I know that

“ He that complies against his will  
Is of his own opinion still.”

Historically the whole development of a body of accepted scientific truth depends on the fact that in general the subject-matter of the sciences lies outside the sphere of values and valuation ; and it is

(a) pp. 284-5.

because certain questions of (especially philosophic) fact do not lie outside that sphere—such as this question of ‘free-will’—that they still afford matter for dispute. In a note on page 295, Professor Taylor writes: “The use of the word ‘necessitate’ . . . puts choice of the apprehended good on a level with assent to a conclusion validly inferred from self-evident premises. The latter I should say is ‘necessitated’ . . . But a judgment ‘this is good’ or ‘this is a higher good than that’ never seems to me to have complete self-evidence. It involves an act of faith of a moral character, and cannot be presumed to be evident *omnibus, semper, ubique*. *Quoad nos* moral judgments are not self-evident. As Aristotle said, you need already to be a good man to find them evident. And you have already exercised moral choice throughout the process by which you became good.” Here, in order to save his phantom ‘freedom’, he gives away his whole argument about ‘rationality’. The will is *not* (he confesses) to be identified with the ‘reason’, and ‘rational choice’ does *not* depend merely on ‘unprejudiced estimation’, but on the *character of the agent*.

And as the equation ‘free choice’ = ‘rational choice’ = ‘right choice’ makes the existence of immorality, and therefore of responsibility, a logical impossibility, so also it denies by implication the possibility of a conflict of rights; for surely ‘rationality’ no more than ‘truth’ can have a double face. Was it not Hegel’s profound remark, that tragedy results not from the conflict of right and wrong, but from the conflict of right and right?

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### 5. ‘ FREEDOM ’ AND CAUSALITY

Having elaborated his doctrine of *liberum arbitrium* Professor Taylor goes on to argue that, according to determinism, “ what happens at present is a definite one-valued function of something which has happened at certain specifiable dates in the past,” (a) so that “ I only think *A* good now *because* I have formerly thought *A*’ and *A*” good.” (b) This might do for the Behaviourists, but certainly for no one else. The truth is that Professor Taylor extraordinarily supposes that the only alternative to ‘ free-will ’ is materialism ; and this is *because he himself accepts the logical postulates of materialism*. I quite agree with him that time (the time of concrete experience) is real, and that *real* time is irreversible—though the abstract time of physics is whatever the physicists choose to make it ; but he imagines that this abstract time of the physicists we must accept as real *unless* we adopt the ‘ free-will ’ attitude. He refers to ‘ Frankenstein’s monster ’ ; but the monster is *his* monster, and the monster of the materialists : his mistake consists precisely in hypostatizing the ‘ laws ’ of science as a ‘ monster ’, a *causa causans* which ‘ compels ’ people. And because he thinks the phenomenal real, he thinks that the real cannot be phenomenal : he denies that an act can be an event ; whereas the truth is that an act is an event, and something more. He declares that “ it is a glaring *petitio principii* to assume that intelligent and purposive acts can

(a) p. 291, (b) p. 290.

be dealt with as 'events' at all." Galton then and Karl Pearson have been wasting their time! As Rashdall points out,<sup>(1)</sup> even Insurance statistics involve the assumption that we can to a large extent predict human conduct; and the statistician who traces the relation between the rate of suicide and the social conditions, and predicts with a close accuracy the number of suicides which will take place in London in the year, is likely to regard Pope's dictum with an indulgent smile. That human actions can be treated as 'functions' of the social and economic circumstances of the times the science of biometrics has conclusively shown. It is the recent development of the statistical study of behaviour which has, perhaps more than anything else, put the libertarian argument out of court: not that it supplies a logical confutation, but it emphasizes how glaringly such an argument is at odds with our common experience and assumptions.

And then Professor Taylor proceeds to deny the reality of character. "The physiological psychologist," he declares, "can only reconcile the facts of human life with the conception of the complete functional dependence of present choice on the past by assuming a whole elaborate mechanism of 'sub-conscious' mental dispositions, or possibly 'unconscious' physiological pre-dispositions, which may lie dormant and beyond discovery for a lifetime until the special situation adapted to arouse them into

(1) *The Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. II, p. 315, note. In support of the determinist position Rashdall adduces the fact of correspondence between physical characteristics and mental and moral characteristics, the "familiar facts of heredity", and the "argument from statistics".

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action arises. Vast hypothetical assumptions of this kind, incapable of verification, are always open to the suspicion of being mere fictions gratuitously invented to help out a defective theory in its difficulties.” (a) In the first place one might point out that it is just the physiological psychologist who denies, or at least ignores, ‘dispositions’, whether of the ‘sub-conscious’ or ‘unconscious’ sort (I doubt whether even a Behaviourist would talk of an ‘unconscious disposition’); and Mr. Joad (in behaviouristic mood, that is) would perfectly agree with Professor Taylor that “the existence of mind” is “a vast hypothetical assumption,” an “inference which . . . it is safer not to make.”<sup>(1)</sup> Because, of course, that is what the argument amounts to, if it means anything: to deny the reality of ‘mental dispositions’ is to deny the reality of ‘mind’ and ‘character’, to argue that the whole science of psychology is mere flim-flam, fit to be put on a level, say, with astrology. This is indeed “The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.” Why not go further and free oneself of *all* these improbable hypotheses of the scientists? The Copernican theory itself—is not that “a vast hypothetical assumption incapable of verification”? I am sure Galileo’s inquisitors thought so at least. This “vast assumption” is in fact nothing else than the recognition of a certain consistency in human behaviour; which has, as

(1) Cf. *supra*, p. 32. To speak of a ‘sub-conscious’ mental disposition is meaningless; because of course *any* disposition is a *potentiality* of behaviour, not an actuality: that is what the word means: what a ‘conscious mental disposition’ might be I cannot imagine.

(a) p. 293.

it were, two faces : a general, which enables us to speak in a general way of thought and feeling and consciousness, of habit, will and character,—and this is the matter of psychology ; and a personal, which enables us to become acquainted with individuals, to attribute to each one character of a certain sort and apply to him as an agent moral predicates. Suppose, argues Professor Taylor (following Bradley) that a man ‘ falls in love ’ violently for the first time in advanced age. But “ the ‘ occasion necessary to awaken the disposition into act ’ may *never* arise. The elderly man, after all, may *not* ‘ fall in love ’. In that case is it easy to believe in the reality of a ‘ latent disposition ’ which *never* emerges from its latency ? ” (a) No, one answers, it is obviously impossible to have any knowledge of a latent disposition which never manifests itself : one supposes the disposition *because* of the acts of a person. This argument in fact amounts to saying : since you cannot possibly know a person’s character through the acts he does not commit, it is irrational to infer his character from the acts he does commit. In short : a man’s character as known is an inference from his behaviour, the schematization of his past conduct ; and if such a schematization is impossible, as Professor Taylor argues that it is, then it is impossible for us to ‘ know ’ anyone, or to say that anyone is wise or foolish, moral or immoral.

Finally he rounds off his argument by embracing the ‘ contingency ’ theory of Epicurus. It is not necessary to insist further that such an argument is

(a) p. 293.

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based on a mistaken view of the nature of scientific causes. He supposes that determinism (“ a scheme like this,” he calls it, “ of the unambiguous functional dependency of the later on the earlier both for its occurrence and for its own specific character ”) was “ devised originally in the exclusive interests of *natural science*.”<sup>(a)</sup> But the ‘ law of causation ’ was not “ devised ” at all : it is an *a priori* necessity of all thinking, depending directly on the notion of identity. And so, regarding the descriptive formulas of science as *real causes*, he similarly hypostatizes the limitations of our knowledge (which compel us to speak of chance or contingency) into a ‘ feature of nature ’, which ‘ accounts for ’ the indetermination of human choice. He alludes to Newton’s “ demand to be shown a ‘ cause of gravitation ’,”<sup>(b)</sup> but does not realise that the famous *hypotheses non fingo* was a protest against just such an attitude as he himself assumes towards the sciences. Newton realised perfectly well that his mathematical formulations were only descriptive ; and though it is true that he mistakenly supposed that a ‘ cause ’ of gravitation might be found, nothing illustrates better his pre-eminence as a scientific thinker than the fact that only now, when his system is being modified, is his view of the nature of that system coming to be adequately appreciated—but not by everyone ; else Professor Taylor would hardly have written this chapter of his on “ *The Freedom of the Will*.”

(a) p. 295, (b) p. 299.

6. PRACTICAL COROLLARIES

I think there is no need to say more on the theory of the subject : let us pass on to consider what Professor Taylor calls the 'practical corollaries', of which there are, according to him, two.

The first (which I confess I find it hard to take seriously) is that according to any determinist theory, "for any one of us there are virtues which he certainly cannot attain, sins which he cannot avoid, temptations which he cannot resist. It is an easy stage from this position to the further one that an intelligent elder friend and monitor might be able to tell me in advance which are for me the unattainable virtues, unavoidable sins, and irresistible temptations." And "if shrewd and experienced educators undertook to convey this knowledge to their pupils," the consequences "would be moral sloth and contented unrepenting sinning on the largest scale," and so, to avoid this catastrophe, "the determinist preceptor would be morally bound to commit the pious fraud of teaching them (his pupils) that no temptation is irresistible, no sin necessitated, no height of virtue inaccessible ;" yet he "would surely feel very uneasy at the prospect of finding himself committed, as a matter of duty, to habitual lying for good ends." (a)

To which the obvious reply is : that character is a real thing, and that at all times, but especially in the early years of life, character can be 'formed' (to some extent) by external influences ; and that

(a) p. 302.



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it is the prime duty of the educator to exert the best sort of influence ; and that just as a doctor, when he has diagnosed some particular constitutional ailment, is able to prescribe a suitable course of treatment, so an educator can educate his pupils more ably the better able he is to understand the individual's limitations and weaknesses. For all of us there are some virtues which are unattainable. But to tell a boy that he can never hope to become a St. Francis is as likely to produce " moral sloth and unrepenting sinning " as telling a boy that he will never become a Jack Hobbs is likely to make him incontinently abandon every form of physical exercise : and to argue that ' according to determinism ' anyone is able to say of another (whose character is not yet even formed) that there are " sins which he cannot avoid, temptations which he cannot resist," is, to speak plainly, a sheer absurdity. (Of not a few great men of action, have not their pedagogues prophesied that they would ' end on the gallows ' ?) It is on a par with arguing that a doctor who is able to diagnose some constitutional weakness in a child, must be able to foretell what diseases he cannot avoid suffering, and what particular illness he will inevitably succumb to—and, knowing this, that he would of course abandon all attempt at curative treatment. The whole theory and practice of education rest on the supposition that training has a permanent effect on character. The only matter of fact on which Professor Taylor's fantastic argument depends is the fact that much harm can be done by discouragement, much good by (judicious) encouragement.

A person 'morally weak' may acquire a degree of strength by being persuaded to believe that he is able to acquire it ; just as a sick man is more likely to recover from an illness who is persuaded to believe that he is in fact recovering. On the other hand there may be cases where encouragement of Professor Taylor's type, trying to persuade a boy that "no height of virtue is inaccessible"—with the corollary, of course, that failure to attain the required altitude is a 'sin'—is injudicious and extremely harmful. If, for instance, a boy is made to believe that he 'can and ought to' attain, by a mere 'act of will', to a standard of asceticism quite beyond the scope of his constitution and circumstances, the result will be that, failing of success and convinced that every failure is a 'sin', he will fall into despair ; the futile, constantly renewed struggle will exhaust him nervously ; and his whole character and outlook may be warped and darkened. But, of course, the libertarian will only look at the 'moral aspect of the case'.

One could write further on this subject ; but it would be to digress too far. Let me rather briefly note some of the 'practical corollaries' of Professor Taylor's libertarian argument, to wit :

(a) Since only those acts qualify for moral predicates which are 'free', a libertarian may excuse himself of any act by claiming that it was not 'free', that he was overcome by some 'bias' or 'prejudice', so that the act was not 'really his' : he may claim all the merit of 'freely choosing' the right, while disclaiming all responsibility for choosing the wrong.

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(b) Since a man's past cannot control his present conduct as a ' rational being ' all moral education is futile.

(c) Since ' rational choice ' is wholly independent of the past, we have no reason to expect from anybody any moral consistency. If it is possible for a murderer to become a saint by a mere ' act of will ' (Professor Taylor insists that we should believe " that no man is utterly irredeemable and no vice of blood or habit wholly unconquerable,"<sup>(a)</sup> ) it is equally possible for the saint to become at any moment a murderer. The worst and best insofar as they are ' rational beings ' are, in respect of their *future* conduct, altogether on a par.

Of course I do not argue that these practical consequences ever are drawn, because no libertarian acts consistently with his beliefs. (How could he, when the theory of indeterminism cannot even be stated without a contradiction in terms? ): he constantly assumes that any individual is what he is, that what he is (his character) is expressed in his actions, and that the better he is acquainted with him the better he is able to judge what his behaviour is likely to be in the future.

But it is with the second corollary that we come to the root of the whole matter. " ' Scientific determinism ', " he declares, " is a purely ' this world ' and secular doctrine. To include it into our Ethics means that we confine ourself from the outset of our practical philosophy to a ' this-world ' view of man's destiny and man's good." <sup>(b)</sup> Now since such

(a) p. 303, (b) p. 303.

philosophers as Rashdall, and as Spinoza, that 'God-intoxicated' man (not to mention Calvin and Augustine) are to be found among the ranks of the determinists, this statement also can hardly be called an accurate one.<sup>(1)</sup> But what I would say is, that these two theories represent two opposing types of mind and of moral temper; and the one I should call the mediaeval, the other the modern temper. That the mediaeval view was predominantly 'other-world', and that the modern view is predominantly 'this-world' is undoubtedly true; but that is not the only difference, nor perhaps the most important difference between the two attitudes.

The mediaeval attitude finds its highest expression in the poetry of Dante, who is naturally for Professor Taylor the "supreme poet". Its essentials one may perhaps tabulate as:

(a) a belief in 'eternal and immutable' values, and that these values are and ought to be embodied in the constitution of society; and

(b) a belief that all acts are either right or wrong, that all men are either good or wicked, and that the good ought to be rewarded and the wicked punished, here and hereafter.

These beliefs find expression also in the writings of Kant, the modern protagonist of 'free-will', in his famous comparison of the moral law to the eternal motions of the stars, and in his notorious remark about executing the 'last murderer'.

<sup>(1)</sup> Rashdall (*op. cit.* II, pp. 310-311) notices that while the controversy was in the main a theological one, liberal thinkers were normally libertarians, the representatives of authority determinists; but in modern times the rôles have been reversed.

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Now I do not for a moment deny that a moral creed of this type is capable of inspiring heroic actions as well as great art, I do not for a moment question the moral grandeur of a character such as Dante's ; but I do hold that these beliefs are fundamentally irrational, and as values they are repugnant to me. A person who believes that there are ‘ eternal and immutable ’ values believes almost necessarily that he is himself acquainted with those values : he tends to regard his own standard of values as *the* standard, and his own judgments of value as having an absolute authority—he tends in a word to moral bigotry. It is the presence of such bigotry, of however heroic mould, which makes Dante so uncompromisingly mediaeval. The mediaevalist prefers ‘ Justice ’ to Mercy ; he will wage war upon every form of ‘ vice ’, but look with suspicion upon those sentimentalists who suggest that prevention is better than cure ; he will argue that “ we ought to think nobly and not meanly of the soul,” <sup>(a)</sup> and “ thinking nobly ” of some ‘ Dartmoor shepherd ’, will be filled with moral indignation every time he ‘ falls into sin ’, and will demand that he ‘ ought to be punished ’, <sup>(1)</sup> even unto seventy times seven.

The modern attitude on the contrary expresses itself in the belief that morality is a human creation, that while there are certain fundamental laws of right and wrong based on the very nature of our humanity, there are various ideals of conduct, none of which can claim an exclusive rightness ; they are ‘ absolute ’

<sup>(1)</sup> *i.e.*, that the punishment is ‘ right ’ absolutely, not relatively to some end beyond itself.

<sup>(a)</sup> p. 303.

only for the individual who acknowledges them as so : that justice is utilitarian and not an end in itself, that its chief end should be to prevent rather than punish crime, and that ' wickedness ' (insofar as it is not a product of circumstance) is a kind of disease, and should as far as possible be treated as such.

This attitude seems to me a rational one, to be in accordance with the facts : I wish to add, finally, a few words of dogmatic justification for it. ' Responsibility ' has two faces. *Externally* it is a utilitarian conception, *internally* it is another form of the categorical imperative. I recognize my own moral responsibility insofar as I recognize certain values ; and I recognize the responsibility of others in the sense that people must be prevented from wrong-doing, and wrong-doers ought to be, as far as possible, reformed. But what of the other view of responsibility and punishment—to what extent are we justified not only in punishing others, but in feeling ' moral indignation ' against them ? The actual attitude towards wrong-doers of the present-day ' intelligent public ' depends, I should say, (leaving out of account all cases of bias, as when a sporting country gentleman is more ' morally indignant ' with a poacher than with a wife-beater) on two factors (*a*) the nature of the crime, and (*b*) the aspect in which it is presented to us.

(*a*) There are certainly some kinds of crime which excite our indignation more than other kinds ; and it hardly seems as though the greater crime (judging the ' greatness ' of a crime by the severity of the

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legal penalty) necessarily makes us more indignant than the lesser. Thus the petty cheating of some old woman may provoke us more than some large-scale robbery or swindle which entailed no real hardship on the victims.

(b) When we are presented with the effects of a crime in the suffering it entails on others, we feel anger at the cause of such suffering ; but if, while in ignorance of the effects, we have a full knowledge of the criminal's history, and if, as is probable, we know either that ' he never had a chance ' or else that in his mental (and physical) constitution there was always something abnormal, a ' kink ' of some sort, then we shall be less inclined to feel indignant with him, and more inclined to pity him.

This seems to me how things actually are at present. And I believe that it is how they *ought to be* to a far greater extent than they are. I believe that moral indignation is only ' right ' when it is a form of pity or sympathy. What we ought to be indignant with is not an abstract ' infringement of the moral law ', but this instance of brutality, this wanton infliction of suffering. It may be there are some crimes as deadly as the serpent's tooth, and as abhorrent : such criminals the Law must needs sharply cut off. But few so put off their human guise ; while they are men they must retain their humanity. The more sympathetically we understand our fellow creatures, the less we shall be inclined to ' righteous anger ' against them. Hatred of others can never be a good : we may ' hate injustice ' ; we need not to hate the unjust. And in making our

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moral judgments on others we should realise that as soon as we pass beyond the sphere of 'fundamental rights', our standard of judgment is but relative and dogmatic ; that it is the task of the laws to condemn, not our task ; that in proclaiming an absolute 'Justice' we arrogate the despot's privilege. If it be objected that such an ideal threatens the foundations of law and 'morality', I would answer that the intelligence of the majority will supply the sanction of a better law and a better social code than that for which their undisciplined feelings have supplied the sanction in the past ; and I cannot believe that there will ever be a time when there will be *too little* hatred and *too little* anger in the world.

### Note.

Professor Muirhead in his introduction to the volume under discussion, speaks of the theory of a criminal type, "which has graced (or disgraced) criminology elsewhere,"<sup>(a)</sup> referring of course to Lombroso. There can be no doubt that Lombroso and his followers spoil a good case by exaggeration and inaccuracy—there is at least good ground for believing that criminals are in general people of less than average mental capacity, and that this inferiority is revealed in their cast of features—; but it is *quite* certain that in our civilized countries there is a definite *criminal class*, that in England as elsewhere, there is a small group of people who pass their lives outside the law, in fighting a continually losing fight against the Police who are perfectly



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acquainted with their habits. The whole system of modern detection, one might almost say, is based on this fact. All these people are card-indexed, and when a crime (of a certain sort) is committed, the first thing is to consult the card-index—this burglar liked strawberry jam, and we know that *Q* likes strawberry jam, so it must be *Q*, and so on. One reads of an ingenious criminal in Germany who having gained access to the card-indices, so successfully imitated the professional methods of another criminal, who a confederate undertook to manage should have no *alibi* available, that the innocent man was arrested and condemned on unimpeachable evidence. <sup>(1)</sup>

Now this state of affairs may be inevitable, and it may be (though I doubt it) that the Police will become so efficient that the professional criminal will be driven out of business ; but in any case the system amounts, rationally and morally, to a *reductio ad absurdum* of the ethical assumptions on which the present methods of justice are largely based, the assumption that a man who is a criminal by nature and circumstance can ‘ make himself honest ’ by a mere ‘ act of will ’, and that if he does not he ought to be punished—and then, when cleansed from his ‘ sin ’, be loosed to prey again upon society, until the time of his next conviction. Surely we might devise a better way than this of dealing with the ‘ social lepers ’ of our time ?

<sup>(1)</sup> See J. Gollomb, *Scotland Yard*. ‘ The Mocking Bird.’ By the way I do not know what Prof. Muirhead would say to Havelock Ellis’s book, *The Criminal*.

## CHAPTER VI

### MR. FAWCETT'S 'IMAGINISM'

UP to the present, or at least in the last four chapters, I have been dealing with certain important questions of philosophy and life; and however widely I have disagreed with the writers whose opinions I have discussed, I have at any rate acknowledged that their opinions were to be taken seriously, that the arguments they used were not without force, and the conclusions they reached intelligible. But when I come to Mr. Fawcett's contribution I am afraid I can no longer make even this acknowledgment. His argument, confessedly, lies outside the sphere of probability (in the strict sense of the word): he writes not in the language of "dialectic", but of "imaginal dynamic" <sup>(a)</sup>—which I understand to mean in plain language that his philosophy is to be treated not as a logically probable system but as a work of imagination. Under the circumstances the only thing to do is to offer a few rather haphazard remarks on the implications of this 'Imaginism' of his.

Mr. Fawcett's 'world-principle' is 'Divine Imagining'. Let us consider very briefly what he means, and what he *can* mean by this. "Man's imagining," he writes, "narrowly so called, the

(a) p. 88.

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imagining which interests a writer on psychology, is, of course, only a phase of his psychical life, one phase among the many in which the ‘ fundamental power ’, or basic imagining suggested by Kant, seems to have flowered. But the ‘ fundamental power ’ appears in this particular phase less transformed, less concealed—like the lava stream beneath its slaggy surface—by products of creative evolution.” (a) This ‘ fundamental power ’ suggested by Kant is referred to and explained on an earlier page, in the statement that “ Kant suggested that imagination may lie at the root of finite sentient.” (b) We see then that, according to Mr. Fawcett, the ‘ fundamental power ’ of our psychical life, or in other words, of mind, is something which is akin to what in the normal or psychological sense we call imagination.

The word ‘ imagination ’ is notoriously a vague one. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* there are, I find, three main senses of the word :

(a) the act or power of forming images of external objects not present to the senses (and of their relations to each other and to the subject) : this is the *reproductive* imagination, and involves memory ;

(b) the act or power of forming concepts beyond those derived from external objects : this is the *productive* imagination, which we may also call ‘ fancy ’, the ‘ creative faculty ’, or ‘ poetic genius ’ ;

(c) thought or opinion in general.

This may take us some way, though perhaps not very far. I think at least we can have no doubt that

the root meaning of the word is 'the power of forming images'. And it seems to me that the distinction between the reproductive and the productive imagination depends on whether we simply recall or *recollect* items of our past experience, or whether we *combine* and *select* many scattered items of our experience into a *new synthesis*. It is generally admitted that we cannot imagine what lies altogether outside our experience, the 'imaginative man' is (in a general way) more sensitive to impressions than the ordinary man, and this greater wealth of experience he is able to apply 'imaginatively' either to the understanding of further experience or to the 'creation' of a work of art.

There are two important points to notice here : First that this 'power of forming images' lies largely outside the control of the will. We can, to some extent, control our recollections of the past ; but how uncertain is that control everybody knows when trying to recollect a name which is 'there, but refuses to come' ; and it is certain that a large amount of creative work is not deliberate : we cannot create because we will to create ; and the artist is perhaps most himself when he 'cannot help' creating, whether he will or not. And the other point is, that the productive and the reproductive imagination are closely associated ; and on this depends, I believe, the fact that what is *imaginary* we contrast with what is *real*. Recollection is 'the act of forming images of external objects not present to the senses', and it is or depends on imagination. Yet whereas memory is always *true*, we frequently *imagine*

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things which we believe to be so, and are not really so ; and that is because we do not merely reproduce, but remould the data, by some involuntary contamination, to something new, and so, as memory, false.

Imagination, of course, ‘ depends on ’ association of ideas ; but then how we associate ideas depends on what we are. The ‘ act of forming images ’ may be considered as a ‘ section ’ of a ‘ train of thought ’ ; but then it is *somebody’s* train of thought : he is both the engine-driver and the passengers, and the train itself. In the abstract, thought is a process with certain common characteristics ; in the concrete, no two persons think alike. And so the character of imagination depends abstractly on association of ideas, concretely on the individual’s character and personality. In the case of illusions the emotional state is so abnormal that the person cannot distinguish imagination from perception ; and there are some people who seem constitutionally unable to ‘ tell a plain unvarnished tale ’ : their imagination runs away with them. In play we pretend, deliberately, letting this associative-image-forming power possess us exclusively, letting reason go hang ; and children play without deliberation, spontaneously. But the imagination of the artist (and still more of the scientist) is disciplined : it ranges at command, serves reason and is served by reason.

Here we have the contrast between reason and imagination, as we have had already the contrast between imagination and perception. So also fancy and artistic creation are opposed to scientific thought and analysis, intuition is opposed to discursive

thought. Can we find here some common factor which will give us for 'imagination' something more than 'the power of forming images'? These distinctions are after all popular ones; we should neither neglect them nor take them at their face value. Thus suppose we said that imagination was 'mind as active' as opposed to 'mind as receptive'. But that will not really do, it is taken from the old psychology of Locke: the mind is just as active in perception as in imagination; and our imagination cannot be controlled from without by objects, but must be controlled somehow by 'reason' from within. If we consider some of these opposites:—the difference between 'fancy' and 'scientific thought' would seem to be, partly at any rate, that in fancying we follow a train of images, in abstract thought follow (or rather 'drive') a train of concepts: in other words, fancying is of particulars, thinking of universals: herein lies the (or a) difference between the artist and the scientist; and we know that there is an antipathy between abstract thinking and concrete imagining: the practice of the former tends to destroy our capacity for the latter. But in the case of intuition and discursive thought we are presented with another kind of opposition. Intuition can be abstract as well as concrete; we know that many great discoveries of science have been made, according to the scientist himself, 'in a flash': the long-sought-for solution or synthesis is as it were, suddenly and inexplicably, 'there'. The case here seems to be between conscious control and 'spontaneous thought', to be just on a par with our ability to recol-

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lect something as soon as we have ‘ given up trying ’. And so too what cannot be solved or settled one day we ‘ sleep on ’, and, likely enough, the solution is there waiting for us when we return to consciousness. Also I think, as in common use, we must recognize the factor of *time* : a woman’s intuition is her quick-wittedness which reaches its conclusion too quickly to be conscious of its own process—it is a ‘ sub-conscious ’ activity : but as such and in itself not reliable. The scientist’s sudden vision is only the last stage of a long and arduous thinking, and even then must be discursively confirmed. Feminine intuition is a good weapon of practical warfare, usually ; but as a criterion of judgment is as reliable as its possessor’s prejudices allow it to be. Shakespeare or Jane Austen needed more than intuition to know their fellow men and women.

But here I think we have the basis of our general antithesis between reason and imagination : the one is controlled and deliberate, the other neither one nor the other. I have pointed out already that our power of forming images is only very partially under the control of our will ; and it is simply for this cause that by the usual process of analogizing we have extended the word to cover all ‘ uncontrolled thought ’ and on that score oppose ‘ imagination ’ to ‘ reason ’. And if it be asked : how controlled or uncontrolled ? I might refer to what I have said in previous chapters about will and character. In having long ends we control our immediate thinking to those ends ; and the as it were ‘ rational equivalent ’ of long ends is deliberation : reason is the

power of control and deliberation which distinguishes the adult from the child, who is 'fancy free' also in that immediate thought and action are not bound to anything beyond themselves; and too tight control and deliberation make the river of thought dull and sluggish. The artist and imaginative man is the adult who has not lost his childhood. But without the power of control and deliberation we are as feathers, a prey to myriad whimsies and illusions.

In following out my rough analysis of 'imagination' I have departed perhaps too far from the subject of our chapter; although, if my analysis has any truth in it, it may help our consideration of Mr. Fawcett's theories. Before returning to reconsider them I would note finally, that the mind cannot be pigeon-holed. 'Imagination' and 'reason' and 'intuition' are all useful words; but they are *not* names of distinct 'faculties' 'within the mind'. And, further, that since the word 'imagination' has so wide and varying a meaning, it is essential that we should make clear, to ourselves and others, *how* we are using it. For 'imagination' can be identified with '*memory*' but also contrasted with it; it can be opposed to *abstract* thought, but also opposed within the sphere of abstract thought to *discursive* (abstract) thought; and it can be regarded as the antithesis both of *reason* and of *reality*. Without definition there is very little meaning in the word at all.

Mr. Fawcett does not define the word; but he says of it (a) that it is, as exemplified in memory, conservative, (b) creative, where its special character-



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istic is spontaneity, which resembles instinct, (c) that it "takes shape in games and myths," and (d) "underlies all reasoning." (a) I am afraid that there are some objections we must raise here. First, that while memory as recollection is a part of imagination, memory as the mere conserving of images surely is not. "A Turner," says Mr. Fawcett, "can evoke from the past even the rich fullness of a sunset." (b) Exactly. But it is the evocation in a transmuted form (perhaps too in part the vivid appreciation of the supposed original experience) that constitutes the imaginative act, not the mere storing of impressions: reproduction may be said to involve conservation, but is not the same thing as conservation—else how indeed could we distinguish memory from imagination? This is a small point perhaps; but Mr. Fawcett makes a great deal of 'imagination as conservative', and on no wider basis than this. Secondly he has entirely omitted that aspect of imagination which enables us to oppose 'imagination' to 'reality', to say that people hear and see 'imaginary' sounds and sights, recollect 'imaginary' facts, and argue for 'imaginary' truths. Here is an important aspect of the 'creative imagination' which surely needs to be explained. And, thirdly, what can be meant by saying that "imagination underlies all reasoning"? If we take the word in the sense of 'uncontrolled, undeliberate thought', we may perhaps say that the adult is relatively a reasoning creature, a very young child an imaginative creature; but it is a very old fallacy to regard a

(a) p. 94, (b) p. 94.

genetic description as explaining the origin of something qualitatively new. I will not, however, press the point, because I do not really know what Mr. Fawcett means by his remark—though certainly it looks as though he regarded ‘reason’ and ‘imagination’ as distinct ‘faculties’, distinct as the different rooms of a house are.

But the simple point I want to make about the whole of Mr. Fawcett’s philosophy is this : that what we know as imagination “in the narrow psychological sense” is all we *can* know about imagination. The great advantage of the Hegelian ‘Absolute’ is that it is a term so completely abstract, so purely formal and negative, that it can mean anything or everything or nothing—whatever the user chooses to make it. But the word ‘imagination’ is of a very different sort : it is of course an abstraction, but an abstraction direct from the concrete ; and it lies within a quite definite genus and scale of reference. ‘Imagination’ is a ‘power’ or ‘faculty’ or ‘aspect’ of the mind ; however we define it, we *must* treat it as something mental, just as we must treat ‘blue’ as a colour : it is a word which *can only have a psychological sense*. We may indeed within the sphere of psychology use the word in a ‘narrower’ or a ‘wider’ sense, though the wider the sense we use it in, the vaguer will be the meaning attaching to it. Mr. Fawcett makes it the ‘fundamental power’ of the mind ; but surely, if he declares that the essence of mind is imagination, it is no longer possible to distinguish between the two words. Since ‘mind’ is the most extensive psycho-

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logical term there is, it follows that ‘ imagination ’ can only have meaning if it is less extensive : to say that ‘ imagination ’ is ‘ mind ’ can only mean that we have two words where one is needed. And it seems clear that to make ‘ Imagination ’ a ‘ world principle ’ involves the identification of ‘ imagination ’ with ‘ mind ’. For surely the world principle must *include* mind ; and since ‘ mind ’ is the most inclusive word within the mental scale of reference (to which the word ‘ imagination ’ belongs), it cannot include anything else *but* mind.

And to make either ‘ Imagination ’ or ‘ Mind ’ into a ‘ world principle ’ involves also an idealism of the same kind as Berkeley’s, and which is exposed to the same objections. To say that the world is the product of ‘ Divine Imagining ’ seems to me altogether equivalent to saying that the objects of our experience are ideas in the mind of God : the difference between the two views is merely verbal. And the illogicality of such an opinion is fully revealed in such a sentence as this which declares “ that causation, including, of course, all cases of ‘ physical ’ happenings, is imaginal process.”<sup>(a)</sup> “ Imaginal process ” must mean some kind of mental process ; an imagination which is not mental is a contradiction in terms ; and to say that causation and all physical events are mental processes also involves a contradiction in terms : ‘ physical ’ means ‘ not mental ’, and to identify opposites involves a contradiction in terms.

It is, I think, typical of this method of philosophiz-

(a) p.89.

ing that Mr. Fawcett should here, in order to avoid the use of the word 'imaginative', which would give his whole case away too obviously, lightly invents a new word, 'imaginal', *which he does not define*. I know what an 'imaginary process' is, and what an 'imaginative process' is; but what is an 'imaginal process'? I would suggest that the word 'imaginal' is "*vox et praeterea nihil*." <sup>(1)</sup>

Mr. Fawcett's philosophy is developed in opposition to the 'rationalism' of the Greco-Hegelian tradition: it proposes to substitute imagination for reason as the basis of mind and reality. His attempt to exalt the former at the expense of the latter leads to some curious results, which I will consider briefly under three heads:

(1) He argues that "thinking or reasoning obtains only in finite centres," and that imagination "underlies all reasoning"; and he quotes Professor Prescott to the effect that thought "is a secondary or specialized development . . . growing from the first [the imaginative operation of the mind which is primary] as the arm and hand grow from the body"; <sup>(a)</sup> and also Dewey to the effect that "thought arises in a situation of conflict which checks response"; <sup>(b)</sup> and so (he goes on to declare) "thought, experimenting imaginatively with different lines of action, opens the way to adjustment," and "logic . . . supervenes when the imaginal experiments, issuing in too many conflicts and blunders, give rise to the need for policing this

<sup>(1)</sup> Incidentally I should say the same of Belfort Bax's 'Alogical'.

<sup>(a)</sup> p. 99, <sup>(b)</sup> p. 100.

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treacherous reason as much as possible.” (a) These last two statements, which seem to have an important position in the development of Mr. Fawcett’s opinions, I unfortunately do not understand. I do not know at all what is meant by ‘ logic supervening ’. If one supposes ‘ logic ’ to have its normal meaning—the study or science of the forms of thought—then Mr. Fawcett seems to be committed to the extraordinary view (especially for an imaginalist!) that no one was able to adjust himself ‘ rationally ’ to the circumstances, was in fact able to act in a practically reasonable way, until the science of logic was developed by Aristotle. But if one supposes that ‘ logic ’ means ‘ logical thought ’ or something of that sort, then what are we to understand by ‘ logical thought ’ ‘ policing ’ the ‘ treacherous reason ’ ?

*sed quis custodiat ipsos ?*  
*custodes*

And since it is a case of ‘ thought experimenting imaginatively ’, why does he write ‘ reason ’—why not ‘ imagination ’ or ‘ imaginative thought ’ ? One might almost suppose that Mr. Fawcett, after having written the word ‘ treacherous ’ realised suddenly that if the word he wrote next was ‘ imagination ’ he would give away his whole argument ; and so ‘ imagination ’ had to be changed to ‘ reason ’, and the world was still safe for Imaginism. In fact, according to normal thought and normal language, it is the imagination which, when not ‘ policed by reason ’, is ‘ treacherous ’: the substitution of

(a) p. 100.

'reason' for 'imagination' deprives the statement of all sense.

And again, what after all is this important distinction between imagination which is primary and thought which is secondary, if thought 'arises' in the form of 'imaginative experiment'? 'Thought' is a term which has perhaps even more different senses than 'imagination': it can be used in a way that contrasts it with imagination, and in a way that makes it include imagination; but Mr. Fawcett ought surely to make it clear to us and to himself in what way he is using the word. Dewey and Professor Prescott (as far as one can judge without the context) seem to be tracing the phenomenal development of thought from a lower stage of 'instinctive' or 'unconscious' behaviour. Mr. Fawcett, however, dismisses "the much trumpeted evolution of the conscious from the subconscious as nonsense."<sup>(a)</sup> He also believes that the Divine Imagining which is the world principle, is the conscious energy of the universe which is also aware of its own *conscita* and contents—and yet holds that this Divine Imagining does not think: so that he must use the word neither in the sense of consciousness, nor of awareness: he seems in fact to use it in the narrow sense of 'reasoning', 'logical thought'. But whatever meaning I assign to the word, I am still quite unable to understand what these statements I have quoted mean, to understand what the relation is (according to Mr. Fawcett) between 'thought' and 'logic' and 'reason' and 'imaginal experi-

(a) p. 104.

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ments’. But I do at least understand Mr. Fawcett to argue that, *because* thought is derived from a ‘ fundamental power ’ which ‘ resembles instinct ’, it is somehow inferior to that from which it arose : he argues in other words that instinctive behaviour is superior to rational behaviour because the former is genetically prior (which is what one might call the ‘ genetic fallacy ’), that the flower is of less importance than the seed from which it sprang—and at the same time he holds it absurd to suppose that the conscious was evolved from the subconscious (unconscious ?) !

(2) And having been told that imagination ‘ underlies all reasoning,’ we are the more surprised to discover that “ reason is patently a form of tentative imagining ” <sup>(a)</sup> : it is difficult indeed to understand how the flower can be a tentative form of the root. (The metaphor is Mr. Fawcett’s own.) And when we consider how he substantiates this statement, we realise, I think, that the supposed antithesis of reason and imagination is no more real at one end than at the other. He quotes Professor Karl Pearson that the laws of science are “ products of creative imagination”, <sup>(b)</sup> and Mr. Bertrand Russell that pure mathematics lie within the domain of the “ logical imagination”, <sup>(c)</sup> and that when ordinary rational thinking fails “ direct philosophic vision ” is possible. “ Intuitive imagining,” declares Mr. Fawcett, “ has shone clear momentarily through the veil of concepts.” <sup>(d)</sup> But are not mathematics, and the laws of science purely conceptual ? A ‘ mathematical

(a) and (b) p. 99, (c) and (d) p. 101.

vision ' which shone through the ' veil of concepts ' seems to be about on a par with a piece of music which ' burst the confines of sound '. One may observe that in fact Mr. Russell speaks of the ' logical imagination ' ; and whatever may be the best psychological explanation of the ' sudden vision ' and its relation to ' ordinary rational thinking ' (for of course I do not for a moment dispute the fact that we can, roughly, make such a distinction) it is I think quite obvious—I have referred to the point already—that these are but distinguishable strands of a single ' rope ', and that intuition, at any rate in the abstract sciences, could accomplish nothing ' by itself ' ; and it is quite certain that all scientific and abstract reasoning is exclusively conceptual.

(3) Mr. Fawcett, arguing that abstract thought at its best is ' of imagination all compact ', maintains, further to enforce his point, that " the higher thinking or reasoning presupposes the decree—let there be imaginative representation with its substitute facts. It is a flat, bloodless symbolizing which often disgusts even the suffering thinker himself." (What a melancholy view to take of the delights of abstract thought ! ) And quoting James Ward and Stout and Mr. Bertrand Russell to the effect that thought is based on language and impossible without it, he proclaims that the world principle ( Divine Imagining ) stands " above this speech-propped makeshift." (a) One is doubly surprised : first at this unkind condemnation of a symbolizing *which is*

(a) p. 100.



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*imaginative* ; and secondly at Mr. Fawcett's strange attitude to all science, all knowledge, all philosophy. The laws of science are products of the creative imagination : so Mr. Fawcett approves them. But they are the product of ‘ the higher thinking ’, they deal in concepts, and are based on language : and so Mr. Fawcett condemns them, ‘ lock, stock, and barrel ’, as the saying is. And yet, in spite of this heroic cutting off, he is still unable to separate the chaff from the wheat, thought from imagination. Thought starts as an ‘ imaginative experiment ’, ‘ higher thinking ’ is an ‘ imaginative representation ’, and in its very highest flights becomes ‘ intuitive imagining ’. And yet the whole of Mr. Fawcett's philosophy seems to depend on the supposition that ‘ thought ’ and ‘ imagination ’ are separate entities. One might suggest that it is no more possible to sever either one or the other from the general texture of our consciousness and treat it as a separate entity, than it is to remove a painting from the canvas on which it is painted and preserve it still as a painting.

Mr. Fawcett's principal grievance against ‘ thought ’ seems to be that thought is rooted in language. “ Our higher thinking . . . failing the crutches of language, could hardly move.” <sup>(a)</sup> For any sort of writer such a cavalier attitude to Speech, Our Mistress, is surely graceless ; indeed a person who holds such an opinion and still continues to write might be likened to an advocate of universal suicide who still persists in living. “ No one,” proclaims Mr. Fawcett, “ once free of that ocean (of Divine

(a) p. 101.

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Imagining) would seek the swamps of thinking again.” (a) Yet he himself uses this ‘device of creative evolution’, not only to “meet the rude needs of our cognitive and practical life” (b)—which it seems, in his opinion, is all that thought and language are suited for—but to philosophize, to explain his ideas about Divine Imagining. “Philosophical truth,” he writes on an earlier page, “is a conceptual scheme which serves in our thinking as substitute for the universe, and this substitute-scheme is a poor thing no doubt, while our own.” (c) What a dilemma for a philosopher! This ‘language of imaginal dynamic’ which I understand Mr. Fawcett claims to use, may be altogether irrational (although that seems rather an exaggerated claim to make for it), but it nevertheless remains language; and it certainly deals entirely in concepts. “In making adequate the concept of Divine Imagining . . . we have to take our clues painfully from what the world-process reveals, imagining nevertheless adventurously when we can do nothing else.” ‘To take one’s clues from what the world-process reveals’ seems another way of saying, ‘to reason from experience’; so that Mr. Fawcett’s system, after all, is ‘sunk in the swamps of thought’, except where the swamp fails, when it becomes purely imaginary; and then one may agree with Dr. Schiller that it may well include “not only all reality, but all unreality.” (d)

I am sorry; but it is impossible to take this sort of theorizing seriously. I sympathise entirely with

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Mr. Fawcett's dislike of Hegelian rationalism ; but he does not seem to realise (and one might say the same of Bergson) that to attack ' reason ' in this way is to commit philosophic suicide. An irrational philosophy is a contradiction in terms ; and yet that seems to be what Mr. Fawcett is attempting. One may feel that the mystic who believes in a ' direct vision ' which is above all reasoning has more of the truth than any rationalist, that is, person who makes rationality the criterion of belief ; but a mystic who starts to argue and philosophize ceases to be a mystic. (I do not say that a mystic cannot ' proclaim the faith that is in him ' ; but I say that he cannot attempt to argue or prove.) One must choose one attitude or the other : one cannot combine the opposing attitudes into one.

I agree with Mr. Fawcett that ' imagination ' is a most important factor in our life, that reality is not a ' frozen block-universe ' ; but I do not believe that, because reality is not ' pure Reason ', our philosophic account of it must be fundamentally irrational. And I believe that ' Imaginism ' is pure phantasy, not philosophy at all.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEW IDEALISM OF PROFESSOR J. A. SMITH AND THE QUESTION OF MEANING

**I** MAY start this chapter by confessing the rationale of my chapter-arrangement. Having decided to make Professor Moore (in company with James Ward and Professor Dawes Hicks) the terminus of my journey and sweet resting-place of content after a long pilgrimage of disagreement, I chose for my first attempts of criticism those articles where my task seemed easiest, and the issues most certain, and put off for later treatment those, to criticise which I felt less confident and assured. . . .

Professor J. A. Smith professes himself a disciple of Croce and Gentile, and expounds briefly (and I must confess it seems to me with certainly no increase of lucidity over the originals) certain aspects of what is now commonly called 'The New Idealism'—and justly so, I think, in that this new Italian school does, by lopping off the moribund 'Absolute', allow to spring up with fresh vigour the antique root of the idealistic heresy : it is the dialectic of Hegel new made over, and so a 'New Idealism'. (Yet from my outside uncomprehending standpoint Hegel still seems to tower above Croce, even as Spinoza towers above Hegel. There is an 'impression of profundity' in the *Logic* which I do not get from the pages of these Italian sages—as for the *Ethics* 'geometric-

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ally deduced', who shall ever rival it in its kind?) And I may confess here candidly that 'I have no use for' idealism, neither that of Germany, nor that of Italy; and I do not claim to have 'understood', nor even to have 'studied' the works either of Hegel or Gentile; because I should hold it simply impossible to 'study' idealism without accepting at least in part the postulates of idealism. To become a Hegelian one must be born with an Hegelian mind; whereas any person of educated intelligence can study and understand Hume or Mill or any of that tribe without sympathizing with them in the least. Hence the insuperable advantage of the idealists, that they can understand, and understanding demolish, the arguments of their opponents, but can themselves only be 'understood' by those sympathetic to their creed. The 'spiritualists', I believe, make a very similar claim.

Yet there are degrees. I believe that, fundamentally, Professor Smith is no more in the right of the matter than Mr. Fawcett. But I am quite certain that this contribution of his stands on a very different intellectual level. This is metaphysician's metaphysic, not amateur metaphysic. Whatever one may think of Croce's philosophy, one is bound to recognize the philosopher's intellectual eminence; and although the intellectual eminence of a theory's author has no bearing on the truth of the theory (Newton wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse that I do not know anyone would have troubled to notice or respect if it had been another's; and all the great philosophers cannot be equally in the right),

it does bear on the amount of respect one pays to its exposition : it is a narrow creed that will acknowledge only the greatness of its own sect's prophets. I believe, candidly, that Professor Smith's contribution is, as philosophy, almost meaningless ; but it is meaningless at least in a high intellectual way : one is impressed in spite of one's distress. Professor Smith speaks of the " loose thinking, the somnabulistic speculations, the slovenly writing which characterize too much of what is offered us as substitutes for philosophy " (a) ; and I would certainly never charge him with being himself guilty of such things. There is a whole world of difference between the speculations of a Croce and the speculations of such as he calls " the commercial travellers in spiritual wares," a difference no less than that between Milton and ' album verses ' ; but though one may recognize the hard thinking and creative intelligence which has produced such a result, one may still question the validity of the ' dialectic ' method.

And yet again, how ? " The account here formulated," writes Professor Smith, " is neither inventory of contents nor theory nor body of truth . . . but is . . . a disclosure and exposure of what, if any of these be established, underlies them as their indispensable substructure, and if, so disclosed and exposed, it is criticized as paradoxical, the criticism is repelled as at once justified and *nihil ad rem*. Its soundness may be questioned, and indeed ought to be and must be, but the cause cannot be deter-

(a) p. 233.

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mined before the tribunal or by the jurisprudence of ordinary 'Logic'. There is a superior court competent to try it." (a) But this claim to be tried by a 'superior court' to that of 'ordinary logic' is itself a prime subject of dispute; and to deny at the outset the possibility of *that* being disputed amounts to a claim that idealism can only be questioned and criticized from the standpoint of idealism. Professor Smith goes on to say that "there is no attempt . . . to withdraw the claims made for it from the jurisdiction of the intellect or to appeal away from the head to the heart": one is surprised to find him appealing to this surely rather outworn popular antithesis, which actually seems to have no significance for the New Idealism, as it certainly has none psychologically; but in any case how are we to distinguish the 'jurisdiction of the intellect' from the 'jurisprudence of ordinary Logic'? Whose intellect? one asks. For if it means the intellects of people other than the writer himself, surely, for most, including many professed philosophers, 'ordinary Logic' does supply the criterion of the truth of a philosophical doctrine. This claim then for exemption from the 'jurisdiction of ordinary Logic' amounts to a claim to be exempt, not from every sort of criticism, but from the criticism of all who believe in the critical efficiency of ordinary Logic—yet, of course, the account claims to be true, not merely for those who adopt a certain attitude towards 'truth' and 'logic', but absolutely for everyone. This is the first and fundamental diffi-

(a) p. 235;

culty for any critic, who is compelled to dispute this claim, yet must realise that in doing so his criticism is *nihil ad rem*, at any rate as far as the author of the theory criticized is concerned. I despair of being able to produce any kind of argument such as Professor Smith would admit to his 'superior court'.

Under these circumstances it would be useless for me to attempt any systematic criticism of Professor Smith's theories. I propose therefore merely to criticise in two particular instances his use of words (almost any page or sentence of his contribution would do equally well for my purpose); and then make this criticism the text for a general attack on the 'metaphysical style of writing' and a general discussion of '*Meaning*'.

(1) In discussing the very difficult question of the 'timelessness' of the history which is the whole and sole Real, Professor Smith states that "'Eternity' is the reality of which 'timelessness' is the negative or polemic equivalent, the ideal face which it in its self-realisation turns to Mind as its would-be knower. This revealed character of the Real the Mind endeavours to express to itself, and paraphrasing in its native dialect what it learns, states it in terms which represent it as a mutually exclusive successiveness of timed or dated events, or rather plainly misrepresent . . ." etc. (a) He is here arguing against the view that History is an aggregate of separate events, and that the idea of eternity attached to History is meaningless; and this error he



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seems to regard as due primarily to Mind 'paraphrasing' the Real in its own dialect. But this is a conception I find it impossible to grasp the meaning of. If the words 'Mind' and 'Real' had some ordinary common-sense meaning, some at least of the difficulties would not arise. But according to Professor Smith the only real which is not Mind is bound to Mind "in endless co-operation or interaction", is "at once the deposit or creature of the central energy (Mind) and the stimulus of it to further effort and output", while Mind "as the representative of the spirit of the whole, at once knows and creates what in any sense is." (a) How then can Professor Smith speak of the real as though it were something standing over against Mind, having its own essence apart from Mind, and as revealing itself to Mind? Does not such language imply a standpoint which Professor Smith explicitly repudiates? He speaks as though the Real were an object which is 'presented' to Mind. That is a notion difficult enough to grasp and 'interpret'; but still more difficult I find the declaration that 'timelessness' is the ideal aspect of a reality which is 'Eternity'. Professor Smith distinguishes in another place between "The Real as it is in itself" and "our way of putting it (the Real) to ourselves, an expression of it necessarily ideal or idealistic." (b) But if we are to admit this distinction between the Real and the ideal—it is a distinction which seems to me to involve a form of Realism which not only utterly contradicts the idealistic standpoint which

(a) pp. 242-3, (b) p. 237.

Professor Smith adopts, but is from any point of view indefensible and impossible—how can we suppose that ‘timelessness’ is any *more* ‘ideal’ than ‘Eternity’? Both terms are equally ‘ideas’, evolved from the framework of language. If all our ideas (our way of putting the Real to ourselves) and all language (our way of expressing the Real) are necessarily ‘ideal’, then surely *all* our ideas and *all* language are ‘ideal’, and it is impossible at the same time to suppose that *some* ideas and *some* words are *not* ‘ideal’. And again, how are we to view his argument that Mind misrepresents the Real, because it paraphrases what it learns “in its native dialect”? (a) Professor Smith does not tell us anything about his theory of error: one cannot expect him to explain everything; yet it is exceedingly hard to understand how, if our way of putting the Real to ourselves is necessarily ideal, we can ever either speak the truth or have any true belief. And it is no less difficult to understand the relation between the Real which the Mind creates, and the misrepresentation of that Real which issues from the same creative matrix.

(2) I am in similar difficulties with Professor Smith’s ‘non-mental’. One’s first difficulty is that the ‘non-mental’ is still mental, that Professor Smith can write of “the circumambient mental *or* non-mental” (b) just as though the terms were synonyms, and one might use either indifferently. But if that were so, the terms would be simply meaningless; for it is impossible that anything at

(a) p. 236, (b) p. 242.

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the same time should both be and not be something. The obvious assumption is that the 'non-mental' is mental in a way, but not in the way that it is 'non-mental': in other words, that there are two senses of the word 'mental', so that in *one* sense of the word we can speak of this "part of the Real" as being 'mental', but in another sense of the word we can speak of it as 'non-mental'. Yet even so I do not see how it is possible for anyone, unless he is given a special explanation, to derive any meaning from the phrase 'non-mental mental'; and such an explanation Professor Smith never, as far as I can see, vouchsafes. He states that the difference between Mind and the non-mental is a difference in the degree of 'self-illumination' or 'spirituality', that the non-mental is homogeneous with what is mental ('what is mental' here being used of course in the sense in which 'non-mental' is *not* mental, *not* in the sense in which the 'non-mental' is mental); and then he suddenly changes 'non-mental' into 'extra-mental', and seems quite clearly to identify the 'non-mental' with what (according to him) we mistakenly call 'historical events'; so multiplying the confusion. For one wants to know in what sense the non-mental is also extra-mental. Of course, from the common-sense point of view, 'events' are 'extra-mental'. But how can Professor Smith, who denies that nature is the reality of anything, and holds that whatever in any sense is, is created by Mind, speak of these creata of Mind as 'extra-mental'? Professor Smith seems at any rate quite clear on this point, that there is nothing

“ other than and transcending our nature ” : if he allows himself to distinguish momentarily between “ our nature ” and “ what surrounds it ”, between “ ourselves ” and “ our world ”, he adds the immediate caution that this ‘ other than ourselves ’ is not *really* other, but is in us (though not in us alone). (a) So that, since History is ‘ spiritual ’, and there is no distinction between the Spirit which is ‘ history ’ and the Spirit which is in us, what are we to understand by ‘ extra-mental ’ ? And although it seems at one time as though the non-mental were in some way or other the Reality of what we (mistakenly, and yet perhaps conveniently) call ‘ events ’, yet at other times it seems as though the term were used to refer to what according to the ideas of common-sense is something quite different ; because in developing his view of Self-consciousness, Professor Smith writes that “ the non-mental real at times short-circuits Mind’s natural course ” and that “ what is thus realised are . . . gifts (which) . . . fall outside *actual* or explicit Self-consciousness. Thus actual Self-consciousness appears always to be accompanied or environed by the un-self-conscious.” (b) Since Professor Smith speaks elsewhere of Mind being enclosed and environed by the ‘ non-mental ’, one certainly gathers that the ‘ non-mental ’ is to be identified with, or at least assimilated to the ‘ un-selfconscious ’ ; and then one could understand the remark about the non-mental ‘ short-circuiting Mind’s natural course ’ in a psychological sense, and the distinction between Mind and the

(a) p. 242, (b) pp. 240-1.

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non-mental real as being more or less on a par with Mr. Fawcett's distinction between thought and imagination. But in that case whatever is one to make of 'extra-mental'? And does Professor Smith really intend to identify 'what are called historical events' with 'what is called intuition' or 'the un-selfconscious'?

These are but specimens of the difficulties I have encountered in trying to understand Professor Smith's New Idealism; and though it may be that Professor Smith would be able to resolve them all; or perhaps he might retort that as criticism of his position they are *nihil ad rem*; yet nevertheless I propose to take them as illustrations of my general criticism of the philosophy which, following in the footsteps of Croce and Gentile, he adopts. The criticism is this: that the structure of Idealism is based on equivocation, the fallacy *παρὰ τὴν ὁμωσυμίαν*. Idealism, admittedly, is opposed to common-sense, not only in its conclusions but in its terminology. It uses words in a 'peculiar' or paradoxical way. This Professor Smith admits, but retorts that the charge of paradoxy is *nihil ad rem*. But the trouble is that the terminology, though paradoxical, is not paradoxical enough, that the argument frequently deviates into common-sense, although it is directed to establishing a position which is directly opposed to common-sense. Thus, for instance, the term 'extra-mental' can only have meaning if it be given a common-sense meaning, and the distinction between 'real' and 'ideal' is based on the common-

sense distinction between a real objective world and an ideal subjective world, which may be a distortion of the former; and these conceptions are introduced without explanation into a system which is based on a denial of such common-sense beliefs; with the result that the argument becomes not merely paradoxical, but self-contradictory.

Such a contradiction is possible because idealism makes no attempt to criticize and define its own terminology. "When it is impossible to obtain good tools," remarks Mill, "the next best thing is to understand thoroughly the defects of those we have." Language is a notoriously defective instrument of *exact* abstract thought; but idealism, instead of trying to eliminate those defects, actually depends on them: it seems to me that Professor Smith, and other metaphysicians, proceed throughout by the *method of ambiguity*. My whole argument against the type of philosophic speculation which is represented most noteworthy in this volume by Professor Smith is that its arguments and doctrines are *meaningless*. Such an argument of course involves the question: what is meant by denying meaning to the language of idealism? I can imagine Professor Smith saying to me, rather sternly: "You say, Mr. Coates, that my philosophy is meaningless. Then will you please explain how it is that these views of mine, or views very similar to them, are accepted as true by some of the profoundest thinkers of the present day? Don't you think you had better explain that fact to yourself before you start pro-

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claiming the meaninglessness of my philosophy to others ? ”

Such a challenge I must endeavour to answer. Let me begin by taking two texts, almost at haphazard, as it were :

“ Labour organizations in Japan have assumed larger and larger dimensions in contrast to the decrease of similar bodies abroad, due to the depression throughout the world, excepting, perhaps, in the United States of America. Up to the time of the quake-fire of 1923, the members of such organizations in Japan scarcely numbered a little over 100,000.”

My second extract is from the *Prometheus Unbound* :

“ Ah, sister ! Desolation is a delicate thing :  
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the  
air,  
But treads with killing footstep, and fans with  
silent wing  
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best  
and gentlest bear ;  
Who, soothed to a false repose by the fanning  
plumes above  
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and  
busy feet,  
Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster,  
Love,  
And wake, and find the shadow Pain. . . .”

The first of these two extracts is prose, and the

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second is poetry. And the difference between prose and poetry (I have selected what seemed typical examples of the different kinds) is not of course merely a difference between what is written in verse and what is not : it goes much deeper than that, and depends, it seems to me, on the dual function of language itself ; which is both a means of information and an instrument of expression. In origin these disparate functions are indistinguishable : the cry of fear is also a signal of warning ; the savage can scarcely tell of the simplest thing without excitement ; and the earliest literature is neither ' fact ' nor ' fancy ' but a mixture of both. (Who shall say that the song of birds is anything but pure expressive art ?) But with the development of thought and language the dual function is recognized, and we distinguish between fiction and fact, between the poet and the historian, the fabulist and the scientist, even though it is true that the kinds continue to overlap : there is no contradiction between them, but pure information and pure expression are at the opposite ends of a single scale. And the difference between the two kinds seems to be something like this : that *information* must be information about something, which in some way *is*, independently of speaker and listener, and in that case meaning depends on the reference being unambiguous (on the logical use of language) ; whereas expression does not (necessarily) refer to any already existing actuality, but may rather create a new reality, and in that case meaning depends on the suggestiveness of language.



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Let us consider the two examples I have chosen. In the case of the first the questions we raise are : (a) is this an accurate statement ? and (b) is it unambiguous ? Thus the second sentence is certainly unambiguous, but it might be inaccurate ; the first sentence on the other hand might be considered ambiguous inasmuch as the clause " due to the depression throughout the world " might be taken to modify *either* " have assumed larger and larger dimensions " *or* " the decrease of similar bodies abroad." And so in the case of any statement of fact, according as it is accurate or the reverse, we say that it is true or false, and according as it is unambiguous or the reverse, we say that it has a clear meaning or that it has little or no meaning. But in the case of the second extract, it is clear that, as poetry, we are concerned not with accuracy or ambiguity, but rather with suggestiveness and musicality. It is the flow of the words, the rhythmic succession and assonance, that primarily captivate and thrill us ; and at the same time the flow of images rouses an echo in our memory, and we experience a never-too-dearly-bought delight.

It is of course true that these images must mean something, that poetry must be poetry about something, just as a painting must be a painting of something ; but in neither case is the end information, and in the case of poetry at least the ' something ' may be a pure fiction, an imaginative synthesis, the parts of which may belong to the past, but which as a whole is something altogether new. The poet, as Shelley also wrote :

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"... will watch from dawn to gloom  
The lake-reflected sun illumine  
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,  
Nor heed nor see, what things they be ;  
But from these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality ! "

The poet is a *maker* not a describer ; and as for the claim that what he makes is ' more real than living man ', that, we say, is a ' poetic truth ' ; because the word ' real ' here has a poetic meaning, not a prose meaning. This is something that may be denied by many ; who hold that the artist recognizes, and interprets to us some transcendent ' form of beauty ' ; but that view (as I have elsewhere argued) seems to depend on a fallacious assimilation of all experience to the form of sense-perception, and results in an impossible identification of creation with recognition. <sup>(1)</sup>

But (to return to the narrower question of meaning) what I think can hardly be disputed, is that there is a difference between prose or *factual meaning* and *poetic meaning*. Those philosophers who most willingly believe that ' Beauty ' is a part or aspect of

<sup>(1)</sup> Of course the painter and the author do ' represent ' ; and just as a picture can give (if the artist have the will and skill for it) a truer representation than any photograph can, so also a novel or play can give a truer representation of ' life ' than any biography or history ; and for that reason Aristotle said well that the drama is ' more philosophic ' than history. But it must be remembered, the artist as interpreter interprets to us no ' transcendental form ' but only the matter of common experience ; and his work as an artist is always *essentially creative*, whether it be in synthesizing his experience or in the formal ' making of patterns '. Music is the purest of the arts because it is the most purely creative.


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objective Reality, most strenuously insist that philosopher is *not* a poet ; and all the more, if it is held that the poet is also 'interpreting Reality', must it be acknowledged that this difference of meaning exists. Poetic meaning depends essentially on the suggestive richness of language. It is to be noted that just as the assonance, which constitutes the immediate sensuous beauty of poetry, depends on the sound-structure of the particular language so that the beauty is peculiar to that language and cannot be translated to any other (it may be perhaps to some extent *recreated* in the alien structure, but it cannot be *reproduced*) ; so also the ideas and images of poetry depend to a large extent on the racial experience which underlies the language ; and as this experience differs from race to race, so those images and ideas are untranslatable. How much more the word 'rose' means to me than it can mean to a Japanese, and how much more the word 'cherry blossom' means to a Japanese than it can to me. And as it is with single words, so also it is with large units, with the whole itself. How much, say, does Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Dante's *Divine Comedy* depend for its meaning on the background of the Christian European experience. Only those artists, it seems to me, can properly be called 'universal' whose background is common to all human experience, not special to some section of humanity. But the poem cannot be said to *refer* to such background but rather uses it for its own purpose of expression and creation. Nor is there in art, *necessarily*, any dependence on some third 'reality' besides the artist's

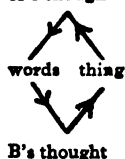
and recipient : there is no triangulation, but liaison direct from soul to soul.<sup>(1)</sup>

But in the case of fact the suggestive richness of language is the great enemy of meaning. What we require here is unambiguity, and the most colourless words are the least ambiguous. (A matter of fact can be stated equally well in any language that is sufficiently developed.) The most definitely informative statements are those of the form : 'this box is square,' or of the form : ' $2 \times 2 = 4$ .' The symbols of mathematics are completely unambiguous, and so, generally, is the language of common-sense : and that is why the statements of mathematics and of common-sense are most certain—certainly true or certainly not true. And the further we depart from these two extremes of definiteness, the greater the danger of ambiguity, the danger that what we say or write may be merely meaningless. We cannot escape from our own imaginations : we are 'poets' in spite of ourselves. Hence the need for definition and logic : our language must not merely express and impress, but must have a definite frame of

(<sup>1</sup>) Messrs. Ogden and Richards represent the relation between

words, thoughts and things by the symbol :  ; but I would suggest

that, to represent *communication*, we must duplicate the figure, thus :



; but where, in pure art, there is no 'thing', no factual reference, the communication can be represented in the simple form :




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(<sup>1</sup>) Messrs. Ogden and Richards represent the relation between

words, thoughts and things by the symbol :  ; but I would suggest

that, to represent *communication*, we must duplicate the figure, thus :

A's thought



B's thought

; but where, in pure art, there is no ' thing ',  
no factual reference, the communication can  
be represented in the simple form :

A's emotion



B's impression

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reference. What is 'true' as poetry may well be false as fact, and what may have meaning as poetry may as fact be meaningless. This does not trouble us except when, as so often, poetry is taken for fact, creation for representation. There lies, in my opinion, the chief if not the only source of human error—are not all distortion and all misrepresentation imaginative?—and this is the fallacy of the method of idealism.

Professor Smith and Mr. Fawcett both claim to be representing some Reality which exists quite independently of what they write or think about it ; and it is in reference to that claim that I say that again and again their arguments are meaningless : they have meaning as poetry but not as fact. They use language imaginatively, not logically ; and the result is that their writings are full of ambiguities, hypostatizations, and false analogies ; for what in poetry we call ' colour ' in prose we call ' ambiguity ', what in poetry we call ' imagery ' in prose we call ' hypostatization ', and what in poetry we call ' metaphor ', we call in prose ' false analogy '. It seems to me that Professor Smith's claim to be exempt from ' the jurisprudence of ordinary logic ' is an admission that what he writes can only have a poetic meaning ; for I can conceive of no meaning which is not *either* poetical *or* logical. And not only the speculations of these writers, but all metaphysics, all ' constructive philosophy ' is obnoxious to the same criticism ; because all knowledge (as distinguished from acquaintance) is analysis, and all construction is ποίησις. (Mathematics as an existing

system is an object of knowledge in the same way, for instance, as a symphony is ; but a process of mathematical thought seems to be, in itself and unapplied, no more a process of knowing than the making of the symphony is.<sup>(1)</sup> Unless reality is 'given' we cannot know it, and knowing is knowing the 'how' of what is given ; and the especial task of philosophy is to analyse the 'how' of our experience as a whole, so that we can limit and establish our beliefs, and distinguish truth from error.

A word here of modification and explanation. There is no reason in the world to suppose that science involves more 'hard thinking' than poetry. A poem, or any work of art, may involve a very small amount or an immense amount of what Rossetti called "fundamental brain-work" ; and so also of inquiry : by no means every work of science, every analysis of fact is profound and full of thought—quite the reverse indeed. The difference between poetry and 'prose' is not in the *amount* of brain-work involved, but in the *kind* of brain-work. And again, it is not of course the case that all metaphysical speculation is 'pure poetry', any more than all poetry (I use the word in its widest sense) is 'pure creation'. At one end of the scale we have pure analysis and description, of common-sense and

(1) But mathematics being a strictly logical *ποίησις*, has as an instrument of analysis an ideal definiteness and unambiguity ; it is not 'poetry' as contrasted with 'prose', but 'poetry' as contrasted with knowledge. We may say that knowledge is AA', mathematics AB, and poetry BB', where A is logical definiteness, A' is analysis, B is synthesis, and B' is imaginative suggestiveness. I do not pretend to offer this as in any way 'explaining' mathematics, but only hope to show that what I have said on the question of meaning is not, in this point, contradictory.



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of the sciences, at the other end pure poetry such as *Prometheus Unbound* or *The Faerie Queen* ; but between these two extremes there stretches the great body of writing, history, fiction, ethics, religion, and much speculative half-science ; and here throughout poetry and prose are mixed in varying proportions. And wherever poetry (creation) is mistaken for prose (fact), there we have error, or liability to error. The distinction between the two kinds depends, as I have already said, on the double function of language ; and it is because the language which philosophy must use is so easily ambiguous that in philosophy the confusion of kinds is most easily made, and is least noticeable. Each special science, because its view is limited, can define its terms according to those limits ; but philosophy, being unlimited, and trying to deal with experience as a whole, can hardly hope to achieve a similar definiteness. Yet insofar as it is ambiguous it ceases to be philosophy ; and the method of metaphysics is rooted in the essentially poetic ambiguity of language. It is perhaps not likely that any philosopher will produce a purely imaginary ‘ system ’ ; there must be some basis of fact somewhere, and truths will be enunciated, novel and profound in proportion to the mental stature of the author ; but the general argument will be inevitably vitiated as philosophy by the poetic use of language : it is a system that may convince, but can never be true. There are of course compensations. Such a metaphysic can survive a thousand blows ; it is neither true nor false ; and it survives for its poetic value,

while the matter of fact, if and when disproved, becomes mere débris to be cleared away. Will there not always be Platonists and Hegelians ?

And, finally in this connection, I would observe that whereas I have here put forward a theory of error which does (in my opinion) explain how certain kinds of philosophizing are liable to be mistaken, Professor Smith by claiming exemption for philosophic speculation from 'the jurisprudence of ordinary Logic', makes any such explanation impossible : surely some philosophers are mistaken in some of their opinions ; and if error is not a matter of 'ordinary Logic', what in the world is it ? And if Professor Smith says that 'nature' is 'not the reality of anything', how is he to explain the constant use of that word by all sorts of people, including philosophers ?

I have now, I hope, explained what I mean by saying that many of the statements made by Professor Smith are meaningless ; but I should like, before closing this chapter, to illustrate a particular fallacy which seems to me to run through and through metaphysical discussion.

Professor Smith 'assumes' that reality manifests itself "most freely and fully in Self-consciousness" ;<sup>(a)</sup> and he protests that "it is a monstrous perversion to impoverish and scale down its momentous meaning to no more than that of 'awareness of another' " by a very serious misnomer " called by the same name as that which is aware of it", or that of a mirroring of an object itself the mirror image of the

(a) p. 238.

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mirroring mirror, etc.” (a) In this protest I heartily join. The trouble seems to be with the psychologists, and indeed with us all, that we find it difficult if not impossible to escape from the frame of the subject-object relation ; we cannot avoid thinking of the mind as a mirror, mirroring something external to itself. That analogy in the case of sense-perception may be allowed to be not *altogether* fallacious ; but in the case of self-consciousness it is altogether fallacious. ‘ Mind ’ is not simple. It is not by definition but by reflection on our concrete experience (that is, by self-consciousness itself) that we realise what mind and what self-consciousness are. (Consciousness seems to bear the same relation to mind as will does to character. ‘ Character ’ is the potentiality, ‘ will ’ the actuality of the self as agent ; ‘ mind ’ is the potentiality, and ‘ consciousness ’ the actuality of the self as experient.) I can think about something, and at the same time think about myself thinking about it ; I can act, and at the same time be acutely conscious of myself acting, of myself as a body, of the ‘ feel ’ of any part, or of the whole of myself ; I can enjoy the present and at the same time recall the past, be conscious of what I think I am, yet catch a (rare) glimpse of what I appear to someone else ; and so on. What ‘ mind ’ is I know in knowing my potentiality as an experient, what ‘ consciousness ’ is I know in being conscious ; and what ‘ self-consciousness ’ is I know also in being self-conscious : the word is ‘ meaningless ’

(a) p. 240.

only to those who are not and cannot be self-conscious —

*O Fortunati nimium, sua si bona norint !*

But then, of course, they do not : one cannot be happy in the consciousness of not being self-conscious.

So far then I quite agree with Professor Smith as against those would-be psychologists who argue that what we have as our most intimate possession or quality cannot *be* anything at all, because it cannot be reduced to a satisfactory abstract formula. But where I cannot follow him is in his way of treating self-consciousness and 'Mind' as independently existing 'entities', somehow existing in their own right. He says that the Real is a History, but also that it is "self-enacting or self-determination." (a) Now if he meant this in a pluralistic sense, that Reality is a 'republic' of self-enacting, self-determining selves or individuals, then I could understand and accept the statement ; but I do not believe for a moment that it is to be understood in that sense ; and in any other sense the statement seems to me to be meaningless. Because 'self-consciousness', 'self-enacting' or any other kind of 'self-being' or 'self-acting' must imply *a* self or individual. Self is *oneself* : to tack a personal reflexive on to an abstraction is a mere abuse of language. And yet Professor Smith throughout refrains from speaking of selves. He writes of 'Mind' that it is not "a nature other than and transcending our nature, but . . . a nature which

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is in us (though not in us alone). What is spoken of is not a Spirit beyond all spirits, but one which is in all spirits, and which is us and which we are. . . . With this explanation I continue to speak of Mind (without either the definite or the indefinite article).”<sup>(a)</sup> But this explanation is no explanation : it burks the whole question of the relation between ‘Mind’ and ‘my mind’. What is meant by ‘a nature’? how can we ‘be’ ‘Mind’? if ‘Mind’ is ‘we’, how can it also be ‘in us’? and how can Professor Smith, if he rejects Pluralism (as I certainly understand that he does), speak of ‘we’ and of ‘our nature’ at all—what meaning can the terms have for him?

Modern idealism, it is generally asserted, starts with the *Cogito ergo sum* of Descartes ; but the fact is that the whole of modern idealism is based on the assumption that *Cogito ergo sum* = *cogitare ergo esse* ; whereas in fact *cogitare* and *esse* only have meaning as the infinitive of *cogito* and *sum*. ‘Mind’, ‘thought’ and ‘self-consciousness’ are all abstractions from the concrete and only have meaning in relation to that concrete ; which is *for me my* thinking, *my* experience, *my* consciousness of *myself*. And yet idealists persist in speaking of ‘Mind’ “without either the definite or the indefinite article”, as though *that* were the concrete reality ; and claiming Descartes for their protagonist, do not attempt to explain how they proceed from *cogito* to *cogitare*, from *sum* to *esse*. And not indeed the idealists alone. It is the mathematical mind of Mr. Russell that,

(a) p. 242-3.

realising the confusedness of this supposedly rock-bottom 'I think', has simplified it to 'it thinks in me' (*cogitat in me!*); and this simplification is welcomed by Dr. Bosanquet (could there be a more striking instance of "The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy"! ) as a substitute for that "deceptive phrase" 'I think'.<sup>(1)</sup> But this simplification is sheer perversion, sheer non-sense. And are we to say also 'it hears in me', 'it sees in me'? for *cogito* surely covers both seeing and hearing. What is this 'it' which does my hearing and seeing and thinking for me? and is there no essential difference *for me* between 'it thinks in me' and 'it thinks in you' or 'it thinks in them'? Dr. Broad has remarked somewhere—I cannot lay my hand on the passage, nor recall it verbatim—that for sheer nonsense there is nothing to rival some pronouncements and some arguments of philosophers. I agree with him, most emphatically.

Nothing can be more immediate or more certain for me than that I exist, I am real, I think. However I may analyse those fundamental facts, I cannot possibly 'get behind' them, escape them, or neglect them. Philosophy must account for thought, existence, reality, by relating them somehow to the basic 'I think', 'I exist', 'I am real'. Idealism persistently refuses to do so.

(<sup>1</sup>) Cf. *Con. Brit. Phil.*, 1st Series, p. 61.

## CHAPTER VIII

JAMES WARD : PLURALISM AND MONADISM

**I** MUST confess—and I hope the confession is not too rude—that to turn from Professor Smith to James Ward is like going outdoors on a day of wind and sunshine, from a room whose smoky dimness has been an oppression to the senses ; and outside one is again in contact with the sights and sounds of the earth, can feel

“ How he sets his bones  
To bask i’ the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet  
For the ripple to run over in its mirth.”

James Ward seems to me to have belonged to the ‘ genuine English tradition ’ of Locke and Hume and Butler. He was an eminent exponent of that common-sense attitude which prefers facts to phrases, and to keep its speculation firmly anchored to the grounds of concrete experience. This is a quality which Professor Muirhead finds characteristic of contemporary British philosophy in general : it is, I think, far to seek in many of its representatives. Ward’s position as a psychologist is indeed adequately recognized by exempting him from the alphabetical arrangement of the volume ; in my humble opinion the *Psychological Principles* will retain its magisterial position long after the brilliance of *Appearance and*

*Reality* has grown dim : it is a work of which no change of philosophic fashion can affect the reputation.

Not of course that I regard the philosophic position which he has so briefly outlined in these pages as completely 'true' and satisfactory ; in that case there would have been no cause why I should try to express an opinion of my own. Though I can accept his Monadism, with reservations—that is, as Pluralism, I cannot accept his Theism. But at least it seems to me that in a few brief pages he does establish certain definite facts, which may be subsumed but cannot be either controverted or ignored ; and yet these same facts are ignored, by implication at least, by many of the writers in this volume. And on the other hand, if I venture to disagree with him, it is in the field of the admittedly suppositive, where Ward himself would not I think have claimed the same kind of certainty as he claims for his psychological analysis.

Of this I do not propose to give a summary, but only to note certain points which seem to be of especial importance, and which I wish to bring forward in support of views such as I have already expressed in relation to various problems and aspects of philosophy, and which I hope to develop now more fundamentally in these three final chapters. They may be numbered as seven :

(1) Any analysis of sense-knowledge must be based on the fundamental dualism of experience. Descartes' *Ego sum* itself implies the correlative *Id est*, *Id est* being the objective continuum. This



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correlation or duality of subject and object is to be taken as the bedrock of experience.

(2) Though the gap between the highest apes and the lowest races of man is the widest breach of continuity known to the biologist, yet the advance of any normal human being *living in society* is only a recapitulation of the advance gradually achieved through the 'social medium' by the race as a whole. The fact that thought-knowledge has arisen through inter-subjective intercourse was quite overlooked by Kant and other eighteenth-century philosophers.

(3) Though thought-knowledge and sense-knowledge present two poles of certainty, yet, if there is any continuity between them, thought-knowledge must be at least implicit at the perceptual level; and on the other hand the conceptual relations of logic and mathematics have their perceptual counterpart: the behaviour of sentient creatures would otherwise be inexplicable.

(4) We attribute numerical identity to objects on the analogy of our 'bodily self': that is to say, in interacting with perceptual things we attribute to them an individuality and persisting actuality like our own. And the same holds good of the category of causality, if by 'cause' we mean an efficient, primary cause or agent. So we are brought back to the category of subject (or substance), assuming with Leibniz that 'activity is of the essence of substance in general'. However, temporal and spatial contiguities, or circumstances, of course, still remain, or the activity would be indeterminate.

(5) The sciences repudiate the real categories of

substance and cause, since their task is only to *describe* nature.

(6) Things for primitive minds are much nearer to what we call 'ejects' than to the seemingly inanimate objects which we now discriminate from these. The term 'eject' then may be regarded as so far covering the two cases—that of things personified and that of actual persons. But in the former case the assurance of numerical identity is always lacking, whereas mutual intercourse places personal identity beyond question even when changes in outward appearance prevent immediate recognition.

(7) There is one part of the world which we can understand, while the rest of it we can *prima facie* only more or less systematically describe. Knowledge which is understanding of existents may surely claim to be more real and valuable than knowledge which is merely descriptive.

These are the points I have selected as the most fundamentally important of his exposition; and although I should myself approach the subject under discussion (the epistemological problem) from rather a different angle, and my conclusions might differ both in some details and in general 'colour', yet I think there are certain facts which *any* treatment of the problem must accept as true, to wit:

(a) The existence of the subject involves in itself the actuality and otherness of the object (objective world).

(b) The concepts of identity, causality and 'substance' belong primarily to our immediate self-consciousness, and we attribute them to objects

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analogically ; but causality and ' substance ' (or, as I should prefer to say, ' existence ') we can recognize only in persons and through inter-subjective intercourse.

(c) We understand individuals, because we can interpret their behaviour in terms of self : things we can only know descriptively ; and therefore in (extra-human) nature the categories of (real) cause and of ' substance ' do not apply. In brief, I know that I am (that I exist) and that other people exist ; and all my ideas of reality or existence must derive from my own consciousness of being an existent among other existents : what falls outside the realm of individuals I must either say is not ' fully ' real, or else I must attribute to it a reality which is patterned on my own reality.

However, there is a small, but ultimately important matter, on which I must raise an objection. I cannot agree that in the case of *things* " the assurance of numerical identity is always lacking." (a) For surely the assertion of *id est*, which is implied in *ego sum*, involves in itself the idea of numerical identity ; or, to put it in another way, to deny ' persisting actuality ' (which is surely something quite distinct from individuality, or ' substance ' in Leibniz's sense) to all non-personal objects, amounts to a denial of the actuality of the ' correlative Other ', whose actuality makes experience possible. Here is the cross-roads, whence branch the two roads of idealist or common-sense philosophy ; because ' numerical identity ' seems to be but another name

(a) p. 34.

for 'material identity', and if the assurance of that identity is lacking, the world of common-sense, and the sciences which take that world for granted, are left without logical foundation: without the assurance of identity we could not even describe or name or recognize things; we should have no grounds for believing in the 'Uniformity of Nature'. To consider the question *a posteriori*—I do not see that in actual experience we have any stronger ground for accepting personal identity than we have for accepting numerical or material identity: we do, as a matter of fact, mistake identities in both cases; and if in the case of individuals our doubts are dispelled by 'mutual intercourse', so in the case of things they are by familiar acquaintance: I am, as a matter of fact, just as sure that what I see before me is 'my desk' as I am that she whom I hear talking is 'Elizabeth': there is no test which can be applied in the one case which cannot be applied in the other.

So far Ward proceeds with his epistemological analysis, and then turns to build on it a 'monadistic pluralism'; though here admittedly knowledge must be "eked out by analogy." (a) In this development I can follow him only part of the way, and wish to develop as an alternative to his 'monadistic pluralism' what I would call a 'common-sense pluralism'.

His argument, briefly, is as follows:

Naturalism professes to deal solely with pheno-

(a) p. 46.

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mena, whereas Spiritualism claims that persons are not phenomenal but real, and finds in personality the source of the categories of substance and cause. Now the term 'phenomena' supposes that there is an 'independent something' which 'corresponds to phenomena'; but Naturalism, while admitting this, insists, as Kant also did, that this reality is unknown and unknowable. Yet since this reality is *ex hypothesi* the *ratio essendi* of phenomena, must not the 'laws' of nature be due to this reality? and so far as this reality (or *ontal*, as Ward calls it) 'corresponds to' phenomena, is it not plain that phenomena must so far reveal it? so that the technical meaning of the term 'phenomena' as a *kind* of object distinct from the object which is partially known through it, seems philosophically superfluous. Kant's 'transcendental object' is in fact just as real as the subject of experience, the 'transcendental subject'. In short, we return again to the fundamental duality: *Ego sum et aliud est*. But while retaining this duality of subject and object, may we not suppose that the differentiations of the continuum, so far as we individuate them, correspond to objects, *i.e.*, to other subjects? This seems to be possible if we substitute for the inert matter of Newton's third definition 'bare monads', and take reality to connote both individuality and behaviour. It is to be observed that even science, though contenting itself with an abstract analytical scheme, yet employs concepts, such as action and reaction, force and energy, attraction and repulsion, which are analogical attributions to the objective of what is

fundamentally subjective :<sup>(1)</sup> in fact, so long as we can 'understand' the facts confronting us, we interpret them in terms of motive, and even in plants we find adjustments to environment which are at least analogous to behaviour. Would it not be simpler then to regard the ultimate 'reals' as entelechies rather than inert particles of matter ?

After further considering the epistemological problem, Ward proposes a 'pampsychical' solution, based, (a) on the recognition of only one kind of reality, that of experients ranging continuously between two limits, an upper and a lower, both inaccessible to our direct apprehension ; (b) on the recognition of a correlation between the rank of the experient and the range and differentiation of its continuum ; (c) on the assumption, in accordance with the principle of continuity, that the same kind of correlation holds good, *mutatis mutandis*, in the case of bare monads ; which assumption will allow us to account for the stability and epigenesis of the historical world.

This is, of course, a very imperfect summary of his argument ; but it is perhaps sufficient to my purpose, which is to suggest an alternative development of his epistemological postulates.

(1) I fail to see how the problem of the 'dualism of mind and matter' is a real one, from the standpoint of pluralism ; and I do not altogether understand how Ward answers the question he puts to

(1) It may be observed that the more recent theories in Physics tend to dispense with these concepts : indeed the present trend of science is to throw off the last shreds of 'ejective' interpretation ; so that Ward's argument may be said to be, to that extent, already out of date.

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himself : whether, for instance, he regards time and space as real, whether he regards bodies as only phenomenal aspects of reals ? But if we say that the ' subject ' is real, and that all reals are (to be thought of as) subjects, then surely this duality is resolved in the subject, who is not a union of incompatibles but the unity which, existing and thinking, underlies all our thought and all the antitheses of thought. To speak of a ' union of incompatibles ' is to speak as though the subject were ' made up of ' two elements, which existed in separation prior to their (impossible) blending ; whereas the subject is to be thought of as the original fount of all our ideas of being and thought and everything else. This ' basis of dualism ' is the subject I wish to discuss in my last chapter ; but the ' problem of duality ' seems to me at least in part due to a confusion between the duality of *sum* and *cogito*, and the duality of *sum* and *aliud est*. As purpose and real causality are attributed to other agents by analogy, so also we attribute numerical or material identity to other things and persons on the analogy of our ' bodily self ', as Ward himself points out. It would seem then that both material and personal identity have their subjective and their ' foreign ' aspect for each self. My ' bodily self ' is not a phenomenon to *me*, because I am self-conscious, and my ' self ' includes my ' bodily self ' : ' my body ' is immediate to me in the same way that ' my mind ' is ; so that while, objectively, we may say that body is phenomenal and mind real, from the subject-object point of view we may say that mind and body are subject-

ively immediate, but objectively mediate. But the theory of psycho-physical parallelism, as it is usually stated at any rate, mistakenly tries to align objectively phenomenal body with subjectively immediate 'mind'. *A*'s bodily movements may be regarded simply as the phenomenal aspect of an object which is *A*, or as behaviour, that is, interpreted in terms of *A*'s mediately known reality; but the parallelism is not between the immediately known real *A* (*A* as subject) and *A*'s objectively observed bodily changes, but *either* between *A* as subject, whose reality is immediate and *A* as object whose reality is mediate *or* between the phenomenal aspect of *A* as object and the mental or 'real' aspect of *A* as object. We can agree to the scientific postulate that there is correspondence between the object as phenomenon and the object as mediately known real, and we can agree that 'my mind' and 'my body' are only two aspects of, or abstractions from, a single unity which is 'my self'; but to place a phenomenon in a causal relation to immediate reality is on a par with making the movements of a reflection in the glass the cause of the movements of the thing reflected. This error of some psychologists was of course perfectly well realised and explicitly corrected by Ward himself; but what it seems to me he does not sufficiently emphasize, is that *sum* is the 'middle term' which supplies the link between *cogito* and *aliud est*, and that there and there only is the dualism of 'mind' and 'body' resolved into a unity.

(2) Again the opposition between naturalism and spiritualism, as he poses it, does not seem to me an



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altogether real opposition. Naturalism, he says, professes to deal solely with phenomena : spiritualism assumes that persons are not phenomenal but real. The assumption and the profession do not contradict one another. Science can deal only with the phenomenal ; and it is not the task of the scientist, but of the philosopher, to consider what are the implications of that limitation : the scientist only falls foul of the philosopher if and when he identifies this ' foreign ' aspect with the real, claims that his ' laws ' are laws ' governing the real '. Reality, as Ward himself several times emphasizes, is ' given ' to things by the subject on the basis of his own reality : phenomena (he quite rightly insists) are not a separate *kind* of object, but they are the ' foreign ' or objective aspect of what we only know as real by supposing it to be as we are ourselves. There is a minimum of reality which we must allow to objects in order that *id est*, and therefore *ego sum*, may be thinkable—namely, numerical or material identity ; whereas the maximum of reality, which we can allow to some ' objects ', that is persons, is a reality as complete as our own : this reality is not ' unknown and unknowable ', but it is known only subjectively and attributed to the object analogically. But if we, as Ward does, attribute a maximal degree, or at least a more than minimal degree, of reality to all objects, and then say that the ' laws of science ' ' reveal ' that reality, we are committed to the hopeless alignment of the conceptual or ideal ' laws ' of science with the real and immediate activity of the self, which leads either to the ' mechanical ' view which exactly

reverses the true order, treating the generalizations of science as 'real causes' and subjective reality as phenomenal, or else to the anthropomorphic fallacy which hypostatizes the subjective into a 'Nature' that 'wills' and 'devises', whose marionettes we are. Such are Schopenhauer's 'Will', Bergson's *élan vital*, Mr. Joad's 'Life Force'. *If the word 'phenomenal' has any meaning at all, then it is quite certain that the laws of science are phenomenal.*

(3) And Ward goes on to suggest that "the differentiations of that continuum (confronting us), so far as we individuate them, correspond not merely to objects but to ejects also, *i.e.*, to other subjects," (a) and that movement of every kind is *really* due to individual purpose: so at least I understand his discussion on page 39. How far we are to take these suggestions seriously, and how far they are essential to a monadistic philosophy, I do not know; but I think they illustrate to what anthropomorphic extremes Ward's argument occasionally leads. To suggest that a stone as such is an individual acting purposively seems to me a return to the crudest animism: the only possible supposition, from the vitalist point of view (it seems to me) is that a stone is a mass of (molecular?) reals which do *not* combine into a higher than molecular reality. Again, while it is true that motion which cannot be described in terms of purpose lies outside the 'real' categories of cause and substance (or 'existence'), it is surely quite without justification to argue from that to the conclusion that all motion must be purposive. In

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the first place it is clear that all the movements of real agents are not purposive : we fall down when we stumble against something in the dark without in the least intending to do so, even ' subconsciously ' ; and, secondly, even the lowest organisms are so far removed from us that we can hardly attribute to them ' purpose ' in any human sense (and ' purpose ' emptied of human sense is emptied of all sense, is a mere *nominis umbra*) ; and therefore to attribute purpose to ' bare monads ' or ' entelechies ' which constitute the reality of the inanimate world would seem to be simply meaningless. In short the subject is focal, and the farther we travel from that focus, the more abstract becomes our knowledge, and proportionately less the ' degree of reality '. We may find it useful, or even necessary, to reify in some degree the abstract by supposing that all bodies are somehow subjects—that is, real in the way that we are real ourselves ; but to anthropomorphize without cause or restraint confounds all the categories of thought and reality, and produces mere confusion—and animism. And moreover, such a procedure does not really *explain* anything at all : our *knowledge* remains precisely what it was before, insofar as it is not vitiating by the general confusion of such supposals.

The truth is, I think, that Ward was to some extent thrown off his natural balance by the nineteenth-century quarrel between ' science ' and ' philosophy '. Although he was himself essentially a ' scientific philosopher ', and although his main contribution to

philosophic thought was in the field of psychology, that is, of a special science (and it is just because and insofar as he is 'scientific' that, it seems to me, his philosophy is valuable); yet for him 'science' inevitably connoted the speculations of Spencer and his school, which were in fact no more 'scientific' than the idealism which the 'philosophers', including Ward himself, opposed to it. And because 'science' seems, to him, to lead inevitably to materialism, he is inclined to distrust it utterly, and to exalt 'philosophy' at its expense. Thus when he writes: "what suffices for positive science cannot content philosophy, which is bent on *understanding* and appreciating this nature which environs us," (a) he seems to me both unnecessarily to oppose the scientific to the philosophic attitude, and to make for the latter at the expense of the former an impossible claim.

Let us go back, for a moment, to the 'two parts of the world', individuals whom we can understand, and things which we can merely describe. Now Ward's argument seems to be that, if we interpret the latter in terms of the former, we shall then understand both parts equally well; and that such an interpretation is therefore a philosophic necessity. But this seems to be a mistake; because we understand individuals by applying the real categories of cause and 'substance' to *particular instances of behaviour*; but even if we assume that these categories are applicable to the non-individual, we *cannot in fact apply them*; and it is I think worth

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while noticing that what falls outside behaviour even in ourselves we cannot understand (in Ward's sense of the word), but can only describe. We cannot understand *why* we fall down in the same way that we can understand why we act purposively ; and I fail altogether to see how any philosophic theory can help us to understand. It is no less futile philosophically than it is scientifically, to seek to find a *cause* of gravity :<sup>(1)</sup> the agnosticism of science is not only perfectly justified in itself, but there is no method by which philosophy, as distinct from science, can pass beyond it. The philosophical hypothesis that all things have subjective reality gives to our conception of the universe a formal unity which would otherwise be lacking ; but it does not explain anything ; and it remains an hypothesis, a supposition which science alone can substantiate. Indeed from the purely logical or philosophical point of view I do not see that there is any more reason to suppose that ' things ' are real in the same way that persons are, than there is to suppose that there are two distinct kinds or grades of reality : individuals who are real, and ' things ' which are only partly real ; because I think it is the part of logic not so much to reach a formal synthesis as to criticize and delimit the categories of our thinking : just because our mind is the ' sun ' of our universe,

(1) *I.e.*, a *final* cause. The Relativity suggestion that gravity " manifests the structure of Space-Time " assigns of course only a descriptive, or, as I have called it, a *physical* cause of the phenomenon : as when we say that wood floats *because* it is lighter than water. Cf. *supra*, p. 134. N.B. also that only a particular event can be assigned either an *active* cause (*causa causans*) or a *circumstantial* cause : *i.e.*, only a *particular* action can have a real cause.

we can understand reality only in 'solar' terms ; and what is not 'solar' cannot be real.

But the question of the probability of such an hypothesis is really a scientific one : there can be no logical (philosophical) probability which is not scientific. Thus if the scientist were able to record 'behaviour' in molecules (that is, were able to observe motions which could only be described in specifically biological language) the question would be absolutely determined : we should no longer doubt that apparently 'dead matter' has a subjective aspect. Such a thing is, I suppose, a physical impossibility ; yet we do find that the conclusions of biology afford definite arguments in favour of 'vitalism', to wit : that there is no break in continuity from the highest forms of life down to the barely perceptible or perceptibly living protozoon ; and that the vital developed historically from the non-vital. There is, it is hardly necessary to point out, no 'logical necessity' about such conclusions : it would be logically possible, but not biologically possible, that the vital had always had much its present form, that there is and always had been complete discontinuity between the vital and the non-vital. But it is the fact of evolution which compels us to assume (a) that there must be 'something' 'in' the protozoon which corresponds to 'mind' in us, and (b) that even the non-vital, and so apparently not wholly real, must in fact be somehow real in the sense also that the vital is real ; though we are quite unable to understand or even in the vaguest terms surmise its mode

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of being, but can only hypothesize that it is existent.

This is the argument I have already developed in my second chapter, the argument for what I would call 'scientific' vitalism. This seems to me at least as probable a theory to deduce from Ward's epistemological foundation as the 'monadistic' or 'spiritualistic' vitalism which he himself deduces from it ; and I want now briefly to consider wherein the difference lies.

According to Ward there is only one *kind* of reality, the reality of the monad ; and the monad is real in being an agent and experient, whereas bodies are merely 'phenomenal'. Leibniz himself declared that the monad is "a purely internal principle", not physical but psychical in its nature.<sup>(1)</sup> But as against what seem to be the conclusions deduced from that view I have already argued (a) that *my* body is not phenomenal to *me*, (b) that the 'laws of Nature' are necessarily phenomenal, and (c) that the assumption that all motion is purposive and that whatever we individuate is an individual confounds all the categories of science and common-sense, and is indistinguishable from the crudest animism. To tell the truth, I am not altogether clear what it is that Ward is really arguing for ; but it does seem to me that his monadism obscures the fact that 'an experient' is both 'psychical' and 'physical', and that he does not sufficiently realise that the only vitalism which can hold water is a vitalism which is not opposed to science but is based on science.

(1) *Monadologie*, 11 and 15-19.

As he himself remarks, "we know nothing of disembodied souls"; (a) and unless we attach our 'reality' to something within the time-space order, it will (metaphorically speaking) fly away and altogether escape our comprehension.

And therefore I would substitute for the monadism of Leibniz the earlier monadism of Bruno, whose monads were *both* spiritual and corporeal. (Bruno's monadism was of course derived in part, through Lucretius, from the atomism of Democritus and Epicurus.) And I would substitute for an 'animistic' vitalism a 'scientific' vitalism. Objectively, or 'phenomenally', we find that there is a descending scale of physical being, to wit: organic, cellular, and molecular; and with this physical or phenomenal scale it seems proper and natural to align the spiritual scale of being. 'Living' beings are real in the fullest sense, in the sense that 'I am real'; and below living beings we have non-living organic matter, and below that again inorganic matter: in organic matter the unit is the cell, in inorganic matter it is the molecule: and we must suppose that cells and molecules are also 'selves', but on a lower plane of reality. What, physically, determines the plane of reality is the degree of integration: what distinguishes the inorganic from the organic is that the former is not integrated above the molecular plane: a 'piece of matter' is not *a* real, but a collection of molecular reals (bare monads). And so also the difference between a living organism and non-living organic matter is that the latter is only a conglomer-



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ation of cells, not a system of cells integrated into a higher than cellular reality. Death is disintegration from the highest to a lower plane of being or reality ; and again, there seems to be a sense in which we may say that a piece of wood or a piece of cloth is *more* real than a stone or than water. Of any reality which is higher than human reality, not only do we know nothing, but it is *ex hypothesi* impossible that we should know anything ; for all our ideas of reality are derived from ' *sum* ', and we could only know of a ' higher than human ' by being ' higher than human '. And on the other hand it is *practically* useless to push ' reality ' below the molecule, since in experience we have no acquaintance with anything ' below ' inorganic matter.

But although such a vitalist hypothesis seems to be scientifically (not philosophically) necessary, and though it does offer us perhaps a simpler ' scheme of reality ' than the ontological dualism of common-sense, which distinguishes absolutely between ' things ' and ' people ', yet (I would again insist) it does not help us to *understand* objects which are not like ourselves any the better ; and to misapply human categories where they have no meaning for us will only lead to confusion.

There are, I think we are bound to recognize, certain difficulties involved in such a ' scientific vitalism '. All our ideas of reality (let me repeat once more) must derive from the consciousness of our own existence. And therefore our idea of an existent must be of an individual, since individuality seems to be of the essence of my own idea of myself as

existing. And 'individuality' seems to include the ideas of identity, bodily finiteness, and uniqueness. But, biologically, there is the difficulty that, in the case of some of the lowest forms of life, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the bodily finite individual, to decide whether the bodily whole is an individual or a group of individuals; and our conception of its or their reality is proportionately confused. Again, this theory requires us to suppose that every molecule is unique. This I confess is something that is extraordinarily hard to conceive of; although I find it still more inconceivable that what is *not* unique is real. And, finally, there is the difficulty which I have already noticed in my second chapter: the difficulty of giving any meaning to such terms as 'reality', 'mind' or 'individuality', if we apply them to what is *not* according to the testimony of our senses either mental or individual or real (in the full sense that we are real). These difficulties I raise, not because I believe they in any way invalidate the theory, but only in order to emphasize the fact that any theory, any 'system of reality' must be bounded, so to speak, by the bounds of conceivability. There are certain limits within which we can conceive and understand and explain: when we imagine that we have passed beyond to (scientifically) indescribable depths of 'the real', all we are really doing is mistaking our reflection in the glass for something other than what it is.

On to the grounds of Ward's theism it is quite unnecessary for me to trespass. I have said quite

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enough on that subject elsewhere. I would here only make the remark that what I may call his 'old-fashioned view', though I believe it cannot be established on any grounds of logic or experience, is for me at any rate, far preferable, intellectually, morally, and æsthetically, to the Hegelian assimilation of God to an 'Absolute' which includes all reality, with its necessary corollary that we are ourselves but 'adjectives' or 'appearances', real only because we are God : a view which seems to me no less ethically and æsthetically repulsive than it is logically unsound and fantastic.

## CHAPTER IX

### PROFESSOR DAWES HICKS AND THE ANALYSIS OF SENSE-PERCEPTION

**P**ROFESSOR DAWES HICKS I have reserved for my penultimate chapter, because the theory of pluralistic vitalism which, following James Ward, I have developed briefly in the last chapter, brings us face to face with the narrower epistemological problem of 'how we know the external world'; and the consideration of that problem will lead us on naturally to consider, with Professor Moore, the question of the logical basis of common-sense pluralism. This is the theory, the varying implications of which I wish to defend in these last three chapters, and which I find to be in different ways supported by the arguments of these three philosophers; who, however much they may otherwise differ in their opinions, are all at any rate I think equally opposed to the idealistic monism of Hegel and his orthodox successors. Professor Moore and Professor Hicks are certainly both realists in the full and normal sense of the word; yet even on this question they by no means see eye to eye with one another; for whereas Professor Hicks attempts an analysis of sense-perception on the basis of realism, and evidently believes this analysis of his to be the correct analysis, Professor Moore, while quite

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certain that material things exist, confesses himself also to be quite uncertain as to the correct analysis of that fact. And, as far as Professor Hicks' solution of the question is concerned, I must confess that such scepticism seems to be justified, because the argument he develops seems to me to leave all the difficulties no wit the less ; and I feel extremely sceptical about any idealist being persuaded by it. (Professor Muirhead indeed tells us that ' we are all realists now ' ; but in view of many of the contributions both to this and to the previous volume, I think we must agree that such ' realism ' must be stretched to cover every possible theory of knowledge except that of rigid solipsism.) And yet, while finding fault with Professor Hicks' solution, I am going to be so bold as to reject also the scepticism of Professor Moore, and to attempt some positive solution of my own. . . . I claim the support of Professor Hicks in that he is a realist, but it may be that this solution of mine is really as much ' idealistic ' as it is ' realistic ' ; but what I claim for it is that, first and last, it is not *merely* logical, but *also* a common-sense solution : *i.e.*, that it satisfies the fundamental beliefs which are common to *all* of us.

### I

Professor Hicks criticizes Hegelian idealism from the standpoint of psychology : if the self and its unity, he argues, be described in terms appropriate to scientific knowledge, the conclusion is inevitable that not thus is the self present in the more rudimentary stages of intelligence ; and it can only

become such by experience : and to postulate the self as bringing about that experience is to reverse the actual order of facts. In other words, self-consciousness is not primary, and the development of self-consciousness implies the correlation of self and an external environment which is both real and distinct from the experiencing subject ; whereas Hegel supposes that ' Mind ' comprises within itself the object which in knowing it contrasts with itself.

This argument seems to me adequate, as far as it goes, against the idealism both of Hegel and of Croce and Gentile : it is in fact only another form of James Ward's contention that experience presupposes a subject and an object which is an independent other—and this in the ordinary, normal sense of the words ' subject ', ' object ' and ' experience '. And indeed it does not seem too much to say that psychology is incompatible with many, if not all, forms of idealism, in the sense that it is impossible that both the postulates of psychology and the postulates of idealism should be true. " So much the worse for psychology," may exclaim the idealists, and in fact do. I do not know how it is now, but in my own time and according to my own experience at Oxford, the study of psychology by ' Greats ' students was not only not encouraged, but was definitely discouraged : to go to lectures on psychology was mere waste of time,—so one was informed. And since that time Oxford's most distinguished psychologist, Professor MacDougall, has abandoned Oxford and gone to America. Psychology of course, according to the school of Bradley, is not only ' mere

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science', but a bastard kind of science at that; more than the other sciences it is riddled with contradiction, built on the sands of half-truths, capable of any absurdity. And it must be acknowledged that psychology as practised by many of its 'professors' is in fact obnoxious to such a charge: it seems to have attracted to itself a surprising number of fiddle-faddle-pedlers. Yet it *is* a science; and the sum of the sciences is the sum of our stored inheritance of knowledge, without which philosophy would still be limping painfully after Plato and Aquinas. There are 'psychological facts' which somehow have to be fitted in and explained: the theory that only the 'Absolute' is wholly real and that the separate and fragmentary appearances which constitute finite experience have not any 'reality' in themselves has to be accommodated to the fact that the subject who accepts this postulate is himself, as object (*i.e.*, to other finite minds), according to this same postulate, in himself unreal<sup>(1)</sup>; and this 'unreal' together with the Reality he grasps can be analysed as a finite experient gradually developing self-consciousness in relation to a finite environment. Idealism scorns psychology, perhaps because it is a little afraid of it.

## II

Professor Hicks, then, sets out to sketch a realistic theory of perception, premising that the chief difficulty which is felt in nearly all realistic theories is, that they interpret knowledge not as knowledge of

(1) Cf. Baillie, *Con. Brit. Phil.*, *First Series*, pp. 19-20.

reality, but of some *tertium quid* that intervenes between the knowing mind and reality. Realism then, he declares, must be grounded on a theory of knowledge in conformity with which it is possible to maintain that real things are directly perceived without owing either their being or their nature to the circumstances of such perception.

He starts by distinguishing the 'that' (occurrence or existence) from the 'what' of a concrete fact. As regards the mode of occurrence we are justified in assuming (he argues) that, in the case of sight, modes of energy issue from the object seen, stimulating the visual organs ; and in consequence of that stimulation certain chemical changes take place in the eye which affect the optic nerves and so the cerebral centres in the cortex with which the optic nerve is connected. Then, in a way admittedly mysterious, a transition is made from molecular motion to so-called sense-quality. All we can say is, that either concomitantly with or in consequence of the cerebral change there arises, not a brand new quality, but a mental state or activity, in and through which, *when a certain other set of conditions has been fulfilled, and not till then*, there ensues awareness of a definitely coloured object. But this awareness could not have come about, unless the mental act were directed upon the particular object seen ; otherwise the entire sequence of physical and physiological events might have had no such effect. But if we turn to the cognitive act, as it reveals itself to us in introspection, we find that it is essentially a process of differentiation, an act of discriminating ; and this



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applies right down the scale of conscious existence : wherever cognitive activity is exercised it is generically the same. Perception then involves two facts, the object given, and the act of perceiving it ; and each of these facts exhibits two aspects, of existence and content. But besides these two contents we must distinguish a third : the ' content apprehended '. " The content of the given thing is the sum of its characteristics or properties ; the ' content apprehended ' is . . . so many of these characteristics as are, for the time being, cognized ; and the content of the act of perceiving is the sum of those characteristics of the said act which is described as awareness of the features just referred to." (a)

Such is the gist of Professor Hicks' analysis of the act of perception in " its essential character " ; and though my summary of it may be very inadequate, and though this analysis may have some epistemological value of its own, as a basis for realism I must confess to finding it the very reverse of satisfactory. That his analysis simply assumes that ' real things ' owe neither their being nor their nature to the manner of their being perceived is perhaps not an argument that can properly be advanced ; because Professor Hicks may be merely trying to develop from this assumption a theory of knowledge which will justify it by being in itself reasonable. Nor will I attempt to elaborate any argument against what he says of the " mode of occurrence " of perception, though it seems to me a notorious materialism to suggest, as he does, that ' molecular motion ' may or can be the

cause of a " mental state or activity " (a)—apart from the fact that he seems to believe that the essence of an act of perception is its description in terms of physics and physiology : which is a still grosser materialism.

But these are questions which we can dismiss. The root of my complaint is that Professor Hicks, so far from explaining or accounting for the difficulties which we encounter as soon as we attempt to analyse sense-perception, seems gratuitously to multiply these difficulties. He starts by observing the necessity for avoiding the introduction of a *tertium quid*, and then postulates three ' contents ' : the content of the mental act, which is a ' property ' of the subject, the content or properties of the object, and a ' content apprehended ', which last, if it is not a "*tertium quid* that intervenes between the knowing mind and reality," (b) I know not what it is. Professor Hicks indeed declares that it is not, but that " it is a way in which the latter (the thing or event perceived) is known, a way in which knowledge of the latter is had, and this very characteristic precludes us from regarding it as itself an existent." (c) But if the ' content apprehended ' is the *way we apprehend the object*, how in the world is it to be distinguished from the ' content of the act of perceiving ' ? If I look now at my desk and now at the wall, how can I distinguish one cognition from the other except in terms of the ' content apprehended ' ? What is " the sum of those characteristics of the said act which is described as awareness

(a) p. 119, (b) p. 117, (c) p. 127.

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of the features just referred to," (a) except *this* awareness and not *that* awareness? The extraordinary involution of the description is enough in itself to show that the distinction it tries to convey is non-existent.

It would seem then a mere kindness to Professor Hicks to merge his 'content apprehended' and 'content of the act of apprehension' into a single 'content of apprehension'. 'Occam's razor' is an instrument that has lately become fashionable; never could it be more profitably employed than here. But, even so, we are still left with the four-fold scheme :

apprehension	object
content of apprehension	nature of object ;

and I still fail to see how Professor Hicks' analysis offers any help towards the solution of the main problem. Because his 'content apprehended' or 'content of apprehension' is an ambiguous term : I do not know whether it means 'sense-datum' or percept. If, for instance, I am looking at my watch lying on the desk in front of me, what I perceive is 'my watch', but the sense-datum of my perception is an oval shape, mainly of a dull white, with certain patches of brilliant white, etc., etc. Now it is plain (surely) that my percept is 'constructed' from the sense-data, and that the sense-data are not themselves qualities (part of the content) of the watch as such : it may *look* oval-shaped, but it *is* round-shaped. But Professor Hicks declares that the 'content appre-

(a) pp. 122-3.

hended ' is *not* a construct, that is to say, it is not a percept, (in fact, he is willing apparently to have it called ' sense-datum ' ) ; and yet he says that it *is* such of the objective qualities of the object as are, for the time being, *cognized*. And so, by refusing to distinguish between sense-data and percept he, in my opinion, simply burks the whole problem. Indeed, he seems so strangely oblivious of where the real problem lies that he writes : " The colours and sounds and other sense-qualities, which we discern in Nature, are not, according to the view I am taking, creations of the apprehending mind ; on the contrary they are what they purport to be, features of the reality which it discerns." <sup>(a)</sup> Only the subjective idealist could imagine that sense-qualities are ' created ' by the apprehending mind ; and the subjective idealist is as dead as the dodo—if indeed either of those strange creatures ever had a more than fabulous existence. But-what is maintained is that sense-qualities are not qualities of the object as such but are only phenomenal, and that the object as such (as perceived) is ' constructed ' by the mind.

### III

I do not wish to criticize Professor Hicks in further detail : I would only point out that it is only after his analysis of the " essential character " of perception that he mentions the fact that the subject is an ' historical person ', that, in the words of James Ward, " all cognition is recognition." And this I propose to make the starting-point of my own

(a) p. 127.

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constructive argument ; because I think that the recognition of this truism must be the basis of any satisfactory epistemology. Professor Hicks says that to speak of perception as though it took place on each occasion *de novo* is " for the sake of simplicity " permissible. <sup>(a)</sup> But it is *not* permissible to simplify the concrete fact in such a way as to deprive it of its essential character. All cognition is *essentially* recognition ; and therefore to omit the factor of recognition (that is, the fact of the subject as historical) is to omit the essential character of the act. Doubtless the natural and obvious thing, when we start trying to analyse sense-perception, is to take an ' isolated ' act of perception and to consider its nature as such ; *but the fundamental fact is that such an isolated act of perception is a pure myth* ; a perception which is not a part of a history, an addition to an already existing experience, is not a perception at all : the ignoring of that fact produces nothing but sheer confusion. This is the fallacy which, it seems to me, vitiates the whole treatment of the subject by Locke and his successors ; and even Professor Moore, I believe, by posing the problem in the way he does, *ipso facto* makes it insoluble. My first point then is this : *that we cannot get anywhere by trying to analyse an isolated and abstracted ' act of perception ' ; we must take our experience as a whole as the concrete fact which is to be analysed.*

Secondly, I would urge—and this is really only a corollary—that sensation in itself can never give us the external world as we know it. In conscious

(a) p. 123.

experience it may be said there is no such thing as 'pure sensation': always we 'interpret' our sensations immediately into objective terms. Yet I think we do sometimes experience something approximating to 'pure sensation'. For instance, if I am sitting in front of a fire 'lost' in a book: I have after a time sensations of heat in my legs. As soon as the sensation causes discomfort I realise and 'interpret' it, but until my attention is distracted it remains 'merely a sensation'. Or again, to take another instance, if I wake up in the night, I am (perhaps) conscious of a dim, not-so-dark in a ground of quite-dark; and just in the brief moments before I fully awake that sensation is 'pure': the *sensum* is not located nor referred to anything; but as soon as I am fully awake I know that it is the faint light of the moon or stars or earliest dawn showing through my window. This fleeting kind of sensation is the nearest, I imagine, that we can get to the nature of our earliest experiences.<sup>(1)</sup>

But we must go farther than this, and admit, as against Professor Hicks, that *sensata* cannot *always* be the qualities of objects. This is clearly quite a different thing from saying that 'pure sensation' does not give us in itself our objective world; because we may admit that objects are 'constructed'

(1) To put the matter more obviously: if a baby's perceptive powers never developed, no amount of experience would ever give him the external world of an adult. The essential difference between perception and sensation is that the former supposes the time-space continuum. Even the 'purest' sensation must, it seems to me, involve some sort of *meaning*—it is this that we call the '*sensum*' or '*sensatum*'; but such meaning in its earliest stages can hardly be said to be objective, since subject and object are not yet distinguished—and just for the same reason of course it cannot be called 'subjective'.

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and that the sensum is applied to the construct, and yet hold that the sensum is a quality of the object (or construct). But it seems to me the essence of realism to regard the object as *not* merely a 'collection of ideas'.<sup>(1)</sup> And that sensata are not objective qualities which owe neither "their being or their nature to the circumstance of" the particular act of perception, I take to be evident from the known fact of the relativity of all sense-perception: *e.g.*, that what feels warm to one person feels cool to another, that the apparent shape and colour of an object vary according to our relative position with regard to it, that what looks and feels a perfectly smooth surface appears under the microscope to be rough. It seems to me impossible to hold that sense-data are *always* qualities of the object as such; else we should be unable to distinguish between objective reality and illusion, between the real and the apparent qualities of things: there would be no 'Uniformity of Nature'. But whether sense-data can *ever* be considered properties of the object as such is a question we still have to consider.

What then are the grounds for our belief in a 'real' external world, which is neither given immediately in sense-perception, nor is a mental 'construct'? and what is the relation between this real world and the phenomenal world of sensation?

The first point to establish is that we can, do and

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* I, 1. "Thus, for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure, and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*: Other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things."

must both 'interpret' our sense-data in terms of perception, and also *distinguish* the sense-data from the object. When I look at my watch lying in front of me on my desk, what I *see*<sup>(1)</sup> is an oval pattern of colours, etc. ; but what I *perceive* is 'my watch'. Generally the interpretation of sense-data in terms of my experience (*i.e.*, perception) is a process so automatic and immediate as to be quite unnoticed ; but when we turn our attention to the matter we are able easily to distinguish the apparent from the real shape. Again, the wood of my desk is (to my sight and touch) smooth ; and yet I believe that to the microscopic eye of a fly it would appear quite different. But though I may be doubtful whether the desk is *really* smooth, I do not for an instant doubt that 'it is a desk', that there is something here that a fly might walk on and look at, that I and it would experience the same thing, though we should experience it in a different way : indeed, my whole scepticism as to the 'reality' of the qualities of things is itself based on the assumption that 'there are things', and our doubt as to the 'what' of things does not in the least affect our belief in the independent 'that' of things.

Because the fact that 'there are things' is bound up with the fact that 'I am', and my reality involves the reality of an other-than-me. This, as we have seen in the last chapter, is just the fundamental argument of James Ward : that *Ego sum* implies a correlative *Id est*. This is not of course to say that the existence of other things depends upon my

(1) Using the word in a minimal sense.



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existing (or on any other person existing) ; for that is just the reverse of realism ; but it is to say that I cannot conceive of my own reality, unless I at the same time suppose that there is a reality which is altogether independent of me : and this is the basis of realism. And I think we must go farther than this, and say that *ego sum* involves not merely *id* (or *aliud*) *est*, but *alii atque alia sunt* : it involves not merely an objective continuum, but the differentiations of that continuum. Genetically it is doubtless true that we start with a 'mere continuum', as we also start with a diffused and minimal consciousness ; but I think that consciousness of oneself as a body must involve consciousness that there are other *bodies*, and the idea of one's own bodily identity involves the idea of the numerical or material identity of *bodies*, just as the consciousness of one's own individuality involves the consciousness that there are other individuals. This 'independent other' then consists, as we have seen in the previous chapter, of two classes of 'others', to wit : other persons, whom I recognize as being just as fully real as I am myself ; and things, which are real only in having identity within the time-space frame. This is the postulate on which all perceptive experience is based : it is *a priori* in the sense that it cannot possibly be induced from perception, but is assumed in perception from the first ; but it is not of course an 'innate idea', but develops with the development of self-consciousness. Psychology may be able to give some account of how self-conscious-

ness and consciousness of an external world develop : the philosophically important point is that in any attempt to analyse ' reality ' we must take the existence of the self and of an external world of things and other selves as an ultimate fact which cannot be ' reduced ' to anything else ; and to try to ' construct reality ' on any basis except the basis of concrete experience is a task which one would characterize as ' obviously hopeless ', were it not for the fact that it is one which is being constantly attempted by metaphysicians. The essence of idealism is to take, instead of ' the self and the external world ', ' mind ' or ' self-consciousness ' *alone* as the ' ultimate fact ' ; and the essence of the now so thoroughly battered and philosophically discredited materialism is to take ' the external world ' *only* as ultimate. But ' Mind ' or ' Self-consciousness ' is but an abstraction from ' my ' self-consciousness, and an abstraction cannot be more ultimately real than the concrete from which it is abstracted ; and to take ' my self-consciousness ' as alone ultimate can lead only to solipsism. Realism insists that ' things ' and ' my thinking ' are the two irresolvable terms of reality. And one may note also that the so-called ' law of identity ' and ' law of causation ' are but the abstract or logical expression of this ultimate '*ego sum et alii atque alia sunt*'.<sup>(1)</sup>

The realism (*i.e.*, belief that objects exist inde-

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The realism (*i.e.*, belief that objects exist inde-

(1) Cf. Baillie, *Cont. Brit. Phil.*, 1st Series, p. 23. " The logical principle that thinking involves non-contradiction or identity in diversity is derived from, but not the sole constitutive principle of, the concrete individual life. It is an application of the fundamental nature of individuality which is appropriate to the sphere of intellect."

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pendently of our perceiving them, or of 'thought' in general) then that is assumed by everyone in practice is found to underlie our perceptive experience necessarily, to be an assumption which is fundamental, and which no analysis of any isolated 'act of perception' can ever explain or justify. But having established the fact that 'things are real', we must turn to the perhaps more difficult question: What is the relation between sense-data and the 'objective' qualities of things? We have argued that 'things are real' in the sense that their 'being' or 'existence' is independent of our perception of them; and we have also seen that we do in fact distinguish between the 'real' and the 'apparent' qualities of things; and on that basis we will proceed to the question of the relation of the apparent to the real.

Perhaps after all the question is not so difficult, if we once admit that there is in fact a recognized 'norm of perception', and that it is by virtue of this norm that we are able to infer from appearance to 'real qualities'. The development of this norm of perception in the individual is also something which it is the province of psychology to trace genetically; but that such a norm is possessed by all people with normal senses is surely indisputable; and by its means we are able to distinguish 'optical illusions' and 'subjective illusions' from 'the objective qualities of things': without it perception would be an impossibility, and the fact that there is such a norm itself presupposes the fact that 'things are real' in the way that I have already argued. We

perceive directly the ' real qualities ' of a thing when we are able to handle it, and look at it from every side at close quarters in a ' normal ' light ; and because we are well acquainted with the modifications effected by distance (as when distant mountains look blue), by changes in the relative positions of subject and object (as that the top of a round table will appear always oval except when we look at it immediately from above), in the intervening medium (as when a straight stick appears bent in water), and in the quality of the light (as when colours change in artificial light and fade at dusk), as also with the fact of variations in our skin temperature and other subjective factors which affect our sense of touch, we are able to pass beyond the sense-data to the object, whenever (as is almost always the case with particular acts of perception) the conditions of ' normal perception ' are not completely fulfilled : that is to say, we ' construct the object ' in accordance with our experience. And one may perhaps remark in a more general way that this ' norm of perception ', which gives to all sensible experience its meaning, and supplies our criterion of perceptual belief, varies to some extent in each individual according to the nature and extent of his experience and to his sensible and intellectual capacities. And again this ' norm of perception ' is also objective to each one of us, in the sense that we recognize that ' seeing is *not* believing ' when what one person sees all the other people present do not see : if an individual's senses become deranged, so that his own ' norm of perception ' is no longer effective, then, if he would

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avoid error, he must submit his private norm to the general norm.

To summarize my argument then : Mere sensation cannot in itself give us our external world, and perception assumes that there is such an external world of persons and things. This assumption is a corollary of the existential ' I am real ' : the external world and the self ' grow up together ' ; we only become conscious of ourselves in becoming conscious of independent others. Realism then is a ' logical necessity '. And as this consciousness of self and of others develops, we develop also a ' norm of perception ', which enables us to judge from the appearance (sense-data) to the ' real nature ' of the object : the ' real nature of things ' being what it appears under ' normal ' conditions of perception, that is, when it can be touched and seen at close quarters ; and the ' norm of perception ' is the product of the individual's experience and his native capacity.

### IV

This analysis may be said to be very superficial : I dare say that it is ; and yet I would urge in extenuation, first, that no ' scientific ' account of perception as a physical process can help towards a solution of the epistemological problem, secondly, that (perceptive) experience, being at once fundamental and immediate, must be simply taken for what it is : we can consider its implications, subject it to logical analysis, but we have to take it for granted that we can do what we do do : to define ' mind ' in set

terms, and then conclude that 'mind' can never penetrate beyond phenomena to 'things in themselves' amounts to denying that concrete experience is what it is. And thirdly, I would claim that if the account I have given is accurate 'as far as it goes,' it is all we need for a theory of realism which will satisfy the requirements of science, logic, and common-sense.

But now, finally, we have to consider certain implications of this theory.

(1) If we define 'real qualities' in terms of normal perception, and 'appearance' in terms of abnormal perception, then it seems clear that we are not using the word 'real' here in the same sense as we were using it when we said that 'objects are real'; because we have no reason to assume that the qualities which belong to things *according to the norm of perception* belong to them *absolutely*, that is, apart from the manner in which they are perceived. On the contrary we know that our sensible capacities, and therefore our sense-data, lie within certain bounds: we realise that our world is a human-centred world, and that a fly-centred world would be quite a *different sort* of world, though it would also still be the *same* world (as far, that is, as *its* world and *our* world were identical within the time-space frame). That is to say, that though we must believe that things *are* independently of our perception of them, we must admit that their nature cannot be independent of the way we perceive them. The 'real nature of things' is what we perceive them to be, and at the same time the way we perceive them: the



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' what ' or content of things is the ' what ' or content of normal perception ; and it is (I think) impossible to maintain, as Professor Hicks does, that " real things . . . are directly perceived without owing either their being or their *nature* to the circumstances of such perception." <sup>(a)</sup> As Professor Baillie writes : <sup>(1)</sup> " The nature or meaning of ' reality ' . . . refers to some aspect or form of relation in which man stands to his world. Thus, for example, we do not set out to look for reality outside and beyond man and his world. The very terms ' outside ', ' beyond ', can only acquire significance through the relation of man to his world. Reality lies there or nowhere." The essence of realism is to assert that ' the world ' can never be explained away nor resolved into the subject (or into any such abstraction as ' Mind ' or ' spirit ' ) ; but if we say that the real nature of the world is independent of the way we perceive it, then we are committed to the fatal dichotomy of ' phenomena ' and ' things in themselves ', which *ex hypothesi* are unknowable. If we distinguish between ' appearance ' and ' reality ' we do so in an entirely common-sense way : my watch *is* circular, but it *appears* oval. It is true that in all particular cases of perception we ' construct ' the object in perceiving it ; but the fact of our perceiving it presupposes that the object is, independently of our perceiving it ; and though what we perceive it to be is also how we perceive it, its ' what ' involves its being an independent ' that ' ,

<sup>(1)</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>(a)</sup> p. 118.

while it is also the 'how' of normal human perception.

(2) But having distinguished 'appearance' from 'reality' we must also, I think, distinguish between 'physical' or 'phenomenal' reality, and 'individual' or 'independent' reality. The external world we know to consist of things and persons; and the former, whose content is indistinguishable from the content of our perceptions, are known only phenomenally; but persons we know not only phenomenally but as 'subjects' or 'selves', not merely by perception but by intercommunication; and in that case we can plainly distinguish between 'what a person is' and 'what he is known by other people to be'. Just because persons (and to some extent animals) are knowable as 'selves' we know them not only as independent others, but as having a nature which is independent of our knowledge of it. And if we accept the theory, as I think we must accept it, that 'things' are also made up of 'selves' of some sort or other, one must admit that such 'selves', which we cannot communicate with but can only know phenomenally, are, *qua* 'selves', unknowable.<sup>(1)</sup> But on the other hand we must not suppose that 'phenomena' and 'things in themselves' are two separate *kinds* of objects, but only that there are some 'selves', some objects, which we know *both* phenomenally *and* individually, others which we know *only* phenomenally. To use an analogy: suppose we have a gramophone record of a Russian talking: then if we do not know Russian, we can only

(<sup>1</sup>) Cf. *supra*, pp. 198 sq.

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'know' the record as a succession of sounds, and if we played the record frequently we could analyse and discover many things about it, phonetically ; but if we understood Russian, then we should recognize the sounds as language : the record would be a means of intercommunication between one individual and another. There is, then, no class of unknowables ; but there is a class of reals which we cannot communicate with, and so what we know of them is only their physical nature (as units of a genus) ; and their physical nature is how we, with our human senses, perceive them : we can only *suppose* that they have an individual nature which is independent of our manner of perceiving them. But there is another class of reals which we can communicate with, and therefore we *know* that their individual nature is independent of our acquaintance with them. And therefore all scientific knowledge, inasfar as it does not involve nor result in acquaintance with individuals, is phenomenal. In the sphere of phenomenal reality things are known phenomenally to have a physical nature : in the sphere of personal reality people are known individually to have an independent nature.

(3) The physical nature of the external world we have defined as being relative to the nature of human perception ; and this seems to be a view which is quite in accord with the physical theory of relativity : indeed that theory seems to rest necessarily on some such an epistemological basis as this : it has revived the popularity among scientists of the Kantian maxim

that the mind gives laws to nature. <sup>(1)</sup> The ' laws of nature ' must in fact be, like the qualities of things, nothing else than ' the way we look at things ' . that is to say that these ' laws ' and the truth of these laws, suppose both the existence of ' things ' and of the subject perceiving those things ; and to suggest of such laws that " their status in reality is independent of their recognition by finite minds," <sup>(2)</sup> is to miss the significance of that fact. To quote Professor Baillie again : " Reality is not ' given ' anywhere to start with, neither in the exiguous form of sense-perception nor in the comprehensive form of a totality ' objective ' to or independent of the human individual. For this would again imply that somehow the individual, who faces such reality, is not himself real, since by hypothesis he is not included in the reality so given." <sup>(3)</sup> This then is the answer to the dilemma of pluralism as raised by Professor Sorley. We can conceive of our world, of a Universe, ' governed ' by ' physical laws '—but is not this conception merely our human conception? and is it not also conceivable that if other-than-human intelligences existed, the physical laws *they* recognized as ' governing ' their world would be a totally different system ? Even the bare notion of the ' Uniformity of Nature ' seems to be essentially

<sup>(1)</sup> Thus Prof. Eddington (in *Mind*, April, 1920) states that he is " almost inclined to attribute the whole responsibility for the laws of mechanics and gravitation to the mind, and deny the external world any share in them."

Cf. Viscount Haldane, *The Reign of Relativity*, ch. v.

<sup>(2)</sup> So Prof. Sorley (p. 262), who makes this an objection to the pluralistic view of Reality.

<sup>(3)</sup> *Ibid*, 1st Series, p. 21.



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a 'human-centred' notion. In brief neither science nor philosophy, in dealing with 'things in the mass' or 'the nature of things' as distinguished from individual selves, can escape from or 'transcend' the basic subject-object relation; and while this relation postulates the world of independent objects, it postulates at the same time that 'the nature of things' is 'our system of knowledge of them'.

(4) A less important point perhaps, which, however, seems worth noticing, is that the 'extent' of reality corresponds necessarily to the range of our senses. It is of course due to the enormous extension of this range in recent times by means of instruments to fortify the naked senses, that the old-fashioned materialism of last century has been blown to smithereens, and that the problem of epistemology has taken on a new aspect. When we look through a microscope we are able to realise to some extent what a fly's external world might be like, because we can look at things (to some extent) with the eyes of a fly; and at the same time we are able to realise the relative character of our sense-knowledge, and therefore of the world it reveals. In this way what I have called the 'norm of perception' has been greatly extended, so that what is of a certain nature under certain circumstances is of another nature under other circumstances. But I think it is necessary to insist that to speak of 'appearance' here will lead only to confusion of thought. My desk is smooth to my touch and sight, although it is also to microscopic vision rough; and between these two statements there is no contradiction. As our

range of sense is extended, so also the range of reality is extended : as long as the conditions of perception are normal, so long we do perceive the ' real qualities ' of objects. What, it seems to me, we must carefully avoid saying or thinking is : that an object is not *really* what it is perceived to be, but that it is really an electric vortex <sup>(1)</sup>—or whatever a physicist finds it convenient to *imagine* it as. Such a view seems to me to lead to an impossible materialism which transfers ' reality ' from the world of concrete experience to the abstract world of conception which is founded on it.

(<sup>1</sup>) ' Electric vortex ' is, I am told, rather old-fashioned nowadays. Perhaps ' energy stream ' is more up-to-date.

## CHAPTER X

### PROFESSOR MOORE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON SENSE

**I** CONFESS that Professor Moore inspires me with a kind of awe ; and that while in the foregoing pages I have freely and unashamedly criticized all sorts of persons and opinions, I feel no little nervousness when I approach the task, not indeed of criticizing Professor Moore—for that indeed would be something quite beyond my courage—but simply of reproducing his arguments, which it seems to me, are, as far as they go, unanswerable; for these arguments are set out with such meticulous and devastatingly unambiguous clearness (so, at least, it seems to me) that only by a word for word reproduction would it seem that their full force and flavour can be retained ; and in the reproducing of the arguments of such a paragon of accuracy any slightest misrepresentation must show as a very odious and unforgivable crime, such as it would not indeed be possible to commit in the case of us other mortals, who use language in our common, careless way. However, with this preliminary imprecation, the task must be attempted ; and I hope that I can produce the essentials of Professor Moore's argument without depriving it of its unanswerable logical force.

I. His first, and it seems to me his most important, argument runs as follows (and it is necessary for me to reproduce it though not *verbatim*, yet in *oratio recta*) :

“ There is a certain set of propositions (1) which (in my own opinion) I *know*, with certainty, to be true ; and there is also a proposition (2) about a whole set of *classes* of propositions, each class of which consists of propositions which resemble *one* of the propositions in (1), which I also (in my own opinion) *know*, with certainty, to be true ; and yet this is a proposition with regard to which many philosophers have differed from me, either directly denying its truth, or holding views incompatible with its truth. The set of propositions (1) which I *know* to be true include such propositions as the following : There exists at present a living human body which is *my* body, which was born, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes. Ever since it was born it has been either in contact with or near to the surface of the earth ; and there have existed many other things, having shape and size in three dimensions (in the familiar sense in which my body has), from which it (my body) has been *at various distances*, and other things of this kind with which it has been *in contact*. And among these things of this kind have been many other living human bodies which have also been born, continued to exist for some time after birth, and been continually on or near the surface of the earth ; and many of these have already died and ceased to exist. Moreover the earth had existed for many

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years before my body was born, and for many of those years many human bodies had been alive upon it, many of which had died before it (my body) was born. Also I am a human being, and have had since birth many different experiences, of many different kinds, perceiving both my own body and other bodies and things, and observing facts about them (*e.g.*, of position), and being also aware of other facts not being observed (*e.g.*, that my body existed yesterday), and having expectations about the future, and beliefs both true and false, and thoughts about imaginary things, which I did not believe real, and dreams. And as my body is the body of myself who have had many experiences of many different kinds ; so each other human body has been the body of a different human being who, while alive, has had many experiences of many different kinds. And the single proposition (2) is, that in the case of *very many* of the human beings who have had bodies, that were born and lived for some time on earth, and have had many experiences of each of the kinds mentioned in (1), it is true that each has frequently known, with regard to *himself* or *herself*, a proposition *corresponding* to each of the propositions in (1), in the sense that it asserted with regard to *himself* or *his* body at the time at which he knew it just what the corresponding proposition in (1) asserts with regard to me or my body and the time at which I wrote it down : in other words, (2) asserts that each of *us* has frequently known with regard to himself and his body and the time at which he knew it, everything which, in writing down my list of propositions in

(1), I was claiming to know about *myself* or *my* body and the time at which I wrote that proposition down.

“ But there are two points which must be mentioned, in order to make it quite clear what (2) is asserting. The first point is that I am using the word ‘ true ’ not in such a sense that a proposition which is partially false may yet be (in some sense) true, but in the sense that what is partially false is *not* true, though it may be *partially* true : that is to say, I am asserting that all the propositions in (1) and many propositions corresponding to them are *wholly* true, and I disagree with any philosopher who believes that the propositions in any or all of these classes of propositions are partially false, though he may *say* that he believes them to be true. And, secondly, the expressions I have used in (1) mean just what they would ordinarily be understood to mean and nothing else. Some philosophers seem to think that such a question as ‘ Do you believe that the earth has existed for many years past ? ’ is not a plain question, but the sort of question which can be taken in different ways, and may therefore be true in one sense and false in another. But this view seems to be profoundly mistaken ; this being the very type of an unambiguous question, the meaning of which we all understand. Anyone who holds the opposite view is confusing the question of meaning with the question of whether we know what it means in the sense of being able to *give a correct analysis* of its meaning. The latter question is a profoundly difficult one, and one to which (I shall argue presently) no one knows the answer ; but to hold that we cannot analyse what

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we understand by an expression is an entirely different thing from holding that we do not understand it ; and it is obvious that we cannot even raise the question of analysing what we understand by it, unless we do understand it. So I hold that most (though not all) the expressions used in (1) have an ordinary meaning, and I am using them in this ordinary sense."

Having thus made clear his own ' common-sense ' position, Professor Moore proceeds to consider how certain philosophers hold views incompatible with that position, and why such views must be false. And here I may venture a freer and less elaborate summary, as follows :

A. Some of the propositions in (1) (and therefore all propositions belonging to the corresponding class in (2)) imply the reality of material things, and of Space (in the sense, that is, that to deny the reality of ' material things ' or of ' Space ' implies that no proposition asserting that human bodies or the Earth have existed, or that anything has ever been in contact with or at a distance from another is *wholly true*) ; while all the propositions in (1) imply (in a similar sense) that Time is real and that at least one Self is real. But there are some philosophers who have expressed some view they held in the form " Material things are not real," and " Space is not real," while others have also used the expressions " Time is not real," and " The Self is not real." All these expressions, unlike the expressions used in (1), are really ambiguous ; but in their most natural and proper sense they do express a view incompatible with (2) in that they imply that some, or all, the

propositions in (1) are not *wholly true*. And in so far as they are incompatible with (2), such views *must be* false. Because if there have been any philosophers then there have been human beings of this class ; and if there have been human beings, all the rest of what is asserted in (2) is certainly true ; and any view which denies that can be true only if there have been no philosophers who have held such a view ; and though many philosophers who are worthy of respect seem to have held such a view, their authority can weigh nothing against the fact that they have existed. Of course it is the case that all such philosophers have expressed other views inconsistent with such a view, alluding, for instance, to other philosophers, and using " we " in the sense in which anyone who asserts that " we " do so and so is asserting that both he himself and *very many other human beings who have had bodies and lived upon the earth* have done so.<sup>(1)</sup> In fact, since philosophers belong to the class of human beings who have frequently *known* propositions corresponding to the propositions in (1), it is only natural that they should sometimes betray that knowledge. The strange thing is that such philosophers should be able to hold sincerely philosophical propositions inconsistent with what they themselves *knew* to be true ; but they have done so. Some of them indeed have argued, in favour of such a view, that no proposition of the type of (1) can possibly be wholly true, because any such proposition entails both of two incompatible proposi-

(1) Cf. how Prof. Smith uses the words ' we ' and ' us ', and yet claims the (logical) right to speak of ' Mind ' " without either the definite or indefinite article ", as being the sole reality. See above p. 186.



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tions. To which the answer is : that no true proposition can entail both of two incompatible propositions ; and since all the propositions in (1) are true, none of them can entail both of two incompatible propositions.

B. There are other philosophers who have held the view that though each of us *knows* to be true propositions of the type : “ *I have had experiences,*” propositions which assert the existence of *material things* or of *other* selves we only *believe* to be true, and never know them, *for certain*, to be true : such “ beliefs of Common-sense ” (they say) are matters of Faith, not of Knowledge. But this view (unlike A) is self-contradictory ; for to say “ No human being has ever known of the existence of other human beings ” is to say, “ There have been many other human beings beside myself, and none of them (including myself) has ever known of the existence of other human beings,” in other words, the proposition that these beliefs *are* beliefs of Common Sense entails the proposition that many human beings, beside the philosopher himself, have had bodies and lived upon the earth, and have had various experiences, including beliefs of this kind ; so that, *if* these beliefs are beliefs of Common Sense, they must be true. It is true that the view that I *know*, with certainty, to be true all the propositions in (1), is a view the denial of which is not necessarily self-contradictory : it might be that I do not know them to be certainly true, but only believe them, or know them to be highly probable. But it seems to me that I *do* know them to be certainly true, and that philo-

sophers who assert the proposition that such propositions are beliefs of Common Sense do hold that that proposition is certainly true (and so contradict themselves). Again it is true that many of these propositions I do not know to be true *directly*, but only because I have in the past known to be true other propositions which were evidence for them ; and I do not know certainly what that evidence was ; so that we are all of us in the position that we *know* many things, about which we also *know* that we must have had evidence for them, and yet we do not know *how* we know them, *i.e.*, what the evidence was. But if we know that there is a "we", this must be so.

Professor Moore then summarizes his ' first point ' thus :

(a) The " Common Sense view of the world " is, in certain fundamental features, *wholly* true.

(b) All other philosophers have accepted this view ; but some have also held views inconsistent with these features in the " Common Sense view of the world."

(c) The features in question have, all of them, this peculiar property, that *if we know that they are features in the " Common Sense view of the world," it follows that they are true.*

(d) Many of them also have this property, that, *if they are features in the Common Sense view of the world (whether " we " know this or not) it follows that they are true.*

II. Professor Moore then proceeds to make three other ' points ', in respect of which he differs from many other philosophers :

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II. There is no good reason to suppose either that *every* physical fact is *logically* dependent on some mental fact or that *every* physical fact is *causally* dependent upon some mental fact.

III. There is no good reason to suppose that there is a God, or that we human beings shall continue to exist and be conscious after the death of our bodies.

IV. While there is no reason to doubt the truth of propositions which assert the existence of material things, no philosopher, hitherto, has succeeded in suggesting an analysis of them, as regards certain important points, which comes anywhere near to being certainly true.

The second and fourth of these points he develops at some length, the third he merely states.

But these are points which I have already, to some extent, discussed in previous chapters ; and instead of discussing them further here, I wish to consider a little further the view that " the Common Sense view of the world is, in certain fundamental features, *wholly* true." (a) The argument by which Professor Moore supports this view seems to me to be irrefutable : and at the same time I agree with him that many (I would say the large majority of) philosophers have expressed themselves in a way impossible to reconcile with that view. This indeed is a startling and disconcerting discovery to make : that *most* philosophers (including not only all the idealists of the 'classical' Plato-Hegelian tradition, but also the materialists and such ' new realists ' as Mr. Bertrand Russell) have held opinions fundamentally inconsist-

(a) p. 207:

ent with what they themselves *knew* to be true. One might, I think, justifiably assume that there must be some fundamental flaw in the method of philosophy, or perhaps, rather, in certain types of philosophizing, which permits of such an extraordinary state of affairs.

Philosophy almost from the first, and whether of the idealistic type or of the materialistic type, has played havoc with the common-sense assumptions of the 'plain man', showing in the so imitable manner of a Socrates, that his beliefs are inconsistent, contradictory, and impossible, riddling him with the bullets of dialectic (or had we not rather call it 'sophistic' or 'eristic'), till the victim is ready to deny nothing and believe everything. It is a pleasant game always for the quick-witted, to confuse and confound his slower-witted and perhaps withal pompous and pharasaical neighbour. We all laugh at Dr. Johnson, thinking to settle with Berkeley's 'sophisms' by kicking his foot against a great stone : he could do no better ; he was an exemplary 'plain man', full of common-sense and most fantastical opinions. But what if your plain man, in spite of his failure to justify himself, is right after all, fundamentally !—not of course wholly, or even in the main ; because the assumptions and suppositions of those who oppose the philosophers on grounds of common-sense are often indubitably more excellently absurd even than the constructions of metaphysics ; but they are absurd not because they cling to common-sense, but because they gallop on beyond it into the wildest chimera-lands ; and they are

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right, as against the philosophers, because though going however wildly beyond, they still *fundamentally* believe to be true what they *know* to be true.

Let us be quite clear about the meaning of this term 'common-sense'. A 'common-sense' belief is one of a kind common to everyone, or, since we must fix some lower limit of development, let us say *common to all civilized adults of normal intelligence*. This, it is hardly necessary to point out, is something quite different from a belief of a kind that is shared by a *majority*, however large : a belief which *any* normal person is not capable of sharing is not (in this strict sense) a common-sense belief. Common-sense beliefs then furnish an indispensable minimum without which a man is unable to be a normal member of society or to hold converse with his fellows ; and they are beliefs of the type enumerated by Professor Moore under (1). Of course it may be argued that if philosophers (who presumably belong to the class of normal civilized adults) have denied these beliefs, they cease *ipso facto* to be 'common-sense' beliefs. But the point is just this : that *though* (some) philosophers have denied the truth of these beliefs, they have continued to hold them : and this is the fundamental inconsistency, which the 'plain man' in spite of all his other inconsistencies and puerilities has always avoided.

The dual basis of the common-sense view (as logically developed by Professor Moore) seems to be this :

(a) that common-sense beliefs must be true,

because they are in fact held to be so by everyone ; and therefore anyone who denies their truth must be denying what he himself believes to be true.

(b) that propositions which express such beliefs are in general unambiguous, (whereas the propositions which express the beliefs of philosophers who deny the truth of such common-sense propositions are generally, if not always, ambiguous) ; and that therefore it is impossible that these common-sense propositions should be ' true ' in one sense, but ' not true ' in another : an unambiguous proposition, *if* it is true, must be wholly true ; and many, if not all, propositions of the common-sense type are of this kind.

Professor Moore takes as " the very type of an unambiguous expression " the proposition that " the earth has existed for many years past " (a) ; but I am not sure that the example is altogether well chosen, because I think that the word " existed " *may be* ambiguous. But there is a large number of propositions which I am *quite* sure are not ambiguous, such as : " I was born in August," " the book I was looking at just now has a red cover," " Peking is a city in China," etc. And these are propositions which I am quite sure are true.

The question of what ambiguity means (*i.e.*, what is the correct analysis of its meaning) is not an easy one : I have tried to deal with it, perhaps not very satisfactorily, in a previous chapter. But I am at any rate quite sure :

(a) that some propositions and some uses of words

(a) p. 198.

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are unambiguous, whereas other propositions and other uses of words, and all uses of some words, are ambiguous ;

(b) that common-sense propositions and the common-sense use of words are in general unambiguous, whereas philosophical propositions and the philosophic use of words are frequently, if not usually, ambiguous ;

(c) that an unambiguous proposition which is true is wholly true, whereas an ambiguous proposition cannot be wholly true, and the more ambiguous it is the more it becomes neither true nor false, but simply meaningless. And this seems to be the explanation of how some philosophers are able to deny what they know to be true : it is because the propositions in which they express this denial are ambiguous ; and therefore the incompatibility of these propositions with what they know to be true is not apparent.

There is perhaps yet another way of expressing this same common-sense view, namely : that language itself supposes that the common-sense view is true, and anyone who uses language *ipso facto* admits that it is true ; but language is used in such a way by (some) philosophers that they are able to deny those very beliefs which their use of it supposes to be true : and this way of using language is the ' poetic ' way, which expresses and provokes a certain attitude ; whereas the ' prose ' or scientific way of using language depends on its referring to some ' object ' or ' entity ' which is independently of the act of intercommunication.

III. But now I wish to attempt, what Professor Moore refuses to attempt, and almost seems to hold is beyond the wit of man to attempt successfully, namely : to establish this view on a logical basis ; and in so doing I hope to be able to clear up one or two questions I have left unresolved in previous chapters. I have indeed already in the last chapter dealt in some sort with the epistemological basis of 'common-sense pluralism', but the epistemological problem is itself conditioned to some extent by the logical.

Let us return once again to the *cogito, ergo sum* of Descartes, which constitutes the 'starting-point of modern philosophy'. Now I have already argued that a fundamental fallacy of idealism (and of some forms of realism) is to assume that *cogito, ergo sum* = *cogitare, ergo esse*, to assume, that is to say, that what we must start with is not 'I think' but 'thought' or 'the act of thought', considered in divorce from any particular thinking subject. On the contrary the thinking subject (I have argued) is central to all thought : thought which is not somebody's thought is not anything, an abstraction without reference. It may be true that "the essence of thought is not in a mental faculty" (whatever that may mean) ; but neither is it "in the objective order of things." The essence of thought for me is *my* thinking, and so also the essence of thought for any individual is *his* thinking. In other words *cogitare* is and can only be the generalized derivative of *cogito* : a philosopher who assumes that this derivative abstraction has an 'essence' apart from the concrete from which it is



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derived, will unavoidably reach some such extraordinary conclusion as that thought "is the control exercised by reality over mental process."<sup>(1)</sup>

But the clear reason why this monstrous leap is made from *cogito* to *cogitare* is that, if we insist on *cogito* we are, seemingly, reduced to solipsism: if *cogito* is the only fundamental fact which I can be sure of, on which reality, for me, depends, is not that as much as to say that 'my thinking' is the *only* reality? And that of course is absurd. Yet because *cogito* cannot by itself give us 'standing-room whereon to raise the Universe', that is no reason for identifying 'my thought' with 'thought' in the abstract, which is at once everything and nothing. Rather we should scrutinize afresh the Cartesian starting-point; and if we confess that *cogito* is *cogito* not *cogitare* we must surely further admit that the assertion of *cogito* implies the existence of the (thinking) subject: that is to say, that 'cogito' involves 'sum' not as a consequence but as a postulate; and 'sum' both includes and logically precedes 'cogito'. And from this point of view, it seems to me that Gassendi was perfectly right in his criticism of Descartes;<sup>(2)</sup> because *sum* must surely

(<sup>1</sup>) Cf. Bosanquet, *Con. Brit. Phil.*, 1st. Series, p. 61.

(<sup>2</sup>) Cf. Lange, *History of Materialism*, First Book, Sec. III., ch. i. Hegel of course (*Logic*, Wallace's Translation, para. 64), pours scorn on those who treat this maxim of Descartes as a syllogism because the word *ergo* occurs in it. But, syllogism or not, what is quite certain is that this maxim, if it means anything at all, does state that 'I exist' is in some way posterior to, a consequence of, 'I think' (my self-consciousness). But, according to my argument, the assertion 'I think' involves as something prior the fact of my existence: unless I am conscious of existing I cannot assert anything about myself. To put it another way: let us say that 'self-consciousness' is the one fundamental fact. But there is not one 'term' here: there are two terms, 'consciousness' and 'the self'; and 'the self' includes both the 'bodily self' and the 'conscious self'.

mean something *more* than *cogito* ; for if the two words are identical the statement *cogito, ergo sum* is meaningless ; and if *sum* includes not only *cogito* but *moveo, video*, etc., how can the whole which includes follow from or be secondary to the part which is included ?

And yet of course in a sense it does : that is, the *assertion* of my own existence implies the fact that I am thinking, of self-consciousness ; whatever I think of, behind the content of my thought lies the fact of my thinking : as we might say, '*sum*', *quia cogito me esse*. But the inverted commas are all-important, because it is they which prevent this proposition from contradicting the proposition : *sum, ergo cogito et moveo*, etc. In English :

A. The first and most certain thing I know, the basis of all my ideas of existence, is the fact of my own existence.

B. Whatever I think of or assert, including my own existence, is conditioned by and involves the fact of my thinking.

This is the dual basis which I would suggest must take the place of the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* ; and here, I believe, we can find the resolution of the opposing attitudes of realism and idealism, of the dualism of mind and body, thought and reality. I am a part of the Universe, but 'the Universe' is my idea of the Universe, which is 'a part of me'. B. alone can lead only to solipsism : it is by mere verbalism that it is made to form the basis of an idealistic structure of the Hegel-Croce type. But if we pay attention to A. alone, we shall also get into

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difficulties : our realism must be a 'relative' realism not an 'absolute' realism which ignores the fact that reality is 'self'-centred, or 'personal'.

Let us try to 'gather up the threads' :

A. The fact that 'I' exist is 'for me' fundamental ; and we have already followed James Ward in his argument that '*sum*' involves '*aliud est*' : I can only realise my own existence in realising that other people exist and that things exist (in some sense of the word). Hence solipsism is not merely absurd but actually unthinkable : denying the reality of 'what is not me' I deny my own reality. Equally absurd, though not of course unthinkable, is the assumption on which the idealistic structure of such writers as Bradley and Bosanquet depends, that an idea, what a person thinks of, can be *more* real than the person who is thinking it. All my ideas of reality must derive from concrete experience, of which the basis is '*sum et aliud est*' : '*esse*' is but the infinitive of '*sum*'. '*Sum*' then involves the world of concrete experience, with its relations of temporal and spatial order, with its categories of quality and quantity, etc. But also, since the '*aliud*' can only be 'understood' in terms of '*sum*', the continuum can only be realised or understood as a sum of particulars : that is to say, pluralism is involved in the very nature of our concrete experience. And these particulars are either individuals, whom by intercommunication I know to be like myself and as real as myself, and whom so far I can understand ; or things, to which

in the act of cognizing (*i.e.*, recognizing) them I must attribute a numerical or material identity, but which, not being able to understand them further in terms of *sum*, I can only so far know to be real. But, as we have seen, biology suggests that these two kinds or orders of objects combine into a single 'descending scale', from the fully human (and that *must* be the highest kind of object we, as human, can know) to the altogether unrecognizable non-human, which we must suppose however to have some minimal degree of that which in ourselves we call 'mind', or 'consciousness', to be somehow 'subjective'. Here then we have the world of common-sense, a pluralistic world which, in spite of Copernicus, must still have its centre in man, in the sense that only in man is there full reality (for man): the merely material or phenomenal 'Universe' is only 'half-real'. Ward, we have seen, speaks of "the real categories of substance and cause," which can only be attributed to individuals, who therefore alone are 'fully real'. Both 'substance' (or 'existence') and 'cause' have a double aspect: 'substance' includes 'mind' and 'body'—we know of no 'mind' which is not also 'body'; and, as we have seen, we have at any rate good reason to suppose that there is no 'body' which is not also 'mind', though below a certain level such 'mind' is purely hypothetical. So also a (real) cause includes both the conception of agency or activity, and the conception of uniformity or necessary relatedness; so that real causes can only be persons, while the identity of our differentiations of the continuum

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(the 'Uniformity of Nature') presents us only with the secondary or phenomenal causes of science, with what in an earlier chapter I have called 'circumstantial' and 'physical' causes.

B. But this is only 'one side of the medal'. Because we have seen that these circumstantial and physical causes are only our way of describing events, that although *sum* involves the fact of an independent *aliud*, yet the quiddity or content of that *aliud* is not independent, but conditioned by the nature of our perceiving (and thinking). All this 'reality' then we have been discussing is, in a sense, mental. 'The Universe' is, from this point of view, a system of ideas 'in my mind'. This fact, or this point of view, constitutes the basis of modern idealism; and, as far as it goes, the argument is unescapable: a realism which ignores it is compelled to construct a Platonic 'realm of universals' which exists, or 'subsists' somehow 'externally', and bearing some quite inexplicable relation to the realm of experience: and again, materialism is based on the assumption that its abstract way of describing things is a 'reality' no less independent and 'external' than things are. On the other hand idealism is mistaken in supposing that it can build up reality, or a theory of reality, on this half-basis alone. The 'Absolute' of Hegel and his successors can only be, in so far as it can be realised by any individual, that individual's 'system of reality'; and so the idealist is not only committing the absurdity of making his ideas more real than he is himself, but he is also guilty of the effrontery of claiming for his individual 'system of reality' an

absolute validity : he constitutes himself the focus, not merely of *his* reality, but of *all* reality.

But this fundamental fact that the nature of reality is conditioned by the nature of 'our' thinking, can only be reconciled with the facts of experience if taken in conjunction with the other foundational fact that 'our' thinking is secondary to 'our existence'. While as long as I think or talk about 'reality' or 'the Universe' I have to admit that 'what I am thinking about' cannot be distinguished from the content of my thoughts, when I have acquaintance either with particular things or with individual persons this is not so : in the case of the former I know *that* the object is independently of my (or anyone) perceiving it, though *what* it is is not independent of *how* I perceive it ; in the case of the latter I know both that the individual has an independent existence, that he exists as a 'self' or 'subject' in the same way that I do, and that what he as a 'self' is, he is quite independently of what I know about him. In brief, A. gives us the world of experience as other, B. gives us the world of experience as known.

Let us consider a few final corollaries :

The first is that all universals, concepts, relations, scientific 'laws' are not 'external',<sup>(1)</sup> in the way that this table of mine is 'external'. This 'realm of universals' is 'our way of looking at things'. And to treat this 'way of looking at things' which is also

(1) Of course the very notion of 'externality' belongs to the field of sense-perception, and has no meaning outside it. It is really meaningless to discuss whether or not abstract relations are 'external'. Cf. *supra*, p. 67.



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largely our 'way of talking about things' as an independent, 'transcendental' reality is to reduce all knowledge to logomachia, to substitute verbalism for science. And this is what the metaphysicians have been doing ever since men first began to ask questions of themselves. 'Reality', the only reality there is, is given in concrete experience: all we have to do as scientists or philosophers, all we can do, is to expand and order that experience.

And one has to admit that 'reality' is to some extent 'solipsistic', or rather perhaps 'relative'. Science treats 'external reality' as something which is independent of the subject, but has been compelled, after all, to acknowledge that this Universe of its conception narrows down from the infinite to the pin-hole of our human senses. We can conceive of a world wherein is no human intelligence; yet we must still conceive of such a non-human world in our human way. Reality as a system or unity is 'someone's reality': 'the Universe' is the individual's sum of beliefs about persons and things; so that there are as many 'Universes' as there are individuals. The best way perhaps of expressing this idea is to say that the 'self' is focal to reality. Or, to put it another way: it is impossible to discuss reality impersonally. (I must confess that though this idea that 'reality is relative' seems to me nothing more than a truism, the very nature of language makes it difficult, if not impossible, to state it simply or directly; and though it is a truism, it is a truism that is continually being neglected.)

Of course language supposes a common object of

reference ; and there is not only opinion which is not my opinion, knowledge which is not my knowledge, but there is a common 'something' about which there is knowing which is not merely my knowing, believing which is not merely my believing. But this 'something', although it is external to each *individual* or 'self', is not external to *all* individuals or selves. To express the idea (more or less inadequately) in a diagrammatic way : Each self is the centre of a circle whose circumference includes ' his ' reality, ' his ' Universe. But these circumferences are not closed, because they are continually intersecting ; and this intersection is intercommunication, mainly in the form of language, between selves, from which results all thought, except such ' thought ' as would be possible to an individual shut off from all communication with his kind. Animals, whose means of intercommunication are extremely limited (and perhaps the lower orders of living creatures are completely without them—I do not know what the biologists say on the subject), are so far shut in within the walls of their private sensible experience : they are what Leibniz called 'windowless'. But these windows which intercommunication allows us open still on a ' human-centred ' world. And so we may say that reality is ' relative ' in a double sense : it is relative both to humanity, it is human-centred ; and it is relative also to the individual. But although I must remain always the centre of my own circle, it is this intercommunication which both enables me to ' have ' a ' reality ' and to distinguish ' my reality ' from ' reality ', ' knowledge ' from ' my knowledge '.

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By intercommunication we get to know independent reals (individuals), but also we can share the common human experience and the common human knowledge. But such intercommunication and all that it implies is not an independent and 'transcendental' 'sphere of being', but is relative to, and dependent on, those 'centres' which are selves.

And if we envisage 'reality' in some such way as this, I think we shall have no difficulty in holding that 'values' are real but not 'objective'. Individuals are not merely percipients but agents and 'appreciators' (I do not know by what other term to distinguish æsthetic experience from merely perceptive experience); and on the reality of the individual as agent and 'appreciator' depends the reality of the category of value, of æsthetic and moral values. Selves or persons are real and therefore what they create and do is real; but this reality, like all reality, is 'human-centred'.





