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*Recent Philosophy*



# Chapter I

## Introduction

A WRITER on recent philosophy may properly be asked to explain what he regards as recent, and what he accounts a philosophy.

On the first point, I have seen the suggestion that nothing is recent unless it is "post-depression," and am familiar with the view that everything in philosophy is a back number unless, spiritually or chronologically, it is at least a lustre younger than the Peace of Versailles. If these opinions are admitted to have an exaggerated look, the explanation may be added that the present age is a period of acute philosophical fever where the changes are far more rapid than in other eras of more indolent incubation.

To prevent misapprehensions on this score, therefore, it seems best to explain that the present little book is meant to be a sequel to Mr. Webb's in this series, that it is convenient to call anything recent that bears the stamp of the present century, that considerations of continuity may compel certain modestly archaeological investigations so far back as the nineteenth century, but that to-day, for our purposes, may reasonably be regarded as a little more interesting than yesterday, whether or not it is of greater historical importance. Prophecies regarding to-morrow are too easily upset to be appropriate to the present series.

On the second point it seems clear that a liberal interpretation should be given to the term "philosophy"; in short that everything should be called "philosophy" which assumes that title and, in the vulgar phrase, gets away with it. In statelier language we may say that philosophy exists wherever it is reputed to exist by any considerable body of tolerably expert opinion. We need not, indeed, expect the whybrows to admit that Mr. Heidegger is an eminent philosopher, or expect to compel all the highbrows to assent to the opinion that the late Mr. Meade deserved that appellation. But unless a man is content to believe, as the great Leibniz hinted, that there is only *one* eternal philosophy, a *philosophia perennis* whose divine right to that title is much more readily apparent than in the case of any human monarch, it is impolitic to be other than hospitable to all serious self-styled philosophies. If there is a

certain risk of gate-crashing, that risk should be taken,

Although this conclusion seems certain, however, the grounds for it deserve rather closer consideration.

It is commonly said to-day that philosophy, distracted herself, is peculiarly distracting to anyone who would woo her. What is needed, we are told, is a "synthesis" (glib word) that will give us a "world-view" or universal perspective not quite obviously all too human. Wide prospects, along with a certain appearance of stability, are eagerly longed for. Without these, it is said, there can be no genuine philosophy. With them even a man who cannot pray may divine a certain substance in the things he hopes for, or at least can learn to acquiesce with a certain understanding.

Such a statement may be consistent with the view that there may be much (as well as some) novelty in philosophy, or even (with reservations) that there may be several distinctive philosophies. It might even be intended to include the possibility that the present age, like Galileo's, is the dawn of a new epoch; that, as some men say to-day in Germany, philosophy at long last is coming to understand its own proper function, the failure of Hegel and of Marx between them having shown that philosophy had in the past attempted far too much; that one of the greatest advantages of a long-continued culture, one of the finest legacies from famous men who are dead, is precisely the privilege of being able to choose between several highly developed world-perspectives. In the main, however, the statement seems covertly to assume that philosophy is a single institution, or comity of institutions with a single dominant tradition, and that its present "distraction" is a proof either that the present age has forgotten the central fact of such a philosophy's existence or is suffering, at the moment, from a sort of nervous allergy which, because of the medicinal force of man's naturally metaphysical mind, should shortly give place to a healthy restoration of "perennial" philosophy. It is therefore rather important to inquire whether in fact there has, in essentials, been but one perennial philosophy in the past, and whether the present age is peculiarly anomalous in this matter.

Those who believe in a single *philosophia perennis*, developing, indeed, as an institution develops, but remaining substantially the same on account, rather than in spite, of its changes, have a difficult case to defend. This eternal philosophy, it would seem, must be a good European philosophy, and indeed be rather eclectic within the European peninsula; except, of course, for selected portions of the new Europe across the Atlantic. Suppose, however, that India, Persia, China, Babylon and Egypt really do not count in this matter,

and even that England and Russia are, in different ways, not quite European enough. The difficulty remains that there is more than one claimant to the title of perennial philosophy, and, still more seriously that, for one at least of the claimants, there is no effective standard for distinguishing the gold from the dross.

In the name of *philosophia perennis*, the Roman Church to-day has flown the pennon of a new mediaevalism or continuing scholasticism. For the most part, however, perennial philosophy is an idol of the textbooks, that is to say it refers to a certain metaphysics in the grand manner which is supposed to constitute a single dynasty with Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel among its more splendid sovereigns. Even if the stature of these great figures be admitted, however, it is far from certain that the royal blood in their veins belongs to the same group (especially in the case of Kant), and there are serious difficulties about people like Hume who did not belong to the dynasty, and devoutly thanked the originating principles of things (if there were any) for the circumstance. Such men, it must be supposed, have their exploits recorded in the textbooks, because they were rebels of note, and compelled the dynasty to exert itself – an explanation, surely, that is desperately difficult to accept. If the rebellion had been successfully crushed, why trouble to display the corpses? If it was not crushed, how is the dynasty secure? And if the conflict was of a seriously philosophical order, must not all the combatants be accounted philosophers?

Therefore I think we should infer that there has been no single dynasty of superlative philosophy in the past, and that a philosophical career has been open to many talents during a very long stretch of recorded time. In that case, the mere circumstance that the prismatic appearance of contemporary philosophy seems peculiarly difficult to reconcile with the white radiance that has been sometimes supposed to belong by right to the subject ceases to be a major difficulty. Heroic solutions become unnecessary. It may be true, as some modern analysts aver, that the great philosophers of the past attained their eminence not, as is commonly supposed, because of their metaphysical powers, but in spite of these powers and because of their analytical subtlety. It may also be true (and it is more plausible to say) that philosophy at the present moment is desperately pursuing a variety of different clues either in a maze of speculation or in a haze of probabilities. But there is no compulsion to accept these opinions unless they are proved by the evidence in detail.

On the other hand, this question of unity versus multiplicity is the very meaning and aim of philosophy has to be encountered very early in any

inquiry into current philosophical tendencies, and so is a suitable and even a necessary introduction to our subject. As I have said, it is not altogether a new problem. Indeed, there is no contemporary movement that cannot show distinctive affinities with famous contentions of earlier centuries. Nevertheless it may also be true that time is giving evidence of the depth of philosophical disparities rather than of their underlying philosophical solidarity, or at the least that this possibility should be considered. It would certainly seem that many philosophies of to-day treat other philosophies not as brothers or even as enemies, but as untouchables.

One of the reasons for this is the increasing technicality of philosophy, not in its questions and answers only but also in the language it is concerned to develop. To be sure, philosophers have always had to discuss technical questions, and, for the most part, have made use of technical terms. Nevertheless, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several of the greatest philosophers were able to express their principal ideas in an adequate and even in a splendid prose that was understood by the educated and serious public. Such achievements in these centuries marched with the decline of Latin as a universal scientific language and with the rise of the vernacular for scientific purposes. Descartes and Hobbes, Malebranche and Berkeley, Shaftesbury and Hume were notable examples; and although Kant and Hegel changed all that by compelling most philosophers to have a certain acquaintance at least with a more technical way of speaking, the change, if in some ways regrettable, was less serious than it seemed to be on the surface. After all it is not so very difficult to learn one new language; and if philosophers, for most practical purposes, had the choice between employing the new "transcendental" language (perhaps sparingly) on the one hand, and, on the other hand, using ordinary speech with a very small addition of technical terms (as Comte or Mill did), their readers may indeed have been wistful but need not have been dismayed.

To-day there is some excuse for dismay. Among certain philosophers of different types, the normal attitude appears to be one of complete linguistic isolation. Each seems to say to the others, "I don't want to talk with you unless you take the trouble to learn my language." Moreover, the menacing part of the situation is that many of these languages are exceedingly difficult to learn, not to speak of the circumstance that they rapidly become out of date.

The reading public, it is true, can extort a remedy. It expects and finds that someone will turn up to tell it in simple (or, better, in lively) language what such and such an abstruse philosophy is really after, and although few philosophers

have been as successful in this respect as some eminent physicists, several have succeeded very well. The trouble is rather with the leaders themselves. If they cannot understand more than a few of these different languages, they have to ignore all except a few among the philosophies of the day. Regarding the other philosophies, the leaders (if they are so charitable) have performed to pick up a few general ideas from somebody's ABC. All of which is distinctly unfortunate. The evil may indeed be temporary, among other reasons, because some of the new languages may be able to simplify themselves and because others may turn out to be unspeakable. But the cure, from obvious causes, may be very slow.

On the whole the most prominent philosophical ideas in the present century appear to have been those of absolutism (or one of its variants), positivism (perhaps rather unmilitant), analysis, phenomenology and realism. This statement, however, if acceptable at all, must be accepted with great reserve. Many would say, for instance, that the century has had to chronicle the decline of absolutism, and that the variants of absolutism (so-called) are departures from it, either intentionally retrogressive, or impatiently and impenitently different. Others, again, would insist that the decline of old-fashioned positivism is quite indisputable and that the newer "positivism" is misleadingly so described if it refers, as it should, to the new spirit of mutual accommodation between philosophy and the natural sciences, so characteristic and (it is generally thought) so healthy a feature of contemporary thought. Phenomenology and other such terms, it may be conceded, describe characteristically twentieth-century movements whatever the standing of the phenomenological and other philosophies may happen to be at the present moment; but the omission of names such as pragmatism, instrumentalism, behaviourism, objective relativism, the philosophy of organism and the like may seem quite remarkable; and it is plain that the work of many prominent philosophers escape from the crude meshes of all these names.

I shall let it go at that. Any selection of this kind is bound to be arbitrary, and I prefer not to argue about the degree of its arbitrariness. Instead I shall say that even if my selection is less defensible than I think it is, there is convenience in giving a preliminary indication of the meaning of these particular terms in the present place, and for postponing the necessary explanations regarding other general names and the more individual contentions of particular men.

(1) Absolutism is a general term for Absolute Idealism. Historically speaking this type of philosophy was developed so notably by G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) that it is not unusual to regard Absolutism and Hegelianism as



convertible terms. It would be embarrassing, however, to insist upon literal equivalence; for many “Hegelians” explain that their Hegelianism consists only of an admiration for Hegel together with a profound sympathy with his points of view. Other Absolutists, in Italy for instance, dissociate themselves from the Hegelian form of Absolutism; and Marx’s followers are Hegelians without being idealists, since they accept Hegel’s “dialectical” method, but put it, they say, “upon its feet,” that is to say develop it materialistically. Accordingly, it seems best to identify “absolutism” with “absolute idealism” and to signify by the term “absolutism” any philosophy that asserts that Mind is the source and principle as well as the measure of all things, having nothing outside it that could hinder or control it.

(2) Positivism was the name that Auguste Comte (1798–1857) selected to describe his philosophy. According to Comte there was clear sunlight for man when (and not before) he had overpassed, firstly, the twilight of theology and, secondly, the wan rays of metaphysics. Only the third or scientific stage of thought had any place in the sun. Philosophy therefore had to abandon metaphysics and had to become scientific, but it need not on that account become a mere waggon-load of scientific results. The sciences formed a hierarchy, and the study of the higher generalities of the sciences formed a distinctive if elevated stratum in which philosophy was truly at home.

In this general sense any philosophy may be called positivistic if it affirms that philosophy and the sciences belong to the same world and if it also denies that philosophy (from a “higher” or from any point of view) can correct or transform scientific thought either generally or in detail. In that sense there are many modern positivisms. On the other hand, certain types of dogmatic positivism are decidedly out of fashion. Few modern authors would be content simply to *accept* the sciences and ascertain their hierarchy. The reason is that the more developed sciences, at the very moment when their prestige stood higher than ever in the world before, became themselves distrustful of their own finality. Consequently the dogmatic type of positivism ceased itself to be positivistic enough.

(3) The modern school of “analysis” is also called “logical positivism” in certain of its developments. Speaking generally, all the great philosophers in the past have busied themselves with problems of philosophical analysis. They have been the microscopists of the critical conjunctures of theory as well as the telescopic spectators of all time and of all existence, and there is nothing peculiarly novel in the idea that philosophy, for a time at least, should restrict itself to analytical questions and make haste slowly in that domain, although

there may be an unusual degree of heroism in the resolution with which this arid-seeming programme is pursued. In the form of “analysis” called “logical” or “logistical positivism,” however, the emphasis is laid upon language. A science develops by elaborating an adequate technique of expression. Philosophy deals with the most general problems. Let it therefore track pure generality to its lair. When it does so it necessarily deals with the pure form of expression, with generalized logical syntax. That is what philosophy, the science of the general, necessarily comes to; and that is its logical positivism.

Such a theory, it is admitted, is incomplete in at least one particular. Pure form can say nothing factual about fact. It describes what would be true of any fact, and consequently what is characteristic of none. Hence the theory must be supplemented by an analysis of certain other generalities, and particularly by an account of the conditions under which it is legitimate to say anything about anything. In this part of their philosophy the logical positivists are for the most part either empiricists or pragmatists or both, but some of them attempt to reach a more dogmatic type of positivism by holding that the “physical” mode of speech is not only of paramount importance everywhere, but also may actually be based upon certain scientific “protocols” that are impregnable either to scientific or to philosophical attack.

(4) Phenomenology is the term employed by E. Husserl to describe his “eidetic” philosophy. It is a name, we may say, for the view that the structural essence of any science that has a structural essence may be compelled to reveal itself to a sufficiently unprejudiced and sufficiently painstaking eye. In short it is the attempt to let the larger generalities speak for themselves. In a wider sense, however, any method may be called phenomenological if its purpose is to give a minute and faithful description of central things in the expectation that the picture so formed must tell a true and also an extensive story. This method is being diligently pursued in many quarters. “Phenomenology” is not “phenomenalism,” for phenomenalism is the theory that *sense*-appearances tell all that there is to tell, but if phenomenalism were not confined to the senses the two would coincide in method, for both would deliberately adopt the method of letting the appearances speak for themselves, of giving them a very long and very patient hearing, and of concluding that their complete and genuine testimony must be regarded as ultimate.

(5) While the terms “absolutism,” “positivism” and “phenomenology” seem obviously to need some explaining, “realism” like “analysis” might appear to be quite generally intelligible. That is its misfortune. It suffers and does not gain from its title, because in its modern dress (which is not quite

in the latest fashion) it has to deal with highly technical matters in a highly technical way. Certain philosophical realists it is true may attempt to be on the plain man's side in the matter of the "reality" of tables, carpets and planets. That, however, is only a part of their philosophical interest. For the most part they are discussing very abstract things, recondite, unpalatable and, very likely, unreadable.

These terminological observations are intended, firstly, to facilitate and abbreviate future explanations, and secondly, to give a rough preliminary indication of the major topics that will subsequently be discussed. As a further introduction, I propose to give a brief survey of the state of philosophy at the beginning of the century.

## Chapter II

### The Beginning of the Present Century

In the first half of the nineteenth century the salient philosophical events were the completion of Hegel's absolute idealism and the elaboration of Auguste Comte's positivism. In the year 1859, however, Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. Thenceforward philosophy could not afford to be pre-Darwinian, although it could (and frequently did) attempt to be super-Darwinian. It also could not afford to neglect the rapid growth of physical, medical and historical science, where discovery stimulated theory, and theory, in its turn, made discovery almost inevitable; but a few philosophers held themselves aloof from these affairs on the ground that the scurry and bustle of the sciences should not affect the serenity of men who contemplated all existence under the guise of eternity.

Towards the close of the century, although the sciences were very nearly international, even among monoglot nations, the same could not be said of philosophy, except in so far as some given philosophy took its cue from some science. Europe became Darwin-conscious, as one might say, overnight. England became Hegel-conscious in about a generation and a half. But the fact is no proof of England's philosophical insularity. Indeed, in the most recent edition of Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy* it is stated with some complacency that German philosophy to-day has been almost entirely undisturbed by foreign philosophical influences, and that the ultimate cause of the fact, without any doubt, is Germany's peculiar native talent for the subject.

To be sure, not all the countries were as Germany was in this particular, either in respect of the fact or in respect of its alleged cause. For that matter, young Scotsmen and young Americans, before the Great War, regarded Germany as the Mecca of philosophy, and so did young Russians, young Poles, young Italians, young Turks and even a few young Englishmen. On the whole, however, it seems convenient to be semi-geographical in the present place, that is to say, to attempt to give a rough indication of what was what in philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century among the German-speaking, French-speaking, Italian-speaking, and English-speaking

philosophers. It might be more accurate, and fairer to the smaller countries, to make the dividing line that of habitually reading or writing in some one of these languages, rather than of habitually speaking it; but limitations of space may excuse a certain injustice to the smaller peoples.

At the opening of the present century there was little disposition among the Germans and the Austrians to assume the mantle of Hegel. On the other hand the mantle of Kant, sometimes turned and often dyed was frequently worn, partly because many noted scientists, such as Helmholtz, had been (physiological) Kantians, partly because it seemed safer to make a stand behind the lines of Königsberg in view of all that had happened to Hegelianism in the name of religion and of communism. Indeed the slogan "Back to Kant," first raised by O. Liebmann (1840–1912), became very popular, although a more accurate catchword might have been "Back to Kant, *and scatter.*" For some of the new "critical" (or Kantian) philosophers were, in the main, psychological, others metaphysical, others chiefly interested in pure logical "knowledge"; and so forth.

Thus J. Volkelt defended a metaphysic of subjective transsubjectivism"; Windelband, Maier and Rickert pinned their faith to the validity of certain norms, including the norm of truth (which was logic); and the two most prominent members of the "Marburg school," Cohen and Natorp, published works on the logic of "pure experience," rationalistically understood, in 1902 and in 1903 respectively.

The most important contribution to the theory of knowledge, however (that is to say, most important in the eyes of retrospective wisdom), was "critical" without being predominantly Kantian. This was the work of A. Meinong (1853–1921) and of E. Husserl. Meinong had been a pupil of F. Brentano's in Vienna, and Brentano (1838–1917), who possessed one of the acutest and most seminal minds of all the philosophers of the last three generations, was Aristotelian, not Kantian, in his antecedents. Meinong's *On Assumptions*, the most influential of his systematic works, appeared in 1902. Two years earlier, Husserl, then a Professor at Göttingen, published his *Logical Studies*, and this work (although not his first) may be said to have established the "phenomenological" school whose subsequent activities in Husserl's *Yearbook* has been one of the major influences in contemporary philosophy.

All these writers were interested, not in presenting a world-picture but in the deeper secrets of this sort of picture-making; but of course there were many philosophers more interested in the picture itself. Thus E. Haeckel (1834–1919) was the occasion of many a pilgrimage to Heidelberg and of

some religious tumult within that ancient city in the early years of the century. His *Riddle of the Universe* (1899) sold half a million copies and its animate or half-animate materialism aped, or was, a creed. E. von Hartmann, again, widely known for his theories of pessimism and the “unconscious,” but also a devoted and indefatigable philosophical world-builder, wielded an active pen until his death in 1906. To return to Haeckel, a German “band of monists” formed itself in his honour in 1906, and included such well-known scientist-philosophers as J. Loeb and W. Ostwald.

The philosophical interest of the logico-mathematical work of such men as Schröder, Dedekind, Cantor or Frege, and the entire German contribution to non-Euclidean geometry is incontestable, and was strong in our period although, in the main, of somewhat earlier date. So also were the German contributions to what used to be called “natural knowledge,” that is to say to the knowledge of physical nature. Here, in special, the “Kirchhoff” school should be mentioned, and more specially still the work of E. Mach (1838–1916). Mach’s *Analysis of Sensations*, one of the best known of his books, was published in 1900, and his *Knowledge and Error* in 1905. The theory of this Viennese professor is best described as pan-sensualism. It was the view that sensations are the sole reality, and it was combined with the explanation that all our principles are only a sort of shorthand; but Mach, an admirable and a most acute critic of classical physics, clothed this rather inadequate skeleton with the robust appearance of vigorous life.

The researches of R. Avenarius (1843–96) into “empirio-criticism” and into a “natural world-notion” derived from “pure experience” had a certain affinity with those of Mach, although the philosophy of Avenarius was biological-neurological rather than pan-sensualist. And Avenarius chose to express his views in a forbidding terminology. He had, however, a considerable international following for several years after his death.

None of these authors, however, had the encyclopaedic range of W. Wundt (1832–1920). Psychologist, logician, moralist and sociologist, he had the energy and the equipment, although he had not quite the genius necessary for “the Leibniz of our age,” and was a signal example of the possible range of a single human mind at a time when extreme specialization was generally supposed to be the only way to prevent the best intentioned investigator from being choked by a surfeit of scientific knowledge. In particular (although it is somewhat misleading to particularize when so much was important) Wundt’s *Folk Psychology*, published in 1900, was a landmark in European sociology, especially in its description of language and myth and institutions regarded as

abiding and developing structures within men's minds yet greater far than any particular mind or small group of minds.

Some of the German moralists were pretty frankly positivistic. Thus Jodl (1848–1914) was engaged in developing a humanistic and naturalistic theory when the century was young. O. Liebmann, despite Kant, clung to the thesis that thinking alone makes anything good or bad. Simmel (1858–1918), the greatest moralist in this kind, defended a descriptive, and relative, as opposed to a normative, absolutistic ethics, although he conceded that there were strong idealizing tendencies within mankind. And many voices continued to assert that the State was “the armed conscience of the community.”

On the other hand the Stoic-Kantian-Herbartian view that duty was the stern daughter of the voice of reason continued to be in power. It pervaded the social humanitarianism of Cohen, and the new philosophy of value that Windelband, Rickert and some others proclaimed. It prompted T. Lipps and others strenuously to deny that a man's good is what attracts and is agreeable to him. On the other hand the analytical value-theory of the Brentano school, especially in the hands of Meinong and von Ehrenfels, affirmed, with skilful and patient assiduity, that love, pleasure or desire were constituents of the very meaning of anything good. Again, the former type of value theory (i.e. that of Windelband and of the others) tended to develop a theory of cultural norms closely associated with the history of political peoples.

On the whole this endeavour to catch the quintessential if fugitive spirit of the great historical civilizations was the most significant feature of German humanistic philosophy of the time and partially united many schools. (Wundt's *Folk Psychology*, for example, included an attempt to portray the character of the greater nations of history, and Simmel, accepting the autonomy of sociology as a science, drew ethical consequences regarding the value of types and attitudes of the human spirit. In Poland, a patriotic Messianism was an interesting development.) On a wider scale R. Eucken of Jena (1846–1926) tried to seize and to amplify the faint traces and confused echoes of an interpersonal “world” higher and more spiritual than the “world” that most men contemplate. He was a pioneer in the movement that led to “existence” philosophies in Germany after the war, for he attempted to discover the foundations of a restricted idealism which, content with something less than the totality of being, should find security for the spirit in its proper habitat and so give an answer to mere this-worldliness, positivism and naturalism.

Beyond all doubt, however, the greatest name and the greatest influence in the humanistic-historical department of philosophy was that of W. Dilthey

(1833–1912). This author, it is true, designed more grandly than he could complete. He was the builder of abandoned palaces; but none approached him in the power of restoring the deep reverberations of past ideas or of persuading his readers that the *Geisteswissenschaften* (i.e. the sciences of the spirit), suitably approached, could be made to tell their own story.

In France the influence of Comte and his positivism remained very strong. At the very least, the French philosophers felt constrained to define their attitude towards Comte's views, and many adhered to those views, at any rate if positivism be regarded, in general, as the theory that metaphysics, like theology before it, is something that human sanity has outgrown, being replaced by simple or "positive" science. For in that sense most that is traditionally known as philosophy is simply a portion of the positive science of psychology.

Hence it may be claimed that Ribot (1839–1916) was the obvious as well as the distinguished successor of Comte, Taine and Renan; that Binet and Paulhan were also notable; and that the work of such men as P. Janet in abnormal psychology did much to rid sensible people of false psychological mysteries. Again, with certain reservations, it may be legitimate to inscribe the name of E. Durkheim (1858–1917) in this part of the temple of humanity. Durkheim, it is true, spoke in the name of "reason," not in the name of Comte; but Comte had originated much more in sociology than the name of that science, and Durkheim, the chief French sociologist of his time, may reasonably be said to have continued (although he altered) the Comtian tradition. What "reason" declared, according to Durkheim, was that institutions were genuine things. He attempted, since Comte in certain ways had bungled the affair, to become the Descartes (or, better, the Galileo or the Lavoisier) of institutional thinghood, and his deductions concerning religion were designed to supplant that ex-Queen of the sciences, metaphysical theology.

It was for their *criticism* of the sciences, however, that the French were most renowned throughout Europe in the early years of the century. This general statement would apply to medicine and biology under the enduring influence of Claude Bernard (1813–78), to Bergson's work in psychology and in biology, and in other such realms. It also applies, however, to mathematics and to physics, particularly to the work of H. Poincaré (1853–1912) and, a little later, to the work of P. Duhem. To Poincaré's clever and charming work, indeed, much of the change in the spirit of present-day physics may be directly traced. Physics, as we all know, has become inquiring not dogmatic, and Poincaré's subtle intellectualism, too subtle to regard science as a mere conventional convenience, too acute to ignore the extent to which conventional



convenience permeates the advanced sciences, too sane to be overbalanced by an accumulation of “facts” or by sudden gusts of irrationalism, was admirably fitted to introduce the present fashionable way of thinking.

After Comte, C. Renouvier (1815–1903) had the greatest influence of any nineteenth-century French philosopher. At an early stage in his career he set himself to develop in France the Kantian thought that (as he supposed) Kant’s native country had abandoned. Hence there is a flavour of Kantianism (often very pronounced) in most modern French philosophical dishes. Renouvier’s Kantianism, however, was relativistic and phenomenalist. He did not believe in a Limbo or in a Heaven of translucent and supposedly intellectual fabric, yet he held that everything relative was imposed by thinking persons, since all relations were so imposed. A great part of his work, again, was devoted to a passionate defence of human freedom, and he was eager to analyse human history.

Consequently there was much Teutonic influence in France, little of it Hegelian, with the exception (in some measure) of O. Hamelin’s “integral rationalism” and “nöödicy.”

F. Ravaisson-Mollien (1813–1900) was another author whose work profoundly influenced the France of the early century, especially in the direction of exploring the spiritual implications of individual personality. His studies on Aristotle, on habit, on art, and on “creative” movement in general had an importance altogether incommensurable with their bulk, and advanced the “dynamic spiritualism” defended, long before, by Maine de Biran. J. Lachelier (1834–1918), the teacher of Boutroux and Bergson’s head master at the *École normale supérieure*, although in the main a Kantian had much in common with Maine de Biran and Ravaisson. He was one of those scholars who, although they wrote very little, were among the acknowledged leaders of their generation.

In general the maxim “Know Thyself,” applied to the individual human spirit and enriched by a widely cultural interpretation appealed strongly to the French philosophers of the period whether they were Kantian-Biranists or not. One may mention, among many, V. Delbos, who died in 1916 at the height of his powers, and L. Brunschvicq, who in 1900 gave an earnest of many welcome volumes of the future in his *Introduction to the Life of Mind*.

Both these men, as well as Bergson, E. Le Roy, Lalande and M. Blondel were pupils of the celebrated E. Boutroux (1845–1921), best known perhaps for his polemics in favour of radical contingency or indeterminism and for his denial that a psychology or sociology of “religious experience” could be

a serious treatment of that great subject. A summary statement of this kind, however, is but a feeble indication of Boutroux's vigour, scholarship and lively mind.

All these influences and many others were drawn together and transmuted in the mind of H. Bergson whose fame probably exceeds that of any other living philosopher, and who unintentionally has divided so many philosophers in so many countries into Bergsonians and anti-Bergsonians. Instead of offering any account of his views at the present stage of my story, I shall simply call my readers' attention to certain dates. *Time and Free-Will*, to choose its English title, was published in 1889, *Matter and Memory* in 1896, the articles on metaphysical intuition ("Introduction to Metaphysics") and on psycho-physical parallelism in 1903 and 1904, *Creative Evolution* in 1907.

Positivism was very active in Italy, its most notable exponent being R. Ardigò (1828–1920), whose pen was busy in the present century as well as in the last (for he wrote on "Spencer's Unknowable and Kant's Noumenon" in 1901, and in 1909 on "The Perennial Character of Positivism"). He had many followers.

German influence was also very strong. The idealism of that country seemed the proper antidote to naturalism, to positivism and also to the revival of mediaevalism (or neo-Thomism) that had become the official Catholic philosophy over all the world after the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of 1879, but aroused more philosophical antagonism among the Italian liberals and patriots than elsewhere. Of Italian neo-Kantians, Masci (1844–1923) was perhaps the greatest. Another and younger is Martinetti. Varisco's works (beginning with the century) are very generally known, and give admirable proof of the breadth of Italian culture.

The view that Italy has become pre-eminently the home of an exiled Hegelianism must, however, be received with some caution. It is true that Vera in the middle of the nineteenth century was a Hegelian of European renown, and that B. Spaventa (1817–83) thought along Hegelian lines. The Italian idealists of to-day, however, find in Spaventa the beginnings of a new absolutism that was not Hegel's at all. In the new absolutism, they say, Being is shown to be creative process, not the sterile logical category to which Hegel falsely attributed a mysterious fecundity; and it is plain that the great philosophical event in Italy of the early century, that is to say the publication of Croce's *Aesthetics* in 1902 and the start of his journal *La Critica* (with G. Gentile's co-operation) in 1903, is not, in any simple sense, the manifesto of a victorious Italianate Hegelianism.

On the contrary, as Croce himself explains in his delightful philosophical autobiography, he was not consciously a Hegelian in those years. He had known Spaventa, it is true, he was much better versed in German philosophy than in any other, and he had invariably been opposed to naturalism and to positivism. He had also acclimatized himself to an “immanent” idealism. His major interests, however, were not in philosophy but in Italian national culture and principally, despite all their astonishing width, in the general essence of F. de Sanctis’s account of literature. Croce’s *Æsthetics*, therefore, although full of Teutonic idealism, was meant to be a studious but quite personal defence of the view that art is an independent realm in which the imagination is free and also mature, not in the mystical sense of D’Annunzio, but as the imaginative expression of a man’s reason. Croce defined his own attitude to Hegel later, after a resolute study of that author, attempting to separate the living from the dead in Hegel, and defending a new philosophy of the spirit. Again, Croce’s collaborator in these years, Gentile, was about to develop a philosophy of the “pure act” designed to be a great advance upon Hegel’s imperfect ideas concerning the Absolute and the Spirit.

According to Mr. Santayana, “Philosophic tradition in America has merged almost completely in German idealism. In a certain sense this system did not need to be adopted: something very like it had grown up spontaneously in the form of transcendentalism and unitarian theology. Even the most emancipated and positivistic of the latest thinkers – pragmatists, new realists, pure empiricists – have been bred in the atmosphere of German idealism; and this fact should not be forgotten in approaching their views.”

Santayana himself was an undergraduate at Harvard in the ’eighties, and like nearly all the other American philosophers of his time, completed his studies in Germany. At the beginning of the century he himself was teaching in Harvard and acquiring a high reputation. Consequently, his comment, at any rate as respects New England, was particularly well-informed; and it would also apply to California, Chicago, Yale, Cornell or Princeton.

At an earlier date, indeed, America had had its full share of Scottish “Common Sense” and Protestant intuitionism, and had struggled, like other reputedly Christian countries, to accommodate itself to Spencer’s evolutionism. Again, it must not be supposed that this German-American idealistic atmosphere was predominantly Hegelian, although Hegelianism had made its landfall under the leadership of W.T. Harris (1835–1909), and although W. James writing to Renouvier in 1880, complained of Palmer’s Hegelian propaganda at Harvard.

“It is a strange thing,” he said, “this resurrection of Hegel in England and here, after his burial in Germany. I think his philosophy will probably have an important influence on the development of our liberal form of Christianity. It gives a quasi-metaphysic backbone which this theology has always been in need of, but it is too fundamentally rotten and charlatanish to last long.”

James’s horror of Hegelianism, however, is evidence of the influence of that theory, and his wide acquaintance with German psychology together with the influence that the neo-Kantian Renouvier had upon him, are evidence of the correctness of Santayana’s observation.

The outstanding fact about American philosophy at the beginning of the century was its emergence from an undistinguished novitiate into plenary philosophical rank. In James (1842–1910) and Royce (1855–1916) it possessed two philosophers who were the equals of the eminent in other lands, and these men were at the acme of their powers when the century opened. In 1901 James, eleven years after the triumphant reception of his *Principles of Psychology*, was giving his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh (the “nuclear Boston”) on the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and his later activities in the philosophy of pragmatism had been foreshadowed by his *Will to Believe* (1897) and by his California address on “Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results” (1898). Royce’s Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen, under the title *The World and the Individual*, were published in 1901, and received wide general recognition.

The personal influence of these two men, in their own country, was at least as great as their literary. Santayana, Perry, Lewis, Hocking, Montague, to mention no other prominent writers of to-day, have testified to the fact from their personal experience of Harvard. And Münsterberg, imported from Germany, was also teaching at Harvard during these years. New England, however, was not the only great philosophical centre. Dewey, whose “instrumental” pragmatism had different aims from James’s, was at Chicago “drifting away from Hegelianism” as was evident in the *Studies in Logical Theory* he published in 1903. G. H. Howison (1834–1916) was forcibly inculcating the (personal and spiritual) limits of (mere) evolution and J. M. Baldwin was also developing a type of genetic idealism at Princeton. In short, philosophy was very much alive throughout the country.

A point of some interest is that the work of C. S. Peirce (1839–1914) has greater fame to-day than in his lifetime, although James, characteristically, proclaimed him the beginner of pragmatism.

In the British Isles the Anglo-Hegelian movement, as it was called,

dominated the dawning century. The name may indeed have been inaccurate, for neither F. H. Bradley (1846–1924) nor B. Bosanquet (1848–1923) could be said to have had a “typically” English mind (if there is such a thing) and they wore their Hegel with a difference. Indeed the best English expositor of Hegel, at that stage of his career, and almost the only one to pin his faith seriously to Hegel’s dialectic, was J. M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925) who had as English a mind as a scholastic patience and a disciplined bent for mysticism would permit. But Bradley, the greatest British philosopher of his generation, and Bosanquet also, were certainly absolutists; and the century began, in large measure, with various attempts to define an idealistic position, broadly sympathetic towards Bradley’s *Appearance and Reality* (1893) and *Principles of Logic* (1883). There was hesitation, however, concerning Bradley’s sublimation of personality in the Absolute, and at the consequences of his principle that the intellect worked with terms and relations, that its methods were an affront to the unity of Total Experience, and so that most human thinking had either to be transfigured or condemned.

The common belief of the youth of the land, however, was that these hesitations were rather “woolly,” and that genuine philosophers had to choose between Bradley on the one hand and, on the other, a resolute return to Hegel himself. This (I suspect) was the attitude of G. E. Moore and of B. Russell when they were students of McTaggart at Cambridge, and there is interest in noting how much Moore was thinking of Bradley in his early papers, and how much of an idealist Russell was in his *Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* (1897). Indeed, it is reasonable to say that Moore’s celebrated paper on “The Refutation of Idealism” (*Mind*, 1903) shows the dominance of Anglo-Hegelianism precisely on account of the sort of idealism it set itself to refute; and although Russell’s *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) – which claimed to be derived “in all its chief philosophical features” from the anti-idealistic philosophy that Moore had evolved – opened a new scene of thought to British explorers, Russell’s subsequent polemics concerning the philosophical problems of relation showed how seriously he regarded the enemy he set out to destroy.

In short, the “new realism” in England, as it came to be called, was born in controversy, and was directed against *one* great opposing view. Moreover, British pragmatism, especially F. C. S. Schiller’s, was another attack on the same enemy. Here the line of argument was that the Absolute was frankly mad, and that what Bradley called the “makeshifts” of psychological and other science were not only all that humanity had to go by, but were good enough for anybody.

Nevertheless, although Anglo-Hegelianism had such great importance in the early years of the century, both as a cordial and as an irritant, it and its affairs did not exhaust the British perspective. After all Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) lived into the century and Huxley (1825–95) very nearly reached it. Leslie Stephen (1832–1904), the chief of British “evolutionary” moralists, was also alive; and James Ward’s *Naturalism and Agnosticism* (1899), if a little belated, could not be called an anachronism. Shadworth Hodgson (1832–1912) persistently interrogated the metaphysics of experience in his own un-Hegelian way. Robert Adamson, the best Kantian scholar in the country, was developing a Kantian form of “realism” when he died, too early, in 1902. In Oxford, Cook Wilson (1849–1915), more Aristotelian than Kantian, was teaching independent and quite un-Bradleian logic. In St. Andrews, G. F. Stout, fortified by a wide acquaintance with Brentano, Herbart and other continental authors as well as with the philosophy of ancient Greece and of Britain, worked essentially along his own lines. He was indeed a formidable critic of the Anglo-Hegelian view that “reality as a whole” is the ultimate subject of all our assertions, but his primary interests, if “realistic” (and “idealistic” too), were not in the reigning house. Again “Scotus Novanticus” (S. S. Laurie, 1829–1909) had “returned to dualism” despite his unusually adequate knowledge of what Kant and Hegel had said; and Laurie defined his attitude to ultimate problems in the high metaphysical way in the Gifford Lectures (*Synthetica*, 1906) that were the final result of very many years of very hard thinking.

It is further to be remarked that in the ordinary academic teaching of philosophy in the British Isles, the work of J. S. Mill, particularly his *Logic* and his *Utilitarianism* had (and still have) an important place despite their years. An “empirical” logic such as Venn’s of Cambridge was commonly regarded as a useful commentary on the first, and in ethics H. Sidgwick (1838–1900), although a much clearer-headed utilitarian than Mill, was still a professing utilitarian. While the “Anglo-Hegelian” ethics of “self-realization” (not very Hegelian, in this instance, and English enough to be frequently non-conformist) were very prevalent in the form that T. H. Green and Bradley had given them, they were certainly not unchallenged, and the reception of Moore’s *Principia Ethica* (1903), although frequently hostile, had a more restricted acerbity than in the instance of the “new realism.” Moore’s book may be regarded as a development of Sidgwick’s views, since it was founded, firstly, upon agreement with Sidgwick regarding the ethical necessity for insight (or rational intuition) into “good,” and secondly since it developed an ethic of benefit which was in effect a wider utilitarianism than the earlier hedonistic

form of that theory defended by Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick. A great part of Moore's thesis was adopted by Rashdall in his widely-read *Theory of Good and Evil* published in 1907.

Here I shall end this semi-geographical chapter, and I shall try to follow logic rather than geography in the future. I should like to repeat, however, that I regret the omission of the smaller countries, and particularly the names of Höffding in Denmark, Norström in Sweden and Masaryk in Bohemia. The last of these, as all the world knows, became the venerated philosopher-President of Czecho-slovakia and proved that Plato's dream, if it came true, need contain nothing of folly. In the early century Masaryk and Krejčė were the chief philosophers of their country, Krejčė's positivism being more extreme than Masaryk's. I must also apologize for including so many names and for omitting so many.

## Chapter III

### Absolute Idealism

Absolute Idealism may be in a less flourishing condition to-day than it was thirty years ago. Nevertheless, it is the natural starting-point for a logical, ungeographical division of our subject. Tradition gave or seemed to give it a certain priority. It is, or it seems to be, a logical extreme, and consequently a convenient boundary. The main reason for beginning with it, however, is that so many contemporary philosophies were designed either to modify or to supplant it. It is not dead or even moribund, but if there were doubts about its continued vitality, its critics would supply the oxygen. Pragmatists, new realists, phenomenologists, naturalists, and humanistic scientists have developed alternative theories largely in express opposition to it. Even if the opposition had succeeded, and absolute idealism, for the time being, had become a sort of Shadow Cabinet, the marks of its former greatness would be plainly visible upon most of its successful rivals.

Idealism has many species, and each of these species has several varieties. Thus the term may stand for a pan-spiritual ontology, that is, for the doctrine that nothing exists save spirit and its states, and such an ontology is pluralistic if it asserts that there are many spirits, monistic if it asserts that there is only one. The term may also stand for idea-ism, that is, for the view that anything thought about, including the entire universe, is by that very circumstance an idea-ed entity, and in some sense, mind-saturated or "mental." Pan-spiritualism, however, may be defended by arguments that do not imply idea-ism, and is, to say the least, a doubtful consequence of idea-ism. Thirdly, "idealism" may stand for a metaphysic of ideals rather than of ideas, and in that case it asserts that what is deep, central and stable in our lives is also deep, central and stable in the universe itself. A caricature of this statement would be the assertion that the principal business of the universe is to make itself safe for civilization. This third view might be defended independently of the other two, and commonly is so defended by Christian theologians, not all of them unsophisticated. Indeed, an alliance between it and the other two is apt to be rather uncomfortable.



Absolute idealism, in its usual forms, is a combination of pan-spiritualism, idea-ism, and idealism in the above senses (the second sense being indispensable to it), and has learned a great deal from Hegel. If a brief statement of a large subject may be pardoned, we may say that Hegel's fundamental contentions were that the "ideas" entailed in idea-ism must be rational ideas, that reality lives in their atmosphere, and that there is a dialectical process by which rational thought, starting with the poorest principles, is forced to travel by way of their complementaries, and so is conducted by a series of reconciliations to the infinite opulence of an absolute all-inclusive principle. This, in its turn, is the logical essence of Absolute Spirit.

In the present century, apart from the special case of Russia, the chief developments of (or from) this type of theory were Anglo-American and Italian. So I shall treat of these.

In England Bradley had concluded his *Appearance and Reality* (1893) with "the essential message of Hegel. Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be any reality; and the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real." Further, he had defended this conviction by affirming that "all we know consists wholly of experience. Reality [being a seamless unity] must be therefore one experience... We can discover nothing that is not either feeling or will or emotion or something else of the kind." He also believed he could prove that "that which is highest to us is also in and to the Universe most real, and there can be no question of its reality being somehow upset."

A price, however, indeed what some accounted a stiff price, had to be paid. Nothing finite, not even human personality itself, could be completely real, and since the intellectual aspect of experience was not the whole of it, the intellect failed to reach reality and could not cure itself intellectually. Space, time, number, cause, substance and all other principles beloved of the intellect were consequently not quite real. They fell short of the divine (or more than divine) unity of experience made perfect in its totality; for they trafficked in the makeshift of terms and relations, although relations could not really unite their terms and were "external" to them. To join a relation (Bradley held) to the terms it professes to unite would require a new relation between term and relation; and so on infinitely.

The moving principle of Bradley's metaphysics was similar to but more flexible than Hegel's dialectic method. "The internal unfolding of any one portion [of reality or experience]," Bradley had maintained in his earlier *Logic*, "would be the unblooming of that other side of its being, without which

itself is not consummate,” and this “movement of the whole within its own body” (which was the rhythm of all thoughtful experience) could not cease until in “the unmixed enjoyment of its completed nature, nothing alien or foreign would trouble the harmony.” Consequently, this metaphysics, like Hegel’s, could be regarded as a form of logic.

America’s principal dialectician, Josiah Royce (1855–1916), argued similarly, yet also dissimilarly. Like Bradley he held that “whenever in dealing with Experience we try to find out what, on the whole, it is and means, we philosophize,” and he agreed with Bradley that realism, by putting its faith in “reals” that had to be “external and opaque” to thought, could reach, at the best, convenient half-truths, while its opposite, mysticism, condemned itself to a fatal immersion in “the ineffable immediate fact that quenches ideas.” He further argued that the value-philosophies of Münsterberg, Rickert and others, despite the “stately” (Platonic) tradition behind them, surreptitiously transmuted mere logical possibilities into ultimate actualities and consequently produced “reality” by a sleight of mind.

Royce’s own solution was the discovery that Reality is what fulfils our ideas. An idea (he held) is essentially an intent, purpose and activity. What fulfils it is life rather than thought, and in the end, the Divine Life. The puzzle resulting from the (alleged) facts that an idea, being a questing thing, fixes its own goal and yet searches for what is beyond itself was solved (Royce thought) by the reflection that all purposive ideas seek their own determinate completion in a responsive and consubstantial reality in which they are perpetually at home. Further, by insisting with much care and subtlety upon the social and communal character of all our thinking, Royce was able to join a philosophical communion of saints to his philosophical deity, and to give the entire picture a natural as well as an inspired appearance.

In direct opposition to Bradley, Royce maintained that the finite need not necessarily be transmuted in the absolute. Bradley’s opposing view, he said, depended upon an unphilosophical rejection, of the actual infinite in its ordinary sense, but modern mathematicians had shown Bradley’s error. A self-representative system (e.g. a beer-bottle with a picture of itself upon its label), would mirror itself to infinity without contradiction (although there are insurmountable practical difficulties in the case of the beer-bottle). Finite systems, therefore, need not burst, metaphysically speaking, through the mere circumstance that their purpose, if achieved, would embrace infinity.

On the other hand Bernard Bosanquet’s views kept very close to Bradley’s, particularly as regards the logic of his absolutism. “If you ask what reality is,”

Bosanquet affirmed, “you can in the end say nothing but that it is the whole which thought is always endeavouring to affirm. And if you ask what thought is, you can in the end say nothing but that it is the central function of mind in affirming its partial world to belong to the real universe.” In short, Bosanquet (1848–1923) did obeisance to “logic as the essential criterion of value and reality throughout experience, in accordance with the principle that it takes the whole reality to elicit the whole mind.” In his Gifford Lectures (1912), his chief work on metaphysics, the spinal column of the argument was contained in the second lecture on the “concrete universal,” and the marrow of the phrase was that thought or logic strove after totality, and hence was “concrete” because it was “universal,” that is to say, all-encompassing. Its inevitable ideal was “a system of members such that every member, being *ex hypothesi* distinct, nevertheless contributes to the unity of the whole in virtue of the peculiarities which constitute its distinctness.”

In a letter written in 1902, Bosanquet called *Appearance and Reality* his “gospel among all modern philosophical books,” but he preached a rather diluted and suave form of the gospel. On certain points, indeed, such as the “indigestibility” of personal idealisms that sought to set the self or its freedom and immortality in some sort above the realm of being, he was as firm as Bradley had ever been, but his view was that anyone who saw that “the universe was so obviously experience” and that it “must all be of one tissue” need not be very greatly concerned with anything else. When he spoke of “mind” or even of “minds” in the plural he thought of impersonal mental implications, not of this or the other man’s soul, and he understood the vague phrase “reality must ultimately be of the nature of mind or experience” in a sense that seemed to find a home for physical bodies (quite unobtrusively interpreted) provided that these could elicit a supervenient intelligible connectedness. Indeed it might reasonably be suggested that Bosanquet’s absolutism was not, like Bradley’s, idealism proper; and Bosanquet said himself, “I want to give up the term idealism and say ‘Speculative philosophy’ or something of that kind. The muddle with mentalism is so recurrent.”

Bosanquet, I think, has much greater influence in England to-day than Bradley has, although Bosanquet was the lesser of the two. Part of the reason is due to the fact that Bradley, although a trenchant occasional disputant in the early years of the century, had ceased to be a full-time writer when Bosanquet’s pen became nimbler than ever before. Indeed the Bosanquet, who in 1912 held that “in the main the work has been done, and that what is now needed is to recall and concentrate the modern mind out

of its distraction rather than to invent wholly new theoretical conceptions,” became convinced, very shortly afterwards, that British realism, German phenomenology and Italian idealism were so “new” and also so important as to demand at least a restatement of the “work” with special reference to them.

This phase of his indefatigable energy will be mentioned later, but it seems expedient now to give some account of the work of another and very different British idealist, J. M. E. McTaggart.

McTaggart’s mind may indeed have resembled Bradley’s. Neither of them feared a paradox. Both of them delighted in clear argument, and in making one phrase do the work of three. Each was avid to describe the subtler phases of his own experience. Yet it would be hard to conceive of a greater contrast than between the mind of McTaggart and the mind of Bosanquet or of most other Anglo-Hegelians. For McTaggart, logic was what a lawyer or a scholastic thought it was, that is an attempt to say precisely what one meant *and no more*, and to infer simply what followed. For the others every statement was a veiled philosopheme, and wrapped in an infinity of “tissue.” Consequently, the fact that McTaggart as the best British commentator on Hegel in his generation may be disturbing to those whose ideas about Hegel come through British spectacles, and McTaggart’s early view that the dialectic was what really mattered in Hegel, and that it could be an instrument of rigour and of immense metaphysical potency was intentionally and most pointedly opposed to current Anglo-Hegelianism.

McTaggart long contemplated the writing of a new Dialectic of Existence, but his magnum opus, *The Nature of Existence*, took certain liberties, very carefully restricted, with Hegel’s triadic dialectic. Its result was a spiritual ontology, pluralistic despite its fervour for cosmic unity, and defended without any traces of idea-ism, its major contention being that spirits alone could exist since they and they alone had the characteristics that any existent must possess. All substances, it was held, must be infinitely divisible, and a substance could contain parts within parts without end on one condition only, viz. that it was related to all other substances by “determining correspondence.” The perceptions of perceiving substances were capable of this relation, and McTaggart could not conceive of anything else that was so capable. He also believed he could prove to demonstration that any other candidates for admission to the status of existence (such as physical bodies) must be promptly ploughed.

McTaggart never concealed his belief that his passion for metaphysics

began and was nurtured by his desire to prove the eternal pre- and post-existence of himself and of other spirits. He differed from so many other absolutists partly in the frankness with which he avowed this circumstance, but principally in his scrupulous, lifelong insistence that such desires were irrelevant to, and indeed a snare in, the actual business of philosophizing. The proof was the thing, just as (we formerly supposed) in Euclid. A further difference between McTaggart and most of his contemporaries was his belief that there was a genuine science of metaphysics that could prove these important and exciting things.

McTaggart was an idealist, although not an idea-ist. "The final stage of the C-series," that is to say, ultimate reality, was good, and of this good we knew "that it is a timeless and endless state of love – love so direct, so intimate and so powerful that even the deepest mystic rapture gives us but the slightest foretaste of its perfection." He described the loving-kindness of spiritual union with immense power and beauty, and lavished his great gifts upon the effort to show how eternity might embrace time in such a way that the "final stage" of the universe did not come after the other stages and yet, in intelligible senses, might and should appear to do so.

To speak generally, contemporary philosophy has been more assiduous about Time than most other epochs. The evidence for this statement springs from a host of quarters; and absolute idealists (who for the most part cling to the fundamental position that there is passage *within* but not *of* the Whole and believe that Time is more superficial and less respectable than Eternity) admit that they have to look seriously to their defences in this matter, lest Time should overwhelm them. Bosanquet, indeed, devoted most of the last busy years of his life to the vanquishing of two philosophical "extremes" which he believed to be new, formidable and pernicious. One such extreme (he held) was the new realism which robbed "mind" to swell the bank balance of mind's "object." The other extreme was the new idealism in Italy which, according to Bosanquet's belief, turned the Whole into a passing stream and was mad enough "to put all the best things ahead."

Let us turn, then, to Italy, and principally to Benedetto Croce (who has, however, an international reputation and influence especially in England, in Germany and, because of Ortega, in Spain).

Croce developed his Philosophy of the Spirit in his works on *Æsthetics* (1902), *The Practical* (1909), *Logic* (1909) and *History* (1916) as well as in his journal *La Critica* (founded 1903) and elsewhere. An important stage in his development was completed in his essay on the living and the dead parts of

Hegel's philosophy (1907), for in it he defined his attitude to that author, having previously breathed an atmosphere super-saturated with views of the same general type.

The major error in Hegel's method, Croce came to think, was an exaggeration of the logical functions of opposition in philosophical dialectic. The "Spirit" is a unity of "distincts," not a tension of opposites, as may be seen in the great spiritual phases that dominated Croce's interest, aesthetics, science, economics and ethics. Thus, in the practical sphere, economics (which Croce arbitrarily defined as private utility) is not the opposite of universal good (or ethics) since (Croce believed) ethics presupposed such an economics, and economics, like aesthetics, could grow from its own roots as a flourishing and (almost) independent spiritual body.

Hegelians might retort that the opposition, in their view, arose when the essence of any department of the Whole was taken to express the *entire* essence of the Whole. (Self-interest, for example, although not inevitably opposed to universal good, would be so opposed if it were regarded as the whole truth of the matter. For selfishness *is* anti-ethical.) They might also complain that even if the flowers of the imagination in art, of the intellect in science, of self-interest and of cultural humanity in practice could bloom together in the same garden, what was needed, philosophically speaking, was some intelligible principle according to which each of them implied every other. Croce, borrowing a phrase of Rosmini's, proclaimed the unity of reality in a "solid circle," and he believed he could show how two of his "distincts" were built upon two others. Yet the result of his doctrine seemed still to be a matter-of-fact-unity of a highly spiritual kind.

But Croce shocked the intransigent absolutists more profoundly still. In his view there was no such thing as one metaphysics, or one philosophy. Such a belief was the ghost of mediaeval theology sitting uncrowned in academic halls. Universal philosophy was as great an absurdity as universal history, for philosophy was the "methodological moment" of brooding self-consciousness, moving as the spirit moves in an inexhaustible deep.

Indeed, philosophy was identical with history. Both were the self-consciousness of "life" itself, and their identity was easy to establish. Knowledge, being always knowledge of existence, implies a sensory, that is, a historical element, and also implies thought, that is, implies philosophy. Pursue the matter and you must see that the reflective consciousness of *process* is at once history and philosophy. Again history is really (in a special sense) contemporary. It is a present vibration "of" life in the reflective spirit. As

Croce said, "When chronicle has been reduced to its proper practical and mnemonical function, and history has been raised to the knowledge of the eternal present, it shows itself to be identical with philosophy, which for its part is never anything but the thought of the eternal present."

There may be some excuse for those who would like to know how this "eternal" present differs from the ordinary *passing* present, how a historian can *re-live* the past unless there truly *was* a past just as veritably as there *is* a present, how a past *not* re-lived could be identical with nothingness, and on what grounds self-consciousness of life must necessarily be accounted philosophy. And even if these vulgar objections are due to commonplace misunderstanding, there is a considerable body of enlightened idealistic opinion in Italy eager to maintain that Croce's principles should have carried him further than he went.

According to these authors (e.g. Ruggiero and U. Spirito) the man who grasped what Croce had just missed was G. Gentile, Croce's collaborator on *La Critica*, until he founded his own *Giornale critico*, in 1920. (There is room for dispute regarding the independence of the two.)

Gentile (who also revised his Hegel) developed a new dialectic in his best-known work *The Theory of Mind as Pure Act* (1916). Hegel, he said, was right in his general conception of "the dialectical nature of thought, the thought which understands itself as unity of the variety, and things as the variety of the unity," but wrong in treating thought as something *perpended*, a dead concept. The truth was that thought (and also reality) was *becoming*, pure living spirit or "subjectivity" of the universal (not the private) spirit, the producer of multiplicity and objectivity. It was the pure "I", the *Io trascendentale*. It was simple *going* with nothing that goes and with nothing gone; and if the profoundly simple but profoundly difficult principle of pure passage that does not pass away was firmly grasped all the standing puzzles of philosophy were triumphantly overcome. Since Time itself was caught up and incorporated in this pure activity of essential going, it was a mistake to confuse theory (as Bosanquet did) with the passage of time. The pure act, although essentially movement, could never be dated. Nevertheless, it was "history" (in a Gentilian sense) and there must be *one* philosophy since the Spirit is one.

Contemporary philosophy in Italy, as in many other parts of the new Europe, is a political as well as an educational force, but the relations of the *Io trascendentale* to Fascism and to the Vatican, however interesting and important, are of lesser account than the relations between philosophy and Communism in Russia.

In that country it is an axiom that philosophical "ideologies" reflect but

also affect the tension of social and political existence. Consequently the entire development of mankind must be made manifest in philosophy and also stimulated by that subject. The relevant philosophy, as all the world knows, is the “militant dialectical materialism” of Marx and Engels revived by Plekhanov and (since Plekhanov had regrettable Menshevik tendencies) brought to established Bolshevik orthodoxy by Lenin himself.

According to Leninist ideology the real world is a tension of opposites and evolves by means of this tension. The “dialectical method” transcribes the fundamental law of natural and social development, but the ideology has to be militant because ideas are active forces instead of being idle dreams. Lenin himself believed that Hegel was more of a materialist than an idealist, as left-wing Hegelians, and a good many of Hegel’s critics have always believed; but, apart from that, he held, with Marx and Engels, that Hegelianism must be forced to descend from its idealistic cloud-cuckoo-land and set upon its broad realistic feet.

The theory, therefore, is a “materialistic” absolutism (or, more accurately, a natural realism of this type). Marx and Engels, profoundly influenced by the religious “materialism” of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) believed that a simple and decisive transposition, similar to that of Columbus and the egg, would rescue Hegelianism from its idealistic extravagance and so make it invincible. In the present century Lenin, apprehensive of the egg’s stability, resolved to make “orthodox” Marxism for ever secure. His intensive study of philosophy during his exile in Siberia between 1897 and 1900 was succeeded in 1908 (on a visit to London) by his chief philosophical work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in which the folly of debasing Marxism with the whimsies of Mach and of Avenarius was effectively castigated. Mach and the others were shown to be but pseudo-realists, indeed to be little better than Bishop Berkeley himself, and their veiled idealism was declared to be “foul and false.”

When Lenin triumphed in Russia and overwhelmed the flaccid ideas of Kerensky and the “Second International,” his “sound philosophical basis of revolution” might have seemed to have been finally vindicated. All, however, did not remain quiet on the philosophical front. Indeed, the organization called “The Society of Militant Dialectical Materialists” had to show incessant vigilance. According to all good Leninists the “materialism” of Marx was opposed in principle to “mechanistic” materialism, that is to say to the doctrine that man’s ideas are simply a part of physics. The persistent world-wide tendency towards “mechanism” in philosophy had therefore to be extruded from Russia, and the Soviet Union had also to be defended against internal



disorders arising out of the “eclecticism” and even the “idealism” of Trotsky and of Zinoviev. In 1929, at Moscow, A. Deborin showed decisively why and where the dialecticians should abjure mechanism. But Deborin himself was tainted with “formalism,” therefore with Menshevik error, therefore with something like idealism, and he publicly confessed his errors in the year 1930.

In Lenin’s philosophy a classless equilibrium would correspond to Hegel’s “absolute Spirit” or to McTaggart’s “final stage of the C-series.” At the moment, however, the dialectical world-process decrees the expropriation of the expropriating bourgeoisie, the Soviet Dictatorship and the expansible Five Years’ Plan.

## Chapter IV

### The Humanistic Disciplines

Ceoco's theory of the unity, and even of the identity, of philosophy with history, together with his opposition to Marxism on the one hand and to positivism on the other hand, must inevitably be compared with recent German philosophical accounts of the "humanistic" or "cultural" disciplines.

Generally described, these theories renounce a part of the claims of Hegelian absolute idealism in order to strengthen and defend the rest of it. Instead of maintaining that "mind" or "spirit" is the source and sustaining principle of all things, these humanists hold that it has achieved an independent sphere of its own, both fine and firm. Hence philosophy has no quarrel and relatively few contacts with natural science. On the other hand, they repudiate positivism, and they also repudiate Marx. The failure of Hegelianism (which they admit) does not, in their view, lend support to Marx. The lesson of the failure is simply that a different philosophical strategy should be pursued.

This movement, in the main, had its origin in the long and active career of W. Dilthey (1833–1914), who in 1882 succeeded Lotze in Berlin, and it is essentially a contemporary movement, although Dilthey's celebrated *Introduction to the Humanistic Sciences* appeared so long ago as 1883. For Dilthey was active during the present century, his influence became much more marked after his death, and it increased very rapidly in the years succeeding the war.

The son of a Calvinistic preacher, and himself trained for that calling, Dilthey found his life's interest in a philosophy of the spirit which should extend and clarify what religion had always accepted sub-philosophically, that is to say the active, teleological social unity of "life." Here he found a congenial theme in his early study of Schleiermacher and of that philosopher's attempt to derive the varieties of the religious spirit from the central fact of "absolute dependence." But history impressed Dilthey even more. The Berlin of his youth was the Berlin of Humboldt, Savigny, Grimm, and his ambition was to produce a "Critique of the Historical Reason" that should supplement the Critiques of Kant, and do for the humanistic sciences what the great Helmholtz (it was thought) had done for the natural. As Dilthey

said in 1903, "Culture is a union of teleological tendencies. Each of these, like language, jurisprudence, myths and religion, poetry and philosophy, has an inner lawfulness determining its structure and hence its development." He also said that history alone could show what humanity was.

Thus although he was profoundly interested in the inward essence of science (whose structure of ideas he accounted rich in revelation), his aim, from youth onwards, was to apprehend the substance of the "great humanistic positivities" as opposed to the contracted and shallow positivism of his time, and even to Comte's sociology, Mill's science of character (ethology) or Hume's earlier attempt to supply an experimental science of human nature. According to Dilthey, the autonomy of the humanistic sciences had to be defended upon lines other than these. "Their material," he said, "is the special sciences, their principle the autonomy, that is, the freedom of thinking and of human life itself." The natural sciences were a part of man's struggle to master his environment and to develop his personality. The materialists therefore were philosophers – Democritus, Hobbes, the encyclopaedists, and certain positivists – but they were not very good philosophers because they forgot that nature was only the correlative of mind, and therefore could never make a mind. On the other hand, Dilthey denied that the higher-flying idealism of Heraclitus, Spinoza, Leibniz, Shaftesbury and Hegel had succeeded, and he advocated an idealism of free self-development as in Plato, in Christianity, in Kant, in Maine de Biran and in Carlyle.

In a certain sense, Dilthey set forth a "descriptive, analytic and understanding psychology." Like so many others he honoured the maxim "Know thyself." For him, however, the personal mind was the bearer and interpreter of a great tradition. If therefore the kingdom of philosophy could be entered by a species of self-observation, all philosophical questions were really attempts to compel the spirit of culture to declare itself. The atmosphere and structure of a man's spiritual life was his participation in a great social totality. The terms that Dilthey principally employed were "life" and "living experience." He would rather say "I live, therefore I am," than with Descartes, "I think, therefore I am," but "life," in this special sense, had to be lived through at a very high-grade level. It was a spiritual achievement, overtaking, joining and continuing the blood-stream of cultural history. A man's life was the way in which he gathered reality into himself and moved with its deeper trend – indeed Dilthey interpreted it in the same general spirit as Christian theologians have described the movement of the human soul towards God and towards redemption.

In certain senses Dilthey was anti-metaphysical and even sceptical. School-metaphysics, he held, was bound to strain itself to the point of rupture. The reason was that school-metaphysics, like Greek philosophy before it, had over-intellectualized its interpretation of the human spirit. The history of the spirit, however, need not so destroy itself, and a symphony of the aesthetic-intellectual attitude of Greece, of the Roman and Stoic imperial philosophy of the will, and of the Christian redemption theory might achieve, in its own peculiar way, a universal metaphysics.

Towards such a metaphysics Dilthey contributed certain large and magnificent fragments, each broken off abruptly as if overweighted by the splendour of its own structure. He was undoubtedly the first philosopher-historian of his age. In his view, in so far as there could be a philosophy distinct from the distilled essence of the sciences, of poetry, of social idealism, of religion and the like, it would be the science of sciences and the theory of theories. In the main, however, the great matter was to allow Shakespeare, Goethe, Roman law, the Fathers, the schoolmen and the more modern "secularistic" or unregenerate humanists to declare the substance of their living thoughts and reveal the master passion of their aspirations. Consequently there is a certain resemblance between Dilthey's philosophy and Husserl's later phenomenology. According to Dilthey, however, the understanding of these matters is cumulative, massive and brooding. According to Husserl (as we shall see in due course) it is rather the immediate insight into some shining essence too often hidden from the careless eye.

The work of E. Troeltsch was in many respects a continuation of Dilthey's, although it is significant of the times that, in Troeltsch's view it was Marxianism rather than simple positivism that had to be corrected.

In his youth Troeltsch had medico-biological interests, but he came to believe that history should be approached from the side of jurisprudence. As a student at Göttingen, however, he decided that theology was the subject best suited to his designs, that is, to the attempt to unify history and metaphysics. Sympathetic towards Darwinism and Dilthey's "understanding psychology" his special interest lay in the way in which Christianity had its roots in the *Life* of humanity. An unhistorical Christianity would be an absurdity and so would be a Christianity not regarded as an abiding source of power in human society.

Such questions were closely united with the final and absolute worth of Christianity, with the spirit of Protestantism, with the gradual secularization of the authoritative attitude in historical Christianity and with the view that "Europeanism" is the only thing that counts in history proper. In Troeltsch's

opinion, Rickert and other value-theorists had vainly attempted to discover an autonomous, unhistorical, abstract standard of values, and Dilthey's researches had been too little controlled by an intelligible governing logic.

Admitting that he himself "had no philosophy" in the more academic sense of that term Troeltsch believed that he knew how to coax historical matter-of-fact in its wholeness to declare its fundamental trend, including the way in which it dominated such relatively special domains as civil philosophy, jurisprudence and similar studies. History itself, he thought, should be able to deliver us from a chaos of ostensible world-totalities, and so would perform its proper office. It should admit the truth in Marx's variety of socialistic fundamentalism and in such works as Kautsky's *Social Democracy and the Catholic Church*, but it dared not admit that man's humanity and social existence could be despiritualized, economicized, naturalized. It should not (like Nietzsche in Troeltsch's opinion) attempt to break with the past but should use the time-process to help us to understand what we now are. It should be able to produce something parallel to Harnack's great *History of Dogma* (another of the major influences of the age), but in the way of life and of sociology, not simply in the way of theological theory. Many modern historians tended to become a straggling army of special inquirers or even of sharp-shooters with a propagandist intention. The remedy was an endeavour after totality. History had its own methods. The fall of empires, in France or in Russia, could not be mathematized like the descent of bodies on an inclined plane; but history was not unintelligible in consequence.

In 1915 Troeltsch went to Berlin and worked still more earnestly at the problem of historical interpretation. Historical activism, he said, should supersede historical contemplation, that is to say he favoured a peculiar and in intention a very elevated type of pragmatism. It also seemed to him that there was a "concrete" or "historical" logic, much as it later seemed to the logical positivists that there is a physical as well as a pure logic. (Culture-language may be just as intelligible as physical language. It is "metalogic" or "Real-dialektik.") It gives the totalities and the hierarchy of sociology, typology, ethology and other such studies and "instinctively" divines their essence and their realistic core.

In the end Troeltsch says that genuine philosophies in the full sense have been rare, although anything more usual has been a feeble substitute for philosophy. Modern writers, for the most part, were only epigoni, or as one might say, bottlewashers. Such writers, however, if they were something more than epigoni *of* epigoni, may do their age a service, and may contribute

towards a genuine philosophy when it comes. To say this may be to make a virtue out of necessity; but there are necessitated virtues as well as freer ones.

Max Weber (1864–1920) has had a wider general repute than any of the others mentioned in this chapter, partly on account of the provocative and stimulating character of one of his answers to Marx. This was the essay entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and its leading idea, perhaps over-emphatic, was that Lutherans, Calvinists and Puritans were fortified in and beckoned towards their capitalistic enterprises by the conviction that their fervent repudiation of slothfulness in business was a high and sacred calling despite its this worldly reference. Cupidity, Weber admitted, was no new thing, and diligence had been the creed of many and the practice of some since the days of Hesiod if not since the days of Adam. He also did not deny that the silver mines of Mexico and other such factors had a good deal to do with the overwhelming importance of pecuniary wealth in the modern world. Weber's thesis, however, was that unless ideas had the force of (or were actually incorporated in) a religion, nothing that was lasting could occur in social history. Ideas led, and were not (as with Marx) mere products. What had to be explained, therefore, was the worldly asceticism, the self-dedication of so many Protestants (and Jews) to the accumulation and employment of pecuniary resources for private profit.

Weber's continuing and considerable influence, however, cannot be based upon this one essay, however great its importance may have been. A jurist by training, he devoted his short but precious life at Freiburg, Heidelberg and latterly at Munich to the keen analysis and to the wide study of politics, sociology, economics, history and philosophy in their interrelations. His aim was the "rationalization" (that is, the logical elaboration) of those ideologies that had dominated social existence. In addition to his *General Economic History* and other economic-philosophical investigations, he studied the effects of religion upon the Chinese, the Jews and other ancient peoples, and his conviction that Germany's rulers had too little philosophy in them gave him a prominence that was also a responsibility, before the war, at the peace, and after it. To distinguish science (whose strength lay in its ethical neutrality as well as in its discoveries regarding technological possibilities) from values and guiding ideals, to understand the place of "rationality" in both these domains, to study history faithfully without regarding it as the expositor of someone's philosophy – these were among the aims that Weber set before him and towards which he contributed so much.

N. Hartmann (b. 1882) of Berlin, whose extensive contributions to ethics,

theory of knowledge and theory of reality have made him widely renowned, may here be mentioned as one of the many who have recently attempted to elucidate the philosophy of humanistic reality.

Hartmann is commonly called an “aporetic” philosopher, since he has a predilection for appending metaphysical question marks to the strenuous phenomenology in which he attempts to expose the nerve of some particular system of reality. In his book *The Problem of Spiritual Being* (1933) he argues that Hegel, the discoverer of this new branch of philosophy, attempted over hastily to bring it within the ambit of a majestic monism, as Marx, his follower and supplanter, also did in his own reversed way. Hegel tried to construct from above downwards, Marx to build from below upwards; but reality is intractable to both their monisms. It is not of one piece, but contains several different principles whose relation is that the lower principles are the stronger although the higher principles are nevertheless free and autonomous.

According to Hartmann, living conscious men and women are the bearers of culture, and neither culture nor the timespirit should be regarded as a sort of divine substance of which men and women are, in the end, only ephemeral manifestations. The autonomy of the “objective” spirit, however, is not, on that account, lessened in any way, and the business of humanistic philosophy is to accept the fact and explore it. Consequently history, that is to say, the appreciation of the continued life and present meaning of social institutions and traditions has a unique and highly significant function in this part of philosophy. If the term “existence” be confined to men and women, cups and saucers and other such things, history has to do with “super-existence,” something on the other side of “existence” in this narrower sense. On the other hand men and women would be less than human if their souls were not directed as well as nourished by this higher if more volatile kind of reality.

Hartmann further attempted to show that “objectified” (as opposed to “objective”) spirit had also a greater tenacity and continuity than most people supposed. The plain man would say, for instance, that painting and sculpture had a spiritual message when the art galleries were open, but not, except in living memories, when they were closed, and that the characters of a forgotten language had no spiritual immortality at all if their meaning remained a complete mystery. Hartmann, however, appears to think that even such “objectified” products of the spirit have a certain superiority to the vicissitudes of time and to the accidents of human forgetfulness.

K. Jaspers of Heidelberg (b. 1883) is another distinguished exponent of a somewhat similar philosophy. His *Man in the Modern Age* (English trans. 1933)

was written for the people, his *Philosophy* (Berlin, 1932) for the academics.

In the former work, Jaspers sought a way of salvation from the vacuity, the dying faith, the restless eroticism and the despairing politics of the modern industrialized herd of human beings. The decay of the west that Rathenau had noted before the war and that Spengler had revealed at the war's close had to be arrested. Man had to confirm himself in a faith independent of revelation, that is to say by means of philosophy. For men had learned, at long last, that they were genuinely historical beings. In other words, their lives were not mere episodes in a divinely appointed drama but, in the literal sense, epoch-making. For that reason, human life could not be simply the drifting passage of an aimless temporality. It had to be interpreted in metaphysical earnest, that is to say as authentic *existence*.

In most languages, the word "existence" seemed poorer, not richer, in significance, than, say, life or love or experience. The "existence philosophy" of Jaspers and others in contemporary Germany, however, repudiates any such interpretation, and holds that "existence" in a very special sense of that term is something fuller and more profound than the "life-philosophy" of Dilthey which it is designed to supplement and indeed to supplant. It might be called, less colourlessly, the philosophy of transcendent actuality; but no doubt it knew its own business when it elected to call itself by the name that Kierkegaard had chosen. In a general way, however, we may remark that the term "existence" is designed to mark the contrast between "existence-philosophy" and phenomenology. The latter, according to the existentialists, is a name for the attitude of a mere spectator, the standpoint of an outside observer. The former indicates the position of a participant in actuality who finds that his genuine human station points inexorably "with an enlarged index-finger" to the transcendent "existence" in which he has his being.

As regards its name, therefore, the "existence-philosophy" of Jaspers was derived from the Dane, Sören Kierkegaard (1813–55). As regards its contents it was derived from that author together with Plotinus, Bruno, Kant, Schelling and Hegel in the remoter past, and from von Humboldt, Nietzsche and Weber in the nearer past. It was a philosophy in quest of the Absolute, but it denied that either Hegel or the positivists, for different reasons, could ever have succeeded in their search for the absolute. As Jaspers opined, Hegel's Absolute Idea, despite Hegel's solicitude concerning it, had worked itself loose from history and from matter of fact. It had tended to become a phantom and, like many phantoms, was rather crudely materialized. The positivists, on the other hand, were crude rationalists, devouring goblets of raw logic without



adequate inquiry into the purpose and function of such a diet.

“Existence-philosophy” had to avoid both these mistakes. It had to be wiser than positivism, less exuberant than idealism. But its affinities were with the latter. Transcendent actuality must always be ultimate. Man in his deepest and highest experience, that is to say in his free and momentous decisions, in his profounder communication with his fellows, in “the possibility of being thoroughly contemporaneous” in history, not only saw and grasped, but also was transcendent actuality. For thought and being in their purity were the same. Nevertheless, Jaspers came nearer to Kant than to most other great philosophers in his interpretation of these transcendent matters. Transcendent actuality for him was an inescapable and inveterate stimulus to searching rather than a final achievement. It was the “heuristic” pole of whatever in mankind is more profound than his vitality, his observations and his logic. In short, it pertained to philosophical faith and was seldom if ever swallowed up in a union more penetrating than vision. It was a religion freed from the superstition of heathen mythologies and also from the incubus of a supposedly exclusive revelation. Yet when Jaspers tried to take his bearings in a metaphysical way he looked first to myths, revelation and dogmas, and secondly to positive science. Moreover, he accepted the traditional metaphysical proofs of the reality of an un-Christian God.

## Chapter V

### The Pragmatists and M. Bergson

Pragmatism, in essentials, was, and, for the most part, still is, an Anglo-American movement, although its recent alliance with “analysis” may have made it more cosmopolitan. What is more, its connection with Anglo-Hegelianism, especially in its earlier phases, was very close indeed. In England, as we saw, F. C. S. Schiller argued, sometimes rather boisterously, that what Absolutism condemned as mere human make-shifts were all that humanity could get and as much as it should want. In America, William James “damned the Absolute” with all his heart and with all his eager will. C. S. Peirce said that his “pragmaticism” was closely allied to Hegel, and John Dewey moved away from something *very* like Absolutism to something that remained *rather* like it.

Accordingly, the present chapter is, in some sense, a commentary on the third chapter. Its inclusion of M. Bergson, however, needs some defence. For Bergson manages his own affairs. One may say, however, that both James and Schiller regarded Bergson as a very great ally; and that is something, although it may not be quite enough. Besides, this is a short book.

It is sometimes held that pragmatism blossomed and drooped with James’s own activities, but the statement is false both as regards James’s pragmatism and his “radical empiricism,” which pair he sharply contrasted.

James’s radical empiricism was a lifelong conviction. As early as 1885 he had written to Howison:

My trouble, you see, lies with monism. Determinism = monism; and a monism like this world can’t be an object of pure optimistic contemplation... Make the world a pluralism and you forthwith have an object to worship. Make it a Unit on the other hand, and worship and abhorrence are equally onesided and equally legitimate reactions.

Pluralism, then, was ultimate. The universe was “strung along,” not as beads are, but straggling like a buttercup. James rather liked the summary one of his weaker students gave. “The universe is a vague pulsating mass of next-to-next

movement, always feeling its way along to a good purpose, or trying to." It contained relatively stable portions, but the growing part of it was the more exciting, especially its finite, growing God.

Its "next-to-nextness," again, was an *experienced* continuity. It was not, as Green or Lotze or the Kantians had held, the interpolation of relational forms that were *above* experience. According to James, the "flights" and the "perches" of human experience were definitely contrasted, but both of them were bits of experience in the same sense.

It may be correct to say that James's philosophy was bio-centric, and also that he was a commonsense or "natural" realist regarding the relations of nature to mind. Certainly he often said so, speaking metaphysically as well as psychologically. The principal emphasis in his philosophy, however, was laid upon "pure experience." This, in its purity, *was* his radical empiricism. He was, he hoped, a better, because a purer empiricist than Mill, or Comte, or Shadworth Hodgson. He was also more adventurous, since he believed that a systematic survey of the jungle, scrub and wilderness of experience, in mysticism and in abnormal psychology, was full of instruction for philosophy generally.

Again, the perspective of his empiricism was at least as much continental as English. He worked for the "unstiffening" of neo-Kantianism, as may be seen, for example, from the special form of the argument in the most important of his later papers, "Does consciousness exist?" This was the contention that "consciousness" had become (for neo-Kantians) only the empty statement that experience had to be thought. In reality, James said, mentality is not a stuff, but an arrangement and a function. The genuine (and plastic) stuff of reality, taken in a context of interest and appetite was "mental" or "conscious"; taken in another context it was "physical."

The later development of Behaviourism, with J.B. Watson for its chief exponent, is logically distinct from this argument. Behaviourism is a laboratory-metaphysics holding that because the most promising line of psychological research, in rats and in men, is their physical reactions, therefore the human as well as the animal mind consists wholly of such reactions. It is not a two-context theory, but a one-piece affair. Nevertheless, James also held that the soul, if it were anything, would have to be *breath*, and that bodily "warmth and intimacy" was the root of the interest-context. Hence in certain respects he could be called a favourable witness to behaviourism, although he was also the best introspectionist of his age.

The pragmatism that James distinguished (oversharply, I think, except as

regards the details of James's temperamental impressionism) from this "radical empiricism" stood for two things, firstly a method, and secondly a genetic theory of truth. The method was the principle that "to attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve, what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare." The theory was a generalization from the method, somewhat amplified in a metaphysical sense. It asserted that truth was always life's instrument, conceptual truth a shortcut, and most "ideas" working substitutes for actual sensation. And it took for granted that the gangling ambulation of human thinking must include the totality of human truth. In other words, it employed the philosophy of immanent idealism, and not the philosophy of "natural" or of any other realism. In the main the "practical differences" on which the theory turned were differences of (sensory) *belief*, and a satisfactory practical verification was assimilation with "the beliefs in stock." Other "satisfactions," however, were also contemplated; for beliefs may be reinforced in divers ways, largely emotional. Buck-u-uppo may be as good as calomel. But at this point James's theory bewildered himself and everybody else.

James, with emphatic acknowledgments, said that his account of the pragmatic method was borrowed from C. S. Peirce (1839–1914) and Peirce himself says that the theory was a consequence of certain debates during the "earliest seventies" in the "Metaphysical Club" of Old Cambridge (Mass), either in James's study or in Peirce's own. For one of the main subjects that this knot of young men discussed was Bain's theory of belief, viz. "that upon which a man is prepared to act" or the philosophy of "You bet." According to Peirce, Bain was therefore pragmatism's grandfather, and many of its critics have said the same, adding, however, that the grandfather had been refuted by Bradley in his *Logi*, and so that the grandchildren should not be heard.

James's private opinion was that Peirce was a "queer being" and a "hopeless crank," but James also said that he "never knew a mind of so many different kinds of spotty intensity or vigour." On this judgment time has taken a certain revenge, for Americans are now agreed that Peirce was one of their greatest thinkers, and his collected works are appearing in eight sumptuous volumes. In these there is spottiness and some amiable eccentricities, especially a passion for word-coining – phaneroscopy and coenoscopy, sumisigns, dicisigns and suasisigns, cotary propositions (i.e. whetstones) and the like. Otherwise, however, the "crank" has become a man of the world, for Peirce's major interests in symbolic logic, in the nature of signs and their use, in the theory

of probability and in abstract scientific methods, in “speculative grammar,” in Duns Scotus and in other scholastics are, at the present moment, the last word in philosophical up-to-dateness.

Peirce described himself as “saturated through and through with the spirit of the physical sciences,” but also as a most diligent student of Kant, Mill and Duns Scotus (and Scotus, as it happens, was a theological pragmatist as well as a tonsured logician). Of all disciplines logic seemed to Peirce the first and chief. There he was an innovator of note, such another as Boole or Schröder. He further believed that “the present infantile condition of philosophy” made that subject a fussy and a foolish guide in affairs of morality and of religion, although the subject might be useful, despite its fallibility, if it set its logical house in order and went to physics for instruction in domestic science.

Hence, although his account of the pragmatic method in the essay “How to make our ideas clear” (*Popular Science Monthly*, 1878) had obvious affinities to James’s views, there were, to say the least, strong temperamental differences between the two men, especially regarding “meliorism,” optimism and the “will to believe.” According to Peirce, pragmatism was a logical thing, a way of *preciding* (as he said) or of making precise. The maxim he originally formulated for it was, “Consider what effects that might *conceivably* have practical bearings *you conceive* the objects of your *conception* to have. Then, your *conception* of those effects is the whole of your *conception* of the object.” This view was a part of Peirce’s general contention that “the life of thought and science is the life inherent in symbols.” Just as a hypothesis in science is a fairy tale unless it can somehow be tested in practice, so an idea is a piece of vanity unless it is subject to a similar control. The whole question concerns the logical process of the “abduction” (i.e. of the appropriate development) of an idea that really is an idea.

In order to retain his independence Peirce, in later life, called himself a pragmaticist and not a pragmatist, but, whatever the name, his point was that he believed his theory to be “a method of ascertaining the meanings, not of all ideas, but only of what I call ‘intellectual concepts,’ that is to say of those upon the structure of which arguments concerning objective fact may hinge.” That was a logical method, not a philosophy. The allied philosophy he called synechism. The pragmatic method, he said, would “largely clear up” metaphysics; but “concrete reasonableness” or synechism yielded a still higher degree of clearness, and was a general description of the manner in which individual reactions of a knowledgeable kind contributed to the development of ideas. Such synechism was “founded on the notion that the coalescence,

the becoming continuous, the becoming governed by laws, the becoming instinct with general ideas are but one and the same process of the growth of reasonableness. This is first shown to be true with mathematical exactitude in the field of logic and is thence inferred to hold good metaphysically.” (Like many moderns, however, Peirce was a “tychist,” that is to say he accepted randomness as well as law.)

Although John Dewey (b. 1859) does not seem to have been strongly influenced by Peirce, his pragmatism is in many respects more like Peirce’s than James’s; for it was an experimental and evolutionary “concrete reasonableness.”

Dewey describes his philosophical career as a transition from absolutism to experimentalism, and his essays in the *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903) show how deeply he had drunk from the former well. Indeed, as late as 1930, he remarked that “there is greater richness and greater variety in Hegel than in any other systematic philosopher” – Plato excepted. He delighted, it is true, in the bio-centric parts of James’s *Psychology*, and proclaimed himself a “natural realist” when it came to shoving his boat, the *Experience*, into water. Yet, as in James’s case, the boat, once under way, seems to fly the colours of idealism, and turns out to be the whole human world, not a boat at all.

Dewey, in his realistic rôle, explains that “experience” is a tentative adjustment to an environment, better illustrated by the behaviour of the dog Argus when Ulysses returned than by the episodic fulgurations of consciousness. There are, indeed, “consummatory” experiences of a sensory or emotional kind, but these have little to do with philosophy. That subject is a criticism of criticisms. It is reflective thought engaged in self-reflection, and reflection, including logic, is not consummatory but transitional. Thought is an instrument for solving problems. Its concepts (as Professor Bridgman says) are operational, and it points or denotes in the special sort of transition that we call meaning. This “meaning,” as we now have it, is massive social experience rather than James’s “pure” experience. It is thickened experience, but the theory, like James’s, is totally opposed to the vain endeavour of getting the perfect Absolute to sit for its portrait.

What Peirce called “concrete reasonableness,” therefore, is treated by Dewey as the experimental and tentative social organization of thought’s mediations, and is attended, as in James’s case but in a much thicker way, with the explanations that “experience,” being human and in the making, cannot so much as contemplate non-experience, that “situations” can be puzzled and problematical as well as men, that “mind” and “matter” are affairs of a double

context, that both persons and their universe are historical, growing things, necessarily precarious although relatively stable in parts.

Dewey's philosophy owed much of its influence to its serious (indeed solemn) concern with physical science, and to the general line of argument that H<sub>2</sub>O was common water *and something more*, that is, was water plus the power of chemical planning. Nevertheless his theory began with "experience" taken with the utmost *naïveté* and catholicity "as the common man takes it when he experiences illness and prosperity, love, marriage and death," and it retained this catholicity to the end, although it reserved an ample place for subtle and complicated developments, such as the delicate reciprocal adjustments of mathematical symbols on which Peirce had frequently and James had occasionally insisted. In short, instrumental reflection had to adjust moral, economic and cultural situations as well as technological ones, and was the organ of a democracy of public achievement. Its very meaning was social, not merely some few of its ideals.

In the future it will probably be held that G.H. Mead's analysis of the notion that meaning in its very essence is a part of social behaviourism is rather more searching than anything from Dewey's pen, but judgment on this point must be reserved until *Mind, Self and Society* (1934 and post-humous) is succeeded by the rest of a projected trilogy of Mead's volumes of lectures.

In the first of the trilogy, Mead explained that by social behaviourism he meant, not Watson's denial of inner or private experience, but an approach based upon the reciprocities of animal action. In this sense (he held) mind and self, allowing a certain bodily individuation, are social through and through. "Gestures," that is, actions adjusted to the future responses of others, come before mind or self, and consciousness emerges from gesture situations, that is to say it is the sort of thing that might turn up in such a situation and is functionally intelligible nowhere else. The essential problem, however, concerns meaning not consciousness. From gestures, symbols are developed; in other words, symbols are gestures that indicate to another agent how he should respond. To use a symbol is to be a mind, and the "self" emerges when a mind is self-conscious, that is, indicates to itself its own rôle in a reciprocal gesture situation. Symbols, in general, are linguistic. Therefore there is mind where there is speech, and a self wherever self-communing occurs.

An interesting development in America and elsewhere is the alliance between pragmatism and the tougher of the new logics. According to C. L. Lewis, for example, pragmatism went to work "wrong way on." The mind's business is nothing but logic; its only possible activity (i.e. its *pragmatism*) is the weaving

of logical patterns (which also exhaust inter-communication). It is the non-pragmatic that we are “up against” in sensation and other vital interests; in technical language it is the “given.” The “given,” however, includes dream-facts and fantasy, and we do not call these “real” even when they give us a jolt. “Reality,” then, is a selection from the “given,” viz. such a selection as can be logicized. And here we must proceed tentatively and hypothetically. (In this, as in other such theories it is not quite plain how the recognition that an experiment or hypothesis *has worked* is itself hypothetical, experimental and in the making. And it is odd, too, to regard such recognition as either allogical or a piece of pattern-weaving.)

In England F. C. S. Schiller has been the chief exponent of pragmatism, or, as he would prefer to say, of “humanism.” Schiller, however, despite his many gifts, was happier as a desperado than as a pirate king, and was so determined to refute (traditional) “formal” logic that he had very little cloth left with which to cover the “psychologic” that he proposed to substitute. From the recent writings of another English pragmatist, Mr. A. Sidgwick, one is led to suppose that “modern” pragmatism has become pretty tame, being designed simply to prick verbal bubbles by asking what sort of verification would be sufficient.

In Germany, the fiction-theory of truth of H. Vaihinger (1852–1933) in his *As if* philosophy may be regarded as super-pragmatic; and Müller-Freienfels and others had a certain sympathy with pragmatism. Again, the view of H. Dingler that science is *simply* a set of practical directions seems more pragmatical than most pragmatisms. In Italy, Papini, at one stage of his career, advocated a pragmatic faith-philosophy that greatly heartened William James; and voluntaristic or activist philosophies have abounded in many lands. Let us turn, however, to Bergson.

It is debatable whether Bergson is the greatest of pragmatists or no pragmatist at all. He himself, in his introduction to the French translation of James’s *Pragmatism*, wrote in a detached mood and showed a good deal of reserve. Nevertheless the atmosphere of his philosophy, although very un-Peirce-like, is sympathetic towards James’s. It is bio-centric, sedulously immersed in the vital sinuosity of moving passage, prophetic of an “open” future. It also attempts to outmanœuvre Kant by the use of peculiarly mobile flying columns taking for granted that pure experience *is* full and ultimate reality and the clue to all semi-realities.

Bergson’s *Time and Free Will* (1889) was designed to make room for an inverted Kantianism. Instead of imposing forms (largely geometrical) upon our world, our minds (Bergson said) were hindered by externality, and found



themselves ungeometrically in a free vital spontaneity that, with luck and resolution, could be grasped by an “intuition suitable to man.” What this intuition grasped was “lived time” or *durée* (for physical chronometry was really spatial).

In *Matter and Memory* (1896) Bergson argued that our sense-glimpses, instead of representing “matter,” were selections of what was salient for purposes of action, that reality was a one-piece continuation of our plans of action, that the brain was the organ of habit, not a storehouse of ideas, and that memory took either the brisk form of recalling the past in serviceable detail or the lambent form of routine.

His short *Introduction to Metaphysics* (*Rev. de mét.* 1903) carried these questions further. His contention was that metaphysics is the attempt to grasp the reality round which symbols can only hover, and that “intuition” alone can succeed in the attempt. One may analyse reality, but no one could ever reconstitute it from analytical elements. In short, metaphysics must be intuitive. Such intuition was a sort of spiritual auscultation enlarged by sympathy, using methods that intelligence knoweth not, methods that for most of us are a sort of aureole on the margin of our (materialistic) “practical” thinking. Such methods, however, are capable of fuller development; and what they grasp is *durée*.

When Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* appeared in 1907 the times were over-ripe for a new philosophy of evolution. Consequently the average man was almost ready for this new philosophy of the subject. He could follow Mivart’s objection to neo-Darwinianism (viz. that it had to pretend that what was useful *in promise only* was an actual vital advantage) and consequently was prepared to accept the doctrine of an unconsciously prophetic vital urgency (*élan*) at any rate if the neo-Lamarckian theory of acquired characteristics accounted for comparatively little in evolution. Moreover, Bergson elaborated his theme with zest, grace, learning and distinction. Hence he persuaded a host of readers that the heart of change was beating within them, and that Nature had provided them with adequate stethoscopes in their instincts and in their sympathies.

According to Bergson the principal obstacle in the way of this spiritual auscultation was man’s inveterate tendency to intellectualize. Intuition (and instinct) was neglected in favour of intelligence. (But it is not entirely clear whether he meant to restore a neglected element by the method of complementary over-emphasis, or was still more radically anti-intellectualist. The answer, I think, is that the neglected element, and it alone, was *metaphysically* ultimate, but that in ordinary experience both elements could, and should, be present.)

In general, Bergson's contention was that science (and intelligence) dealt with discontinuous fixities, and yielded a sort of solid geometry. Our intellects were practical, because they were tool-users, the tools being inorganic and adapted to inorganic things. (He did not object to tool-makers, but only to phrase-makers.)

These opinions seem strange in a world that contains shepherds and policemen, that is to say, in a world where intelligence actually is applied to other animals and to other men. It would hold of levers and wheels, not of thumbs and legs, indeed it is quite certainly exaggerated, unless the meaning be that "science" tends to lose itself in a mechanical waste. Even so the times were somewhat unpropitious for Bergson's thesis, for he argued that science dealt with frozen discontinuous immobilities at the very time at which the mathematicians had developed a very definite doctrine of continuity and the physicists were volatilizing "matter."

The trail of Kant is very pronounced in Bergson's pages. Kant had held (a) that time is the form of psychology or the "inner sense," (b) that it has to be represented spatially by drawing a line, (c) that the time and the space of physics corresponded very precisely indeed. For Bergson time is the mind of life and is misconstrued by physical science which treats it as a fourth dimension of space.

His complaint therefore was that physics omitted the essence of time, viz. transition and history. Physical chronometry was really non-temporal and should be superseded by a bio- or psycho-chronology.

Bergson's critics maintain that this psychochronology omits too much, or all, of the "ology." They also maintain that he should have formulated a somewhat similar doctrine regarding space (as he himself once or twice suggested), that is, should have distinguished a psycho-megethology of sensory bigness from the conceptualized geometry that he criticized.

Further, it would seem that Bergson, in his description of a cosmic as well as of a vital *élan* in his *Creative Evolution*, attempted too much. Let it be granted that the universe is historical, perhaps growing, that stable things are only relatively permanent eventclusters, and that dead matter, however interpreted, is contrasted with living plasticity. In that case if the universe, starting from a condition neither dead nor alive, split into a dead part contrasted with the living part, there really would *be* a dead part (although its *rigor mortis* would not be pure immobility), and the intellect, instead of purveying useful fictions, would be describing literal fact so long as it confined itself to the inorganic.

In the quartercentury that intervened between *Creative Evolution* and his

next big book, Bergson's interests revolved in part round a Plotinian as well as a vitalistic account of human personality, but he was chiefly engaged in keeping his account of *durée* up to date. Hence in a small volume (1923) he examined Einstein's relativity, arguing in general that Einstein had developed physical chronometry as it should be developed, but that his theories did not affect the *absolute* time of animal experience. To each of us succession *was* succession whatever the measurements from another frame of reference might be, and there was no good reason why this absolute psychological succession could not be shared in neighbourly sympathy. If the chronometry from another frame of reference indicated a time-lapse where no succession was experienced, such a time-lapse was "drawn out of nothing," a bookkeeping transaction that added nothing either to life or to history.

In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932) Bergson continued to develop the contrast between stability and transition. In ethics, he held, a closed society (determining the obligations of duty) was opposed to the open mind; in religion various defensive social reactions were anti-thetic to what, at its limit, would be the pure mystic spirit. Such a mysticism was the bounty of Nature, the source of Nature, not a part of it, and Bergson found himself able to affirm that the universe was love and the need for love, in tangible and visible form. (So God was love, although He was in the making.) While in this theory it was not apparent why there were not obligations towards open-mindedness, or why the prophets should not be preachers of social peace, both the exposition and the comments on latter-day affairs had the author's characteristic luminosity, and his explanation that the natural units of a closed society were *small* made it easier to unite the "open" type of religion and of morals with the cause of humanity.

Early in the century Bergson had established himself as the most widely read philosopher in Europe, and as one of the most widely translated. No one except Earl Russell has subsequently approached him in this particular and his influence was commensurate with his renown, although there may not have been very many pure Bergsonians (except perhaps Bergson). Many writers, however (as the late Wildon Carr and Mrs. K. Stephen in England or G. Dwelshauvers in Belgium), have been pretty nearly Bergsonians; and very many philosophers have either been semi-Bergsonians or have de-Bergsonized themselves lengthily in print.

In France Bergson's aesthetical illustrations influenced M. Segond and the late M. Thibaudet and stimulated J. de Gaultier to develop a "Bovaryism" of super-Bergsonian self-deception in art. The mysticism of *The Two Sources*,

again, may have been tutored, in part, by the semi-Bergsonian mystics Péguy and Delacroix. G. Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* was also an interesting sequel; for its author employed Bergson's philosophy, along with Marx's, as a romantic basis for his Syndicalism, with personal addenda concerning the "myths" of the Class-Struggle and the General Strike.

The chief French Bergsonian has been E. Le Roy, Bergson's successor at the Collège de France. This author, having begun as a scientist of the Poincaré type, later discussed evolution in the spirit of one of his sub-titles "Marginal Commentary on the First Two Chapters of *Creative Evolution*." In *La Pensée Intuitive* (1930) he treated of "the return to immediacy," "creative imagination" and the like. Regarding Christianity he was a modernist and also a mystic.

G. Wilbois was a pragmatist who developed a positivistic but "instrumental" theory of reason and its works. R. Berthelot, a vigorous anti-Bergsonian, attempted to climb back to Plato and Hegel over the corpses of the three "pragmatists," Nietzsche, Poincaré and Bergson. M. Pradines, on the contrary, declined to follow Bergson *because*, in his view, Bergson was not a pragmatist.

In 1893 M. Blondel, in his essay on *Action*, had defended an activist logic and philosophy with a *devout élan* towards deiformity. His later book on *Thinking* (1934) attempted to supply a radical cure for all philosophy (including Bergson's) by following, faithfully, this more devout path.

## Chapter VI

### Two “New” Philosophical Disciplines

The present chapter will deal, in the main, with Meinong’s theory of objects and with Husserl’s phenomenology.

Both of these disciplines accounted themselves “new,” and correctly so. There may, it is true, be nothing absolutely “new” in philosophy, but there is an important relative sense of novelty in that subject in so far as a philosopher’s persistence in elaborating his answer to a question that may not itself be unfamiliar consolidates a position that may have been visited but has never been held. This type of novelty characterizes both the theories we have here to consider.

Of the two, Husserl’s has the closer connection with the idealistic tradition in philosophy, that is to say with Descartes, Kant, Hegel and Absolutism. In its later developments especially it might reasonably be regarded as another alternative to absolute idealism, additional to those we have considered in former chapters; and since it purports to be a philosophy of “pure,” and even of “immanent” experience, it has further affinities with a part of the last chapter. It is also, however, an alternative to positivism, and a species of analytical philosophy, that is to say, its connections with the later chapters of this book are at least as close as its connections with the earlier chapters. Again, the work both of Meinong and of Husserl, despite their differences, has an intimate bearing upon the various forms of philosophical realism we have next to discuss.

On the whole, then, it seems best to regard the work of Meinong and of Husserl as independent philosophical expeditions, influencing the general situation in a multiplicity of rather complicated ways. These expeditions were also independent of one another. Both, however, owed much to Brentano (1838–1917) who sowed the seeds of them although he later criticized the harvest. This circumstance introduces a further historical complication. Brentano, in the main, went back to Aristotle, and refused to travel with

Kant or with Hegel. He was greatly indebted, it is true, to Hume and to other empiricists. Indeed, he is largely responsible for the circumstance that so much in recent philosophy resembles the eighteenth century in its prime rather than any part of the nineteenth. But Brentano's highly original answer to Hume (and to positivism) was not at all like Kant's, and did not resemble post-Kantian idealism.

In metaphysics Brentano held fast to the existence of personal, immaterial, indeed null-dimensional souls, and to each man's immediate experience of his own soul. The most stimulating contention of his *Psychology* (1874), however, was the use he made of the revived scholastic theory of "intentional inexistence." On this view the essence of a knowledgeable soul is to *refer*. Our experience is always of something other than itself, and we are acquainted with ourselves only and always in the exercise of this referential function. Our "inwardness" is the inwardness of "outward"-directed beings.

In Brentano's view, this conception, faithfully followed, yielded a sound (indeed the best) philosophical method. The intent and direction of experience defined and would clarify its possible achievements in the knowledge of existence, and justified itself in the cases in which full *evidence* could be attained. What was necessary was fidelity to the facts. There would be the fallacy of mere "psychologism" if it were forgotten that our minds had a business, the business of apprehending that to which they referred. There would be the fallacy of "irrealism" if it were forgotten that we invariably endeavour to apprehend real things. But both fallacies may be avoided by sufficiently strenuous patience.

Professors Kraus and Kastil have been engaged for some years in editing Brentano's writings and correspondence. Consequently the learned world is now better able to appreciate what Brentano himself stood for, and his views concerning the development of what is loosely called the "Brentano school." For the purposes of the present narrative, however, we have to do with the influence of Brentano's teaching at Vienna (1874–95) rather than with what he later wrote in exile, or with his earlier career at Würzburg before his inability to accept the dogma of papal infallibility together with his reluctance to join the Old Catholics put an end to his career as priest-professor there.

Let us return, then, to the method of the *Psychology*, and consider its influence upon Alexius Meinong (1853–1921), Brentano's most distinguished pupil at Vienna, and the founder of one of the "new" philosophical disciplines that are the subject of this chapter.

Although Meinong gradually transferred his interests from mental processes

to the entities to which they referred, he was a practising psychologist all his life and a devoted follower of psychological clues. Such clues, he believed, could be found in the “contents” of the mind, in terms of the threefold division into “acts” “contents” and “objects” that the Polish philosopher Twardowski had elaborated in 1894.

In Meinong’s philosophy the term “act” had a very formal status. It was not necessarily an activity and it designated in the main a difference in the mind’s attitude. This may vary when nothing else does, e.g. when we suspend judgment without any apparent variation in the fact judged. (Thus judging and supposing are different “acts.”) “Contents” and “objects,” however, were not of this formal order. The “objects” are all the things to which we refer – this book, that table, Cleopatra’s nose. The “contents” are the special experiences through which we refer to such objects. The experience of blue differs inwardly from the experience, say, of sour, and all such inward differences are differences of content. (It was natural to hold that these differences of content helped us in discriminating differences in the objects.)

A part of Meinong’s theory resulted from his attempt to employ the distinction between “act” and “content” in interpreting the entities to which they conjointly referred. In particular his work on *Assumptions* (1902) explored the hinterland between bare apprehension and explicit judgment and drove all the entities that could be entertained before the mind, but were neither believed nor known, into the same pen. (Here play, and fancy, and explicit supposal, and scientific *tours de force* had each its place; and so had much else.) His dominant interest, however, was in the sort of topic which he gradually developed into a *Gegenstandstheorie*, or theory of cognoscible entities. This, as he believed, was a genuinely new philosophical discipline that had never before been investigated for its own sake only.

It seemed clear to him, on reflection, that there was great unsubtlety in the bald statement that our minds (complete with “acts” and “contents”) referred to “objects,” at any rate if by “objects” one meant existent things. The proper question, here, was, “What precisely confronts the mind when it judges, supposes, or infers?” If we allow that we *may* apprehend existing things, as Alexander did when he tamed Bucephalus, it is also plain (Meinong thought) that very frequently the entities directly before the mind are *not* existent things. Bucephalus existed, and Alexander could see, tame and ride him; but when Alexander made judgments about Bucephalus what was directly before his mind was something like “the fact that Bucephalus was spirited,” “the spiritedness of Bucephalus” (or, again, the charger’s non-existence when

Alexander named a town on the Hydaspes after the dead Bucephalus). *Such* entities are not existent things. (For example, Alexander could ride a horse but he could not ride a fact.) In short it is only our “prejudice in favour of the actual” that leads us to hold that existent things always confront us when we think. The thought-universe, that is, the sum of the entities of which we think, is immensely wider than the sum of existent things.

The new science of *Gegenstandstheorie* was based upon the apparent verity that whatever a man thinks of (or even supposes) must somehow *be*, and that much that we think of manifestly does not exist. In arithmetic, for example, we deal with numbers, and numbers do not exist, although twelve eggs may exist in one basket. The numbers *subsist*. Again the similarity of two peas does not exist even when the two peas exist.

This particular distinction between existence and subsistence is plausible, and so is the general doctrine that our thoughts range beyond mere existence, contemplating possibilities as well as actualities, negative facts as well as actual things, and so forth. Again, Meinong’s account of “states of affairs of a higher order,” of “incomplete objects” and of other such matters have provided the present generation of philosophers with a fascinating and also with a highly instructive field of inquiry.

Nevertheless (as with many philosophies) the first steps are easier to take than their successors. Many who were grateful to Meinong for his distinction between existence and subsistence were thoroughly uneasy when they were asked to believe that the pseudo-Dionysius had a pseudo-existence or that a round square must somehow *be*, and be both round and square, because what one contemplated in that case *was* a round square. Such critics would be glad to believe (with Brentano) that Meinong had built a house of cards – very good cards but not the best – and that a little further subtlety would show that it was Meinong who was unsubtle. (The general line Brentano took was to say that a phrase like “the non-existence of X” is plainly incomplete since it implies that someone believes X not to exist. Such beliefs are actual facts, and all mental processes that seem to refer to “quasi-things” can be shown, with sufficient patience, to be someone’s actual judgment, true or false, about genuine things.)

Meinong used the technical term “objectives” to describe the entities before the mind in judgment and supposal, but his analysis was not confined to “objectives.” Our awareness, in general, he held, was directed towards presentations, and we had also to consider the “dignitatives” of emotion and the “desideratives” of desire. For emotion and desire also referred beyond



themselves, although they were blended with and, in a sense, based upon a knowledgeable awareness.

Hence Meinong's doctrine of emotional presentation and of value-theory in general. Brentano had held that the good was the goal of right loving just as the true was the goal of right judgment. Meinong, who had studied economics under Menger, elaborated (and altered) this theory on the general lines that the composite experience of *valuation*, in which emotion was integrally contained, indicated a corresponding set of value-facts. The influence and interest of his repeated researches in this field were outstanding, and will be reconsidered in our penultimate chapter.

Meinong described himself as one who built "from below," and he did not expect to construct a metaphysical edifice that had many storeys or any towers. He had worked towards the view (he said) that *evidence* (as Brentano also had held) is self-justifying and final, towards a rationalism that was not afraid of empirical matter of fact, and towards the emancipation of psychology from "psychologism." In his work on *Probability*, however, he attempted a metaphysical proof of universal causation, and tried to assess the nature of induction. He also employed a distinction between penetrating and merely contemplative inquiry in the service of an *unprejudiced* exploration of the "actual."

Meinong realized that a philosopher must always be lonely. He himself had had to vindicate his independence from Brentano, although, after Brentano's death, he gladly acknowledged the bright sunrise of his youth when Brentano was at Vienna. Nevertheless he was glad that he himself had had an appreciable influence (and an admirer has called him the Plato of a movement in which Brentano was the Socrates). The early death of S. Witasek, a favourite and distinguished pupil, affected him deeply, and he was pained to see that the "mountain of injustice" that succeeded the war had become a barrier between his ideas and the rest of Europe. In this respect, however, he exaggerated the size of the mountain; and in the Teutonic countries, the support of such men as Höfler and Pfänder counted for much.

The second "new" philosophical discipline we have here to consider is the "phenomenology" of E. Husserl (b. 1859) and of his followers.

This theory, as its author emphatically allowed, derived its initial impetus from Brentano's doctrine of the intentionality of the experiences (*Erlebnisse*) men "lived through." Moreover Husserl in the years 1884–6 had been Brentano's pupil in Vienna, had responded with alacrity to Brentano's "cataleptic" eagerness, had assimilated Brentano's descriptive psychology of the intellect

and of the fancy, and so had resolved to turn from mathematics to philosophy. On the other hand, Husserl was always less of a scholastic and more of a Kantian than Brentano. The *one* “perennial” philosophy, he believed, required Cartesian-scholastic sharp-wittedness, but it also needed Kant’s profoundly penetrative genius. The Kantian development was more than a licence for mystification, and philosophy should be refashioned phenomenologically.

Husserl’s *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891) paid special attention to the newer mathematical theories of Cantor, Dedekind and others, and was succeeded by his celebrated *Logical Studies* (1900). In that work he argued in the first volume that the invincible clarity and pure generality of mathematical forms were but a part of the intelligible non-empirical structure of universal science, and demanded a survey of the entire domain of “logic” that is of such general facts as “states of affairs,” unity, plurality, relation. The second volume investigated the intentions of logical assertions in greater detail, and had a family resemblance to much in Meinong. (But in Husserl’s opinion, it had a better philosophy behind it.)

In the *Logical Studies*, the term “act” was interpreted widely, its “quality” corresponding to what Meinong called an “act,” and its material “to the Meinong-Twardowski content.” In Husserl’s later books, however, i.e. his *Ideas* (1913) and his *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), this standpoint shifted appreciably, partly because the self was said visibly to dominate all so-called “acts,” and partly because the whole doctrine was directed towards a “pole” of impersonal selfhood.

Husserl’s phenomenology is the “logos” or science of all that appears, and so is a philosophy of pure experience, although not in James’s way or in Bergson’s. Its aim and canon is to permit our experience to reveal its essence and structure.

Such experience, Husserl said, was, in a sense, realistic. Except in our acquaintance with selves and their acts we referred to a world that is not made up of selves or of their experiences. On the other hand our experience grasped and meant a world whose structure and essence, both generally and in the more special “regions” of the developed sciences, was a logical structure, correlative not antithetic to mind. Experience was of an object; but all objects, by parity of argument, were *for* (the “pole” of) subjectivity.

Most idealists, however (according to Husserl), had lost their way. They assumed, overtly or surreptitiously, that objects must somehow be *in* some particular self. And that was “psychologism.” Husserl had no objection to psychological descriptions of the intentions of human experience. Indeed,

he began his account of phenomenology in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th ed.) with a psychological section, and many of his followers had a distinct preference for that aspect of the subject. Nevertheless it was essential (he held) to “bracket” or suspend the assumption that such phenomenology was only a description of the life-history of this or the other particular being. Let experience declare its intentions. Let it fulfil these intentions where it can. But do not let it presuppose common-sense theory or any other theory. Principles there must be. But let them come at the end. They belong to the summing up, not to the opening of the case. And the end is very far removed indeed from “psychologism.”

This insistence upon a resolute preliminary suspense of judgment or *epoché*, more resolute even than Descartes’s, is a cardinal feature of Husserl’s philosophy. Its success may be more doubtful, for presuppositions have a way of creeping in, and the avoidance of all presuppositions may well be a counsel of perfection, impracticable in an inadvertent world. Thus Bosanquet complained that Husserl invariably succumbed to at least one devastating initial prejudice, the prejudice namely that regions of verity may be detached, and that the innermost shrine of reality may be penetrated, here and there, “on the faith of mental vision as you have it before you.” Others made similar complaints. They could not believe that mere intensity of understanding could succeed if breadth were lacking. But Husserl, although he often compared himself to a solitary and bewildered if astute pioneer in a new continent, believed that he had lived long enough to attain a great deal, having presupposed precisely nothing.

As he thought, he had attained his “eidetic” goal, because the method of “phenomenological reduction” had not failed him. These terms describe the other two cardinal features of his philosophy.

The word “eidetic” was intended to describe the transparent intelligibility of formal, logical structure. It marked the penetration by essential insight into the logical constitution of reality and into the broader generalities of certain of its “regions,” these being further specified in sensible or “hyletic” experience. The “phenomenological reduction” was the method of philosophical reflection, an improved Cartesianism and Humianism in which after long pondering and suspense of judgment the eidetic clarities blazed forth in their own dry light. When they did so, they confounded the foolishness of psychologism. The “reduction” was in terms of the universal “pole” of subjectivity, not in terms of our brief thinking lives. In it our minds acted in their universal capacity and the method was “new” because it was

so very thorough. In no other way could the *one* perennial philosophy bring salvation to “the present confused day.”

A recent historian (A. Metzger) represents phenomenology as a latter-day elaboration and secularization of Cusa’s philosophical theology of the fifteenth century, according to which rational souls were the living descriptions of eternal and infinite wisdom in which a hidden deity was “contracted” yet fitfully and sometimes luminously made manifest. There was an ultimate “preponderance” of rationality in human life, for, as Aquinas had said, “things are nobler in the mind than in themselves”; and human reason sought *its own*.

That, if it be true, seems to describe the aim and status of philosophy in the opinion of certain prominent phenomenologists rather than the essentials of the phenomenological method. In particular Aquinas’s statement might itself be subjected to severe phenomenological criticism, and Metzger’s summary of the position would accurately describe only a few of the detailed phenomenological discussions in Husserl’s *Yearbook* (begun in 1913). On the other hand it would seem to express Husserl’s later views, and it faithfully records the sort of contention that M. Heidegger (Husserl’s successor at Freiburg), and the late M. Scheler of Cologne, commonly regarded as Husserl’s most eminent followers, brought into prominence. For these authors united Husserl’s phenomenological method with an attitude towards metaphysics and towards history that closely resembled the philosophies of Dilthey, Weber and Jaspers.

Heidegger (b. 1889) in his celebrated book *Being and Time* (1927) used the phenomenological method. He went, he said, to the facts themselves in all their innocent power, interrogated them without asking any leading questions, and waited patiently for their answer. He believed, however, that the answer was broad enough to reach the farthest horizon of metaphysics and of all reality, since it displayed the inner spring and ultimate status of time itself. There is deity (of a kind) in man and also in the dust of which man is made. The dust is not simply “there” for man’s spirit to reckon with, and the work of philosophy is unfinished when man is content contemplatively to characterize himself and his dust. Philosophy is the quest for reality, and reality, in its primary and authentic sense, has to be elicited from the anxious solicitude of each phase or department of existence for every other. In the Quaker phrase that Whitehead also employed, nature, and even the dust of nature, is “concerned” with man’s spirit just as truly as man’s spirit must be heedful of nature. This universal heedfulness, however, is in the making and unconsummated. It is therefore bent on futurity. It must die to live; and so it is temporal and historical in its

very essence. Consequently, what philosophy has to learn to do is to immerse itself in the time-process itself and decline to be misled by specious substitutes. The Greeks and more especially Parmenides understood the gravity and the overwhelming importance of the problem. The moderns should stand on the shoulders of the Greeks instead of being content either with a pick-a-back journey or with no journey at all.

Scheler (1875–1928) was a pupil of Eucken's at Jena and in 1901 joined Husserl at Halle, but his restless spirit was avid for results and could not long endure the restraints of Husserl's *epoche*. This eagerness, although it professed to rush to the facts in a phenomenological spirit, extended beyond naturalism to supernaturalism and Scheler preferred the clarities of emotion to those of simple reason. So he reached a set of value-structures (pleasure-values, "life-values," holiness) set in a universe whose essence was love; and in his chief work on ethics (1916) he showed himself to be as vigorous as well as an acute critic of Kant's formalism in that subject. His later writings were chiefly concerned with religion; and there his attitude to the Catholic Church remains tantalizingly problematical. His account of the essential unity of human and divine in the mystical body of Christ has a certain resemblance to Cusa's position, pretty thoroughly de-intellectualized; but he had learned as much from Nietzsche as from Husserl.

Important contributors to Husserl's *Yearbook* were A. Pfänder (b. 1870), M. Geiger (b. 1880), O. Becker (b. 1889), A. Reinach (1883–1916). Some of these authors were pioneers of phenomenology, for example Pfänder who published his *Phenomenology of Willing* in 1901. The subjects they (and others) treated either in the *Yearbook* or in separate works covered a wide range – the senses, logic, epistemology, aesthetics and the unconscious (Geiger), geometry (Geiger and Backer), individuality (Löwith), art-theory (Uitz), ethics (Hildebrand and Bauch), religion (J. Hering). All these phenomenological discussions kept close to Husserl's ideals. In a wider sense of the term, phenomenology is everywhere apparent in Central Europe and also in other parts of the globe.

## Chapter VII

### Realism

The term “realism” has had so many meanings in philosophy, and these meanings have so often been unstable that the name, when it recurs in the history of the subject, is frequently abandoned or deprecated by those who are supposed to welcome a realistic theory. There is no doubt at all, however, that a movement generally and not inappropriately called “realism” was characteristic of the present century, and that, even if there has been a general disposition during the last few years to drop the name quietly, many of the recent philosophical debates in many countries are marked by fresh and livid realistic scars.

In the sense of the term that is suited to these controversies we may perhaps distinguish between epistemological and naturalistic realism. The former is largely negative, and offers a counter-analysis to what I have called idealism in any of its forms. It asserts (to be brief) that men are capable of apprehending some non-experiences without altering them in any way by the mere fact of apprehending them. Accordingly, *epistemological* realism, on its negative side, runs counter to a great many current idealistic inferences. It denies altogether that the entities we apprehend must necessarily be “mental”. On the other hand this repudiation of the shadows supposed to be inevitably cast by our thought does not of itself give information regarding what is reputed to be unshadowy. That is an affair of positive description where the witnesses need not necessarily agree.

*Naturalistic* realism on the other hand usually undertakes to show that the human mind is a natural growth whose function of understanding the world is itself an inevitable part of the world’s behaviour. It is physical realism in a wide sense of the word “physical” and *not* in the narrower senses of “materialism”. This view, it would seem, might (logically) be sustained, as it frequently has been sustained (although not always very logically) by many “natural realists” in the past without the acceptance of epistemological realism. On the other hand a friendly alliance between the two doctrines offers an attractive programme.

“Realism,” however (neglecting the special historical sense which refers to

the controversy regarding “universals”), may be interpreted more widely and more vaguely still. In its widest sense it has often been ridiculed but has never been extinguished, and has had several lively independent developments in many countries during the present century. Some of these were scholastic-Aristotelian; and the Roman Church in particular has consistently maintained that *esse* (i.e. existence and primarily physical existence) cannot be based on *nosse* (i.e. upon knowledge, as Descartes and the majority of his successors are supposed to have held), but, contrariwise, that *nosse* must always be based upon *esse*. Others were Hegelian, as Marx’s was. Others again were neo-Kantian, for example the work of R. Adamson (1852–1902) in Scotland and G. Dawes Hicks (b. 1862) in England. In Germany O. Külpe (1862–1915) argued in his book *Realizing* that although direct perception, induction and “reason” could not *severally* establish physical realism, they made that doctrine very probable indeed when taken *together*. Rehmke and Linke, and the Russian, N. O. Lossky, now a Professor in Prague, were also prominent realists, and there were strong (Aristotelian) realistic movements in Oxford and elsewhere.

The most vigorous realistic growth of the century, however, was a particular form of the doctrine in England and in America. It began (epistemologically) with G. E. Moore in England, was enormously stimulated by Russell’s early writings, and quickly gained a general renown. Then it underwent a transatlantic change at the hands of the “new” and of the “critical” realists in the United States. Lastly, S. Alexander in England (naturalistically as well as epistemologically) produced his great book *Space, Time and Deity* (1920).

So far as I know neither Moore nor Russell ever called themselves realists (although Russell gave his prompt and emphatic blessing to the “programme” of the six American “new realists” when it appeared). Indeed the later development both of Moore’s and of Russell’s philosophies towards “analysis” took as straight a line as could reasonably be expected from a slow advance over intricate country. Even their early work was nearer in spirit to Meinong’s and (with reservations) to Husserl’s than to realism of the naturalistic kind. Nevertheless “analysis” is very friendly to epistemological realism, and Moore and Russell, in their early writings, were realists in a positive sense, Moore because he held (1903) that we were directly aware of material things in space, and Russell because he held (1912) that the “instinctive” belief that there *were* physical objects corresponding to our “sense-data” was, in all probability, true. Moore’s “Refutation of Idealism” (*Mind*, 1903) vigorously asserted that the verb “to be” had a perfectly precise meaning, viz. quite simply, *to be*. If any idealist maintained that it had a further meaning (e.g. “to be perceived”

or “to be thought”) he was adding something that the verb could not and did not *mean*. (For the benefit of later writers one might add that the same argument applies to additions like “to be verifiable,” “to be in relation,” “to be correlative to a transcendental subject”.) Hence anyone who maintained that all reality was idea-ed must produce arguments that had nothing to do with the meaning of “being.” The idealists were asked for a show-down, and were informed that even if their spiritual philosophy of reality was right, they had always given at least one wrong reason in support of it.

Moore, however, more than suspected that they had confused between the act of knowing (in Husserl’s sense of “act”) and the object known. What is experienced need have none of the properties of the experiencing of it. In other words, Moore (unlike Bradley) held that this distinction was more than relative, and (unlike Husserl) that it was more than correlative in the sense that an object, somehow, required an act, as an act, plainly, requires its object. (The “contents” of the Twardowski-Meinong analysis as good as disappeared.)

Part of Moore’s task, therefore, was to give an account of “acts,” and he began by holding that “acts,” although (nearly) “diaphanous,” could be inspected directly, and must have some internal differences to account, say, for private associations. This part of the theory speedily induced traditional as well as novel doubts, and was generally abandoned, although (perhaps) it should not have been.

The more exciting part of Moore’s task was the rescue of objects from the pale cast of idealism, and British philosophy busied itself all over again with its favourite problem of the status of the “objects” of sense-perception. It was easy to show that most of the traditional arguments did not prove that perceived entities were mental. If, for example, ten men, looking at the moon, have ten distinct visible apparitions before them, ten cameras, similarly situated, would also take ten different pictures. It was also fairly plain that colour, sound, and other “secondary” qualities had every right to be regarded as non-mental if the “primary” qualities of shape and size had such a right. On the other hand it was difficult to believe that if a physical object had *one* shape, *one* colour, etc., men’s visual glimpses (which must differ for young and old, nearsighted and emmetropic, etc.) could be *identical* with physical objects, even in part; and it was odd to suppose that a few privileged glimpses, and, more generally, a few tactile “feels,” odorous whiffs and audible reports, revealed reality while the others revealed appearance only.

Hence the renewal of ancient debates, but on non-idealistic lines. Did we perceive “sense-data” and, through them, become acquainted with *another*



entity, the physical object? Could it be held, despite numerous and formidable difficulties, that we did or might glimpse part of the surface of a physical object? Was it possible that a “physical object” was just a name (in a “Pickwickian” sense) for a family of sense data, i.e. for all “whiffs,” “feels,” etc., and for the enormous family of all visual glimpses from all points of view? If so, what about the glimpses that were not sober? Such inquiries, no doubt, must be minute and may be tedious; but they do investigate a genuine problem.

Moore did not hold that “to be” necessarily meant “to exist,” and much of his argument referred to what Meinong had called “subsistence.” When Russell, who, by his own statement, had left Bradley’s camp for Moore’s about 1898, published his very important *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) this part of Moore’s philosophy received close attention. Russell could not (he said) develop “any even tolerably satisfactory philosophy of mathematics” unless he accepted, with Moore, “the non-existential nature of propositions (except such as happen to assert existence) and their independence of any knowing mind.” He was also constrained, with Moore, to accept “the pluralism which regards the world . . . as composed of an infinite number of mutually independent entities, with relations which are ultimate, and not reducible to adjectives of these terms or of the whole which these compose.” At the same time, in a study of *Leibniz*, Russell came to see (as he believed) that the doctrine common to Leibniz, Spinoza, Hegel and Bradley, viz. that every proposition has a subject and a predicate was false, and that its rejection shattered the metaphysics of all these philosophers.

The crusade against monism and against omni-mentality was fought in the high upland regions where the internality or externality of relations, and other such abstract matters, habitually dwell. It was held, against Bradley, that relations really do relate their terms although they may do so extrinsically (i.e.  $x$  in the relation  $r$  remains quite simply  $x$ , and is not a different creature  $X^r$  just because it is in relation). It was also held that relational propositions need not be subject-predicate propositions, and that our judgments do not normally attempt to characterize “the whole” (e.g. the man who counts three sixpences, counts these three sixpences only).

A prolonged reiteration of these deep generalities ensued and may have been necessary for tactical purposes. Essentially, however, they were a defence of a type of philosophy which England and even Europe had largely forgotten, and Russell’s general inquiry into the philosophy of continuity and into the nature of mathematical and dynamical series were shining if disputable examples of a renewed alliance between philosophy and (at least) the more rigorous sciences.

They also showed the need for attacking philosophical problems piecemeal instead of systematically neglecting every tree in the hope of discerning some traces of an invisible wood. The claim, in short, was that much had been done, and that much was waiting to be done. Much more had happened than the blowing of a trumpet to arouse a slumbering philosophy from its (alleged) idealistic monistic inertia. And although logic and mathematics, along with the theory of perception, were the headquarters of the new strategy, other regions were also in evidence. In ethics, most particularly, Moore, in his *Principia Ethica* (1903), debated the meaning of good and its application to well-being and to human conduct with a rigour that had long been absent from British moral philosophy (some of Sidgwick's pages and a few of Bradley's always excepted).

In the year 1910, six American realists, believing that the time was ripe for teamwork in philosophy, and particularly for the allocation of special duties to the different members of the team, published their "Programme and First Platform." As one of them later said, "We set out with high hope of success, confident in one another, and in the sympathy of our big brothers in Europe, Russell, Moore and Meinong." Their book *The New Realism* appeared in 1912.

The authors agreed that logic and the sciences for the most part study non-mental entities, that logic was prior to all mental facts and not itself mental, that there are external relations, and that what one of their number (R. B. Perry) called the "egocentric predicament" (i.e. the plain fact that all questions and answers about "knowledge" must be *the questioner's*) does not logically entail any tincture of selfhood or mentality in the object of thought. They also offered elaborate defences of "analysis" in various fields, attempted to return to "primordial common sense" (although not very naively), paid special attention to the problems of error (because they were sophisticated, not naive) and saluted the dawn of a "constructive" realism, cordially co-operating with the special sciences.

It may be doubted whether their unanimity could have lasted. In the main the American "new realism" came to be regarded as a combination of the above "platform" with "neutral monism," and with a species of behaviourism, rather liberally interpreted. This development was sketched by Perry in his account of *Present Philosophical Tendencies* (1912), and later elaborated, more stridently, by E. B. Holt, another of the six, in *The Concept of Consciousness*. It was an attempt to unite the realism of the European big brothers with James's later speculations concerning consciousness, and asserted the double-context theory of mental and physical (the elements being "neutral" when out of context). It further explained that awareness was always to be regarded as a

function of “contents” which might quite well be physical things, and that “specific responses of the organism” were the sole other relevant fact in an affair that tradition had misrepresented for so long. According to Holt, error was to be regarded simply as a natural occurrence like a badly fitting pair of gloves.

Perry himself ceased to be a militant realist and came to prefer “Peace without Victory in Philosophy” (1928). He also developed a theory of value as a function of interest, very different from Moore’s contentions, in which he believed he could incorporate what was true both in idealism and in realism. In short, he went his own way; but even if he had not, the concord of the six would have been broken by the refusal of W. P. Montague, the most eminent among them, to agree with their general views concerning consciousness and concerning error. Regarding the latter point, Montague believed that the “sad trend” towards the inclusion of mistakes and illusions into “reality” was puerile; regarding the former point that the “sad trend” towards behaviourism (even without psycho-phobia) was profoundly unjustified. He described himself as an unrepentant “animistic materialist,” holding that the “space-time mode of existence” called potential energy could be and was actually transformed into a “time-space mode,” that this time-space mode was observable as a mental state, that it had mechanical, vital, sensory and rational levels, and might persist after death, perhaps only in the form of a sort of air-pocket of feeble memories, but perhaps much more vigorously.

Another American team, this time containing seven members, produced a volume on *Critical Realism* in 1920, four years after the volume had been projected. They were anxious to “escape the many difficulties” of the “new” realism, and were opposed both to a “physically monistic” and to a “merely logical” realism. The lead was taken by C. A. Strong who, at that time, agreed with the views of another member of the team, G. Santayana.

According to Santayana, “substance” and “appearance” could not be identical since the latter might be illusory or fantastic, but there must be a certain identity if the appearances were relevant and reported substance. The identity (in his view) was identity of logical essence, and the “transitive report” of a substance was due to active movement. Later, in 1923 (as in subsequent writings) Santayana argued, in his brilliant *Scepticism and Animal Faith* that what was “given” was always essence, never existence. The “given” was mere appearance, “all surface,” and the depth, power and persistence of substance could not be inferred from the “given” by any logical process. It was an affair of animal faith. We act, as all living beings do, on the faith of a world of

physical existence, and confirm although we can never demonstrate this faith by pursuing and avoiding physical existences.

Since "appearing" is a natural event it is difficult to believe that sense- (and other) apparitions are *mere* logical essences (which are general and are not events). Hence Mr. Strong did not remain for long in full agreement with Mr. Santayana, his "realism" being more adequately stated in his *Essays on The Natural Origin of the Mind* (1930).

The problem was to understand "how the mind can arise naturally." This could occur (he said) only if mental and non-mental were fundamentally similar, and it could be understood if the correct distinction were drawn between things as they are and things as they appear. Error apart, we do directly perceive houses, chairs and other such things, and direct perception would occur if, having sensations which are mere feelings, we used these sensations as signs in such a way that we generated senseappearances out of sensations and projected these along the lines that we had learned in our physical movements. In true perception the appearance would have the properties of the physical thing (which would therefore appear to be what it really is), and the errors of representationism and of phenomenalism would both be avoided, the former because there would be no deputies between the self and what it perceived, the second because no attempt would be made to suppose that physical reality was made up out of mere appearances.

In general, critical realism came nearer to a dualism of minds and things than most other theories, and Mr. Lovejoy, one of the seven, argued forcibly in favour of a pretty full-blooded dualism in his book *The Revolt Against Dualism* (1930). Here he diverged from the others by being, in fact, a representationist, and his book supplies interesting evidence of the moribund condition of realism in America during the nineteen-twenties. The "new" realism, Lovejoy argued, had been superseded by "objective relativism" and by various attempts to unify mental and physical. The latter we shall meet again. The former, being convinced by Whitehead that we should not "bifurcate" nature, and that the relativity of our experience to varying conditions is not in itself evidence for mentalism, appears to assume that the traditional perplexities about the nature of knowing are negligible pieces of moonshine.

But let us return to England and consider Mr. Alexander.

According to Alexander, space-time is the stuff of all reality. "It is for me an ether of pure motions," he says, "chaotic at first, and without differences of quality (the one quality is that of being motion) but of intensity and direction." Metaphysical (not primarily mathematical) description showed that

space-time was *one*, that is that space must be timed or be nothing, and that time must be spaced or be nothing. A very fundamental mode of experience (called “intuition”) revealed certain pervasive features of *all* space-time, i.e. such “categories” as substance, cause or relation, which consequently were subsequent, not prior, to space-time. Substances were “groups of motions within a contour,” and were therefore distinguishable from mere “stuff.”

In addition to the pervasive (or categorical) properties of space-time there were also particular (or empirical) configurations and qualities. These, in Lloyd Morgan’s language, “emerged,” that is to say were “new” in the sense that they could not be deduced from more fundamental configurations, although they were based upon these. Thus the “secondary” quality of colour “emerged” from certain vibrations and was stippled over surfaces in such a way as to seem to suffuse them. Similarly life “emerged” and, from life, minds. Minds, like all else, were bits of space-time and so were not unextended. In our experience they were “continua of acts.” From the standpoint of physical science they were described as continua of neural motions within the brain.

The general type of relation involved in knowing was not at all peculiar. It was simply “compresence,” togetherness in one space-time. On the other hand the *perfection* of minds was very “empirical.” The quality of consciousness belonged to very few substances. (Hence Alexander reluctantly refused to be a behaviourist, and kept aloof from American new realism.) But although minds had the privileges of their perfections they were *natural* emergents, and in many ways the relation of consciousness to its neural basis resembled the relation of other emergents to their bases. Thus colour was (almost) the “mind” of certain vibration-patterns, and time, rather more vaguely, might be called the “mind” of space.

So minds were put in their natural, realistic place. Since they could not directly inspect themselves, they were said to “enjoy” themselves (even in toothache) and they “contemplated” other non-mental things. Such contemplation yielded direct awareness of the non-mental. In sensation there was awareness of *sensa*, in perception of *percepta*, and so forth. The object of contemplation was *what* it declared itself to be, *where* it declared itself to be, *when* it declared itself to be (and was literally a past event in the case of memory).

For the most part, these results were said to be a mere transliteration of the facts, when these were subjected to “strenuously naïve” scrutiny. But sometimes they were described as a gigantic but coherent hypothesis. And Alexander claimed that error and illusion did not impede his views. “Mere”

appearances, he argued (as with the mountain that seems blue when it is not), came about through mistaking the blue of the atmosphere for the colour of the mountain's surface. In "illusory appearances" the brain process elicited the appearance but did not create it. An illusion was a genuine selection from genuine space-time, but was attributed to the wrong place.

Further, according to Alexander, certain objects of human contemplation had a more intricate relation to "enjoyment," for the "tertiary" qualities of truth, beauty and goodness implied a certain "union of mind with its objects" (but depersonalized). Regarding deity, Alexander held that the universe was busily approaching that quality, although the quality of deity had not as yet emerged.

Alexander's later work has been principally concerned with aesthetics, as the volume *Beauty and Other Forms of Value* (1933) attested. In certain prefatory observations to the re-issue of his *Space, Time and Deity* (1927) he hoped modestly that the book "may still be useful as one ingredient thrown into the fermentation which is now taking place in philosophy, from which I believe some important result is about to issue"; and that is a note on which the present chapter may fittingly close. Alexander's book may have been lonely. Certainly, "realism," for the time being, has lost much of its first superb confidence. It may not be "life without air" as fermentation was once supposed to be, but, temporarily at least, it seems to lead a lingering life without any clear mission. It is evaded if not actually cold-shouldered in many quarters, and it may, no doubt, have asked the wrong questions. Still, it asked very searching questions, and it should not be condemned simply because it has become slightly unfashionable.

In a general way, it is legitimate to suggest that *epistemological* realism, even if it went to work rather too quickly, brought a salutary freedom into contemporary theories of knowledge. Its challenge to the reigning idealism was effective enough to arouse a general and keen inquiry into the foundations of natural evidence, and to upset a complacency that bespoke danger.

It is not so easy to be confident about naturalistic realism. In so far as that doctrine attempts simply to de-anthropomorphize – which is Mr. Alexander's way of saying that the human mind should renounce a position of miraculous privilege – it must command very general sympathy. More generally, the attempt to show that all the marvels of man's mind have a parallel although not an equal in a pervasive subhuman current of natural process may seem to promise an escape from superstition. As we saw, however, the connection between these views and epistemological realism is rather slight, and may have

been injudiciously exaggerated by many who thought epistemological realism so important that it ought in some way to be made the basis of a metaphysics. That it could never be. According to its own premises, epistemological realism has to go to the “object” hat in hand. It begs for what it cannot give, the manifestation of that object as it really is. It is a permissive, not a declaratory theory, allowing the “object” to declare itself to the mind but, for that very reason, renouncing the very idea of enforcing or instigating any particular sort of answer.

## Chapter VIII

### Natural Knowledge

Through fear of positivism (which they regarded not as a philosophy but as a philosophical pest) many philosophers in the nineteenth century and some in the the twentieth were anxious to avoid all contacts, even very general ones, with natural science. In particular, absolute idealists and many humanists argued in this way; and only a limited number of the philosophers we have considered in earlier chapters (e.g. M. Bergson, the instrumental pragmatists and certain realists) have entered into serious negotiations with natural science on terms of approximate equality.

As we saw, however, the internal condition of physical science itself has made this philosophical attitude increasingly difficult to sustain. At the very moment when physical science seemed to have become almost omnipotent – a menace to civilization because of its destructive potencies, a leader, as it would seem, of the Churches (which had ceased to struggle against it), something sacrosanct in the eyes of “common sense” – physical science itself appeared to lose (a certain kind of) faith in its own foundations, and voluntarily became very philosophical indeed.

To be sure it did not lose faith in its strength. Its explosive and productive capacities have not diminished; but it is no longer prepared to be either contemptuous or indifferent towards attempts to question or drastically to revise its own fundamental conceptions. In short the acquiescent type of positivism (which accepted the principles as well as the results of the natural sciences as a sort of unquestionable datum) seems at least as naïve to most scientists of the present day as ever it did to a philosopher of yesterday. The reason is that natural science has brought about a revolution within its own domain, and that, like so many revolutionaries, it has been moved towards a Declaration of Ideas.

The circumstance is fortunate for philosophy, since philosophy has never flourished except in alliance with the sciences, and also has never flourished when it was prepared to plod humbly after them. On the other hand, there are certain embarrassments in the situation. It is hard on good philosophers who



are also bad physicists, and it should be hard on good physicists who are also bad philosophers. Further, it imposes rather too much of a strain upon the few persons who are eminent in both departments.

Someone has suggested that the scientists should put up a notice – “Structural alterations in progress. No admittance except on business,” and should give private instructions that inquisitive philosophers should, most particularly, be excluded. If so the instructions should also include a stern veto on philosophical gossip irresponsibly communicated after lunch. And, as has been said, it is the scientists who are most eager to mix philosophy with their business.

The revolution in physics was particularly well mentioned, partly in respect of available scientific instruments and of the power to produce new ones, partly in respect of the results of a rather slow evolution of relevant mathematical ideas. It is too much to expect that the appropriate philosophical ideas should have the adaptability of the former, or should synchronize with the flowering-point of the latter. Therefore we should not be surprised if the affair is as it seems to be, that is to say, if most of the better physicist-philosophers decline to be rushed, if most of the better philosophers, while excited, are still more cautious, if there is general agreement that something of vast philosophical importance has occurred, although it may not be wholly apparent what that something is.

Since the scientists have taken the lead, and have cheerfully devised a good deal of metaphysics, it seems best to give a brief account, in the first instance, of the revolution they have (pretty unanimously) proclaimed.

Here Lorentz’s terms, “macroscopic” and “microscopic” are convenient (although the latter usually describes what is ultra-microscopic). The “macroscopic” is what is large enough to be on a perceptible scale, the “microscopic” what is more minute. Using these terms we should say that there have been two revolutions, one in the macroscopic metric field, the other regarding what is very tiny indeed. The first revolution brought about the triumph of relativity theory, the second concerned atoms and quanta of electricity. The consolidation of the two revolutionary fronts is still a strategical problem, but in both of them a certain type of logical courage has been the dominant consideration, apparent certainties being treated very unceremoniously, but the greatest deference being paid to what is logically tangible.

For philosophers the most interesting feature in the mathematical landscape about the beginning of the century was probably the attempt to arithmetize

geometry (e.g. by holding that points *were* numbers) and to logicize arithmetic (e.g. by holding that numbers were classes of classes). In the elaboration of this theme the paradoxes of the unending, that is, of infinity and continuity, touched traditional philosophy very nearly, and the “tidying up” of mathematics in its very determined attempt to distinguish between genuine logical meaning and mere operational convenience had also an important bearing upon traditional philosophical arguments. Hence Dedekind, Frege and Peano set a large number of problems for philosophers, and the great *Principia Mathematica* of Russell and Whitehead (1910–13) was, among other things, a philosophical achievement of the highest order.

The purely logical interpretation of all mathematics, however, was not universally accepted. The finitists, such as Brouwer, would not accept it; and the formalists, such as Hilbert, regarded most such questions as “metamathematical,” that is to say, as outside mathematics proper. Indeed, Russell himself later maintained (1927), that, whatever might be legitimate in pure mathematics, geometry was *important* only when it was interpreted as a part of physics.

In the geometrical domain there had also been bold logical adventures, and among them several that started from the experimental denial of Euclid’s parallel postulate. About the ’30s of the nineteenth century Lobatschewsky and Bolyai proved that a hyperbolic geometry was self-consistent, and Riemann shortly afterwards showed that a spherical geometry, in which space would be finite and a straight line could return into itself, was also self-consistent. Accordingly Helmholtz argued that Kant’s deduction of the necessity of (Euclidean) space in all human experience was fallacious, and Tannery maintained that there was no genuine necessity about geometry. Russell and some others held that there was experimental proof that our space was very nearly Euclidean. Others, with Poincaré, denied the possibility of such a proof on the ground that our measuring instruments could not be assumed to be invariant but might alter with the changes in local space curvature. According to Poincaré, “Euclidean space” was a series of disguised definitions, that is, a particular sort of scientific language. There might be many such physical languages, and there was no more sense in asking whether any one of them was “true” than in asking whether German was “truer” than French.

The theory of relativity administered a further shock to the plain man. Early in the present century Michelson proved that the measured velocity of light was independent of the velocity of the measuring instrument. Accordingly, a certain transformation of the classical theory of the composition of velocities

was required, indeed ‘a moving body should be represented as contracting in the direction of its motion according to the formula that had been suggested by the Irish physicist Fitzgerald (1851–1901) and the Dutch physicist Lorentz (1855–1928). It could also be inferred that what seemed simultaneous to an observer in such and such a local field would *not* be so recorded on the clocks on a distant moving body. Indeed “before” and “after” in time would have no meaning at all for bodies moving faster than light. We should regard the physical universe, Minkowski-wise, as a four dimensional field in which there is neither “time” nor “space” but an indissolubly united space-time. This was the field of the “special” theory of relativity.

The “general” as opposed to the “special” theory of relativity was not confined to co-ordinate systems in uniform rectilinear motion, and was held to have completed the identity of geometry (or rather of geo-chronometry) with physics. It implied the abandonment of all direct relations between distant events, space-time relations being confined primarily to smallish “local” sets of “occasions.” According to Einstein (at one stage) the cosmos was Riemannian and finite; gravitation was only a measure of the warping of space-time, and “matter” indicated a hummock or pimple of greater space-time curvature than the normal.

It is commonly said that, by 1915, Einstein had brought the domain of field physics, i.e. the treatment of matter, electricity, radiation, energy, etc., on the macroscopic scale into good order, and that Weyl and others have subsequently unified the gravitational and electro-magnetic fields, making the relation of gravitation to space-time self-evident and indeed a matter of book-keeping. Such statements, it is true, do not imply that there is only one way of doing these things. (Thus Whitehead argued, in 1922, that emendations of the traditional gravitation formula were preferable to the theory of differences in local space-time curvature.) They also do not imply that anything approaching finality has yet been reached. (Thus Jeans, in 1935, said that no one was satisfied with the present position regarding the kindred problem of an “expanding” or of a “contracting” universe and the contentions of Lemâître, de Sitter and Einstein about it.) On the other hand, there is little or no disposition to pretend that the revolution, after all, may be only a temporary tumult, or that it does not have profound general significance.

On the microscopic front, Röntgen discovered X-rays in 1895; radio-activity was another new discovery and the theory of the electron soon took shape. In general terms, electricity came to be regarded as the basis of all physical behaviour, the new electric-atomic theory was able (very nearly) to

give a personal introduction to its protons and electrons by means of von Laue's optical gratings and other such devices, energy was shown to have definite units (possibly ultimate) and to have mass or inertia even in the form of light.

In 1900 Planck put forward the theory that changes of energy from matter to radiation could take place only by definite amounts or quanta, i.e. by discrete multiples of the very small quantum  $h$  and this idea was included in Bohr's model of the atom (Niels Bohr, the Dane, having developed Lord Rutherford's model). Einstein further suggested that the (quite general) photo-electric effect was an instance of quantum behaviour in terms of  $h$ .

If so, an electron could not pass continuously from one orbit to another and could not even "jump" from orbit to orbit except in a figurative sense. Its motions had to be in some multiple of  $h$ , and, for a time, it was supposed that philosophers and everybody else must simply accept the fact of ultimate discontinuity in nature. Later, when the Bohr model became a little out of date, it was said that this particular discontinuity should not be taken too seriously. It was an important fact of physical description, but insufficient in itself to prove the ultimate discontinuity of nature. On the other hand the "principle of uncertainty," associated with the names of Schrödinger, Heisenberg, Dime and other contemporary workers in this field purported to be equally exciting to a philosopher, for Heisenberg discovered that if the position of a particle is very accurately determined its momentum is very uncertain (and conversely), the range of uncertainty being "round about  $h$ ". On this ground, principally, certain physicists have roundly asserted that the bottom has been knocked out of determinism.

Indeed,  $h$  is always turning up. The prevailing theory today follows De Broglie in holding that motion in these atomic regions is both wave-like and corpuscle-like. The electrons cannot be treated as mere particles, but have to be regarded as particles associated with a wave whose length is  $h/mv$ , that is Planck's constant divided by momentum.

Picture-thinking, therefore, is becoming increasingly difficult in such demesnes. It is becoming harder and harder to imagine to anyone's satisfaction what kind of electrical stability occurs, and how it is related to electrical flux. Again, these Heraclitean tendencies of the theory are accentuated in the plain man's mind by the discovery that the transmutation of chemical elements is not absolutely impossible. The first successful transmutation occurred in 1919 when nitrogen yielded to bombardment by  $\alpha$ -particles.

In the light of these results, both macroscopic and microscopic, it seems

necessary to ask whether every philosophy should also be profoundly modified.

(1) The relativity of space is nothing new in philosophy. It is the denial that space is a sort of empty box in which things move combined with the assertion that what we call space is always a property of bodies. If, as Eddington has recently said, "our goal is not to reach an ultimate conception, but to complete the full circle of relationship," the chief philosophical problem would seem to be whether the completion of the full circle would *not* be ultimate both for philosophers and for everybody else.

(2) The inter-relativity of space-like and time-like in indissoluble space-time patterns, together with the denial of (or the doubts concerning) *one* homogeneous spacetime, seem much more profoundly innovative. With regard to time in particular, there is a peculiarly stubborn and very general conviction that succession in one's own experience is something entirely absolute whatever the clocks on distant bodies might have to record, and that the substitute offered by some relativists of an absolute "interval" that may be time-like is insufficient. On the other hand, if this stubborn conviction could be overcome, the doctrine of local space-times might not even seem paradoxical.

(3) A recent writer in the Jubilee Number of *Nature* (May 4, 1935) has said that the "rejection of unobservables" is the battle-cry of the new revolution, and that its primary contention is that "in the logical correlation of experience the concepts employed shall be such that whatever is not generally observable by physical means is necessarily meaningless."

This statement, although often accepted, seems plainly to be false. There is nothing *meaningless* in the conception of experiencing what is not physically measurable by any instruments that either exist or are at all likely to exist. Obviously there are such experiences in our dreams; and if we raise the question how far the sounds, smells, and other phases of nature that are actually experienced by mankind, either are or could be recorded in the pointer-readings of accurate instruments, and what assumptions are made when reliance is put on these pointer-readings, we can hardly deny that the restriction of all meaning to a particular set of recorded measurements is arbitrary, if not simply silly. Philosophically speaking, the alleged privileged status of measured observations is, most emphatically, a *problem*.

(4) It should not be inferred, however, that philosophy, in its struggles with this problem, can remain indifferent to the newer physics. In the past many philosophers were generally supposed to be mere paradox hunters, and a little mad, because they persistently showed that it was very questionable

indeed whether men could perceive bits of “matter” that retained their perceived properties when nobody perceived them, and could be moved about in “space” without undergoing any alteration of their perceptible spatio-temporal properties. For the most part, the scientists, except in a very academic way, shared the general view about philosophers, and supposed that their own withers were quite unwrung. In short, it seemed that science and “common sense” might be in essential agreement. But the revolution in the sciences has changed all that. It is impossible to pretend that “space-time curled up in the proximity of matter” is a homely common-sensical idea, like a coal-scuttle or a teapot. There is a widespread belief that all’s yet to do (or very nearly all) in the subtler understanding of nature. There are even some grounds for supposing that scientists need not always be the best judges of the concessions that should (or should not) be made, and that if philosophers plod along persistently with the simple, central questions that, trusting their own special training they believe to be profound, they may contribute very effectively towards a clearer situation.

(5) It is sometimes said that the most urgent task of the revolutionaries is to replace the old-fashioned mechanical or pictorial models by adequate “epistemological” models. Similarly, Sir A. S. Eddington in his latest book, *New Pathways in Science* (1935), suggests that what has to be learned is how to deal with a “haze of probabilities.”

If so, the sufficiency of such models and the consistency of this haze are surely philosophical problems. An epistemological model is a very odd sort of entity. It is just a way of dealing with – something; and anyone who can be content with ways of dealing, without the remotest inkling of what he is dealing with, seems to be poised precariously between earth and somewhere else. One might as well suppose that the science of medicine was wholly concerned with treatment and not at all with disease. The scientists, indeed, seem to have fallen into the pit that a few philosophers dugged. They are losing sight of everything except a “method,” and are frankly agnostic regarding the method’s goal.

Here their new methods of signalling within a haze of probabilities seem also insufficient. The theory of probability certainly plays an important part in all our investigations, whether it be of the fashionable “frequentist” sort (i.e. the theory of “scattering” and of “randomness” in large statistical aggregates) or, as Mr. J. M. Keynes argues in his *Treatise on Probability*, it is an attempt to measure the relevance of logically inconclusive propositions. In either case, however, there are, to say the least, respectable grounds for

believing that nothing in Nature can *be* merely probable. Everything actual must be just what it is. The haze of probability would not even yield a science of atmospherics, for the atmospherics would be only epistemological. In short these views, if they are not supplemented, would shut Nature quite out.

(6) Certain philosophers, more particularly Whitehead and Russell, find that the newer theories are utterly opposed to the metaphysical conception of "substance." Consequently they attempt to elaborate a logic of "events" in place of a logic of "things." Other philosophers maintain, however, that "events" *are* (ephemeral) substances, so that it is not the notion of substance, but certain narrow interpretations of the notion that are being attacked. Obviously, if "substance" is defined by its endurance in simple time, it is ruined when "time" is caught up into complex "space-time." But need "substance" be so defined? Obviously, again, if "substance" is interpreted after the fashion of "billiard ball materialism" it is ruined when the conception of a field of electrical energy, partly focalized in tiny "wavicles," is preferred. "Substance" is more like the click than the balls; and there may be some hope for the mutual accommodation of "mind" and of "matter." But why should a "substance" be a hard, massy particle? The fashionable view in these matters seems (in technical language) to be either a monism of the electrical field or something very like a monadism of its sub-atomic centres of influence. Both monism and monadism are theories of substance, and if it be said that what is essential is the historical route of the One or of its Many, it would not be impossible to devise a metaphysic of "substance" on these lines.

(7) The claim that Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle" knocks the bottom out of determinism seems to be a simple-minded mistake. Everything in nature is what it is, that is, cannot be vague. If precision in the measurement of position is unfriendly towards precision in the measurement of momentum, the trouble lies in the measurement, and is in itself a proof that accuracy of measurement is not the same thing as natural reality unless, indeed, particles do *not* have position and do *not* have momentum.

In any case, it is an elementary confusion to confound this alleged indefiniteness of nature with "free will," that is, with "indeterminism." The indeterminist holds, say, that he moves his arm freely, but never dreams of denying that his free movements are perfectly definite. What he does deny is that they were inevitably determined by antecedent causes.

Accordingly, if there really is sub-atomic "freewill" quite different arguments must be adduced; and it is plausible to argue, as many modern physicists do, that the macroscopic determinism that astronomers and others

assume regarding eclipses and the like does not necessarily imply microscopic determinism, even granting that the macroscopic is composed of the microscopic. For if the macroscopic is a statistical aggregate, it is illogical to apply aggregate-principles forthwith to the components of the aggregate. In life-insurance the death-rate for large numbers is the important matter, and such statistical aggregates do not yield direct information about the chances of survival of some particular insured person.

On the other hand, the difference between aggregates and their components does not even make it plausible to suggest that the former are wholly determined by causes and the latter not at all. There are causes for the death of insured persons (as detectives know) whether or not actuaries concern themselves with any of these particular causes. Again, if the components are determined it is not unreasonable to assume that statistical regularities will continue if no new causes enter, and that they will change if new causes do enter (as the death-rate changes when there is a war). If, however, the components acted quite capriciously, why should there be aggregate constancy?

If and so far as our measurements yield statistical aggregates only we cannot argue that because we know the (macroscopic) past and cannot infer the (microscopic) future, therefore we should abandon determinism. For, by hypothesis, we do not know the microscopic past. Moreover "randomness" is irrelevant. It could be induced in a pack of cards by a shuffling-machine without the faintest denial of determinism. Again, if "randomness" be the opposite of organization, the human will, being highly organized, ought to be *less* free than most other natural entities.

The above account of the revolution in natural science, and of its general bearings upon large philosophical questions has necessarily been very sketchy. It may, however, support and even explain the contention with which this chapter began, viz. that philosophers might reasonably ask for a little time for considering these matters.

In the main the philosophy of such questions has been concerned with the excursions into the subject obligingly made by the scientists themselves. Einstein, Weyl, von Laue, Schrödinger, Planck, Eddington and others have all contributed to the advantage, and frequently to the delight of philosophers. Among the older writers, the pages of Mach and of Poincaré are very nearly as fresh as when the ink on them first dried, the more especially because both these authors paid very careful attention to the relation between sense-perception and the logic of physical interpretation.

Among philosophers E. Meyerson (1859–1934) in a series of works from



1908 onwards endeavoured to show that “reason” was the pursuit of identity in all natural diversity, and that the new as well as the older natural science was, in this sense, “rational”; and Einstein himself said that Meyerson had analysed the “demon of explanation” that possessed him. Russell, in what may be called his “later” period, attempted a synthesis of the newest scientific conclusions in his *Analysis of Mind* (1921), *Analysis of Matter* and *Outline of Philosophy* (both 1927), as well as in other works. Again C. D. Broad, in his *Scientific Thought* (1923), and in other writings, made a resolute attempt to explore what he called “critical philosophy,” holding that the “speculative” kind of philosophy could be only a guess and was unlikely to be a good guess if “critical” philosophy did not make a greater advance than had yet been reached. (It may not, however, be entirely plain why critical philosophy would *be* philosophy if there were not speculation in its eyes, or, in the alternative, why Broad should not have become, like so many others, a champion of pure philosophical analysis.)

And there were many others. On the whole, however, the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead is the biggest and the most celebrated among recent efforts to reach a “speculative” philosophy that shall have fully assimilated the natural knowledge of the present age.

Whitehead, whose *Universal Algebra* had appeared in 1898, became irrevocably committed to philosophical authorship after his collaboration with Russell in their massive and splendid *Principia Mathematica*. He published a series of important monographs upon the philosophy of nature between 1919, the date of his *Principles of Natural Knowledge*, and 1924, when he became a Research Professor at Harvard. During the succeeding years in America, his pen became still more active, and was busied about the wider cosmological generalities as well as about more special topics such as Reason, Symbolism and Religion. In this period his chief books were *Science and the Modern World* (1926), *Process and Reality* (1929) and *Adventures of Ideas* (1933).

Before he went to America Whitehead’s work was most notable for its attempt to define point-instants, and such like entities in such a way that they could do mathematical work, because they had the formal properties of the mathematician’s stock in trade, and yet were so connected with the data of actual perception that they could authenticate their pedigree in undeniable reality. Thus the relation of inclusion or overlapping is perceptible and quite genuine. Therefore, if a “point” can be defined, by the method of extensive abstraction, in terms of this genuine inclusion-relation, there is no occasion for disputing its authentic correspondence with something real even if

mathematical convenience largely determines the language in which “points” play so important a part.

In such an undertaking, the general conception, however sound, is of lesser importance than the technical skill and knowledge that are required to determine what mathematical entities should be defended and by what sort of elaborate proof. Again the philosophy of the subject is to be judged, not by a few triumphs upon a promising philosophical front, but (in the instance of natural knowledge) by its general success with respect to all the fundamental conceptions in natural philosophy. Accordingly, Whitehead’s fame, at this stage of his career, was established by the pertinacity, patience and skill with which he developed his philosophy of natural events and of the precise sense in which the fundamental physical conceptions could be interpreted as functions of such events. In him the newer conceptions in physics seemed to be an occasion for making a fresh and sober start instead of an excuse for heady theorizing.

In his later writings Whitehead set out to develop his “philosophy of organism.” The time had come, he believed, for a sustained effort of constructive thought after two centuries mainly occupied with the criticism of detached questions. Nothing short of a new philosophical cosmology could suffice for the modern world.

This was not a change of view. Whitehead was working towards it in his *Principles of Natural Knowledge* when he said that the essence of a biological organism was that it was “one thing which functions and is spread through space” and that his fundamental principle was “in the place of emphasizing space and time in their capacity of disconnecting, to build up an account of their complex essences as derivative from the ultimate ways in which those things, ultimate in science, are interconnected.” But in *Process and Reality* the seedling had become a great tree.

“Our datum,” said Whitehead, “is the actual world,” and he also said that “the elucidation of immediate experience is the sole justification for any thought.” The goal of such elucidation was coherence, and genuine coherence, that is to say, an inter-relation that explains the properties and functions of the partners to it, has hitherto proved very elusive. Sense-perception is incorrigibly superficial. Natural science is positivistic, generalizing connections without being capable of inter-connecting them. Philosophy has to be reminded of its proper functions. It is to be commended, indeed, in so far as it still consists of a series of footnotes to Plato, particularly to Plato’s *Timaeus*, and the movement from Descartes to Hume is still full of instruction (although Kantianism and

all that came of it is not instructive). But the “bifurcation” of nature and mind had to be overcome, as well as many other false antitheses. No one could be satisfied with a situation in which natural science was “a system of interpretation devoid of any reason for the concurrence of its factors” and in which mind was regarded as “a field of perception devoid of any data for its own interpretation.” There was diversification of the “totalitarian” datum, but there was no invincible dualism, either psycho-physical or any other.

The solution was a relational monism in which the constituent partners developed an internal relational pattern that was also a “prehension” of a cosmic pattern, and it was claimed that if we stripped high-grade conscious experience of its more spectacular peculiarities we should find at the core of it something much more fundamental than consciousness, and would possess the clue to an “organic” understanding of the cosmos. In this wide sense of “experience,” “actual entities” or “actual occasions” are “drops of experience.” Each such drop of experience has several subordinate features called “prehensions,” i.e. each of them develops an internal relational pattern that is supposed to grasp or prehend a more general relational pattern, i.e. this internal development on the part of the drop of experience is supposed to *be* a reference to reality outside itself so that *prehension* is the basis for conscious *apprehension*. And each drop of experience is creative. It actualizes itself. Actual occasions are living occasions and replace the lifeless “substance” of earlier philosophies.

In Whitehead’s philosophy the “actual occasions” which are “drops of experience” are supposed to *feel* alive, not necessarily in the way of high-grade sentience, but in the wider, profounder way that may pervade all actuality. In this and other matters Whitehead tends to join forces with Bradley, and he seems to accept the “natural” inference that his philosophy resembles “a transformation of some main doctrines of Absolute Idealism on to a realistic basis.” Those who, like Bosanquet, are anxious to discern the meeting of extremes in contemporary philosophy may here take comfort. On the other hand, the dualists, the intransigent realists and the positivists seem to be ready, although rather reluctant, to turn against much in Whitehead the guns they had formerly trained against much in Bradley. At present the attitude of Whitehead’s critics seems to be hesitating. And many people cannot make up their minds whether Whitehead is an obscure philosopher with frequent amazingly lucid intervals or, on the other hand, a philosopher almost as clear as the profundity of his problems permits.

Whitehead’s “philosophy of organism,” despite its name, was not in fact a

biological metaphysics, that is to say it was not a philosophy that took its cue from the contrast between living bodies and dead ones. This line of approach to metaphysics, however, is also pursued at the present time, although there is less general interest today in the problems of speculative biology than in the times of our fathers, when every path seemed to lead to the theory of the evolution of living species.

As we saw, one of the main designs of Bergson's philosophy was to find a place – indeed a central place – for biology in the metaphysical sunlight. As a result, the philosophical problems of final causes in nature, of guidance (natural or supernatural, conscious, unconscious or conscious-seeming) in the course of events, and of the limits and illusions of evolution underwent a new phase; and these problems were also debated by persons who had no special interest in Bergson. The autonomy of physical life and of its biological principles has been defended by believers in a special vital principle (vitalists), by neo-vitalists (who are rather more cautious in their descriptions of the soul-like “entelechy” that is the animating principle of biological things), of “holists” who maintain that a living thing is an incontestable instance of the way in which pattern dominates the atom. Attempts have been made (e.g. by L. von Bertalanffy in the first number of *Erkenntnis*) to give an unmetaphysical and purely positivistic defence of the uniqueness of biology, and to unite that science with the newest physics. And the champions of a universal mechanical explanation, even in the case of living process, have counter-attacked all along the line. In fine there has been a brisk and continuous action.

H. Driesch of Leipzig is the most prominent contemporary defender of a neo-vitalistic “entelechy.” An experimental biologist, turned metaphysician, he has elaborated an entire “philosophy of order” from the clues afforded by the reproductive behaviour of the sea-urchin. He has been followed, among others, by the Viennese sociologist, O. Spann. The late J. S. Haldane, in the course of his researches into the physiology of respiration, came to the conclusion that the self-regulation of a living body could not be explained by a mechanical, although it was congruous with an idealistic, philosophy. In Russia “mechanism” has been officially condemned. General Smuts, among his other services to humanity, has published a philosophy of “holism.” L. J. Henderson, in *The Fitness of the Environment*, has argued that the habitat of living things on the earth's crust cannot be favourable by accident only to their growth and survival.

The opponents of such views have also been energetic. According to Mr. Hogben, for example, all necessary modern revisions of the theory

of evolution make against, not for, a doctrine of final causes, and Pavlov's discoveries regarding "conditioned reflexes" in dogs may also be applied to men. The "association of ideas" has been shown to be a linkage of reflexes, and the latter theory is mechanically explicable, although the former was not. Distinguished botanists such as F. Knoll remain impenitent mechanists, and the logical positivists (e.g. Frank and Carnap of Prague) insist that the language of physics is capable of describing without remainder all biological behaviour whatsoever.

## Chapter IX

### Analysis

It is almost a commonplace that philosophy differs from the sciences and from common sense in the greater ruthlessness, rigour and resolution of its analyses, but there is still something startling in the assertion that analysis either exhausts or is the sole foundation of philosophy, and even in that case it is debatable what precisely should be analysed. Accordingly there is genuine novelty in the new philosophies of “analysis,” “logical-analytical method,” “logical” or “logistical positivism” and the like. There is also a certain novelty in their attitude towards the old empiricism, the old materialism, the older positivism and the newer pragmatism.

Here, both in an historical and also in an international sense, the work of Bertrand Russell had quite peculiar influence. His book, *The External World* (1914), was a manifesto in favour of the “logical-analytical method in philosophy” and of its supremacy of this method over all else, including his earlier realism. As he later said (1924), “I do not regard the issue between realists and their opponents as a fundamental one. I could alter my view on this issue without changing my mind upon any of the doctrines upon which I wish to lay stress. I hold that logic is what is fundamental in philosophy, and that schools should be characterized rather by their logic than by their metaphysic.”

The main purpose of *The External World* was to explore a certain field, viz. “the relation between the crude data of sense and the space, time and matter of mathematical physics.” (The author modestly explained that he was anticipating Whitehead’s methods in a projected fourth volume of their joint *Principia Mathematica*.) The fundamental principle of the new enterprise came to be formulated thus: “Wherever possible, substitute constructions out of known entities for inferences to unknown entities.”

This formula seems to be ambiguous, but the upshot of it is straightforward enough. Take, for example, the physical conception of a unit of “matter.” It is derived, somehow, from sense-perception and from sense-memory, that is, from a rather untidy and rather superficially observed stretch of space-time history,

largely private. In short, according to Russell, units of matter are too neat to be true. They are illegitimately inferred from the “hard” facts of observation, and there is no conceivable way of proving their actual existence. Therefore he says that we should *construe* the logical relations within historical, untidy sensefields, and if we must use artefacts for convenience’ sake, we should always remember that such artefacts are symbols for a perfectly genuine piece of construing.

In general, Russell’s view was that we had to deal with common “knowledge” supplemented by scientific “knowledge.” These should not be accepted uncritically either apart or together. They need a logical purge. But although corrigible in detail they cannot be rejected in the bulk and there is no peculiar and superfine brand of “knowledge” called philosophy. There is only painstaking, step-by-step reasoning. Logic itself leaves an open door. It cannot of itself decide between pluralism and monism, or other large philosophical generalities of that sort. On empirical grounds however, Russell, having entered through the open door, confidently turned toward logical atomism and relational pluralism.

This being understood, he held that philosophy’s main business was the scrutiny of logical structure, and especially the clarification of such pervasive facts as mind, matter, causality, will and time. As he said, “I believe all these notions to be inexact and approximate, essentially infected with vagueness, incapable of forming part of any exact science. Out of the original manifold of events, logical structures can be built which will have properties sufficiently like those of the above common notions to account for their prevalence, but sufficiently unlike to allow a great deal of error to creep in through their acceptance as fundamental.”

These statements, if they stood by themselves, would be subject to the general objection we formerly noted in the ideal of “critical philosophy,” viz. that there must be some independent ground for deciding *what* notions are worth analysing so meticulously; and although Russell himself was also a “speculative” philosopher, being peculiarly fertile in suggesting “the kind of thing that may be true,” it is unlikely that his “logical-analytical method” would have retained its great influence over contemporary philosophy if it had not had a borrowed plausibility from some further basis. This further basis had to do with language, and with Wittgenstein’s views on that subject. (A certain alliance between Russell and Wittgenstein was indicated in *The External World*, and later became appreciably closer.)

Anyone, be he plain man, scientist or philosopher, conveys his thought in some language, and every language has a structure or syntax as well as a

mere vocabulary. The syntax of a language, therefore, should correspond to the logical-analytical *construing* that epitomized Russell's method. Russell and Wittgenstein accordingly suggested that logical syntax itself might supply the key to the new analytic philosophy, and Russell, in 1924 (i.e. after Wittgenstein's book had appeared), gave typical examples of the way in which a philosopher might easily be the dupe of mere bad grammar. Let it be allowed that language endeavours to express facts of different logical types, and that language is likely to mislead if it does not itself employ correspondingly different forms. Let it further be allowed that attributes and relations are of different types. Then if we say that attributes either are or are not relations we are saying something that, strictly speaking, is meaningless. All that could be said significantly would be that attribute-words and relation-words have different uses; and that would be a correct statement since words are properly employed both in attribute-forms and in relation-forms.

The uninitiated have to collect Mr. Wittgenstein's views from his only printed book, a series of aphorisms called *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* published in 1922. These aphorisms assert that the world consists of the "totality of existent atomic facts." Of these we "make to ourselves pictures," and if the structure of our verbal pictures corresponds to the "world," reality is depicted. Wittgenstein held, however, that the formal structure of language could only exhibit, but could not depict itself; and he seems also to have held that although propositions could be compared with facts, the structure of facts that corresponded to syntactical structure must always remain ineffable.

Hence, if "philosophy" be the logical structure of language we have to deny ourselves a good deal of written or spoken philosophy. According to Wittgenstein, the natural sciences contain the totality of true propositions, and philosophy, being unable to depict (that is, to express) *itself*, can be nothing but an activity. Its business is to clarify thoughts, not to express any true proposition. Wittgenstein's final aphorism, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," would seal his lips concerning philosophy itself. He himself, however, philanthropically committed the misdemeanour of allowing philosophy to try to depict what it could only exhibit, and also discriminated between various kinds of non-significant speech, i.e. of "nonsense." Certain forms of "mysticism," for example, seem in his view to have been rather highgrade "nonsense," e.g. some of the talk about God or immortality or ethics (none of which were contained in the natural sciences). He did not, however, draw the inference that the province of what could be shown but not said might in fact be philosophy's most important business.



Our logical pictures, he held, had their own “logical space.” This “space” of bare, dumb, logical possibility consisted of the logical equivalences (called “tautologies” by this author) that would be true of anything, and therefore told us nothing. (Thus we know nothing about the weather when we only “know” that it is either raining or not.) A contradiction, similarly, knocked the bottom out of logical space, but revealed nothing about the world. Nevertheless, the systematic exploration of tautology and contradiction (in other words, formal logic) was an enterprise of the utmost moment to which Wittgenstein, with some help from Dr. Sheffer of Harvard, and with Russell’s great achievement behind him, made extensive contributions. Again he tried very hard to warn philosophers of the danger of mistaking “tautologies” for genuine assertions about the constitution of the world. According to him an “object” is not a fact, but is a disguised way of speaking about logical space, and there is no such single fact as “God” or the “universe.” Indeed, according to Wittgenstein, any “fact” had to be evidenced by mere momentary personal sense-experience as the more extreme empiricists, like Hume when he was on his guard, had always maintained. “I am my world,” said Wittgenstein. In other words pure realism coincided with a form of “solipsism,” that is, of necessarily personal sense experience.

Wittgenstein was an Austrian, and had been influenced by tendencies long commingling in central Europe, such as the positivism allied with the liberalism of these countries, the radical empiricism of Mach and of Boltzmann his successor, the athletic logic of Brentano and others. There had also been many attempts to assimilate thought with language. Thus the “gignomenology” of Ziehen of Halle was an attempt to “reduce” Mach’s pansensualism to “physical” language. Koppelman of Milnster tried to develop neo-Kantianism in a similar way. The theologian Runze of Berlin defended a “glottological” philosophy. Stöhr of Vienna published an *Algebra of Grammar* (1898), and Marty of Prague further elaborated the philosophy of linguistics.

Accordingly, the rapid growth of “logical positivism” in recent years took place in ground suitably prepared. The “Vienna circle” is most active in this propagandism. M. Schlick of Vienna, whose murder in the summer of 1936 shocked the whole of Europe, was one of its leaders. Others are Neurath of Vienna, and Carnap and Frank of Prague. But Carnap, like a former British Prime Minister, is prepared to issue coupons to other authors, such as Reichenbach of Berlin, Sheffer of Harvard, Tarski and other members of the “Warsaw circle,” the formalists, finitists and logisticians in mathematics, and, chief of them all, Russell and Wittgenstein. The “union rationaliste” in

France, supported by such writers as Langevin and Boll is also commended and the coupon is extended to writers in *Erkenntnis*, the journal of the Vienna circle, the international *Philosophy of Science*, and the British periodical *Analysis*.

The general trend of argument in Carnap's "circle" has a refreshing simplicity. We ask of any philosophical volume whether it treats firstly of logical syntax and vocabulary, or, secondly, of an empirically verifiable piece of natural science. If not we commit it to the flames. On the other hand there are brisk arguments within the school, an absence of complete concentricity in its "circles," and very rapid readjustments.

Wittgenstein's self-denying ordinances proved irksome and were abandoned. According to Carnap, syntax could depict syntax as readily as it could depict, say, geometry. (In other words Carnap appears to ignore Wittgenstein's point that if you explain your symbols you are not operating with them.) Consequently logical positivism has a special subject-matter, viz. Wittgenstein's "tautologies" – a name that Carnap disliked because he thought it unnecessarily provocative.

Again, as we saw, Wittgenstein had developed a correspondence theory of knowledge, and had held that personal sense experience alone could verify the correspondence of logic with fact, one of the consequences being that anything resembling a natural law (which was obviously far tidier than any personal sense-history) was wholly unverifiable. Such views were much too severe for Carnap the logician or Neurath the sociologist. These authors believed in what they called "the unity of science," that is, they believed that all significant assertions (other than the purely formal ones) could be reduced to the speech of physics. Hence "physicalism" was very instructive indeed, since it included all the natural sciences. In short, their "physicalism" was public, not private, and was familiar with natural laws. It was possible, they held, to draw physically valid inferences in P-language (i.e. physical language) by making initial stipulations concerning the force and scope of the terms employed, although L-language (i.e. pure logic without any such initial stipulations) would not justify these inferences. Indeed, in their view, the "unity of science" meant the complete competence of the language of physics for all significant purposes. (Psychology, for example, however peculiar its problems, could state all its conclusions in the physical mode of speech.)

The trouble was that certain annoying but very familiar philosophical difficulties refused to be pitchforked out of existence, and that this galling circumstance came to be perceived within the school as well as outside it. Logic, even if it is P-logic, has to infer statements *from* statements; and

sense-experience is not a *statement* at all. The question, therefore, is whether sense-experience (for all good positivists proclaim themselves empiricists in the end) is the basis for any utterly certain P-statements (technically called “protocol” statements). In other words is there any justification for substituting P-statements for E-statements (i.e. for statements merely transcribing personal sense-experience)? And is not *any* statement, even an E-statement, something more than a mere transcription of personal sense-experience?

According to Schlick, there was no difficulty at all. It was quite easy to compare the statement in one’s guidebook that Ulm Cathedral has a tall spire with the fact in question, since one can go to Ulm and see the spire. Obviously, however, this account of the matter would not explain why dreams and hallucinations would not justify the protocol-statement that there is a physical spire in Ulm, or, in general, do anything to disentangle the obvious philosophical problem of the relation between personal sense-glimpses and continuing, public physical “things.” Indeed, as Popper, a critic although also an ally, has shown in his *Logic of Discovery* (1935), the alleged “protocols” in physical language have to be stipulated and can never be irrefragably ascertained. If everything is to be called “nonsense” that cannot be elicited from such protocols, nonsense is easy to manufacture. Define your protocols, and you define both “sense” and “nonsense.” But your triumph is only a matter of definition.

Carnap’s favourite, if not his only method of argument, is to say that if a man sticks to the “formal” mode of speech he is safe unless he is frankly careless. Otherwise while he may talk sense, it is unlikely that he will. (Thus he is safe if he says “5 is a number designation,” in peril if he says “5 is a number.”) The objection is that, on this view, any well-ordered set of signs would be as good as any other. What is wanted of “physicalism,” or of any other language, is that it should tell us something about the world. In short, the signs should *signify*. The protocol, from the nature of its case, has to be “verified,” not logically but meta-logically. Hence Carnap’s device, however useful it may be in many cases, cannot save him in this instance, and his other attempts to defend his “physicalism” seem to be particularly elegant examples of circular reasoning. Thus let anyone say, “I saw a redcoat in my dream.” The reply of the “physicalist” is, “Unless you say something publicly verifiable, you are talking mere nonsense.” – “But I did see that colour in my dream.” – “You must mean, if you mean anything, that your brain was in the condition in which it would have been had the optical centres been stimulated by rays transmitted from a British pillarbox or other red object.” – “But how could I

or you pretend to verify such a statement about my brain?" – "If we couldn't we should not be using physical language. Therefore you *must* mean what I say you mean."

As we have seen, however, there are many differences and very rapid changes of opinion within these friendly "circles," and the point may be further illustrated by reference to the work of K. Popper of Vienna, H. Reichenbach of Berlin and A. J. Ayer of Oxford.

Popper's aim was not to banish metaphysics in all possible senses but to define the difference between a logic of possible discovery and every other mode of reasoning. Here the critical problems were firstly the relations of a logic of discovery to sensible experience, and secondly its capacity for affording genuine proof.

On the first point, Popper dissociated himself altogether from the attempt to find irrefragable sensory "protocols" for such a science. Our sensations, he said, do not have the stability, or the public character of even the simplest statement of fact. They are fleeting, momentary private feelings, and it is mere waste of time even to play with the idea that the general laws of any science could be solidly established upon these vanishing foundations. The man who forgets such elementary considerations impales himself upon one of the prongs of an inevitable trilemma. He has three lethal alternatives before him, to state dogmatically and quite falsely that our senses can supply such protocols, to admit an unending regress between the supposed sensory basis and the finished assertions of any natural science, or to take refuge in a sublime but personal scientific faith.

Regarding the second point, Popper maintained that if scientific laws were regarded as probable hypotheses only, and if propositions regarding probability were interpreted as descriptions, inductively reached, of the characteristic behaviour of typical aggregates, a modest but sane and reliable positivism might be established. He further argued that such a theory was an "answer" to the classical difficulties of Hume regarding the problem of the validity of inductive argument, especially if sense-experience, instead of being regarded as the basis of empirical science, was regarded, negatively, as something that might conceivably refute an empirical hypothesis. (Granting, however, that probable argument can never yield certainty, it is not clear how it could ever yield negative certainty, that is to say a complete logical refutation.)

Reichenbach, the joint editor of *Erkenntnis* along with Carnap, explains that his alliance with the logical positivists arose from his desire for "a common working programme" rather than for "a common doctrine." This community

of aim, however, led him like the others to work towards, and finally to succeed in, the elimination of the “synthetic *a priori*” propositions of Kantian philosophy. It also led him, as, despite their differences, it also led Popper, to attempt an answer to Hume, very different from Kant’s, on the general lines of establishing a “probability connection” which might escape the strictures Hume had directed against older-fashioned attempts to find a rational basis for induction. This “probability-connection,” however, was an affair of aggregates observed in the present and past. Consequently (as Reichenbach, like Popper, admitted), it could not be applied by any known logic either to particular cases or to the future. As regards the future therefore the “answer” to Hume was in effect that the whole thing was a gamble, and that natural scientists were students of form. The “answer to Hume,” therefore, was admirably adapted to elicit a vast chuckle from the eminent spirit of that departed mortal.

Reichenbach further agreed (in general) with the majority of logistical positivists in holding that every significant proposition must be “verifiable” in sense-experience and in interpreting this statement in a behaviouristic and pragmatic way. “Two propositions,” he said, “for which the same decision always obtains on the basis of observable fact, have the same sense.” He adopted the device of defining “sense” by “the same sense” which seems rather like saying that nobody could be known to have been born at all unless, at the least, he is an identical twin.

Mr. Ayer did *not* attempt to answer Hume. On the contrary he tells us that his philosophy is the logical outcome of Hume’s empiricism vastly improved by Russell and Wittgenstein. According to Ayer metaphysics disappears because it tries to say something about what is not matter-of-fact, whereas the only way to avoid senselessness is either to explain the use of symbols or to say something verifiable about matter-of-fact. The former (traditionally called the *a priori*) is a formal exercise in linguistic equivalence. The latter must be verifiable in principle by some future sense-experience. The great philosophers of the past have deserved that appellation solely because they were great analysts. Hence their lapses into metaphysics may perhaps be condoned.

Again moralists and theologians, although gullible, may be offered some crumbs of comfort. The moralists do find something rather special in their experience, viz. “feelings” of approval or disapproval. Their mistake was to regard such feelings as something more than pure lyrical ejaculations. Theologians, when they affirm the existence of a transcendent God, that is of a deity whose existence is in principle not empirically verifiable, are affirming what is nonsensical. They have, however, the consolation that if they became

logical positivists they would neither be agnostics nor atheists. For both these sects assume that there is sense in the proposition that God exists, although the former profess ignorance of and the latter deny His existence. The logical positivists know that the proposition contains no sense whatsoever.

I shall not here inquire into the efficacy of these methods of painless and expeditious capital punishment, but would call attention to the increasing debility of this pragmatic-analytical method regarding matter-of-fact. What Ayer asserts is that unless a proposition is capable *in principle* of being verified in sense-experience it is either senseless or a formal tautology. The phrase "in principle" is intended to allow for the possibility that actual observations may be physically unobtainable, as, for example, a visual observation of the other side of the moon. But Ayer goes much further. He cannot accept Popper's suggestion that sense-experience may refute although it cannot establish a hypothesis. Therefore the verification can never be absolute. Indeed, according to Ayer, our observations "are themselves hypotheses which are subject to the test of further sense-experience" (it would seem *ad infinitum*). Consequently all we need be able to do is to have the ability to tell in practice "what sort of situations" would verify the propositions expressed.

Even the pragmatist's reference to *future* verification seems to be watered down. As I understand him, Ayer *defines* his "weak" principle of verification by the possibility of future corroboration, and no doubt it is true that most of our memories of sensible events might be corroborated in the future, say by discovering somebody's memoranda. Since, however, our reliance on such evidence depends ultimately on memory, i.e. upon past experience of the reliability of records, it is odd to make a collateral circumstance of this kind definitive of the entire situation; and if anyone were to say that one's memory of a past event was not evidence of matter-of-fact, and was devoid of all meaning when so regarded, although some future corroboration would acquire meaning and be such evidence, his view would surely be most remarkable.

It should be remarked in conclusion that the possibilities of "analysis" are not exhausted in the particular line of development that is now so fashionable. Among other possibilities there is Professor Moore's form of the theory.

According to Moore (in 1925) we all *know for certain* that a number of propositions are true "in their ordinary sense," for example that material bodies have existed long before the birth of any human being now alive; but (a) we may not know the evidence for such propositions even when they plainly require evidence, and (b) may not know the correct analysis of such propositions, even when the evidence for them could not be ascertained without analysis.

Thus the proposition, “material bodies exist,” has to be evidenced, in part at least, by simpler propositions (as it happens, equally evident) regarding sense-perception. The simplest of these has the form “this is so-and-so” where the predicate signifies a sense-quality. While the existence of “sense-data” (according to certain interpretations of them) may be disputed, there can be no dispute (Moore said) regarding their existence when we say, for example, “This is green”. On the other hand there may be much dispute about the question whether sense-data could or could not be literally parts of the surface of some physical object. If they are such parts, how are they related to the unsensed parts of the object? If they are not such parts how do we ever reach physical objects by means of them?

The conclusion accordingly was, that knowledge was one thing, analysis another. The correct analysis of known propositions presented a set of second-order problems that could neither confirm nor refute our primary certainties. Philosophy, in the past, had been (as it should have been) concerned, very largely, with these second order inquiries, but had confused itself and other studies by its neglect of the difference between the two orders.

A theory of this type presents several interesting features, three of which may be indicated here.

(1) According to certain critics there is at least one instance in which the “ordinary sense” of language is unintelligible without philosophical analysis since the phrase, “knowing for certain,” imperatively demands such scrutiny. “Knowledge,” these critics say, is a vague term and very apt to be a fetish. Consequently every gnostic theory of philosophy runs the risk of becoming an austere kind of idolatry. The point is vital to Moore’s philosophy. He denies the sufficiency of the moderate and very usual opinion that commonsensical assertions of the existence of material things (and the like) are first approximations, presumably containing a nucleus of absolute truth. In his view such assertions must be absolutely true “in their ordinary sense,” and a more moderate type of opinion is an untenable compromise inviting disaster from lack of audacity.

(2) While there is likely to be wide approval of the general doctrine that philosophy is not required to establish what should not be seriously doubted and should never raise a metaphysical smoke-screen over the visibilities of common sense, it is very unlikely indeed that the entire sub-structure of philosophy should be infallibly known in this way. What is problematical or even unintelligible to the plain man need not be metaphysically negligible. It may be true, indeed, that the subjects of traditional metaphysics, that is to say,

the existence of deity and the freedom and eternity of the human soul, are beyond the control of decisive argument, but the mere fact, if fact it be, that these subjects are beyond the horizon of common sense, is not a sufficient reason for accepting their philosophical nullity.

(3) If, as some of Mr. Moore's followers maintain, the second-order propositions of philosophical analysis can neither confirm nor refute the first-order philosophical assertions of common sense, the interesting question arises whether there is any positive reason, other than curiosity, for visiting these remote analytical regions. It is easy to understand why in practical affairs a greater degree of accuracy than is commonly expedient should sometimes be absolutely necessary. Anyone can see that it may be very important indeed to weigh arsenic much more scrupulously than sugar. There, however, the increase in accuracy is of the same general order; but philosophical analysis, according to Mr. Moore's followers, is of a totally different order.

Some enlightenment, perhaps, may be obtained by considering the case of the sciences. A tax-collector would neither increase nor diminish his professional efficiency by pondering the question whether there could or could not in strictness be such a thing as zero-number, but mathematicians need not renounce such inquiries merely on the ground that they do not affect the ordinary operations of simple arithmetic. On the other hand, many mathematicians would maintain that if operative mathematics were wholly unaffected by speculations on such subjects, the speculations themselves would have to be regarded as a piece of busy curiosity.

Pushed to its extreme, this argument would seem to condemn everything except in so far as it had practical results. It might therefore be invited to consider highly speculative questions concerning what is and what is not "practical." Curiosity may be low and mean, but it may also be high and fine. Consequently there is no occasion for regarding analysis as a species of frivolity.



## Chapter X

### The New Mediævalism

Our survey of recent philosophy has covered vast distances in a rapid transit, and was forced to pursue a rather variable course. Mr. Whitehead, indeed, maintained that he could return to a species of absolutism on a realistic basis strongly supported by the new adventures of theoretical physics. Mr. Alexander, I dare say, would be sympathetic towards this view; and other philosophers, in countries other than England, profess to be able to discern much unity in the majority of current philosophies. On the other hand, absolutism and positivism are extremes that are not easily made to meet, and absolutism and logical positivism are extremes (I should say) that refuse to be joined.

On the whole, therefore, I submit that the course of this discussion has corroborated the contention of the Introduction. There is not just one “perennial” or “magnanimous” philosophy showing endless patience towards tiresome rebels, but obviously and always on the winning side. Historians are not at liberty to assume, like Mr. Urban of Yale, that “minute” philosophers and tired radicals are not worth powder and shot, minutiae being unworthy of philosophy and radicalism a proof of intellectual fatigue. They also may not assume with Signor Croce that civilization has made itself fully articulate only recently in Southern Europe, where “The Spirit” has achieved a purer utterance than the guttural and slightly inconsecutive language of Hegel. Such views may indeed be true, just as it may be true that positivism in any form is a shallow philosophy and that every pedestrian and empirical philosophy (as Croce said of Mill’s *Logic*) is merely “infantile.” But they cannot be assumed to be true, and a hospitable historian has to assume that they may be false.

Accordingly, although our discussion began with a description of Absolute Idealism, and proceeded to consider philosophies that, to an appreciable extent, had to be regarded as divergent variants from Absolutism or intentional alternatives to that philosophy, it could not even pretend to discuss its entire theme upon such a plan, and abandoned the attempt rather early. Had it not been so the present chapter should have been introduced very much earlier. For as we saw in the Introduction the Church of Rome claims that it alone has the

custody of the genuine *philosophia perennis*. For two millennia, or thereabouts, it has been the guardian of the truth as well as of the way and of the life, and, knowing the truth, has elaborated a philosophy of that truth, so far as the truth can be the child of any philosophy. In other words, the claim is that a return, in essentials, to St. Thomas of Aquino, is the only possible journey for a sane and clear spirit. That is what "perennial philosophy" truly means.

In the year 1879 the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* restored the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas to the place it had occupied at the Council of Trent, prescribing copious draughts from the limpid waters of Thomism and the restitution and wide propagation of the angelical doctor's wisdom. Later accretions in the way of science might be welcomed, but the structure of Thomism should remain inviolate.

This decision was the result of a prolonged controversy within the Church, and may be regarded as a tardy sequel to the encyclical *Qui pluribus* of 1846 in which the power and the trend of nineteenth-century philosophy was deplored. In the intervening period Thomism was frequently flouted, as for example by Döllinger in 1863 when he said that the old scholastic dwelling house had collapsed beyond repair. Influences from Italy and from Spain, however, proved stronger than such sentiments; and Thomism became the official Catholic philosophy.

Among the quicker results were the beginnings of the magnificent Leonine edition of Thomas's works (begun in 1882) and the foundation of Thomistic academics such as the Accademia Romana di San Tommaso (1891). The first of these events was symbolic of the vast improvement in the modern understanding of the mediaeval mind, so marked a feature of present-day scholarship in many regions, not all of them philosophical. The second, on the other hand, lent colour to the prevalent belief among non-Catholics that Leo's restitution of Thomism was a reactionary decision much more important for ecclesiastical politics than for philosophy proper.

The new mediaevalists, however, were aware of such complaints, and some of them deplored the tendency which they found in Spain and even in Louvain (despite Cardinal Mercier's eminence) to be content, or very nearly so, with a careful exposition of Thomas's views. In their opinion Thomism was far too big a thing to be incapable of growth. It could and should develop like all else, including the Church itself. In particular it could become stronger by assimilating much in modern science to its own dominant vision of God and the soul; and able pens in the present century have supported this line of argument with so much force that the revival of scholasticism in this spirit is

beyond all question a powerful influence in the philosophy of the day.

Thus in Italy A. Gemelli, the Franciscan rector of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan (founded 1909), through his journal the *Rivista di filosofia neo-scholastica* and with the help of collaborators such as E. Chiochetti and F. Olgiati, has vigorously repudiated a "stationary" interpretation of Thomism. In his view, the union of Christian insight with Aristotelian scientific method which was Thomas's great achievement is capable of becoming stronger and more mature as fresh discoveries are made; and Gemelli himself, a biologist and psychologist by training, was ready, like many others of the same mind, to defend a vitalistic biology on its scientific merits and to enrich mediaeval psychology with the latest theories of *Gestalt*, or "pattern" psychology, with experimental results, and with all that could be extracted from psychological forays into the "jungle" of the supernormal. What he maintained in essentials, was that Croce, Gentile and the "expriest," Spaventa, had misinterpreted the facts of history. According to them civilization had become "liberal," that is to say, completely secular. The theocentric standpoint of the middle ages, such people affirmed, was as much of an anachronism as the birettum of a University doctor. For Gemelli, on the contrary, liberalism of this kind was an affront to rational understanding. The liberal need not devise liberal things *godlessly*, and is not compelled to stand by these things without divine succour. Again, he maintained that both the scepticism and the anti-realistic bias of post-Cartesian philosophy were opposed to the sane integrity of existence. There was nothing reactionary in proclaiming the fact. In brief, the contention was that mediaevalism had not been retrogressive in its prime, and that the solid rightness of it was as true and as firm as the Church itself. In Italy more particularly there was no good reason why the spiritual descendants of Leonardo, Galileo (*sic*), Cusa, Bruno and Campanella should not be mediaevalists, or why there should not be good Catholics who were also good Italians in the country of Dante, Aquinas and Manzoni.

In German-speaking countries the academies of Eichstätt, Freiburg i.S, and Lucerne had somewhat similar aims, and in the years that succeeded 1879, the works of Pesch in natural philosophy, Cathrein in ethics, Baur and Hertling in metaphysics were widely known and translated into many languages. Another important author was K. Gutberlet who contributed a synopsis of his views to the recent series of *Self-presented Philosophies*. This author, perhaps tendentiously, argues that since no philosophy can dispense with presuppositions, there is, so far, no objection to presupposing a good deal. The only important question is whether one can *defend* one's attitude. He himself was in no sense Aquinas's

slave and indeed came nearer to agreement with Aquinas's independent commentator the great Spaniard Suarez, but he found that the views of Gauss and of Cantor on the infinite supplied munitions for theism, that modern thermo-dynamics did the same, and that Darwinism, modern ethnology, psycho-analysis and experimental psychology had a similar message for a discerning mind. In brief, neo-Thomists found progressive corroboration of their general standpoint in the closest examination of modern scientific views.

J. Geysler, Professor in Münster and later in Freiburg, is one of the most celebrated of contemporary German neo-Thomists. He agreed with Husserl in his attack on "psychologism," but was less of a Platonic-idealist. In logic he stood for an "eidetic" realism, as many others have done who, in general, were moved by the same philosophical impulse as Meinong and Husserl. He also developed an elaborate psychology.

This line of development has been fairly frequent. The noted phenomenologist Scheler followed it, as we saw, in the last phase of his career, and A. Pfänder, a prominent member of the "München circle," may be regarded as a phenomenological neo-Thomist. Thus in his recent important book *The Soul of Man* (1933) Pfänder, defending what he (following Dilthey) calls "a psychology that understands," argues that any thorough-going attempt to interpret the soul is necessarily plunged into theological debates. Our souls are not self-created. They elicit what is in them to become, and therefore must be in abiding contact with an enduring creative ground. In outline, "The soul of man is a unique, incorporeal, spiritual, reflexive, personal living entity, God's creature and part of His world, freely progressive in the determinate melody of its development, and echoing that melody in itself." But this conclusion is regarded as the proper testimony of the relevant facts, and not as a hypothesis imported from abroad.

In French-speaking countries the new scholasticism has been very active especially (as we have said) at Louvain, but the contentions of two eminent Frenchmen, E. Gilson and J. Maritain (themselves very different men), are specially noteworthy.

M. Gilson, formerly professor at the Sorbonne and now at the Collège de France, has done more than any other man of his time to interpret great scholastics like Thomas and Bonaventura, to show their connection with the Fathers (as in his study of Augustine) and to indicate the extent to which Descartes and others who broke with scholasticism were themselves, in large measure, scholastic in their outlook. In a wider fashion, however, his recent Gifford Lectures on *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* have an appeal for the

general public, since the lectures call attention to the important question whether there can be such a thing as Christian philosophy proper.

Obviously philosophy may be written by Christians for Christians just as it may be written by a Frenchman for Frenchmen. In that sense, however, there might be a French algebra as well as a French philosophy, and nobody would suppose that any such adjective described the nature of the subject studied. Again, it might be argued that anyone who discoursed in a philosophical way upon the subject-matter of the Christian revelation, was, on that account, a Christian *philosopher*. But that would not make a Christian *philosophy*.

To M. Gilson the latter explanation was wholly repugnant. Being a good scholastic he was also a good rationalist, and therefore maintained that revelation, in itself, could never be philosophy, since philosophy must be based upon reason alone. Revelation might indeed show what was true, but unless these truths could be proved independently by mere reason they would not be philosophical truths. The philosopher, if a believer, would accept them without any question; but they could not be part of his philosophy.

Nevertheless M. Gilson held that there could be and that in the strictest sense there *was* a Christian philosophy. The Hebrew-Christian tradition, he said, had interpreted terms like God, Being, Essence, Created Nature in a sense that had not been seriously contemplated in any other tradition. When Anselm or Descartes argued about God's existence they thought of God in a sense that Plato and Aristotle had not so much as entertained. The Christian tradition, therefore, set quite new problems to philosophy, not indeed because it released totally new logical possibilities (for these were eternal) but because it emphasized the unique importance of rationalizing a certain highly specific set of beliefs. The Christian revelation, in short, set new philosophical questions. If a rational answer to these could be found the result, quite stringently, should be called Christian philosophy.

According to M. Gilson (who can speak with authority) this attempted rationalization was the essential aim and spirit of mediaeval philosophy. St. Thomas and others had held that much revealed truth could not be so rationalized. If so, it was not philosophy; but the rest *was* philosophy; and, in M. Gilson's view, the part that was philosophy was a genuine science of metaphysics, a science that subsequent ages had lost but might now recover. In other words the rationalization of the scholastics really was rationalization. It was not what that term is sometimes supposed nowadays to mean by loose-lipped psychologists, that is to say the finding of bad reasons for beliefs that have allogical causes but no logical grounds.

M. Maritain is a different type of neo-Thomist. At first an enthusiastic Bergsonian, he came to renounce and to denounce Bergson altogether. Bergson, he declared, was an arch-modernist, because, being a pure phenomenalist he was necessarily opposed to the sanities of human reason. If Bergson had mastered the Aristotelian conception of potentiality, or had grasped what St. Thomas meant by "being" he could never have written his books. The whole modern world had gone astray, either (according to this author's diagnosis) because (like Luther) it had become bogged in what was really an animal privacy of personal experience, or (like Descartes) had treated the human mind as if it were not embodied but angelic, or (like Rousseau) had become a sort of sentimental Narcissus. What was needed was the healthy Thomism of a body-mind, set in a world of real things, yet God-searching as well as divinely founded.

These modernists had been condemned in another encyclical the *Pascendi dominici gregis* of 1907. By that time Ollé-Laprune was dead, but Loisy continued to write, and so did M. Blondel (continuing the ideas of Ollé-Laprune) and also L. Laberthonnière. These writers did not form a school, but attempted, each in his own way, to give tradition its head without too much restraint from the bearing-reins of hard dogma or of an unalterable past. Thus Loisy maintained that the very substance of the text, "the kingdom of God is within you," was that the Church might grow in a way that the historical Jesus and his disciples could never have anticipated; and he also believed in a progressive morality, transfigured and sainted. Blondel similarly argued that the active spirit of Christianity was the master of the scriptural word, and not its mere servant. Among younger writers the Bergsonian, E. Le Roy (b. 1870), held that "to affirm God was to affirm moral reality as autonomous, independent, irreducible to all else, indeed, as the *first* reality," but that any such affirmation was inseparably connected, not with any new church but with the (one) historical church, and with the plenitude of self-transcendence that theology alone could describe.

As I have hinted, the revival of scholastic philosophy in Spain does not seem to have restored the philosophical glory of that country in late mediæval times when Vives brought vitality into the attack upon Aristotelian scholasticism, and Suarez brought at least equal vitality into its development. It would seem, however, that there has been something of vigour in the recent philosophy of Catalonia where the tradition of the Majorcan Raymond Lully has not been allowed to die.

## Chapter XI

### Axiology and Ethics

Although the greater part of the narrative of this book has been concerned, for inescapable reasons, with metaphysics, with metaphysical method and with the implications of metaphysical clarity, occasional references have been made to the moralistic researches of certain notable contemporary authors, and also to their axiology or value-theory. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to supplement these fugitive remarks, especially in the wider domain of axiology. While it cannot be pretended that our age has been either very active or very successful in the narrower field of moralistic speculation, it has not been idle even there, and it seems, by predilection, to be axiologically-minded.

Among his other contributions to philosophy, Wundt gave an important discussion of the “heterogony of ends,” that is to say of the way in which a means may come to be prized as an end, and former ends may either be ousted or transformed. It is common knowledge, of course, that such a process occurs, for we have all heard of misers (whose itch for the means obscures the end), of the idolatry of mere occupation, of a perverted gospel of mere drudgery and so forth. Such transformations, however, need not be indefensible in other cases, and the systematic study of them according to a principle, may be more useful than oracular Nietzschean utterances concerning the “transvaluation of all values.”

In ethics Wundt attempted to wring “an ethics of fact” out of man’s actual circumstances. Such an ethics, he believed, was in no sense a matter of mere opinion and it became dominant (however slowly) on account of its genuine worth. In adopting this attitude he was opposing a strong contemporary movement in favour of ethical “relativity” and “subjectivism,” especially among the positivists.

Thus F. Jodl (1848–1914), Professor in Prague and in Vienna, followed the three positivists, Feuerbach, Comte and Mill, but in the direction of making a new religion of national culture. Otto Liebmann (1840–1912), who taught in the Universities of Tübingen, Strassburg and Jena, firmly asserted that goodness and badness depended on human opinion, that absolute worth was

a piece of nonsense since our “knowledge” was only and always a relation between two unknowns (mind and thing). Most important of all, G. Simmel (1858–1918), a stoic in his life and something of a pragmatist in his thought, advocated ethical relativism in his *Introduction to Moral Science* (1890) on the ground that the facts of life compelled this conclusion when such matters as egoism, altruism, freedom, the alleged “categorical imperative” of duty and the like were carefully cross-examined. From 1900 onwards, however, Simmel, despite his relativism, tried to come to terms with the “objective spirit” he believed Hegel had discovered, that is to say with a broad and progressive cultural stream.

German writers of today commonly regard Münsterberg, Windelband and Rickert as the advance guard of the present axiological development. The first of these (1863–1916) was a man of varied talents and one of the big four at Harvard from 1892 to the time of his death. He attempted to reconcile Fichte’s ethical idealism with current parallelistic psycho-physics. A pure psychology, in his opinion (as opposed to the natural science of psychology), was a world of values and of wills in which selves, particularly other selves, were recognized rather than described. Pure psychology, in this sense, gave the rudiments of purpose and even of intelligibility to all the sciences, for it alone recognized the value of living in personal, superpersonal and divine existence.

Windelband (1848–1915) who succeeded the celebrated Kuno Fischer at Heidelberg, gained a high reputation as a textbook writer of the history of philosophy, and in his own constructive work developed a neo-Kantianism that led him far away from Kant. His leading principle was the unconquerable supremacy of absolute obligation wherever it might be found – in ethics, say, or in logic, or in art. Hence norms or standards were philosophy’s genuine business, and he believed that such norms could assimilate the philosophy of culture, whether the culture was general (as in logic) or was individual and unrepeatable (as in “idiographic” history). Along with this went a species of theology and a chastened but persistent sympathy with Hegel.

Windelband’s successor at Heidelberg, however, H. Rickert, was the most important of the three. His book, *The Object of Knowledge*, first published in 1892, attracted international attention very early in its career, and each lustre of the present century saw a new edition of it, largely rewritten. Moreover, Rickert wrote other books.

His fundamental contention was that the realm of values is totally distinct from the realm of matter-of-fact existence. Questions of right are never questions of fact, and the word “ought,” when significantly used as in logical



inference, ethical obligation or aesthetic worth, must be self-justifying and can never be defended by results. The process of valuation, to be sure, is a mental experience and therefore bound up with psychological matter-of-fact. Again, the goods that men desire are either actual existents or conceived to be possible existents. Nevertheless the authority of genuine “norms” (i.e. of worthy ideals) is not in any way derived from existence, in the human soul or elsewhere. The norms are “beyond existence.” The man who would know them for what they are must rid his mind, finally and completely, of the illusion that *any* fact can do more than illustrate them and evince their imprint.

Consequently, Rickert sharply criticized the “Life-philosophy” of Dilthey and others. In his view these authors misinterpreted norms, and tried to regard them either as semi-mental or as half-things that were not really things; and this entire conception was a marshy notion and a sort of frog-philosophy. What had to be acknowledged was pure obligation itself and not an impossible structure compounded half of validity and half of matter-of-fact.

Even if this extreme position were rejected, however, it would be plain that a strict analytical inquiry into the meaning of “value” is necessary for any appreciable advance in this subject, and it is generally admitted today that unless “value” has no reasonable meaning and is either bad grammar or a piece of inept phrasing (as some positivists hold) its genuine meaning is very difficult to determine with accuracy. We may turn, therefore, to recent attempts of an analytical kind, and here we may resume our study of the work of certain Austrians.

According to Brentano love and hate are comparable to judgment in two very significant respects, for they imply firstly the attitude of a man towards something of which he is aware, and secondly a certain kind of rightness or wrongness. The second of these characteristics, in the case of judgment, is truth or error, and there is a similar, although different, characteristic of love and hate. When we are aware of anything we may acknowledge its goodness with a right love as well as declare its truth in a correct judgment. Anything that is rightly loved (and similarly anything that is rightly abhorred) in this way has the same absoluteness, the same independence of our whims and private constitution as a true judgment.

Neither Meinong nor von Ehrenfels, the other two leaders of this Austrian company, agreed in detail with Brentano, but they both developed the view that approval (or the process of valuation) was not merely evoked by emotion, desire or some such experience in the soul but contained emotion or desire as an essential component which, nevertheless, was different from *simple* feeling

or desire. If feeling and desire, as by most psychologists, were held to be psychically blind, the analysis of approval would be stultified from the outset. Approval was a name for the sort of *discernment* that feeling or desire might attain.

Meinong, for various reasons, held that feeling or emotion (and principally pleasure-pain) was fundamental in approval, von Ehrenfels that the fundamental factor was desire. Each therefore took his stand upon different sides of a very old controversy, the question, namely, whether pleasure is invariably the fulfilment and therefore the result of precedent impulse, and (if not) whether the exceptions are trivial or profound. Consequently Meinong's problem, in the main, was the analysis of the function of pleasure-pain in the process of prizing, appreciating, setting store by. He elaborated this question in connection with a doctrine of emotional awareness. As we have seen he also developed a theory of "dignitatives" and of "desideratives" which corresponded, in the domain of feeling and of desire, to the "objectives" already considered in his theory of knowledge.

Von Ehrenfels, on the whole, was less of an analyst than Meinong, although he had frequently to turn to analysis in order to distinguish his views from those of his friends. His principal interest, however, was to trace the way in which our motives and desires body forth our values. Thus, for the most part he described the development, the conflict, the growing hierarchy and the obsolescence of values, with special reference to the general law of *relative* happiness-getting, that is to say of the *difference* in happiness that is anticipated from the attainment or non-attainment of some possible state. His outlook, in short, was relativistic and evolutionary, his analytical researches subordinate. Hence he had the opportunity of being much more readable than Meinong, and his talents as a writer enabled him to grasp the opportunity.

On the whole, these Austrian authors have had more influence than any others upon the modern analytic approach to value theory, partly because they were so careful to distinguish their theory from the economic conception of "value" so effectively pursued by Wieser and other Austrian economists who had been among the instructors of their youth. Other countries, however, had not been idle. France, for example, had the late M. Goblou on the analytical side, M. Bouglé on the sociological. Czecho-Slovakia has Mr. Lossky. In America, again, the subject has had, and seems likely to continue to have, a very lusty existence. Indeed, to judge from a very recent volume (1935) from many pens entitled *American Philosophy Today and Tomorrow*, it would seem that value-theory is *the* "live" subject in "post-depression" transatlantic philosophy.

The debate between relativism and absolutism in these matters is still very active in America, and the mails are crowded with plans for one of the most difficult feats of modern metaphysical engineering, the construction of a traffic-bearing bridge between “subjective” and “objective” value theories. In this connection certain authors, particularly Mr. Urban of Yale, have gone to school with the Austrians, although they have not always remained in the school. In a general way, however, the debate has tended to become an affray beneath the disputed banner of pragmatism, that is to say has come to be regarded as one of the more obvious aspects of the theme that human appreciations make as well as suffuse what we call “reality.”

Much of the literature in America is sprinter’s work in short articles, but there are cross-country runners also, among them Mr. R. B. Perry whose *General Theory of Value* (1926) follows a long and rather devious route. Always a liberal moralist, Mr. Perry has recently attempted to emulate the astute little child who knew how to lead the young lion of realism and the fatling of pragmatism in amity together. His value-theory, however, is perhaps beyond both these “isms”; and it is certainly ambitious. “The theory of value,” he says, “is that branch of knowledge in which such sciences as theory of knowledge, ethics, political science and jurisprudence are unified and distinguished.” Its fundamental problem is the *conception* in the universal principle of value, and Perry’s view is that *interest*, that is to say the attitude of favour or of disfavour, is “the original source and constant feature of all value . . . Values are forms of certain acts of living mind to which we have given the name of interest.”

This general sense of the term, he contends, can be shown by suitably detailed argument to include all the more special senses that are legitimate, and can weather the assaults of criticism that are apt to submerge the cruder forms of relativism and subjectivism. Mr. Perry also believed he could show (on lines rather similar to those of von Ehrenfels) that the historical transmutations of our “values” were dependent upon “the genesis and mutation of interest,” and upon the changing and increasing purpose of human societies.

In England, axiology is seldom regarded as one of the main arterial roads of the island’s philosophy, although Bosanquet, Alexander and Whitehead came near to treating it so. Indeed, it seems often to be considered as a byroad debouching from ethics and leading with difficulty to uninteresting if elevated regions. Obviously, however, the subject has always been a part of “ethics,” for that subject is necessarily an applied axiology in so far as it is a reflective search for great goods or for The Great Good, an attempt to discover how far and how life is worth living, a resolute effort to discriminate between genuine

and merely apparent success. Such an interpretation of the subject may indeed enlarge the traditional boundaries of a subject primarily concerned with right and wrong, virtue and sin; but even a narrow moralist dare not neglect it altogether.

Early in the present century Mr. G. E. Moore in his *Principia Ethica* (whose sequel was his *Ethics* in the present series) vigorously defended a view that has obvious affinities with the above. A moralist, he held, has to examine (a) the meaning of "good," (b) what was or could be good, (c) how the best consequences could be obtained by voluntary action. These were the essential ethical questions, and they ought to govern the logically subordinate enquiries of most moralists into rightness and wrongness of "conduct."

If so, it is plain that general axiology is the foundation of ethics. An understanding of the meaning of value or worth, and a critical review of all that is worth having or worth doing, is precisely what is meant by pure and by applied axiology respectively, whether or not it is precisely what most men (or what many men) mean by "ethics." Mr. Moore, it is true, thought that his first main question had a short and simple answer. "Good," he held, simply meant good. It was a simple indefinable predicate. In a later essay in his *Philosophical Studies*, however, he maintained that "intrinsic value" was in many respects a highly peculiar predicate. In short, in his own aloof way, he, Moore, might be regarded as another of the value-analysts, and although the analysis of approval, a favourite subject of British moralists in the eighteenth century, is not a very prominent part of contemporary inquiry among British philosophers, it is beginning to recover a part of its former importance.

As applied to rightness and wrongness of conduct, Moore's theory (and that of moralists like Rashdall who on the whole must be regarded as his followers) is a species of utilitarianism, since it regards good results as the proper standard for determining right conduct. It is not, however, a hedonistic utilitarianism, since it denies that pleasure alone is good in itself, and holds, on the contrary, that there are many intrinsic goods other than pleasure. Hence it is commonly called "ideal" as opposed to hedonistic utilitarianism.

Of late years, however, there has been a strong and keenly argued movement in British (particularly in Oxonian) ethics of a very different tendency. According to this counter-movement, utilitarianism of any kind is not a moral theory at all. It does not tell us what a man or a community *ought* to do, but only what would profit such agents if they did it. In short it omits the very thing that alone is authentically moral, viz. moral *obligation*. If it be contended that a philanthropic regard for other people's interests

and a prudent regard for one's own interest *are* obligations, a sufficient reply (according to this school of thought) is that such duties, admitting them to be duties, are obligatory because we can see that prudence and philanthropy are morally right, not simply because they are advantageous. In other words the utilitarians are said to have neglected the essential step that makes their theory even a part of morals. It is further contended that many moral obligations, such as promise-keeping, do not derive the whole of their obligatory character from their promise of benefit, and that it may sometimes be a plain moral duty to perform an action that, so far from bringing about the best possible consequences may be actually disadvantageous.

If it be said that controversy on these lines has persisted for at least two millennia, since men, during all that long period, have debated, with varying degrees of clear-headedness, whether or not justice was an enlarged and far-sighted expediency (as opposed to an opportunism of temporary expedients) and whether an inexpedient or hurtful justice was ever possible or, if possible, justifiable, it should be replied that the modern age has played its part in clarifying the problems at issue, and in repudiating some mistaken and some too facile solutions. That in itself is not a trivial achievement.

On the whole, it seems likely that the contributions of the last thirty years to axiology have been more important than its contributions in the narrower field of a supposedly "pure" ethics – unless, indeed, the logical positivists should prove to be right in rejecting both unless both are changed so profoundly as to be no longer, even colourably, what traditionally they profess to be. By way of supplement to what has been said, however, attention should be called to three other contributions to this subject.

One of these is Meinong's. That author, in addition to his general value-theory, elaborated an interesting and novel ethical system, connected no doubt with his value-theory, but highly original and independent in its special message for ethics.

The view in question, to be brief, was an attempt to measure moral worth by the ratio between self-seeking and devotion to the good of others. In Meinong's opinion a prudent regard for one's own good had in itself *no* moral value, positive or negative. There was no *righteousness* about it even if it were sensible and otherwise commendable. On the other hand philanthropy (love of ourselves being excluded) and misanthropy (self-hatred being also excluded) were respectively morally good and morally bad. For the most part what the bad man does is to seek his own good at the expense of other people. What the good man does, when there is conflict, is to renounce his own lesser good

in favour of the greater good of others. According to Meinong it is possible to measure the moral worth of human action by means of this principle with very considerable accuracy, and to employ the marginal methods of the Austrian economists (i.e. the principle of the “just-worth-while” or its opposite) in the calculation. Hence he introduced and defended a novel moral calculus, capable of much greater elaboration than simple arithmetic.

L. Nelson (b. 1882), who in general philosophy stands (as Fries and Apelt did) for a psychological Kantianism, has developed elaborate and important theories of ethics and of jurisprudence.

In ethics he had the courage to undertake a new *Critique* of the practical reason (1917) in which, like Kant, he accepted the ultimacy of duty in ethics (or rather of the ultimacy of the readiness to perform specific duties). On the other hand he interpreted this moral girding of the loins, not as an eternal clarity self-evident to anyone who could understand his own “real” and supersensible nature by grasping things invisible with that part of himself that was eternal, but as something extorted from the social creature called a man in his endeavour to conform to and (however darkly) to understand his situation among his fellows. Our duties, each in its own specific character, are stresses of social life, not angelic patterns. Yet each of them is a limitation of “interest,” that is to say a way of disciplining and binding the play of impulse and of desire, the guiding principle being (as Kant declares) that every human being should be treated as a centre of independent dignity by every other. Nelson’s *System of the Philosophy of Right* (1920) was a Critique of All Jurisprudence on similar lines; and the neo-Friesian school (with its inevitable journal) has had considerable influence on the Continent, e.g. Heymanns and Kranenburg in Holland, Christensen and Starcke in Denmark.

N. Hartmann’s elaborate *Ethics* has deservedly gained a high European reputation. Its general intention is to give a concrete ethics of values in which the wisdom of Aristotle and of Jesus shall be incorporated, and also a humane reinterpretation of Kant’s Stoicism, a more solid transvaluation of the discoveries of Nietzsche’s lonely genius, and a certain modification of Scheler’s views. The book is divided into three principal parts, firstly an account of the philosophy of its theme and of the sense in which values are ideal and absolute essences, secondly an account of the virtues, thirdly a discussion of the problem of freedom. The second of these has probably the greatest general interest, and is a notable contribution to the phenomenology of ethics.

## Chapter XII

### Conclusion

The present century has already run more than a third of its course, and only three centuries have elapsed since “modern” philosophy was inaugurated by Descartes’s *Discourse on Method*. In other words there has been plenty of time in the twentieth century for a great deal to happen to its philosophy. The question is whether very much has happened.

It would be generally agreed that there has been a lot of strenuous bustle. America has attained its philosophical majority. Russia professes to be built on a technical philosophy. In the greater and in the smaller European countries the universities, almost unanimously, put philosophy very near the top. One of the new countries has had a philosopher-president. In many countries, philosophy (as it should) has been powerful outside the universities. There is a heavy crop of new philosophical journals, and an extensive if not a very ready market for any philosophical author who can make himself intelligible to the average educated reader.

In short, philosophy is being taken seriously, and the general level of philosophical competence is fairly high. The supply of genius for the subject may be less satisfactory; but genius is an irregular commodity. If genius were all it had to wait for, philosophy could afford to travel hopefully.

That, I think, is the common view, and very likely the true one. In most quarters it is held that contemporary philosophy has failed (although perhaps it has *just* failed) to rise to its present immense opportunities. Greatness has eluded it, but, missing greatness, it has done very well, and has made a good many paths much straighter than they were. The rest should come.

And the opportunity seems immense. In the physical sciences, there is appetite and even a mild hunger for philosophy, together with a readiness to entertain and to elaborate theories which, if they can be sustained at all, have a profound bearing on philosophy. In the humanistic and political sciences there are all the problems that came home to everyone when civilization was in jeopardy during the war, and imperilled during the subsequent peace. In matters of ethics and of religion, there are the scars of deep wounds, and the

lines of affrighted confusion. Along with all these goes a much more accurate understanding of the history of ideas. How could philosophy have a greater opportunity?

But, given the opportunity, what have philosophers done? Has philosophy become most elusive just when there was a disposition to give her a public welcome? Have different bands of philosophers deliberately cultivated different “languages” that resemble secret codes rather than the vehicles of general communication? Is there a superfluity of puerile pedantry? Has there been too intensive cultivation of special areas with slender regard for the general needs of the philosophical community? Have the middle-aged reasonable grounds for fearing that the times are out of joint for them, there being too much to learn, too much to unlearn, too parti-coloured and too glaring a panorama to face with comfort or with keen admiration? If so, are the young more fortunate? Will the terrors of one generation become a jesting matter in the next?

Questions of this order are very generally asked, and they seem to be reasonable. As a partial answer to some of them I shall consider what, in a general way, a man may expect from a philosophy, and how far contemporary philosophies are likely to satisfy such expectations.

In the main there are three things to hope for. The first and most usual is an exceptional catholicity and stability of outlook. The second is a piercing and most pertinacious clarity. The third is an emancipation, to a degree quite out of the common, from prejudice and taking-for-granted. The three types of expectation cannot be altogether separate and may be very closely connected. The third, for example, goes along with the second, and the second may need the help of the first. Width of view plays a large part in determining what ideas should be cleared up. Provisionally, however, the three types may be distinguished with advantage.

Accordingly, let us attempt a summary of the previous evidence, condensing further what was already highly condensed, and let us keep to the three main hopes that have just been outlined. (1) Have there been great philosophical syntheses in our time? (2) Has the process of clarification proceeded apace? (3) Have we become more chary of covert assumptions and of presumptuous takings-for-granted?

(1) As regards “synthesis,” a good deal depends on the sort of synthesis that is meant. Thus the logical positivists claim to have effected a wide philosophical synthesis called the “unity of science” by asserting that all significant questions can be put, and all significant answers given, in a single “physical” language.



The reason, they say, is the overwhelming importance that should be attached to a scientific manner of speaking. Most of us, however, would deny that a uniform way of speaking, even if it suggests more than it says, is of itself a synthesis, just as we should deny that a mere encyclopædia of the sciences, even if it were very well arranged, could be a philosophical synthesis in a fit and proper sense. In the language of Goldsmith's Hall it would have to be a "made-up piece."

In the Middle Ages philosophy took its place in a wide theo-centric synthesis. Philosophy, indeed, was the part of that synthesis which natural reason could grasp. The growth of secularism in its two chief forms, viz. the cultural-humanistic semi-Paganism of the Renaissance, and the mechanical or revived Democritean philosophy of the seventeenth century, challenged the older theocentricity either expressly or covertly, but always in a big way – indeed in a way so big that each subsequent philosophical era has to ask how it stands in this matter.

The New Mediaevalism of the Roman Church gives one possible answer, and a theocentric philosophy dominates all Christian theologies. But what of secularism?

Here I think it is necessary to distinguish the humanistic-cultural vein of secularism from the physical-scientific, notwithstanding the facts that physical science, so far from belonging exclusively to the vegetable garden, is itself a flower of "culture," and that the unity of the two is a better synthesis still.

Absolute idealism, in its head and in its heart, is cultural-humanistic; and absolutism is still alive. In England and in America it has still a strong following, although it has often been invited to abdicate. In Italy, again, the new idealism of Absolute Spirit, the *Io trascendentale* developing from moment to moment, is a trumpeter's assertion of the power of historical culture to progress creatively from its own resources. In Germany the tendency is rather different. The spirit of culture, according to the "Life" and "Existence" philosophers, is not the whole Time-Space Spirit, and philosophy is the stronger in so far as it separates the tenacious spirit of culture from the natural forces which it uses but never attempts to overwhelm.

A cultural-secular absolutism, therefore, adopting several rather different forms, is a definite movement of our time. More particularly its alliance with "history" in a sense of that word in which art, literature and the finer essence of aspiration is of greater moment than conquest or political intrigue, gives a certain promise of vitality. And other philosophies, renouncing absolutism, come near to the absolutist spirit. The humanistic type of pragmatism, for

example, has shown itself to be capable of moving sympathetically with the times; and M. Bergson, in a part of his philosophy, is a great humanist on high metaphysical lines.

The other main type of philosophical synthesis may be called the "naturalistic," supposing always that we may obtain a shrewd idea of what "nature" is from the "natural" sciences. Such "naturalism" is a looser term than "positivism" and looser still than "materialism." Its scope, however, may be gauged fairly accurately by considering the usual modern attitude towards "materialism."

Traditional materialism, for the most part, was either official or obscurantist. A materialist was merely officially so, if, like Hobbes, he held that all real events, including thinking, must be physical movements, but also maintained that we discovered our thoughts by a process of self-observation or introspection which could be practised successfully without any conscious reference to matter and motion. But a materialist was an obscurantist if he denied or ignored what we call the mind. Nowadays, however, when "matter" is volatilized and electrified into protons, electrons, neutrons, deuterons and neutrinos, or metamorphosed into puzzling "quanta," when "mind" is dissected into a half a dozen sets of quite different functions, and when a variety of effort is spent upon the elaboration of some bi-functional theory concerning "mind" and "matter" the whole face of these problems is altered, and naturalism can afford to be as much or as little psychological and as much or as little materialistic as it chooses. It is likely, however, that certain modern theories of this subject, such as "behaviourism" and the views of some of the disciples of the late Professor Pavlov, are rather old-fashioned in their accounts of this matter.

Speaking generally, then, our age has been fertile in naturalistic syntheses, and has so far only reaped the early harvest. Even the English who are notoriously averse to large-scale philosophical planning in the grand manner have today their Alexander and their Whitehead, philosophers whose sympathies with "naturalism" are considerable.

And the influence of Marx's "dialectical materialism" inside Russia and outside it, has always to be remembered. The French Revolution was the triumph of pure secularism, transforming an ideological fashion into an immense historical fact with momentous consequences, not always entirely logical, upon subsequent ideologies. The Russian Revolution was another event of the same gigantic order, less rigid perhaps, in its type of rationalism but not less secular and, in its own estimation, at least as hard-headed. In the

political sphere, Nazism and Fascism are alternatives to Communism. In the realm of European ideology, most contemporary philosophical syntheses are designed to yield other alternatives. But dialectical materialism is still a fighting army.

On the other hand, the work of Whitehead and of many other authors is so intimately connected with the analytical movement of modern science that it can scarcely be assessed except by reference to the second division of our present theme. Relativity-theory and the modern theories of the atom have the peculiarity not only that they challenge scientific-philosophical dogmatism at points which philosophers cannot ignore, but also that they shift the emphasis of the whole discussion. A philosophical synthesis is usually regarded as a world-picture, that is to say as a picture of reality. The new scientific researches, as we saw, are primarily concerned with a sort of *epistemological* picture. Their interest is rather in the consistency of symbols than in the actual character of events. Certainly there is a challenge, at least indirect, to philosophical and to commonsense notions of the space, the time, the causes and even the determinateness of things. But "things" are no longer in the foreground. It is equations that are prominent.

(2) Let us, then, proceed to consider contemporary analytical philosophy.

We should, I think, distinguish four species of philosophical analysis, all of them practised at the present time. These are: (*a*) crucial analysis, (*b*) typical ostensive analysis, (*c*) instrumentalism and (*d*) formal analysis. The four species are not wholly distinct, but are sufficiently so to be usefully treated apart.

(*a*) By crucial analysis, I mean the analysis of a philosophical crux, crossroads or critical situation, nothing in particular being assumed regarding the sort of analysis that is pertinent.

This method has certain presuppositions. It must have some preliminary inkling of the whereabouts of the important crossroads. It must also presuppose, at any rate tentatively, that each such crux may be isolated and investigated, as we say, on its merits. At a later stage results may be pooled and perhaps revised; but not in the first instance.

Here contemporary philosophy has been very active indeed, and even the enemies of the method admit its occasional services in matters of detail. Such men as Brentano and Meinong in Austria, Russell, Stout, Moore and Broad in Great Britain, Lovejoy, Strong and Mead in America (to mention no others) have done notable service. If no crucial question has been entirely cleared up, our progress in the apprehension of the possible logical alternatives has been little short of prodigious. What do we actually perceive? What do we actually

remember? What precisely do we judge? Where is there room for error? What is the status of relations? How many things do we mean by a “mind”? Must a cause be something more than a rule of sequence? Is “substance” the denial of historical process? Is process creative? What is “value” and how is it related to the process of valuation? Modern philosophy has taken endless pains with questions such as these, discovering their austerity and their formidable complexity, but raising their analysis (it seems fair to say) to a level that is not likely to be permanently lowered in future.

(b) By typical ostensive analysis I mean the attempt to induce typical patterns to exhibit themselves, and so to reveal very general truths. In a large sense – larger than Mr. Husserl’s – this is phenomenology; and the method has become familiar to the modern mind. It might be called catholic as opposed to sensory empiricism, omnivorous empiricism as opposed to sensivorous. No philosophy can avoid the appeal to fact and what is more, to facts that appear; but if facts are to be allowed to tell their own story, they should also be allowed to tell the whole of that story.

It may be objected, indeed, that we are all phenomenologists of a sort. The narrower kind of empiricists and the phenomenologists believe that there are no phenomena except sensory ones. Realists of Mr. Alexander’s type cultivate a strenuous *naïveté* that humbly requests the “object” to “declare” or “reveal” itself. The absolutists do not complain of the method of patterns. Their objection is that one great pattern, The Whole, dominates all subordinate patterns. And certainly the isolability of patterns constitutes a philosophical problem. It would seem, however, that the phenomenologist’s predilection for an intensive scrutiny and lavish description of certain selected patterns is readily defensible as a distinctive philosophical method.

Again, the attempt to describe “pure” experience, so characteristic of the earlier years of this century, is in its own way a species of phenomenology. The difficulty, of course, is to avoid contamination from illicit theory. Here James, Avenarius and even Bergson may have failed. But Bergson’s description of experienced time has been a model for all subsequent philosophers.

(c) Instrumentalism, as described by Mr. Dewey and his followers, has a certain affinity with phenomenology. As Mr. Brightman and others say, it is an “operational” theory; and it may reach great analytical nicety in its endeavours to detect the “particular go” of particular operations. For the most part, however, instrumentalism is built on rather more massive lines, and is an attempt to describe the moving pattern of the knowledge that is power in a semi-reflective, scientific, semi-religious, industrial-agricultural community. It

is a blend of phenomenology with a restrained, impressionistic and not very formal analysis.

(*d*) It would frequently be said, however, that all the above forms of “analysis” are feeble and somewhat muddled attempts to reach analysis proper, and that genuine formal analysis is being erected by Carnap and by Neurath upon foundations imperfectly laid by Wittgenstein and imperfectly sketched by Russell. Since this philosophy is in the making and is acutely bellicose, its potentialities, at the moment, can scarcely be gauged with accuracy. It is plain, however, that great advances have been made in the formal dissection of “logical syntax,” in the detection of errors that are due to bad philosophical grammar, in the unmasking of disguised tautologies, and of subtle inconsistencies very easily missed. Philosophy, perhaps, is the study of the greater simplicities. If so, the general statements of these simplicities may itself be simple; but the rigorous pursuit of such simplicities must always be a difficult and exacting art.

(3) The third big question I propose to consider here is whether the present age compares favourably with others in respect of a salutary cautiousness. Are we, or are we not less prone to taking-for-granted than other eras?

The partiality of the present age for fine and free analysis should help it in this particular; but some would complain that the fiercest analysts themselves take a great deal for granted, for example certain adamant logical “atoms,” or a naive acceptance of “sensory protocols,” or of the future as the sole standard of verification. In the particular case, this censure may be deserved, but in general we must consider with some care what is philosophically reprehensible in “taking-for-granted.”

It may be said, quite justly, that hesitation regarding first principles is not a philosophical virtue. On the contrary, it is a philosophical vice. Again it may be said with a good deal of force that the modern practice of deprecating alleged certainties, and of attempting instead to obtain reasonable assurance from the mutual support of probabilities (*a*) is itself a first principle, and (*b*) may itself require certainties on which to erect its probabilities. Avoiding one prejudice, it is easy to fall into another; and a flaccid toleration in philosophy is never to be commended. What should be made plain, however, is that *prejudging* is a philosophical crime, and that there is no objection whatsoever to the firm acceptance of first principles after adequate scrutiny.

Since Descartes, Hume and Kant, to mention no others, were fully conversant with the importance of this matter, contemporary philosophy has no excuse for neglecting it. In fact, it has had a sensitive conscience

on the question. Husserl's conscience is perhaps the most sensitive of all Phenomenology he says needs an initial scepticism more profound than Descartes's, a less mitigated initial scepticism than Hume's. It must cultivate the ancient *epoche*, that is an entire preliminary suspense of judgment. Other philosophers, if less emphatic, are also very scrupulous. The absolutists with their alternative "The Whole or Nothing" may beg more questions, and snatch more answers, than they think they do, but at least they are convinced that their philosophy vindicates itself after inquiry and would otherwise be contemptible. Other synthetic philosophers, like Mr. Alexander, put forward what they regard as an elaborate set of hypotheses. And it is far to claim that contemporary philosophy has explored this whole region pretty thoroughly. It has seriously and systematically examined the plausibility of initial certainties, the possible ways of presupposing, and the possible defects of plausibility itself.

Accordingly it seems plain that philosophy has seriously conducted a serious business during the present century. The period has been lively and also assiduous, not one of philosophy's greatest periods, but, nevertheless, one of its better periods. The narrative of this book, short as it necessarily was, should have justified this conclusion. And now I shall ask some "popular" questions, *not* in the best sense.

Has there been a general advance in contemporary philosophy? That depends on what you mean. There is no unanimity regarding method or system, no single dynasty of *philosophia perennis*, no agreement even regarding the boundaries of philosophy or the site of its capital. On the other hand, there is a very general tendency towards experimental readjustment, there is a widespread agreement that serious philosophy is needed not by certain select and cloistered spirits only but by anyone who has a general love of ideas. There is immense industry, and, in certain quarters, an exaggerated willingness to renounce and to unlearn. Certainly there is little virtue and less promise in annual confessions that last year's book was mostly a muddle, but the fault, if conspicuous, is a lesser thing than the sensible disposition to remain for ever in the same philosophical pill-box.

Is current philosophy distracted by growing-pains? That, as we have seen, may be a disingenuous question, for it may assume that there must be something quite definite into which philosophy should grow. On the other hand it may be said, soberly and patiently, that if fermentation is over-active in contemporary philosophy, the diagnosis has received attention, and the condition may be controlled.

What is the relation of contemporary philosophy to contemporary temperaments? This question seems to me to be essentially unfair. It assumes that there should be stock philosophies for stock figures when the truth is that a good philosophy should be able to dominate every temperament.

Let it be supposed, however, that, where so much is problematical, it is of advantage to humanity that men of different types should be able to find large patterns of ideas, one of which, at least, is specially attractive to each such type. In that case recent philosophy has much to offer. Is clearness your aim? There are many philosophies that attempt nothing else. You can sharpen your wits to a very keen edge. Do you want “atmosphere”? You can look for inspiration from phenomenology. Is your single desire to see things steadily and whole? There are many “holisms” or absolutisms. Are you a Heraclitean responding only to a philosophy of change? Think of Bergson, Gentile and Whitehead. Do you believe that every reputable philosophy must be distilled out of science? There are several new positivisms, some of them wary and tentative, others (although not so many as formerly) robustly confident. Do you trust your senses only? There are several new and very resolute empiricisms. Is “value” your major interest? There has been no philosophical era in which that particular problem has been more fully discussed.

There is another side to philosophy – its destructive aspect. Has recent philosophy made important discoveries regarding what should be finally and completely abandoned? Have we learned, for certain, how to avoid any one of the mistakes of our ancestors?

If a theory can be disproved by experiment, it becomes a mistake unless radically revised. In the realm of intellectual experiment, and therefore in philosophy, only a contradiction has the same degree of finality, and even there it is usually possible to argue that a little ingenuity would remove the contradiction. Hence there is very great difficulty in being confident that any of the larger historical ways of philosophizing can be condemned for pure block-headedness. It seems always possible to find an ancestor for any philosophical theory one chooses to form.

The recent striking rise in the level of historical scholarship has on the whole increased the obvious folly of crying, “Off with his head.” Silliness may indeed have been revealed in high old-fashioned places, but many of the reputed dunces have been relieved of their caps. Ignorance of the ways of nature, and of the possibilities of human invention, may indeed have muddled many philosophical giants in the past, but the larger generalities of logic, the greater simplicities of the universe and in the character of human

nature are on the whole immune from such objections. And these, after all, are philosophy's principal theme.

Ways of philosophizing are usually forgotten rather than definitely refuted. For the time being they are spent and stale, and man's interest goes elsewhere. A revival of interest, however, is always possible and, indeed, is quite normal.

"Back to Kant," "Back to Hume," "Back to Locke," "Back to St. Thomas," "Back to Plato." All these things are said today, in all seriousness, by very eminent people, sometimes, indeed, by the same people. There is a refreshing disposition, it is true, to use the opulence of the past instead of simply admiring its frozen riches; and for the most part the tendency to be content with what So-and-so said in such and such a year is as dead as Mr. Gladstone. But the philosophical past has not been buried, and there is no general agreement, I think, to the effect that any of the larger metaphysical ideas of the past should now be regarded as unhappy ghosts. There are outcries, no doubt, against substance; but many competent philosophers are still substantialists. The recent confident revolt against a causality that is something more than uniform sequence has already subsided in many quarters. Dualism, representationism and other such theories, discarded by some, have been rescued by others. To-day there are would-be solipsists, would-be pansensualists, would-be neo-Protagoreans, would-be apostles of common sense. What was supposed to be Kant's greatest discovery, the discovery, namely, of synthetic judgments *a priori*, is repudiated in set terms by an important philosophical school. In short many things commonly regarded as philosophical crudities or absurdities are still maintained by competent people; and other competent people are eager to take the risk of setting back the clock.

With greater resources for illuminating, man should become less afraid of the twilight. Yet his eyes are but human, and time itself will not permanently improve them.