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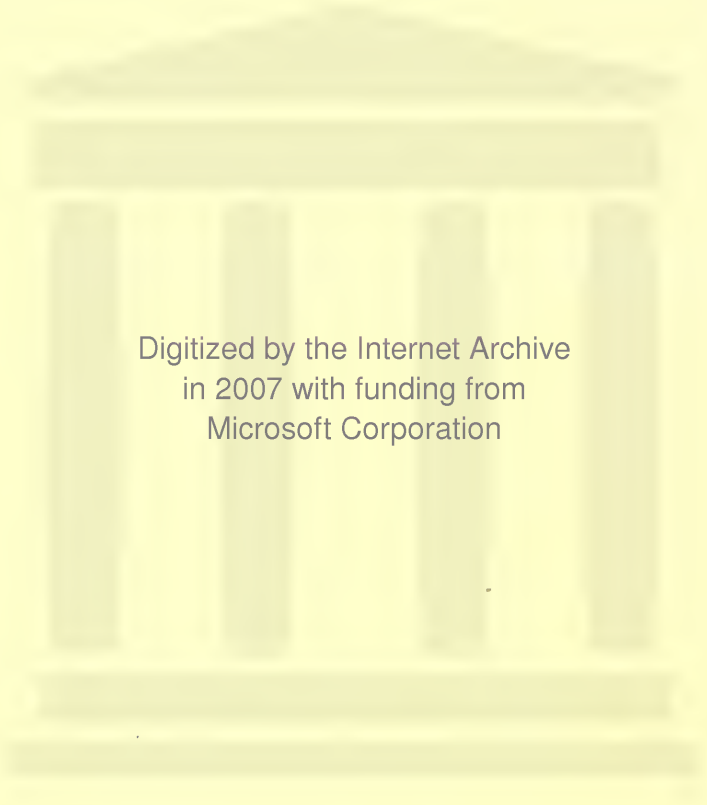

THE HISTORICAL METHOD IN ETHICS AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE papers here brought together are all that remains of the work of one of the acutest and most thoughtful of the younger generation of philosophical teachers. Their author fell in the war, being one of those who counted his life a little thing to give in so great a cause. He was thirty-three when he died, and he had published next to nothing in his lifetime. These three essays were found in their present form among his papers. The first and longest was clearly intended for publication, either by itself or as part of a larger work on ethics; the other two bore traces of having been originally prepared for some Philosophical Society, but both would have been sent as articles to the philosophical reviews by any one with a less exacting standard of work than Handyside. The three are now published together, both for their own intrinsic value and as a tribute to his memory.

John Handyside was born at Leith in 1883 and received his school education at the Royal High School of Edinburgh, of which he was Dux in 1899. In the autumn of that year he entered the

University of Edinburgh, and as soon as he reached the philosophical classes his vocation was clear. After carrying off all the distinctions open to undergraduates, he graduated M.A. with First Class Honours in Mental Philosophy in April 1903, and in the autumn of the same year gained the Ferguson Philosophical Scholarship open to graduates of the four Scottish universities. Edinburgh awarded him in succession a Baxter Scholarship and the Sir William Hamilton Fellowship, and the funds thus placed at his disposal enabled him to continue his studies at Oxford. He gained an Exhibition at Balliol, and subsequently won the Jenkyns Exhibition in the subjects of the school of Literae Humaniores. He graduated B.A. with a First Class in 1907, and in the following year he was elected to a Prize Fellowship at St. John's College.

So impressed had I been by the promise of Handyside's work that I kept my Junior Assistantship open a year for him till he should have taken his Oxford degree; and he returned to Edinburgh in that capacity in the autumn of 1907. He held the position for four sessions, being given latterly the status of Lecturer, and lecturing independently to the Honours men on Advanced Logic and on Spinoza. On the basis of his distinguished academic record and his successful teaching experience in Edinburgh, he was appointed in 1911 to the independent Lectureship in Philosophy in the

University of Liverpool. His new work lay mainly in the direction of ethics and political philosophy and proved sufficiently absorbing, combined as it was usually with a tutorial class for workpeople under the University Extension Board. For one session at least, owing to the illness of Professor Mair, the main burden of the philosophical department was laid upon his shoulders, a severe test for a young man, but one which served to show the genuine stuff of which Handyside was made. He was also Examiner in Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh at the time, and I remember admiring the way in which, without fuss or complaint, he accepted and efficiently carried through all the additional work thrown upon him. When the war broke out, Professor Mair's health was not yet fully restored and Handyside remained at his post for the first year; he literally could not be spared. But he was restless, for he had heard the call. During the session he sought to prepare himself as far as possible by training with the O.T.C., and in July 1915 he received a commission in the 16th King's Liverpool Regiment. In a letter written at the time he expressed vividly the sense of peace which this decision brought with it, the complete cessation of all anxieties about the future. After nearly a year's training in England, he was sent to France towards the end of June 1916, and attached to the 18th King's Liverpool Regiment. It was the

opening of the battle of the Somme. On July 16th he wrote to me, 'I have now been out for some weeks, chiefly at an interesting point of the line, where I learnt what it is like to go across the open under shell-fire, both by day and by night; but now back in rest billets.' Three months later, on the morning of October 18th, he was mortally wounded, 'while gallantly rallying his men in a particularly awkward and desperate situation.' 'It required,' said one of the messages, 'a truly brave man to do what he did under very adverse circumstances.' He was carried to the aid-post of his battalion, and after a few hours was sent further back to an advanced dressing-station, but all that could be done was to alleviate the pain of his wounds. He was himself perfectly conscious of his situation, and remained wonderfully cheery and brave. He was able to dictate to the padre a letter of farewell to those at home. 'Do not be broken-hearted,' he said in a tender message to his mother; 'it is curious how little one minds dying, for oneself, but how much for you.' So he sought to comfort her; for himself he was content.

To these few facts it may be sufficient to add the concluding words of Professor Mair's sympathetic notice at the time in the University of Liverpool students' magazine: 'In the place where he lived and worked for nearly five years,' he wrote, 'it is needless to say much of the qualities of our dead

friend. He was a man of acute and fine understanding, widely read in the history of human thought and sensitive also to whatever was good and notable in the intellectual life of the present time. He never showed any desire to impose his views upon others, but was decisively ready when he judged they were really wanted. He was not a friend of the turgid or frothy. With his students his influence was always on the side of sobriety and clarity of thought. Cheap gospels and ready-made solutions did not thrive under his auspices. He had, it is well worth mentioning, a special kindness and attraction for children. He remembered a number of his child friends in the stress of warfare, and from the trenches would send them, individually, gay messages.

'The contemplative interest was perhaps the strongest in him, but when the issue became big enough he had no difficulty, as we see, about entering the arena of action. His was too critical a mind to accept a simple formula for a complex situation, and it is doubtful whether he would have adopted literally the saying of M. Paul Bourget: "C'est que nous sommes les soldats de la chrétienté et que nous avons devant nous les soldats d'Odin," but he saw the business on that scale at least, and had no doubts as to his part in it. All the distinctions he won at Edinburgh and at Oxford cannot

rival the unforgettable distinction he has thus won.' [1]

Handyside's mind was naturally of the acute and analytic order, not sceptical in the sense of having settled beforehand the impossibility of philosophical construction, but fundamentally critical in the best sense of the word, distrustful of easy solutions and premature syntheses. On some minds philosophy breaks like a sudden light, an insight carrying its own evidence with it, and making all things new. They are caught up, as young men, in the sweep of some great philosophical system ; the principle of explanation is accepted and the rest of their thinking is nothing but its application. But Handyside's mind was less simply built. *Audi alteram partem* was the instinctive maxim of his trained and impartial intelligence. Hence, however attractively a philosophical theory might present itself, however strong its appeal to his sympathies, he had first to bring it face to face with all the difficulties which the history of thought or the theories of modern science might suggest to a well-stored mind. It had to be repeatedly taken up and patiently meditated before he could determine his own position in relation to it. Eminently philosophical as this attitude must be pronounced, and greatly as it enhances the value of the positive conclusions

[1] *The Sphinx*, vol. xxiii., No. 1 (January 24, 1917).

reached, it was obviously unfavourable to rapid and copious production. For Handyside was disinclined to write merely to display his own dialectical ability. Though naturally critical, negative criticism by itself did not seem to attract him ; he preferred to wait till he saw the prospect of disengaging some positive result.

These qualities of mind and this method of approach will be perceptible to any attentive reader of the following essays. The order in which they are printed is probably the reverse of that in which they were composed. The second and the third are closely connected and may be assigned on internal evidence to the close of the writer's time in Oxford or to the period of his Assistantship in Edinburgh. They are the work of one fresh from the study of constructive idealism as presented in the writings of Bradley and Bosanquet, and the author is in the main in sympathy with that position.

The third essay is a very thoughtful criticism of the ideas of mechanism, organism, teleology, and free activity, discussing in particular the tendency of certain recent idealists to make freedom and purposive activity imply an element of indeterminateness which contradicts the idea of uniformity and law. On this view the relation between mechanism and 'the higher categories' becomes one of contradiction or mutual exclusion ; but the contention of the essay is that we cannot

get rid in this way of the uniformity and necessity of causal sequence. 'Teleology can only exist in a world which has the characteristic of a mechanism,' and 'the process within the mind itself does not exclude what we must call natural causation.' Freedom means 'self-determination,' that is 'determination by grounds that are wholly internal to itself,' and it seems obvious that nothing finite can possess such complete self-determination; yet, from the point of view of 'a complete system' there is no contradiction between the determination 'of part by part,' which is the point of view of 'mechanism,' and the 'determination of whole by whole' which is the point of view of philosophical 'system.'

The second essay, starting from Spinoza's denial that intellect is predicable of God, broadens out almost immediately into a penetrating analysis of the act of knowledge in its two correlated and mutually essential aspects of thought and sense, conception and perception, relation and quality. Bradley's view of the judgment as 'reference to reality' is criticised as tending to make the reality to which we 'affix' our predicates a Beyond or Other which we can never really know. 'The reality to which every judgment refers is not thus external . . . but is just the concrete system of the related qualities which we have already thought, and of those which, consistently with the existent system, we may think.' Similarly

the 'subject of knowledge is not a soul-unit outside of the knowledge and somehow appropriating it, but the very form of the knowledge, the "unity of consciousness" or "synthetic unity of apperception" which reflective analysis shows us, or may show us, to be an essential element in the description of knowledge.' The ideal of 'thought' as a qualityless system of relations is next examined and repudiated. Such pure or merely relational thought must always have an 'other' over against it; the general character of immediacy and the particular qualities of sense cannot be reduced to terms of thought conceived as merely a relating activity. 'We are bound to define our "intelligence" in terms which will include "sentience"; we must unify intellect and sense'; and an absolute experience conceived as such a unity is at least a 'regulative idea.'

These two essays deal with questions of epistemology and pure metaphysics. In the first essay, Handyside passes from these to the problems and the method of ethics. As has been already mentioned, his work at Liverpool lay largely in the direction of moral and social philosophy. This was the first time the teaching of ethics had been placed in his hands, and the fresh work attracted him. He was naturally led to reconsider the methods and principles of the science, and he told me (in 1912 or 1913) that he was thinking of a book on the subject. This essay evidently represents

what he had put on paper with that intention, and is therefore his maturest and most independent piece of work. It is on a larger scale than the other essays and differs from them also in being written with a view to publication. Although dealing primarily and specifically with the place of 'the historical method in ethics,' it is in effect an important instalment of what might ultimately have been entitled the author's Prolegomena to Ethics, and contains, explicitly or by implication, much of what he had to say on the scope and proper definition of the science, its postulates or presuppositions, its methods of procedure, and the nature of the conclusions at which it may be expected to arrive. I will not attempt to summarise what seems to me a singularly ripe and suggestive piece of writing. It is full of matter for any one interested in the foundations of moral theory, and its value can be appreciated only in a careful reading.

A. S. PRINGLE-PATTISON.

University of Edinburgh,
August 1919.

THE HISTORICAL METHOD IN ETHICS

MORALITY is not static, but has had a history, has been developed, has passed through a course of evolution. Just as, for instance, positive law has changed, just as man's economic functions have changed, so have his moral code and his social relations. Fashion, habit, and custom; moral sentiment, opinion, and belief; social relation, observance, and institution; all these are the ways in which what, in the abstract, we call the morality of a nation or of a period, shows itself concretely, and each of these changes with change of time. Morality has a genesis, that is, a point at which it started out of the pre-existing physical and psychical conditions. It has a development, of differences within itself, differences yet connected for us by this link of identity, that they are all within the moral sphere—an evolution or genesis and development considered together as taking place in a system which includes them, and whose various aspects vary reciprocally, and a history, which is the record of its evolution. So much may now be asserted without qualification; but on the question of the signific-

ance, the value, and the proper end of the application of the historical method to Ethics, or of the historical consideration of morals, there seems to be still room for diversity of opinion. The question presents itself sometimes as one concerning the nature of Ethical Science, sometimes as one of the relative claims of origin and validity within that science—two aspects of the problem which it is not necessary for us to distinguish here.

Ethics, as usually and traditionally understood, is the science of morals, in the sense that it determines the principles, the code of laws, on which acts, conduct, and character are validly to be judged good, right, meritorious, or evil, bad, wrong. Its province is to determine what virtue is, what vice is, and, hence, what is virtuous, and what is vicious ; it is to tell us what our duties are, what is obligatory upon us, what has a claim upon our wills, what we ought to do, what has value, worth, dignity. From all this we may select three ways of formulation which state this view best :

1. Ethics is the normative science *par excellence*, is the science of the norm of will, conduct, character.

2. It is the science of the ' ought ' as opposed to the science of the ' is.'

3. It is the science of the determination of values.

But of Ethics in this sense it is easily seen how small has been the success, as it has usually been attempted. When moralists have tried to arrive,

by means of demonstration, at laws which should have a universal claim on human conduct, they have invariably failed, no matter how few or how general their laws. The last attempt, and that distinguished by the greatest 'common sense' of all, was that of Sidgwick, and Sidgwick (I believe demonstrably) failed. And it is easy enough, especially after the fact, to give the abstract principles which show that such an attempt *must* fail. If your conclusion is to be a moral judgment, a judgment of value, your premises also must include such a moral judgment. Thus, ultimately, every moral judgment which it may be attempted syllogistically to prove must rest upon at least one moral judgment which is merely assumed; and to assume any moral judgment, when all can be doubted, is absurd. And thus it is certain that those most ultimate propositions, on which Sidgwick and his predecessors base their proofs of laws or maxims, either are not moral judgments, and in that case do not prove the conclusions, or, being such, are themselves equally in need of proof, and equally unprovable.

And so it seems not possible by this method to reach any general or universal propositions, or categorical imperatives, of the sort that the rationalising demonstrationists want. And, if so, it becomes relevant to point out that we do not, as a matter of fact, in an unsophisticated state, base our moral judgments on universal principles

or on the recognition of categorical imperatives; that our moral judgments are rather the expression of intuitions, which are themselves the result of the inexhaustibly complex system of our individual characters and of our social environment; that, therefore, no 'law' yet formulated has given the exact content of customary morality, or of any recognised section of it; and, finally, that even if it did so for the morality of one time, yet, ultimately, it would still be inadequate since customary morals vary with time.

And so we are driven to conclude that this conception of 'law' is not adequate to our moral experience, that morality is not, in any deep sense, legality. If, then, we give up such an inquiry for abstract and universal forms in the moral life, as a practicable 'Method of Ethics,' we must betake ourselves, it would seem, to some kind of consideration of the particular elements of content in that life. We pass, in short, from a rationalist to an empiricist account of morals, from the point of view of the universal to that of the particular. And, from this point of view the variety and variability of moral phenomena gains in importance; empirical Ethics is led to pay attention to the changes in morality from time to time (as well as from place to place), to the evolution of morals, to some sort of a historical method. With this view comes usually the other, which seems, *prima facie*, to be naturally connected with

it—that, in opposition to the dicta of the previous view, Ethics is a positive science, a science of the 'is,' a science about men's notions of value. Such a view is, of course, easily to be combined with a purely naturalistic view of morality, with a complete denial of the reality of obligation. This question is, however, too wide to be more than referred to here, where the validity of the moral standpoint is, for the most part, postulated merely.

The view, then, that the science of Ethics is a historical or evolutional science—if this be a correct way of describing the view which lays emphasis on the History of Morals as the datum of Ethics—presents several aspects for consideration. And first, as to the possibility of such a science. It seems to me that there is undoubtedly room for a science with such data. Similarly, I should say, there is room for, *e.g.*, an evolutional Economics, an evolutional Politics, an evolutional Aesthetics, an evolutional Science of Religion, and an evolutional Science of Knowledge. And in fact we find that evolutional or historical methods have been applied to each of these spheres. Even in the last of them, I find, for instance, Windelband translated as speaking of a 'Science of the History of Philosophy'; and it seems clear that any attempt to treat systematically the development of knowledge—that is, of Science and Philosophy—has a right to the title of 'science,' or is debarred from it only by the

absence of a consensus of experts. And so it seems that, with the growing fullness of data, and growing accuracy and impartiality of inference, each of the above-named branches of inquiry might be awarded the name of science.

But while we thus judge an evolutional Science of Ethics possible, this other conclusion seems also inevitable, that even the beginnings of such a science are as yet non-existent. Ethics, in this sense, is teachable, but where are the teachers? It would be difficult to point to any systematic treatment, or attempt at such, of the development of morals, either universally or within limits. Even the most purely narrative and least systematic treatment of moral history would be something; but even here there appears to be much less accomplished than in the spheres of Religion and Knowledge, each of which has found numerous historians and innumerable investigators. And the obvious remark is possible—which may be regarded either as a defence or as an admission—that the facts of moral evolution are so widespread, as compared, for instance, with the facts of the History of Philosophy, which is chiefly confined to the learned, that they become almost impalpable for Science. But this is no more than the ascription of a cause for the fact that Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, for example, does not depend on, and scarcely even contains, a single empirical fact as to the development of morality. The Science, in

fact, of which that work may be taken as representative, offers a certain parallel with Economics. In the latter, despite the insistence of some schools on the necessity of making a historical science of it, the main work done is easily distinguished into the two main departments of abstract theory and concrete history. So it seems to be, as yet, with Ethics, the second-born of these sciences of Humanity. Here we have a little historical material like Lecky's *History of European Morals from Constantine to Charlemagne*, and much more as yet uncollected and unsystematised, on the one hand, and theory comparatively abstract on the other—too abstract, as I am convinced—typified by Stephen's book already mentioned. But this, of course, does not go far into the matter. The science of Ethics, like those other actual or possible sciences of Humanity, works, it is to be presumed, from certain data, and arrives at certain conclusions, by certain methods on certain assumptions. And the problem is: What part does the history of the evolution of morals occupy in the science? Is the history the datum from which conclusions are drawn, and is it the sole such datum? And in what sense can the method and the assumptions also of the science be called 'historical'? And especially (to some the all-important question) what sort of conclusions can it enable you to arrive at?—a question formally separate from the others, and here to be treated last.

1. The other questions, however, suggest an examination of some general characteristics of the evolution of such a group of human facts. And first, the assertion that the earlier facts are the simpler. We may take this in two senses. Either the facts are simpler in themselves, *notiora naturae*, or they are simpler to us, *notiora nobis*. And even in the former of these senses, the statement seems one not to be so easily accepted as it has been by some. The natural use of 'simplicity' seems to be to indicate relative degrees of abstraction; thus, mathematical facts are simpler than physical or chemical facts. But within one *kind* of facts, of uniform degree of abstraction, the notion of simplicity seems not naturally applicable; we can scarcely say that a circle, *e.g.*, is more or less simple than an ellipse, or the motions of a nebula than those of a planetary system. And can we be sure that we are stating any significant truth when we say that a totem-group, for example, or a nomad tribe is in itself a simpler phenomenon than a modern European village? We should answer, I suppose, that it, barely, *may* be, but (to leave this point) that a large part of its apparent simplicity arises from our ignorance of some elements in the fact: which brings us to our second point. Whether the earlier fact be simpler in itself or no, there can scarcely be any doubt that it is less simple to us, who are ignorant of half the fact, and half its conditions. And so,

although the earlier facts *may* have been simpler, we cannot say that we know a larger proportion of the truth about them than about the complex contemporary fact. An element of a present fact may be found, perhaps, in an earlier and less complex stage of the evolution, in isolation from its present context, but with another context, which, if it has the advantage of being simpler, has the great disadvantage of being comparatively unknown.

II. It may be worth while to indicate the dangers of interpreting human evolution exclusively on the lines of biological evolution, *i.e.* of Natural Selection. The fit organism survives, and therefore the fit species; the unfit organism or species perishes: that is the emphatic point in biological evolution. But in human history the extinction of a race is among the rarest of all events, and has probably not occurred sufficiently often to render possible a natural selection view of human history. *This* evolution is of ideals, not of individuals; the selection plays its part in the sphere of customs and institutions, not by selecting societies, nations, or races themselves. It is the rejected ideal that perishes, the accepted ideal that survives. The changes of animal species are accidental variations selected by natural conditions; but a society is not a species, and the differences with which moral science has to do are not things unchangeable like differences of colour or of skin texture, but things entirely in the hands

of the society itself. And this differentiation from biology is the reason why discussions, *e.g.*, of moral heredity, and similar topics, are really irrelevant to all the important questions of ethical science.

III. It seems sometimes to be made one of the assumptions of Historical Ethics that 'earlier' and 'lower' shall be equivalent, and so, also, 'later' and 'higher.' Now, the statement may be true and may be provable, that human evolution is an unbroken advance or progress; it may even be postulated for special purposes; but it surely can not be postulated as a general basis for the science of morals. As long as Nietzsche considers Christianity a regress, while Tolstoy condemns almost every movement since its introduction, or as long as the mass of men think the Middle Ages to have been on a lower level than some that preceded them, so long will the statement require proof, and refuse to be merely postulated.

IV. By what methods, then, do 'historical' sciences seek to reach true propositions? The question is partly one of General Logic, or of the Philosophy of Science, and may be answered differently according as we have different ideals of knowledge, or different modes of formulating our ideal, such as the 'establishment of uniformities of co-existence and succession,' the 'discovery of laws of nature,' the 'description of phenomena,' the 'construction of a system of necessary truths,' or the 'attainment of judgments of systematic

necessity.' Now the difficulty in the way of applying these ideals to the sciences which have as their datum human history is simply the complexity of that datum, its concreteness and lack of abstraction. All facts, all data, are given in temporal series, and in this respect human history is like other facts. But physical facts, from their being defined as such by a previous abstraction, are in this sense simple, and so capable of the artificial isolation of parts from their context, for purposes of understanding and control. Thus, to take a usual example, the conjunction of hydrogen two parts, oxygen one part, is followed in a large variety of contexts by the production of some drops of water, and we arrive at the relative universal: 'Given H_2 and O, you get water,' or: 'Water is H_2O'; the varying context being here treated as irrelevant, by that very abstraction which isolates certain facts to form the physical universe. But for the most part even such universals as this are unattainable in human affairs, which are essentially concrete. We do not arrive, in them, at any notable amount of separation of facts from a context recognised as irrelevant. Every contingent aspect of a man's character seems, for instance, to be able to have a bearing on any particular act of his; and we are consequently much more narrowly confined to mere narrative judgments, instead of reaching judgments of systematic necessity. It is as if, in the physical

instance, we could do no more than describe, more or less exhaustively, but never with absolute exhaustiveness, each case of the production of water, with its context. We can, as a rule, do nothing more than this in matters of human history. Another way of putting what is really the same difficulty is to say that the historical series is not repeated nor repeatable. This is the same point as before, for of course the physical series also is not repeated; only, through the abstract nature of the latter, certain events in it can be so taken by themselves that *they* may be repeated, *if* their context be neglected; and this is practically impossible in history, *i.e.*, in the case of concrete human facts.

V. But there are other propositions about human affairs which seem to attain a very high degree of universality, far beyond that of mere statements of fact and of empirical connections of fact, and some notice may be taken of these. Take, for instance, the 'law of the three stages,' that human progress is from the mythological, through the metaphysical, to the positive method of science and explanation, a statement which is often called a 'law.' It is clear that, in the most natural sense of this, the 'law' is as much a narrative judgment as any particular statement of historical fact, and can be stated thus: 'Human progress has been so, and has been found to be so.' But, again, it may be taken as a 'law' in the sense that 'human

progress must be so, or must have been so,' a judgment of systematic necessity, which, it is therefore implied, would be true for any 'humanity.' And why does this interpretation look absurd? Because only one side of the relation expressed in this judgment is really specified. We know what we mean by this kind of progress, but what do we mean by 'a humanity,' or humanity, in general? Something, surely, of inexhaustible complexity, composed of elements of varying importance for this predicate ('progress'), on whose relative importance we are not agreed. If this notion of 'humanity' were through and through comprehended and analysed, the fact of such a progress characterising such a complex would thereby be understood, its cause assigned, and the 'law' would be a judgment of necessity. But 'humanity' is inexhaustible (or at least unexhausted) in complexity, and our judgments about it are far from being scientific universals. This one example may serve, being a large one. Of course the mass of our judgments are of much narrower scope, and the possibilities of reaching truth much greater. But we can scarcely expect to exhaust the nature, and therefore the conditions, of any fact of human history, *e.g.*, the Ionian Philosophy, the economic state of the Middle Ages, the art of the Italian Renaissance, or (to return to Ethics) Greek morals, the compromise of the Early Church with the world, or any

particular case of modern moral reform. The facts of human history are there, largely opaque to us, and we can construct only too little on the basis of those facts.

VI. It seems, then, that a 'historical' science of Ethics can scarcely aim at 'laws,' whether of development or of static connection. But the same, or similar, aims may be otherwise expressed. The Hegelian, for example, may postulate the significance or universality of human moral history, in such a way that the particular connections of fact known to us must be supposed to have the value of scientific universals, as taking their place in a reproduction of the system of the categories. And it seems necessary to reply, in the first place, that of course we must postulate the necessity, and therefore the universality of the connections of fact in the real evolution itself, but that we cannot therefore assert the universality or necessity of our seeming knowledge of the evolution; and, secondly, that the development of the categories in history can, from the point of view of history itself, be a *mere* postulate, requiring empirical proof like any other law. Or, as Hegel himself says, Universal History must be examined as a particular case in which the theory (of the world's being constituted by reason and its categories) is to be confirmed or refuted.

It may seem that by these qualifications I have left myself no room for admitting that the historical

consideration of morals can have any results. But I think that if the claims of the historical method be more modestly stated—if, after failing to be other things, it confines itself to being History—there is still a sufficient sphere for it, namely, that of the genesis and development of particulars. If the method does not attempt to formulate 'laws,' but is content to narrate connections of fact at the first degree of remove from the mere datum (if there is any such datum apart from connections), then the understanding, the practical and theoretical control, of the particulars so connected may be greatly increased. In fact, it is arguable that it is only in so far as we remain at this level—the narrative of genesis and development—that we can be said properly to use a historical method at all. Otherwise, the Moral (or other) History is the datum, and the method pure scientific construction on that datum. Here the method and the datum are one. This conception, then, of the historical method (which I take to be essentially that put forth by Dewey), as facilitating our comprehension and command of particulars by a knowledge of their genesis, or rather, as I should say, of their development, seems to be the only one by which the value of that method, for Ethics, as for the other human or humane sciences, can be validated, if 'history' be taken at the level of the empirical knowledge we possess of it, and if, for the present, we leave

out of consideration the final question as to the relation of the method to judgments of value. The conception requires, however, more elaboration. If we take, for instance, the history of those virtues now generally classed together under some such name as Honour, and lay clear the course of their evolution, we may thereby attain a fuller insight into the significance in modern society of those virtues, and into their essential nature. Starting, thus, with the Hebraic eighth and ninth commandments, and the Hellenic conceptions of Veracity and Justice, we might consider the Christian combination, and consequent elevation, of the two, the mediaeval literal and rigorous, but narrow, understanding and acceptance of certain fundamental rules, the feudal ideals of chivalric and knightly honour, puritan and pietistic ideas of truthfulness and honesty, and the modern emphasis on commercial honour, consequent on the industrialism of modern civilisation. Such an application of historical method would give knowledge worth having, real insight. If it put modern Honour in line with Hellenic Justice, it would lead us to a better understanding of the part played by each, through comparison with some part more obviously played, under different circumstances, by the other. The value of the knowledge will not depend, as Dewey well insists, on the extent of the positive identity between the two. If the Hellenic ethical, *i.e.*, moral and social,

system differs from the modern as a whole, corresponding elements in the two systems will have implicated differences; and it will be from the differences, quite as much as from the identity, that we shall be able, when starting from the elements, to construct the systems as wholes.

As to the advantages, however, of going back to the beginnings of things, the earliest conjecturable stages of morals, I must confess myself somewhat sceptical, for these reasons:—(1) The fact whose primary genesis is thus traced has usually very little real identity with any facts of more advanced periods with which it could conceivably be compared, too little identity to serve as the basis of a fruitful comparison. Dewey's comparison of primitive customs of infanticide with a certain aspect of industrial civilisation, almost the only real instance that his papers contain, is itself sufficiently artificial to serve as a verification of this assertion. Another aspect of the same is, (2) that in primitive societies the conditions at work to produce facts, of whatever degree of similarity to modern ones, are often superseded in later days. In savage epochs, *e.g.*, it may be true that natural selection of societies is at work to a certain extent. The tribe that sinneth, it shall die; the group with a bad custom may be exterminated. But throughout the historical period this state of things is past. Ideals may change, but that is because the same

man or society more or less consciously changes it, not because the society with the lower ideal perishes. And, similarly, other conditions of the details of the ethical systems of societies do not survive into the historical epoch, and are for the most part, therefore, unknown to us. And so we come to the difficulty, mentioned by Sidgwick, that our knowledge of distant and early times is very really dependent on our knowledge of times nearer to us. We have, for one thing, direct record of historical facts, which supply us with a known and certain basis from which our constructions and inferences may proceed; but for prehistoric periods and societies we have to rely on inference from the beginning. And (which is the point) the principles and analogies by which we infer and construct in such cases must be entirely derived from our knowledge of general moral facts in periods with which we are more directly familiar. And, thus, consideration of *prehistoric* facts can scarcely be an application of historical method, since we do not interpret the present and that indefinite past in the light of each other, but confine ourselves to one side of this, and that the least instructive, namely, construing the unhistoric past in the light of the historic present.

In consequence, Ethics, *qua* historical, is concerned not so much with the genesis of morality from the non-moral — if such a genesis is even

conceivable *within* Ethics—as with the genesis of differences within morality, not with moral beginnings, but with moral development. And for this we can find the reason, that a pre-moral state is one which we cannot certainly construct for ourselves in imagination or conception as we construct other possibilities within morals. It is not an object of Ethical Science, and cannot, therefore, take a place in the historical development with which Ethics deal. The historical method, for Ethics, must start from the genesis, not take account of it, must consider the history of morals, not of something else which includes the beginning of morality as an event within it.

In this connection it is natural to touch on another point, *viz.*, the view which attributes a greater reality to the earliest moral phenomena, or even negates the reality of moral phenomena as such in favour of pre-moral and non-moral facts. This general view may receive various concrete fillings. It may be held, *e.g.*, that all action was originally selfish; and it may on this ground be further maintained that, somehow, all action is really selfish, though apparently not so. It is the same view which seems to show itself when Mill argues that all action is pleasure-seeking, and appears to find this consistent with the miser's seeking money for its own sake. Mill might, indeed, defend his position otherwise, but it seems impossible to validate it apart from some such assumption as the

present. But that assumption it is clearly not necessary to make. As has often enough been said, sometimes too flatly and with too little comprehension, the fact is what it is, whatever it has been preceded by; morality is none the less real, though it may have been preceded by, and evolved out of non-moral elements. Or, to put the reply otherwise, the preceding elements can be called properly 'non-moral' only by those who hold them apart and in abstraction from the result of their combination. The view we are considering looks upon the earlier fact, the pre-moral elements, as a substantive (if we may put it so), and yet forgets that substantives can only be defined in terms of adjectives—that this pre-moral substantive must essentially be defined and qualified, and therefore modified, by its relation to moral facts, by the adjective, namely, that in combination the non-moral elements had such a moral product, evolved into such a moral result. And, surely, a complete view will negate all such sharp divisions of phenomena as this into moral and non-moral, simply on the basis of the true evolutionary idea of the continuity of process in all phenomena.

This leads on to another imperfect view which may be more briefly dismissed. It is the counterpart of the view already mentioned, that the later is higher, essentially, than the earlier, and it presents itself in many forms, from the sentimentalist ideals of primitive societies, to scientific beliefs

that earlier morals are, as psychologically more real, so nearer also to moral reality than later. Perhaps something of the same view may be found in the proposal to consider morally valid only what is common to all moral codes, which might, on certain views, be taken to correspond pretty nearly to the ethical system of the first moral beings. But all of this is, of course, quite unwarranted, really requiring us to suppose a special agency at work at first and later exhausted, or quiescent at first and active later, to account for the difference. And such a supposition is quite contrary to any consistent view of evolution, however much it may claim connection with that standpoint. The process is one throughout.

Our empirical knowledge, then, and our insight into, and appreciation of, ethical facts, seem capable of advancement by means of the historical method, as we have here conceived it. But while this is so, there seems still to be room for a revival of another and most important question, important as one not yet even approximately settled. The knowledge we are supposed thus to attain is positive knowledge, and from that very fact it seems to be, strictly speaking, not moral knowledge. It is knowledge about the 'is,' not knowledge about the 'ought': this antithesis seems so far to remain unsolved. And whilst, as we have seen, it seems impossible to give any determination of values by pure thought

or universal *a priori* principles, the rationalist's method, it seems equally impossible to give any proof of the values of conduct from the facts of history, the empiricist's method; and so, it may seem impossible to give any such determination of values at all. In the abstract this is clear enough, and it has been said often enough. Let us consider a few ways that have been adopted of getting over the difficulty.

I. Clearly, if ethical history be all looked at in the light of the Utilitarian formula, that formula will remain at the end as the ultimate and unexplainable. If aspects of the moral evolution be appraised on the standard of 'greatest happiness,' that standard may seem proved by the evolution. Could we prove that every moral code has been of Utilitarian tendencies, we might represent ourselves as proving the validity of the Utilitarian criterion. Or rather—more strictly—*if* the human constitution were such that no act could be performed except *as* having utilitarian consequences, it would seem thereby to be made certain that no other ethical standard could be valid for men, though it would still be unproved that even the Utilitarian standard was so. But, as the human constitution is admittedly not so, even the exclusion of other criteria can only be the consequence of the (illegitimate) postulating of the Universal Hedonistic criterion from the first.

II. Similarly, if it be postulated that the criterion is something called social 'efficiency,' 'adjustment,' 'adaptation,' 'vitality,' 'health,' 'equilibrium,' the end of the historical inquiry will at least leave us with what we started with, and in addition some knowledge of how this end is to be reached, if any of these phrases really denotes a definite end which can be aimed at. But how, so far as such a definite social end is meant, one is to prove it to be the true end of conduct, from history as usually understood; or how, from such history, one is to prove that definite characteristic which all these criteria have in common—their social character, which Bradley, *e.g.*, denies—I know not.

III. We may, again, start with Green's obviously true proposition, that man has certain potentialities, and that his good activities from time to time are the realisation of these. And our danger here, though I do not mean to imply that Green himself fell into it, is of overlooking the fact that wrong action is comprehended under the same formula. If we neglect to notice this, we are apt to take it for granted that any course which moral evolution has taken at any period was the right course, and so to come again to the view that human history *must be* a progress. But, of course, we have no real reason, *a priori*, for thinking the historical choices of nations more likely to be right than the choices of individuals; if we do postulate this

providential rightness of choice, we are likely to be reduced to the point of treating the choice as its own justification, and a guarantee of the validity of the impulse to it; which in morals is Intuitionism, and in historical theory makes all judgments of comparative value arbitrary, unmotived, and unscientific.

IV. There are other dangers when we start with an inadequate formula, one which is, therefore, unable to supply itself with content. Alexander's formula of 'equilibrium' is, I think, an example of such; and here it is easy to slip into the view that since, as is true, all conduct, and all social orders, are in equilibrium — from the very fact of their existing—one kind of conduct or of state is as good as another, so that progress as distinguished from process becomes impossible. Comprehensiveness or extensiveness of the equilibrium may, of course, be taken, in such a theory, as the basis of comparative values, but even these seem to take us beyond the meagre notion of equilibrium as such.

In the light of these instances, and of our preceding remarks, we may say, in general, that on ordinary views one seems either (1) to start with no criterion and to end with none; or (2) to start with some assumed or postulated, but at all events unproved, definite criterion, and to end as one began; or (3) to start with an analytic proposition, or empty formula admitting of all

possible diverse fillings, and then, (*a*) either to make one's valuative judgments arbitrarily, or (*b*) to refuse to make them at all, either of which is, ultimately, the denial of the existence of a criterion, and therefore of value.

If, then, we put aside such views as partial, we seem brought face to face with the need of ourselves stating some tenable view of the nature or form of the criterion, in connection with which a view of the significance of historical method in Ethics may be developed. We have already said that lateness is not a sufficient guarantee of validity; ethical retrogression is possible. The criterion, then, cannot be merely the latest evolved moral and social system, *i.e.*, that in which we live. But when we seek to determine how any system in which we live can be, by us, theoretically condemned, in whole or in part, we must beware of taking up again that point of view already dismissed as inadequate — that of moral 'laws' as such. Of course, if there is to be any morality, there will have to be in some sense laws of morality, maxims, obedience to which is obligatory on the individual. But such laws are not adequate to the expression of moral good. As such, they do not find a place in the moral universe at all, but have to be transmuted, transcended in a higher standpoint. This may be stated as an opposition between formal and teleological Ethics, as Paulsen, *e.g.*, puts it. The law, the formal

maxim, has, transmuted, its place in the ethical system, but is not the whole of that system, nor its essential aspect. Our view, at once of the moral criterion and of moral evolution, is, then, to be dominated rather by the idea of system than of law. The morality of any place and period is a systematic whole, an ethical (*i.e.* a moral and social) system ; and the criterion of validity in Ethics is to be a criterion applicable to systems rather than to laws.

When I speak of taking up this view of system from the beginning of all historical inquiries, I must not be taken as meaning that some specific moral criterion is right, and therefore may be adopted, while those other views, of 'social vitality, 'general happiness,' etc., are wrong, and may not. The point is that, so long as any criterion remains at the standpoint of 'law,' it cannot be validated, either by history or by demonstration, and so cannot make real use of the historical method : for these purposes it must be taken at the level of system, and it is this general and formal characteristic, which must be borne by all theories, that the formula I here use is designed to indicate. For ethical system is not itself, directly, an ideal, but only the general form of all ideals, a schema left to receive *some* concrete filling, which may be essentially identical with the content of any of those rejected legal conceptions, and may be supplied, I believe, through a certain kind of

historical consideration, which is at the same time demonstrative.

How, then, is this validation of a system possible? Validity is, of course, equivalent to rationality, and we have found it impossible to demonstrate, to exhibit, the rationality of a law: can we do so for a system?

(*A*) Kant, in whom the legalistic or formal view of Ethics is consummated, has often been proved to have made the only criterion of a law, in effect, its consistency with itself, its non-contradiction; and I think it clear, both that no other criterion of a law can be offered, and that this is insufficient. But if we transfer even this criterion to system, we seem to find a difference. The theory of knowledge seems ultimately to hold that the criterion of the truth of any new judgment is simply its consistency with the system of truth already accepted, and that the only possible criterion of the system of truth as a whole is its consistency with itself, its exclusion of contradiction. And this, if we may argue by analogy, seems to be a first indication that the test of consistency may be of more value in the case of a view of morality as system than in the other view of it as law. Consistency, of course, must be taken in Ethics, as in Metaphysics, in its strict and absolute sense, in which even a concept of pure understanding, for example, or a pure form of sense, may be shown, when taken by itself and carried to its logical extreme, to

involve a contradiction which is implicit in its nature.

(*B*) We must, in the second place, view all human sensibility and choice as the construction of an ethical (a moral and social) system, in which man 'finds himself'; which, by the fact of his response to it, he judges to be suitable to himself, to respond to his nature.

(*C*) Any system so constructed by human volition can be binding, obligatory on the wills of individuals, only so far (we have already seen) as it is in some sense rational. But of rationality we have in a moral and social, as in an intellectual, system, no external test. And as, in the latter, consistency or non-contradiction, 'harmony,' 'comprehensiveness or inclusiveness,' or, as Bradley expresses all these in another formula, 'individuality,' is the only possible internal test, so it seems it must be with the former, the ethical construction. And, consequently, it is open to us to interpret many of the shorthand formulae of ethical thinkers as so many expressions of the various modes in which this abstract rationality of consistency concretely shows itself. Thus, for instance, with reference to the individual, we have the norm of conduct defined, in increasing degrees of isolation from the true source of obligation, as rational action or rationalisation of sensibility; choice of the proper, or fitting, amount, choice of a mean relative to us (both in Aristotle); equili-

brium of conduct (Alexander); personality ('Be a person'); harmony or individuality of character (Bradley). With reference to society, the norm is defined as social equilibrium, social vitality, social adaptation, social adjustment, none of which, I believe, can be really thought out without involving some idea of a right proportion of elements—a choice of neither too little nor too much, to use an old suggestive phrase—which brings us back once more to rationality as criterion, which brings us, in turn, to systematic consistency.

Nothing, it seems to me, could be more disastrous than to represent these various formulae as conflicting, discrepant, mutually exclusive. They are all, fundamentally, expressions of various sides or aspects of the one ideal, which derives the obligatoriness, which it imparts to them, from the fact of its being the rational in relation to us. And it is only less harmful that any one of these formulae should be unduly exalted and worshipped, as, *e.g.*, Alexander tries to exalt his formula, to the oblivion of the all-important point that it is nothing unless it makes concrete the ideal of rationality. Take 'equilibrium,' for example, and examine it to see what worth it has, if taken to be more than a formula, and an inadequate formula. Surely it is obvious that any sort of conduct, bad as well as good, is in a sort of equilibrium as making allowance, in some proportion, for the various wants of man, and that any sort of social order is in a sort

of equilibrium for the same reason. But for the concrete work of determining in what proportions such allowance is rational, or of comparing different states of such equilibrium as to their relative value, the formula of 'equilibrium' as such, and while it stays within its own limits, is useless, and shows up plainly as a *mere* formula. Aristotle's formula for good conduct, and still more Plato's, derive all their value—when once they have been acknowledged to be, as formulae, inadequate—from their close connection with the keen analysis by each of these thinkers of the whole moral and social system. Formulae like that of Alexander are practically valueless in so far as they are not so connected, and do not naturally lend themselves to such a connection.

From these implications of the idea of a consistent, and so rational, system we may return to consider directly the value of History to ethical theory and practice. Men now are confronted with the same problem which man in all ages has had to face; they have to create, or at least to maintain and gradually to remodel, a moral and social system in which they may find their true selves, and so be truly satisfied; they have to posit in and out of themselves an ethical order which shall be rational, in the sense of appropriate, harmonious, individual, and, ultimately, consistent, and comprehensive or exhaustive, as including all its relations within it, and so, once

more, being consistent; and this is what all men have been doing since the world began. Now, so far as we are shut in to the present, we are prejudiced, neglect possible alternatives to what comes naturally to us; we lack the material of criticism, either (*a*) by not being aware of alternatives, never having conceived them, or (*b*) by not understanding and appreciating them aright. And this is a defect both in moral practice and in ethical theory. It was through such a narrowness of outlook, both geographical and historical, we may say, that Aristotle was led to justify slavery in theory, just as it led his countrymen to be slaveholders in practice. Aristotle and his countrymen did not appreciate or understand—were not, we may in a very real sense say, aware of, or were blind to—the possibility of any life system outside of the free corporate life of the city-state, and deemed it 'natural' that the alien should be taken from the life-system he shared to serve them, thinking it no loss to him. But modern Europe, with better appreciation of the cosmopolitanism of history, can scarcely persuade itself to reduce black or yellow to practical slavery; Europe is conscious of the numerous possibilities of ethical type, and conscious also of its own savage ancestry. And so, in less momentous cases, knowledge of moral history may mean insight into moral values through the consciousness of alternatives to which the unenlightened mind is blind,

and the consequent capacity of criticism. The ethical thinker, similarly, who in some ways is but the moral man sublimated, receives from historic studies a fuller understanding, a more adequate power of evaluation, of ethical phenomena.

Or, more abstractly, we may formulate the position thus. The moral criterion is not the abstract non-contradiction of a single proposition, or 'law,' which may thereby be set up to preside and keep state in blank universality over the particular acts of men. It is a concrete consistency—non-contradiction on a higher level—which involves the inclusion of all relations within it, and so implies the greatest possible comprehensiveness, or exhaustiveness, the allowing and accounting for all imperfect and one-sided views. And, just as systems of truth are tested, often, rather by neglect of aspects than by positive error, so ethical systems may most easily be judged, in the first place, as failing in comprehensiveness. The system lacks in consistency, in internal harmony, what it lacks in comprehensiveness. And from this arises the value of history to the student of ethical system. One historical system may contain an aspect which others omit, or omit an aspect others allow for. And if the student really knows moral and social systems other than that which he lives in, and the points in which they differ, he will be at last supplied with a datum which is at the same time a criterion, on which he will be able

to make real estimates of value. And this datum-criterion can be derived nowhence else. The claim of an aspect or element to be included in a thoroughly exhaustive system can be but this, that it has found a place in some imperfect life-system, even though such imperfect system be at the level of what we should judge mere sensibility. Further to define this method would take me too far. Some additional characteristics and consequences may, however, be given.

(1.) Ethical systems, in the secondary sense of theories about morality and society, find a place in this historical datum and method, along with the various actual moral and social orders. Thus, Plato's ideal of the Republic, and of perfect virtue, the construction in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*, have a high significance for the historical method because of their completeness. And it is because the writings of most modern moralists fail in this that they lack this historical value. They do not give really systematic constructions; their principles are usually too detached, too little coherent with one another, their outlook on life too narrow or too sophisticated, to be adequate to any actual moral or social system. The chief value of such theories is often to serve as representative of some aspect of the actual system in which they are produced. Just because the theoretic insight of man is limited, systems conceived by one man are more likely to be one-sided

than systems built up by the living of a whole society. But such theoretical systems are of course through and through influenced by, and dependent on, the ethical conditions of their place and time, and must be understood in the light of them, and complemented by sides of that reality which they neglect.

(2.) It follows directly from our description of the true method that, as there can be no external, but only an internal, test of the validity of systems, so there can be no external method of supplying aspects which a complete system must not neglect. All our knowledge of such aspects must be gathered from the various systems themselves, and the exhaustiveness, and therefore the consistency, of one, can only be decided upon in the light of a consideration of the others. Thus the method of Ethics is an *immanent criticism* of systems, a criticism, that is, which does not go, for a criterion of systems, beyond all systems—for there is no ethical knowledge, datum or construction, beyond all systems—but stays within the limits of the historical evolution, to criticise system by system, and part by part. And, as the principle of this criticism can only be consistency, the method of Ethics is dialectical in that sense. A system can be refuted only by being shown to involve, in one part, principles which it elsewhere negates, or to imply a self-contradictory conception. Thus, Aristotle criticises Plato's social con-

struction dialectically when he says that it involves at once the conflicting ideas of blank unity, and of the organic unity of differently functioning members —if we may represent his argument so—or that, while its end is a strong mutual affection of all members of the state, its means involve the destruction of the intensest affections and the substitution of a general watery sentiment. In the former of these examples, again, a more fundamental case of dialectical refutation seems to be involved, namely, that the conception of mere unity is, as in Metaphysics, so in Ethics, contradictory. This dialectical method, made at once more subtle and more comprehensive, is the method of Ethics.

(3.) It may seem, indeed, that, by this emphasis on self-consistency, there is neglected a distinction which would supply in a different way, a criterion of morals, *viz.*, that between sensibility, as such, and moral construction as such. Here sensibility in a limited sense is regarded as ultimate, and the province of ethical construction is looked on as the building of a system in which these ultimate sensibilities may attain equilibrium, proportion, a mean state, harmony. But such a construction may, or even must, be an object for sensibility; thus, those elements of sensibility called moral sense, conscience, conscientiousness, morality (subjective), sociality, ethicality, even sympathy — unless this

be regarded as ultimate — seem to be on a different level from the primary sensibilities, and seem therefore to be left out of account in the primary construction. This is the first objection to such a theory. Many readers of Stephen's *Science of Ethics* must have felt some perplexity, when a new feature of sensibility, *e.g.*, the conscience, appeared, as to how it was to be disposed of. And there is the same source for the confusion besetting Mill's proposal to treat the individual, in the first place, apart from his society. Of course, the individual has a certain sensibility by himself; but it always seems to be implied that the social sensibilities are less real than others, and not data for the moral and social construction in the same sense as they. Now, if we had such a primary and ultimate sensibility, we should have an external datum of some sort which every construction would have to include, a criterion, therefore, external to every mere construction, and prescribing the limits, and therefore to a large extent the nature, of every construction. We might, *e.g.*, have ten or twelve fundamental wants, and the criterion might be the mean of each of these, or the equilibrium of all. But then, as already said, such constructions cannot take account of all sensibility, but leave out the moral and social sentiments on one side, and cruelty, for example, on the other. The good character does not, *e.g.*, possess an equilibrium between the

moral sentiments and cruelty, nor does the good will choose a mean amount of conscientiousness. Morality, then, seems not to be a construction qualitatively different from its datum, sensibility, *since there are moral sensibilities*, but is qualitatively identical with the datum, and the datum with the construction. 'The form of all consciousness is judgment'; *i.e.*, the lowest element of sensibility is a construction, differing from moral volition of the highest kind as the one-sided and self-transcendent from the comprehensive and self-consistent. Thus sensibility becomes, not an external thing which must be allowed for, but an element in the total construction itself, which must justify for itself that place by the same criterion as other elements, consistency with self and with the whole system. Thus, in brief (*a*) primitive morality, once more, cannot be ranked higher, on this ground, than later; one is as much construction as the other; and (*b*) the criterion of comprehensiveness cannot be interpreted in this external way. It has more analogies with Stephen's saying that the true view must not only refute, but allow for and account for, imperfect views. It would be a poor metaphysical theory that had to deny the reality of error; and similarly the perfect ethical system must include and perfect all imperfect ones. The aspect of comprehensiveness, we might say, corresponds to the empirical, the aspect of consistency to the rationalistic

moment of the true method, and each aspect, rightly understood, is involved in the other.

As to this consistency, finally, about which I may seem to have talked too much and said too little, it is of course difficult exactly to define it without developing a system of philosophy. For practical purposes it will exhibit itself in a manner comparable to an aesthetic intuition. For purposes of all theory, other than ultimate theory, harmony and individuality, as we have said, will be the *media axiomata* which will serve as criteria. Ultimately, I conceive, we have grounds for believing that only certain forms of Being, of relation, and of system, or only one form, can be self-consistent, and such a form, if any, must be found for the ethical system, if ethicality is to be adequate to the Absolute. All this may seem a digression from the question of the historical method, and is yet, I think, necessary for the full explication of the part I conceive that method to play in ethics. Meagrely, or even strictly, conceived, it is not adequate to the science of morals. But, broadly taken, it is an essential aspect of the critical, or dialectical, or speculative, method of Ethics, supplying all the real matter, or material, as we may relatively call it, for that criticism, or immanent dialectic, which, as the true method of Ethics, is the truth of, and takes up into a higher synthesis, the two imperfect and inadequate methods,

the empirical and historical, on the one side, and the rationalistic and demonstrative on the other. And the further one stops short of that absolute science which is the aim of all knowledge, of the more value, I opine, will be the help that History affords. Practical thought, opinion as distinguished from science, works with intuitions; and there is nothing to produce intuitions but History.

THE ABSOLUTE AND 'INTELLECT'

'NOTHING'—so says Spinoza—'is more clearly perceived than the very act of understanding; for we cannot perceive anything without adding to our knowledge of the act of understanding.'

Such a statement, indeed, may be taken as involving the at least disputed point whether it is true that we cannot be conscious without being conscious that we are conscious, cannot know without knowing that we know. But, apart from this, it at least affirms definitely, what we must start from, that understanding or intellect—two terms sadly out of fashion—is a fact of our finite experience. As an empirical fact, it is or exists. But, although existent, it may not be —in Bradley's sense—real; may not, as such, be predicable of Reality; or, as we say nowadays, may not be attributable to the Absolute.

The alternative possibilities excluding such predication are capable of expressions as numerous as metaphysical theories; for convenience we may dichotomise. First: Intellect may not be predicable of the Real *universally*, as when, for instance, the Absolute is taken as a World or a Nature in the ordinary sense of these words, or as

God *and* the World (in Deism), or as, say, a Society of Spirits. In this case, one element or many (even all) elements in the Real may have intellect truly predicated of them, but not the totality.

Second: Intellect may be predicated of the Real, but not absolutely, not as such. This view —which, I suppose, it would be correct to attribute to Bradley, and, in some sense, to Spinoza also— holds that the Absolute is a unitary experience (or, in the case of Spinoza, possesses such an experience as one aspect of its being), but that this experience transcends intellect, contains it only as transmuted into something that is not intellect. The first of these two denials of intellect to the Absolute we may formulate:—intellect is not predicable of Reality *as such*; the second:— intellect *as such* is not predicable of Reality; though, of course, it is not necessary to maintain that the distinction between the two is an absolute one.

The question involves numerous difficult and disputed questions as to the nature of that intellect we are to affirm or deny of the absolute Reality. Spinoza himself, though, in the *Ethics* (I. xvii., note) he says, 'Neither intellect nor will pertains to the nature of God' (ad Dei naturam neque intellectum neque voluntatem pertinere), elsewhere speaks regularly of the intellect of God. His object here is to bring out a view to which Bradley's is comparable, that the intellect we

can attribute to the Absolute is *toto caelo* different from the intellect we find in finite experience. As he puts it, further on in the same note :—'If intellect and will appertain to the eternal essence of God, we must take these words in some signification quite different from those they usually bear. For the intellect and will, which should constitute the essence of God, would perforce be as far apart as the poles from the human intellect and will, in fact, would have nothing in common with them but the name.'

Why, if the difference be so essential as this extreme and emphatic statement represents, even the name should be the same in the two cases, is not explained ; but it is easy to see the naturalness of Spinoza's trying to make the distinction as sharp as possible. 'The intellect in function,' he says (I. xxxi.), 'whether finite or infinite, must be referred to *natura naturata*, not to *natura naturans*.' This brings his distinction between the two kinds of intellect into line with another of his distinctions — that between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*. By the former, in which intellect in function is now included, Spinoza defines himself to mean 'all that which *follows* from the necessity of the nature of God, or of any of the attributes of God, *i.e.*, all the modes of the attributes of God, in so far as they are considered as things which are in God and which without God cannot exist or be conceived.' And

it is clear, also, that the intellect of God is to be placed, as distinguished from intellect in function (*intellectus actu*), in the antithetic class, *natura naturans*. For by the latter we mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself, or, the attributes of substance which express eternal and infinite essence, in other words, God, in so far as he is considered as a free cause. And 'the intellect of God,' it is similarly said (in the note to prop. xvii.), 'in so far as it is conceived to constitute God's essence, is, in reality, the cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence.'

The distinction, between intellect absolute and intellect finite, is thus, for Spinoza, the same as that between God and the World, between substance with its abstract attributes on the one hand, and the infinity of particular modes, which are to be subsumed under those attributes, on the other; it is on a level with that between extension and the modes of extension which together make the world in space, which, as Spinoza himself declares (Letter 72), cannot be deduced from the attribute of extension. The problem of the absolute intellect seems thus to be identified with the most general problem of Spinoza's system, *viz.*, how that abstractly indeterminate substance — indeterminate because purely positive, while all determination is negation—can, I do not say *explain* the world, but even allow of the existence of a multitude of finite things, modifica-

tions of itself. The intellect as universal seems to have only a negative relation to the intellect as particular, to particular intellects and acts of intellect, and such a negative relation—a relation of mere exclusion—cannot be the end of the matter. For the universal intellect cannot but be defined even by such a relation to the particulars from which it is differentiated; cannot even be so differentiated from them except on the basis of some identity with them. There could be no reason for speaking of an absolute intellect unless what were meant by the term had something in common with what we know as intellect in our finite experience.

Or, again, however we emphasise the distinction Spinoza expresses in the words, 'The intellect of God in so far as it is conceived to constitute God's essence,' we must nevertheless remember that the finite, conditioned world cannot be conceived except as, in some sense, constituting God's essence; every mode follows as necessarily from, and, therefore, is as necessary to, the Absolute as any other similarly finite and conditioned mode. If, therefore, the absolute intellect is to be conceived as more especially constituting the divine essence, it may be interpreted, according to the usual ambiguity of Spinoza's system, either as the abstract, universal unity, under which the finite modes can only be subsumed, or as the concrete, individual totality, in which every finite

mode has its place. And these two interpretations may perhaps be taken to correspond to the two views here possible (alternatively) as to an absolute Intellect. If the former be chosen, then, indeed, by abstracting from all the finite modes of intellect we may arrive at something to which the name of intellect must be given, but which, if supposed actual, must be *toto genere* different from those finite modes; but if the latter, the result we arrive at is, *prima facie* at least, the existence of an intellect more perfect indeed than ours (the finite modes), but more perfect *in the same kind*; an absolute intellect which is the systematic unity of the finite modes of our experience, and which may, therefore, be in large measure beyond our present knowledge, but, as containing or including elements we do know, cannot be supposed, as a whole, altogether unknowable, but only in large measure unknown.

Spinoza, however, does not offer much opportunity for a discussion of the question here actually at issue. That involves, ultimately, perhaps, the whole problem of knowledge, and, directly, at least a fuller discussion of the nature of intellect itself, to which, accordingly, we now turn. The question seems mainly this—how broadly we may, how narrowly we must, take the term for our present purpose.

Intellect is, in general, taken to be the faculty by which we think, and thought may be taken as

exhausted by conception, judgment, and inference. But, of course, this 'faculty' is not something separate; thought cannot be taken as a part, merely, of our conscious life, but must be viewed as one aspect of all experience. And, in this way, the thought-aspect comes to be opposed to the feeling-aspect, intellect to feeling, taken, in the first instance, mainly as sensation. But, of course, when we consider the constituents of the ideational continuum — our 'ideas,' in the narrower sense of fainter images which are the vehicle of thought—it is plain that, as psychical existences, they are on exactly the same level, are as truly feelings as 'sensations' pure and simple, from which they are distinguished, as Hume said, only by their smaller intensity. The element immediately characterising the feeling-side of our consciousness is quality; sentience, as such, is a play of mere sense qualities. And equally characteristic of the thought-aspect is that to which it has been endeavoured to reduce all thought, *viz.*, relation; 'relational thinking' and 'the relating activity of mind' are phrases which indicate this characteristic.

The view of the duality of the mind in knowledge is, of course, old, even in the more special form which is expressed in the antithesis of quality and relation. For this antithesis is expressed with sufficient clearness in Plato's *Philebus*. There 'all existing things' are divided into four new

classes, *i.e.*, four new categories are selected for use. The first of these is ἀπειρία or τὸ ἄπειρον, the infinite, unlimited, indefinite, or indeterminate. The example given is heat, in general, as admitting of varying degrees, but not limited to any one of them, thus indicating that the class is to be understood as quality. The second is τὸ πέρας, 'limit,' the determining element; the examples given are quantitative ratios, like equal or double, 'which cannot exist in a greater or less degree.' The emphasis, however, seems to rest not on their quantitative character—which probably is due only to Plato's mathematical bent and the facility of the instance—but on their being examples of definite relations. The third class is formed by combination of the first and second, *i.e.*, by the introduction of definite relations into the sphere of given qualities. It includes such things as health, music or harmony, fine weather, and, finally, the 'mixed life' (which is the best life for men), all of them, it is to be noted, good things, 'the delights of life.' That is to say, partly perhaps owing to his main subject here being ethical, but partly for deeper reasons, Plato regards the introduction of relations into indefinite qualities as the condition of all that is good (and, therefore, one would naturally be led to suppose, of knowledge), while at the same time it is the condition of all real existences, since the third class is the only one of the four into which these can fall.

As for the fourth class, in which 'mind' is placed alone, it is defined as 'the cause of the mixture.' It would be rather difficult to see the reason for such a 'cause' apart from the elements which combine; but the placing of 'mind' under this denomination seems to suggest that it is the 'cause' only in the sense that those elements are aspects abstracted from it, and that their 'combination' only realises what is implicit in their original unity. Thus we arrive at a sort of idealism, in which quality and relation are the constituent elements of the world of things, 'sense' and 'thought' the complementary aspects of the absolute mind.

There is, however, in the suggestion that, though *our* mind (used as equivalent to knowledge, the thought-side) is not the good, absolute mind may be, a hint that the absolute mind may, according to the ideal of later idealism in Green, be a purely relational thought, to the *exclusion* of sense qualities. And this leads us back to our discussion of the difference and distinctions of the two elements.

If we compare and contrast the two, we note that qualities of sense are *in* the mind; relations can only be *meant by* it; sensation is immediate presence to the mind; the object of thought is only 'intended.' And at this point we are brought into line with a number of other parallel distinctions. One of these is the old distinction of particular and universal:—what is in the mind can only be particular, a single, fixed unit of

sentience, a sole 'idea' or image; but what is meant by the mind is a universal, which can be said to be 'in the mind' only in a different sense from that in which the sensation is so. This is the same distinction as that between perception and conception, to use the Kantian antithesis. Or, again (in a different sense of perception), it is comparable to the distinction between the perception and the percept, as object perceived. Here the distinction presents itself in the form of that contradiction, noted by Ward, between the two chiefs of the Scottish school, Reid and Hamilton. 'Ten men looking at the moon all see the same moon,' says one; 'All see different moons,' says the other: and the difficulty of course is that, though we must say that in some sense they all see the same moon, we yet cannot explain this from the psychical state of the different individuals. In the same way, the totality of all objects, *i.e.*, the world, however immediately, when we simply look at it, it may thrust itself upon us, yet involves relations in its constitution, and so cannot be in our minds in the same sense as a particular sense quality. And, finally, this is the distinction implied in Mr. Bradley's phrases, such as content 'working loose' from existence, *i.e.*, 'meaning' from quality.

The thing-thought-about, then, is not *in consciousness*, in a sense; and the thought-about-the-thing, we have to add, so far as it is in con-

sciousness, is merely a sensation, an image, an idea (and these properly do not belong to thought at all, but to sense). This position, which, *taken by itself*, is the result of Sensationalism, is easily verifiable. For we cannot look, say, on a judgment, nor, so far as they are distinctively acts of thought, on a concept or an inference, as a psychosis. My judgment or thought about a certain thing is, psychically, merely an image of it; if I think of it as in a definite position, all that is added is a cephalic sensation, say a movement of the eyeball in that direction. And such sensations are certainly not judgment, nor conception. Just as Hume could find no Ego by introspection, just as Professor James can find no 'activity' by that means (he even includes affirmation in the list of activities he found to be no activities but merely cephalic movements), so one is certain not to find a judgment, or, more widely, a meaning of any kind in the mind by introspection. All one can so find are particular psychoses, which, just because they are such, are neither 'judgments' nor 'meanings.' And in the same way, when Professor James analyses what he calls 'the Emotion of Belief,' one is immediately certain that this cannot be belief in the sense in which it is identical with judgment. Introspection will carry us so far as the analysing of these things into 'sensations' or 'feelings'; but it will carry us no further; it will not reveal that on account of which

we term some things true and others false; it will not carry us to a 'meaning,' a 'thought of a relation,' a 'reference to an object.'

That is to say, by this mode of inquiry we never reach 'intellect' or 'thought' at all, and, if we confine ourselves to this, we are logically forced to the denial of its reality even finitely. And this, it seems, can scarcely be the whole truth, for the possibility of truth contradicts it. Judgment, as indicated by its occupying the place of chief importance in modern logic, supplies us with the crux of the question, and we certainly seem entitled to postulate or take for granted, that we do judge; the reality of conception and inference as acts of knowledge seems, at first sight, to be implicated with that of judgment. Bradley feels himself entitled to start from the position that we judge, *i.e.*, that some statements are true, and some false; and what he thinks it necessary to say, every one else, whether justifiably on his own principles or not, assumes.

But yet the insufficiency of this mode of explaining knowledge does not guarantee the correctness of what may perhaps be fairly taken as its opposite, the purely Rationalistic view, which makes it proceed by analysis of concepts. For, allowing it for the moment the possession of concepts, this view cannot explain judgment, except either as the mere analysis of a given concept, which is not properly judgment at all, but much

more truly an essential of conception; or, if it admits any other sort, regards such judgment as the mere *external* attribution of predicates, which has the fault (for which, under the name of the Judgment of Reflection, it is condemned by Hegel) of never possibly exhausting the subject, but always leaving it, ultimately, unknowable, the basis for agnosticism and the thing-in-itself. Similarly, on this view there can be no real inference. And, finally, the adoption of this view brings us back in the end to the need for sentient experience even for conception. For (1) general concepts of qualities must primarily be so derived; and (2), once derived, they cannot be re-thought as conceptions, without some faint image and therefore sentient experience of the qualities themselves. This is simply an application of the well-known fact that all thinking is accompanied by a train of images, taken to mean, as it must, that thought, as we understand it, depends on accompanying sentiency, in the form of images of not more than a certain degree of irrelevancy. (3) Concepts of relation cannot be attained except as dependent on qualities, seeing that relations are not self-existent, but can *be* only as subsisting between what are not mere relations, *viz.*, in this case, qualities. (4) These relational concepts, even when so attained, cannot, more than others, be re-thought without accompanying sentience. And (5), and

perhaps most important, is the objection that, while it fails to explain the 'empirical' concepts (of qualities) which the opposing theory does in a way explain, it shares with that theory its inability to explain, or give any account of, those concepts of relation (or 'pure' concepts) which it uses—a difficulty perhaps the chief of those which any theory of cognition has to encounter.

While then, of the two theories, first, that judgment is nothing distinguishable from the particular feeling, and second, that it consists in analysis of concepts, thinking in the predicate part of what is already thought in the subject, the former severs sense, the latter thought, and each uses its selected element in abstraction, the true theory, it would seem, must keep them together, and in thus keeping them together find its salvation. Judgment, such as can be true or false, cannot be, as on the one theory it would be, mere feeling, nor, as on the other, mere tautology, and so neither theory explains it, nor, consequently, conception and inference, whose fate is bound up with that of judgment. And yet, as one of those theories reduces judgment to conception in the sense of image-thinking or ideation, and the other reduces it to conception in the sense of mere analytic thinking, so the true view may find the essence of judgment to lie in conception taken in its proper sense of thinking together, or together-thinking. The sense quality, as imme-

diately existent, is not thereby predicated of reality. This predication can only be taken as constituted by the thinking of the quality so given into a context of related qualities, a system to which both quality and relation, and therefore both sense and thought, must be taken as essential. The essence of knowledge, therefore, must be found to lie in the unity of consciousness which makes the 'thinking-together' of things possible, and it is by this unity of consciousness that our ideas of relation, the possibility of the existence of objects for us, and even, more generally still, the possibility of our having meanings beyond the particular presentations of sense, must be explained, as, by this means, Green tried to explain them.

It is, then, so far as they are grasped by the unity of consciousness, and so thought into a system of related elements, that the mere qualities given by sentience are elements in a knowledge; and, so far, the mere presentation of a sense quality is implicitly, or potentially an act of knowledge, since it is the first step to the thinking of that quality in relation to others. In this sense judgment is the form of all consciousness; *i.e.*, the quality presented is, *ipso facto*, taken up into the unity which constitutes knowledge. And thus we can regard even sentience as an act of knowledge, by anticipation of the possibilities latent in it; and, of course, it is only in the light of the realisa-

tion of such possibilities that we can judge—as all schools admit we safely may—that such a quality, *qua* presented, *is*, or exists. In its immediate existence, however, the feeling is a much more primitive act of knowledge than those of developed thought. The 'assertion,' as Hobhouse calls it, cannot, of course, be represented as knowledge at all except by being represented as a judgment, a predication of reality, a statement that something is true. But this judgment cannot be said to be, let us say, 'redness is'—for the existential judgment is too developed and reflective a form correctly to represent so low a stage—but rather 'Reality ("the Real," "x") is red(ness)'; that is to say, what we have is an immediate qualification of reality by the given. To awakening consciousness the world is just this chaotic, confused, presented blur. Bradley's contention that all such 'judgments,' and those on the next stage, 'analytic judgments of sense,' are all *false*, follows at once, and is well exemplified in such an instance. Into this mere 'infinite, 'indefinite,' 'indeterminate' quality, to follow Plato, 'limit,' *i.e.* relation, has to be introduced for the attainment of truth; and indeed the falsity of such 'sense-judgments' may be taken as the ground of, and occasion for, relational thinking. 'The relational form,' as Bradley says, 'is a compromise on which thought stands, and which it develops. It is an attempt to unite differences which have

broken out of the felt totality. Differences forced together by an underlying identity, and a compromise between the plurality and the unity—this is the essence of relation.'

At the lower level, then, and right through knowledge, there are the two aspects of thought and sense, conception and perception, relation and quality. 'Right through,' I say, because, as we have seen, we can *think* neither quality nor relation without an image of some sort, some corresponding sentiency from which the pure thought-content may work loose. And this is a fact from which it seems impossible that we should free ourselves. Even the ideal of knowledge, so far as we can conceive it, seems not to have got beyond involving the same two aspects; and if knowledge, in any sense in which we can understand it, or even what we call thought or intellect, is to be predicable of the Absolute, it must be a thought which at the same time is a sentient experience. Even the purest of all pure thoughts, 'I am I,' means nothing to us thinking it except as we at the same time feel.

Knowledge, then, is the relational thinking of qualities, to which both sense, and intellect in the narrow sense, are essential; and judgment is the thinking of a new characteristic (a quality, or a system of qualities) into a place in the system of knowledge so formed. For this, I think, is a point of view which must be taken as a corrective

to the necessary, but, after all, somewhat external view of judgment as 'reference to reality' simply, as Bradley often puts it. He often amplifies this, it is true, by the addition:—'to the reality given in sense'; but even this requires to be supplemented; for the reality is given not merely in sense but also in the construction within, and on the basis of, sense which is our thought, and, therefore, in the whole system of our knowledge. This point of view, I say, must be kept well in mind, for, if we forget it, our phrase 'reference to reality' tends to have for its import a somewhat external predication which cannot *exhaust* the reality it refers to, but always leaves an unknown somewhat in it; because this reality is, before predication, a mere x, so, it comes to seem, it must be, after it. But the reality to which every judgment refers is not thus external, is not, properly, a beyond or an other to knowledge at all, but is just the concrete system of the related qualities which we have already thought, and of those which, consistently with the existent system, we may think.

From this standpoint the view of judgment as a synthesis has a greater relative truth than that which expresses it (merely) as reference to reality. For, just in so far as we do judge, and are able to do so, both the reality referred to and the predicate referred are within our grasp, and it is the thinking of the predicate into definite

relation with remaining reality as similarly constituted that constitutes the essence of judgment.

The same outlook may be conveyed otherwise, as, *e.g.*, in the statement that concepts are the *end* of science, and so the concept is more ultimate than the judgment. Or we may put it in the form of a criticism of the self-consistency of the three forms of knowledge (concept, judgment, inference) when each of these in turn is supposed the Absolute. In such a criticism it might be pointed out: First, that inference could not be supposed the form of this absolute knowledge in the (usual) sense of a passing from point to point by links of necessary connection, for such a transition would be a limitation of what has been supposed absolute, but only in the sense of the known presence of such necessary connections in the present whole. For inference, then, as it is loosely conceived, there would be substituted hypothetical and disjunctive judgment, and these would be seen to be the essence (as they are the end) of all inference. But, again, judgment cannot, in this limiting case, be conceived as a 'reference to reality,' to an 'other' or 'beyond,' for there is, by hypothesis, no reality beyond the knowledge itself, and, if we press the idea home, it can come to mean nothing more than a meaningless positing of the whole content of the knowledge. I say 'meaningless,' for such positing, as it adds nothing to the content, corresponds to no

clear idea in our minds, and can finally be taken to mean nothing more than the existence of the knowledge itself. We thus come to taking, as Plato did, the concept, or Idea, as the form of this absolute knowledge, and, rightly understood, conception seems clearly to include the essential features of both judgment and inference, in the reference of every element to the whole, and the connection of element with element within the whole.

Such a discussion of the relative consistency of the different forms of knowledge is, of course, only relevant as bearing on the possibility of the Absolute having intellect predicated of it, and in what form. In this connection may therefore be considered the question: In what sense, given a knowledge as the Absolute, can personality be predicated of it? It is easy to say, on the one hand, that it is mere prejudice which keeps us from thinking a knowledge which is not the knowledge of any one, and equally easy, on the other hand, to say that it is inherently impossible to think a knowledge which is not the knowledge of any one, or of any subject, or 'of any person.' And such opposing dogmatisms might fight for ever without coming to any agreement. But the essence seems to be relevant here. The difficulty is that, if knowledge has to be the knowledge of some one, then knowledge cannot be the Absolute, for the subject or person whose knowledge it was

would still be outside it, while, on the other hand, the denial that the Absolute is knowledge may appear essential to the assertion of an absolute subject of knowledge, an absolute person. And this seems to be an inadequate way of looking at the problem. For the subject of knowledge is not a soul-unit outside of the knowledge and, somehow, appropriating it, but the very form of the knowledge, the unity of consciousness or 'synthetic unity of apperception' which reflective analysis shows us, or may show us, to be an essential element in the description of knowledge. Just so, the doctrine that all consciousness is self-consciousness, the consciousness of a self, may be taken in a one-sided way, so as to exclude (as Ward excludes Bradley's description) any account of soul-life or consciousness which does not involve, somehow, a self outside of that consciousness: the truth surely being better expressed as, that all consciousness involves *within itself* an element which can only be described as self-consciousness. The self is not added to the consciousness by synthesis, but found within it by analysis. And, analogically, we may say that the subject of knowledge or of thought is rather the form in which thought is cast, the self-conscious unity of it, and so, nothing apart from and outside the thought itself, nothing for the sake of which it need be denied that a knowledge should be the Absolute.

I have said that knowledge has always, and

essentially, the two aspects of feeling, and thought in the narrow sense, but so far this question has been regarded only from the lower level, and it is necessary also to take into consideration the further question, whether, in the ultimate sublimation of thought, it may not be seen to be possible to reduce sense or feeling to thought. This, of course, is the position of Plato, possibly of Hegel, and of Green. And what I take to be the same position is explicitly advanced by Bosanquet. He says (*Logic*, vol. II. p. 82): 'In returning from the consideration of abstract necessary relations to that of concrete real totalities, we must remark that, ideally speaking, every concrete real totality can be analysed into a complex of abstract necessary relations.' Here, I suppose, the 'ideally speaking' means nothing more than 'in an absolute knowledge.' And, if this position were to be taken as true, the difficulties, of taking intellect pure and simple, in the sense of pure thought, as the absolute reality, disappear; for there is not even any quality left which is an other to thought; thought, being all embracing, can be absolute.

And it seems clear that, if you are to think out the idea of a pure thought, you must come ultimately to such a qualityless system of relations. Bradley, indeed, seems to think qualities admissible even into such an absolute of pure thought, when he says, 'Let us imagine a harmonious system of

ideal contents united by relations, and reflecting itself in self-conscious harmony.'[1] Here the ideal contents, being set alongside of relations, must, I suppose, be taken as qualities, pieces, therefore, cut out of sentience. But, if so, there seems an end to Bradley's objection that feeling must be something beyond this perfect thought. For the very presence of ideal contents, *i.e.*, qualities, to thought, means the feeling of them, since they can be so present only through images of some sort which, in their private existence, are mere feelings. And so (to postpone further consideration of Bradley's view) thought, if it is to be taken as pure, must in the last resort be considered as a system of qualityless relation, as Green and Bosanquet consider it.

And just as such a view, taken absolutely, seems too slight for reality, so, taken finitely, it seems too slight for thought. For, first, such thought does not exhaust feeling; the general character of immediacy, and the particular qualities of sense, it seems impossible to reduce to terms of thought conceived as merely a relating activity. And, second, even such a thought implies feeling; relations cannot exist except as between qualities, and such qualities cannot be thought (even if the relations themselves could, which I doubt, for even relations are always of some definite sort, spatial, temporal, etc.) without sentiency. Apart

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 170.

from such sentience, finally, it seems meaningless to say that any operation can be conscious; a mere system of relations, even if existent, would be non-conscious, and, therefore, not even properly to be called thought. Intellect, then, is meaningless, if taken as independent of sense, and must be kept in organic connection with it. For Spinoza, one might say, sense and intellect, as metaphysical objects, were not yet distinguished. To him 'idea' (as to Descartes 'cogitatio') meant indifferently an organic sensation or a thought embracing the universe, and 'ideatum' either the bodily affection or the thought's object. And what he held in undifferentiated unity we must endeavour to recombine.

And in this point of view we may perhaps find an answer to one at least of Bradley's objections. *If* thought is to be taken as the mere relating, we must agree (and this is what he evidently intends) that we have, immediately to hand, an 'other' to thought, namely, feeling; and so thought cannot be the Absolute. And here Bradley stops, not choosing to adopt any other view of thought. And yet another view of thought, it seems to me, he implicitly does adopt elsewhere, when he denies 'the existence of any content which was not an actual or possible object of thought,' and judges the supposition self-contradictory.[1] All reality, that is, can be, according to Bradley, thought

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 176.

through and through; there is nothing which cannot be adequately grasped by thought. But what, then, of feeling, emotion, 'those burning experiences,' 'the agonies and raptures of the soul'? For these, and indeed the immediacy of all sentience, have been affirmed by Bradley to be an other to mere relational thought. If, by such thought, they were thinkable through and through, what objection could there be to the assertion that they exist only in its medium? For, on that hypothesis, nothing whatever in them would fall outside an absolute thought. 'Everything, all will and feeling, is an object for thought, and must be called intelligible' (*ibid.*). But, in so far as it is 'thought,' its existence in the thinking mind must be merely the existence of a thought or of thoughts. Even 'these burning experiences' can, it seems, be 'mere pieces of thought's heaven.'

And, if so, we seem driven to the conclusion that the thought to which there is an other, is not the same as the thought to which all reality is intelligible, which can think reality through and through. The former thought is pure, merely relational, thought; the latter is the thought which alone we know, sentient thought, to put it strongly, at least qualitative thought. And it seems clear that it is only to a thought which is partly sentience that a reality which is, at least, partly sentience can be through and through intelligible, a possible content of

thought. And if, as Bradley does, we stick *both* to the ultimate reality of feeling *and* to the ultimate intelligibility of reality, we are bound to define our intelligence in terms which will include sentience, we must unify intellect and sense.

That such a unification is not impossible it is perhaps possible even here to indicate. Suppose it granted that we cannot think 'redness,' without feeling it, that the content, or universal meaning, implies the particular existence of the idea. Here we have the primary unity of thought and sense, which forms an individual experience. And, of course, if we, from our experience thus *including* thought, are allowed to possess intellect, there can be no reason for attributing at least the *possession* of intellect to an absolute experience similarly endowed. But, further, experience may be more or less organised, with reference to thought, and this in two ways. (1) Our ideas, in the sense of the images through which we think, are of a fluctuating nature; their transitions are often irrelevant to, and so hinder, the logical course of thought. Now our finite ideational experience may be organised, for purposes of thought, by concentration, selective attention, fixed associations, habitual trains of ideas and such like. When these conflict with the meaning, we have volition proper; in so far as they are subdued to it, volition, will, disappears. At the

limit, when the ideational continuum is perfectly organised for thought (when, consequently, will no longer exists), knowledge attains its highest development. If, as a further stage, we abstract from time-process in that continuum, as Royce does, and arrive at the idea of a timeless consciousness, we seem to be brought to (2) Royce's idea of a perceptual (and not merely ideational) continuum, organic to, and organised for, thought. For, if there is to be no change in the ideas, no procession of the train of images, such an ideal continuum seems to become at once perceptual, and to be that world of perceptual experience 'in which the answers to all questions are contained,' and in which, therefore, the Absolute Thought mirrors itself. From such an organisation of perceptual experience human beings are, of course, still further removed than from a satisfactory organisation of their ideational or ideal experience; we can only catch faint glimpses of its possibilities in the significance of carefully trained observation in carefully arranged experiment; but the idea is at least permissible — a regulative idea — though, at the point I have at present reached, it seems to be no more.

For, so far, it may be said, this paper has been employed rather in clearing up the idea of intellect, and in developing it in such a manner as will render the existence of an Absolute Intellect a tenable hypothesis, one, *i.e.*, not immediately

self-contradictory, than in displaying the positive grounds for the acceptance of such a hypothesis. An Absolute Intellect, in the sense in which it is here meant, ought to be proved, not merely displayed as possible. And what grounds of proof can be offered ?

If we start, with the old Sensationalism, from the view of the contents of our minds as exhausted by sense qualities, we may, like Berkeley, construct an argument for a similarly constructed Absolute. For, on this hypothesis, we have no idea, because no experience, of anything other than sense qualities or sensations or feelings. If therefore, and so far as, we are to think anything existent, we cannot think of it as consisting of anything else than of what we think and know. The Absolute, therefore, as the totality of all existence, must, it would seem, be a conglomerate of sensations. This, of course, is not Berkeley's conclusion, which depends entirely on the non-sensationalistic element in this thought, *viz.*, the 'notions' of spirit and of volition, which, as not derived from sensation in the ordinary way, are not properly ideas. But neglecting this element, the conclusion to a sensational Absolute, solipsistic or otherwise, seems justified, so far as any argument can have validity at all on such a system. For our reality, *ex hypothesi*, consists of that whose *esse* is *percipi*, which cannot be conceived as existing out of consciousness

because being in consciousness is of its essence, and, indeed, merely abstracted from it. And such a Reality, taken as all reality, or as the Absolute, we might dignify with the title of an Infinite or Absolute Mind, could we forget that even a conglomerate of sense qualities, such as this Absolute would be, contains facts, *viz.*, relations between qualities, which are not allowed for on the Sensationalistic theory, and which therefore must fall outside the content of its Absolute.

This sort of Idealism, however, has probably never been held. When, on the other hand, we consider the implications of the existence, as an element in knowledge, of relational thinking, or thoughts of relations, we arrive at another idealistic result. For when, by our thought, we relate elements, we imply that those elements were already in reality joined, or related; that is to say, the relation we think is a fact, a reality. But, in the case of a relation (or a law of relation such as Lotze objectifies) which we think, just as much as in that of a quality which we feel, there is a limitation on our supposing it real independently of our thinking it. Just, in fact, as a quality means a felt quality, a feeling, and cannot be supposed actual but not felt without contradiction, so a relation means a thought relation, a thought, and cannot be supposed actual apart from thought. This, I think, is the essential significance of Royce's consideration (in the supplementary 'Essay on

the Conception of God') of realist arguments, that what is outside of all consciousness may be in relation to what is inside. The answer is that we cannot think such a relation; all relations we do or can think have both their terms in consciousness. But the further implication, of course, is that only thinkable relations are real, and that these are real only in so far as they are, in some consciousness or other, thought.

But neither this argument nor the Sensationalistic one is final so long as we do not allow that, in the one case, relations, or, in the other, qualities, are the only element or aspect in our knowledge; and a combination of the two can only be final (as regards the attribution of intellect to the Absolute) on the basis of a theory that quality and relation—sense and thought—exhaust knowledge, or are its only aspects. And it is for this reason that it may be useful once more to insist that 'affixing a character to reality, to a reality beyond the act,' or 'reference to reality,' are not additional characteristics of knowledge on a level with those others. For 'reference to reality' is, after all, not an ultimate description of knowledge, but, when taken as more than a metaphor (like 'affixing a character'), must in the last resort be defined in terms of 'thinking into the context' of those related qualities which, as thought (and therefore felt) by us, are our world which we have ourselves constructed for ourselves. It is only by

taking 'reference to reality' in this sense that we can suppose ourselves really to know what is the object of our knowledge, *i.e.*, reality. If we take it, for instance, in the literal sense of the metaphor of 'affixing,' then we have a process too external ever to give us knowledge, one which will 'never let us know the thing itself, but only its predicates,' which seems to leave the 'beyond' or 'other,' after the affixing, just as much a 'beyond' as it was before it. It is this view which, in ordinary common sense and ordinary science, supposes the world to exist as we know it, in the sense that it is what our knowledge states it to be, but not as we know it, in the sense that it does not exist in the atmosphere of knowledge, does not exist as a knowledge, *i.e.*, as combined thought and experience. And it is, I think, from holding this view that ordinary science, and even, in some instances, the *first* efforts of metaphysical reflection, tend towards agnosticism; for the object known must, on this view, in one aspect at least, namely, in respect of its existence, be entirely impenetrable by thought.

If, then, we omit such secondary characteristics as 'reference to reality,' as being definable in terms of the two primary characteristics, which alone are essential, *viz.*, quality and relation, sense and thought, then the argument of Sensational, and that of Relational Idealism return upon us combined, and therefore with completer

insistency. Quality and relation constitute the World; sense and thought constitute knowledge, which is the realisation of the 'faculty' intellect. Quality cannot exist except as the content of sense; relation cannot exist except as the content of thought. The World, therefore, or Reality, cannot exist except as the content of sense and thought combined, the content of an absolute knowledge, the functioning of Absolute Intellect.

SYSTEM AND MECHANISM

SYSTEM, in some wide sense, we probably all regard as the ideal of knowledge, but such a statement is confessedly abstract. As ideal of knowledge, system must also be stated as general determination, or formal description, of Reality. Therefore it must be capable of as detailed development, of as concrete formulation, as Reality itself. And, short of this, it may fairly be demanded that, as most general determination, system be exhibited as containing more particular and concrete determinations under it. We want, in fact, some insight into the categories which fall under this most general concept.

For instance, if we say in general that the system which we are trying to attain in knowledge, or to find to be the general description of Reality, is a whole of parts, then, of course, we do not mean a quantitative whole. The form of wholeness is not given by the mere addition of the parts. Something else is relevant. Apparently this is the interconnection of the parts; and a system is a whole of interconnected parts. Then the mode of interconnection in a whole becomes relevant, and according to different

possible modes there will be different kinds, or categories, of system.

The most frequently mentioned oppositions between such kinds fall into a group, and in each case the mechanical kind of whole forms one side of the opposition, as against something which is usually considered much better and higher than mere mechanism. Thus we speak of a mechanical whole as opposed to an organic whole; or, again, of a mechanical system as opposed to a teleological system; or, again, of mechanical determination as opposed to freedom, or self-determination. We have, in fact, the trite opposition of Mechanism to Organism, Freedom, or, in general, Teleology.

Now, when this opposition is made by Idealistic or pseudo-Idealistic philosophers, 'mechanism' is often made to carry the implication of something very concrete indeed, *e.g.*, of the Atomic theory of the constitution of matter. And hence, perhaps, a somewhat ludicrous tendency to magnify the importance of the modern theories which seek to go beyond the atom, and to suggest that they upset the whole mechanical theory of the Universe. That would imply a much more concrete and definite meaning for mechanism, defining it by reference to matter and motion, which in its own sphere may be necessary.

For philosophical purposes, however, and as a category which is to apply generally, and not merely to Nature, something much more general

is wanted. For this purpose mechanism is, I conceive, to be taken as an expression, more concrete than system, but still abstract, of the general point of view usually involved in the scientific way of looking at facts. It is, as the Law of Causality, again, is sometimes explained to be, an expression of the abstract uniformity of Nature (whether that is an axiom or a postulate being indifferent to our present purpose). In this light we may define it, as a first approximation, thus: 'A mechanism is a whole of interconnected parts, such that all process taking place in the whole is conditioned entirely by universal rules concerning the parts, or, otherwise expressed, by universal relations holding between the parts.'

The point of this attempt at a definition lies in the universality ascribed to the laws or rules holding within the system. This, when the sum of things (Reality) is conceived as a mechanism, involves what is known as, and called sometimes with a certain theologic odium, the reign of Natural Law, or the universality of natural causation, or, again, the doctrine of the merely mechanical determination of events, of all that is and comes to be.

In the abstract this is all somewhat uninteresting. The point, as a matter of fact, of more direct interest to me is a marked difference between the attitudes of the older idealism and the newer idealism towards what is involved in the category

of mechanism, conceived somewhat as I have conceived it.

The older idealism, in this, of course, following Kant, regarded itself as supplying the only possible basis for scientific method, by proving, demonstrating, 'deducing,' such categories or laws as Causation, Uniformity, as of universal application. The necessity of such a deduction was, in fact, Philosophy's primary justification. The mechanical categories received an important and independent place. They were necessitated by, and therefore necessary to, the higher philosophical unity, and to those 'higher' categories in which that unity found itself more congenially expressed, organism, freedom, teleology. The relation of mechanism to these, therefore, was not opposition. Mechanism was supplemented, 'transcended,' in however indefinite a way, not contradicted, by the 'higher' categories.

With this attitude certain tendencies in later idealism stand sharply in contrast. Teleology and freedom are now most frequently — by Professor Ward, for example, by Pragmatists, by many unintelligent pupils and successors of the older idealists — conceived as directly in opposition to the uniformity, universality of sequence, constancy, definiteness, and determinateness, which are the most general characteristics of mechanical system; and scientific laws, *e.g.*, become, not by mere failure to reach

their ideal, but essentially, mere rules of thumb, true not universally but only, at best, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ. The difference of these possible attitudes is really my main subject. We may note that the newer attitude has a great advantage in point of definiteness. It does a great deal in pointing out the various ways and points in which mechanism seems to fall short as an account of reality. An organism, *e.g.*, in the sense of a living thing, is a whole, we are told, which not only cannot be exhaustively described in terms of mechanism, but, in the nature of the determination of the parts by the life of the whole, is a refutation of the alleged universality of mechanism. The novelty and spontaneity of the reactions of an animal vindicates teleological causation, as an alternative to, and in contradiction of, mechanical determination. Human conduct, again, is determined not by natural causes, but by ends, and so is self-determined or free in a sense which not merely transcends, but excludes, causality and uniformity.

This is all at least definite, and, so far, compares favourably with the older method which, having expounded the validity of the mechanical view, left very indefinite the way in which it was 'transcended by,' 'taken up into' the higher unity, or even, with Kant, made those higher categories not properly susceptible of being 'known' at all, as the mechanical categories were.

Definite conceptions are however, I am con-

vinced, possible on this side also. And what I should like to do is to attempt to defend the older as against the newer Idealistic position by showing that the higher categories, which both uphold, do really involve, and can be exhibited as containing within them, the lower or mechanical.

Let me take the conception of an organism in the first place, and show in what way I believe this to be possible. The conception is notoriously difficult to define, and its relation to the narrower, literal sense in which it is applied to actual living things is difficult satisfactorily to determine. But I think that, *prima facie*, what differentiates an organism from a mechanism is the reference to the *whole* as, in some way, an independent factor in the relations formerly stated as between the parts. An organism is a whole of interconnected parts such that the parts are determined by the whole. This is trite enough. What does it involve? Is the determination, of the changes which the parts go through, by the whole, something quite novel, different from and opposed to the determination of those changes by the parts according to the rules of their ' mechanical ' interconnection ? This is, I suppose, the view of Vitalism, in Biology, as the theory of a special Vital Energy ; and it seems to be the general view of the newer idealism. Or is this determination of parts by the nature of the whole only the reciprocal determination of the parts looked at from a new point of view, *viz.*, the point

of view of the whole? This is the position I should prefer to adopt.

If we try to consider in detail how we are to conceive the determination of parts by whole in an organic system, the latter view, I think, carries the day, so far as we admit that such detailed understanding is possible—so far, that is, as the concept of organism is regarded as admitting of being thought out. Short of some unintelligible spontaneity on the part of the whole, we may regard the parts, in their action and change, as determined by the need for the preservation of the whole, or by the general plan which constitutes the whole, or by the end or interest or good of the whole. Let me take these up briefly in that order.

The nature of the activities of a natural organism is, no doubt, determined in some sense by the need for the preservation of the whole. The parts of an organism do not, as a rule, act in a way showing complete indifference to whether the whole continues in being or not, whereas a group of material particles in empty space will follow, we suppose, their own laws of motion, attraction, and repulsion, without any determination by the necessity of the mechanical whole, the group, which they constitute, being permanent. The actions and reactions of the members, the parts of an organism, have then a further characteristic. How is this, determination by the existence of the whole, related to that, the determination of the parts by

one another? Now, on this point it is usually recognised, whether with elation or with dejection, that the tendency of Science is to make the organic determination a complex product, a special kind, of mechanical determination. Within a certain organic kind, *e.g.*, there is, to a certain kind of stimulus, a variety of possible responses; by Natural Selection those organisms that make certain responses are eliminated, others survive, and thus, by this Natural Selection, a purely mechanical process, a specialisation of the activities of the organism to those which preserve the organism is, on the whole, effected. When it is effected, it still is by a mechanical process that it goes on; stimulus and response are connected by habituation, involving a mechanical interconnection between parts. And the organic character of the whole involves only a summation of mechanical determinations of action and reaction.

Of course it is clear that no natural organism is a perfect organism, comes up to the conception of an organism. A perfect organism would be one in which there was a satisfactory response to every environment or stimulus. But to every natural organism upon this earth death cometh soon or late; and by its termination it demonstrates its imperfection. And so it may be argued that the natural organism is not relevant to a discussion of organism as a philosophical category

meant to be applicable to the sum of things. For such a category the notion of determination by preservation of the whole becomes inapplicable; or we have to say that what has to be preserved is not the mere existence of the whole, but its existence as of a certain nature, as a system constructed according to a certain plan. An organism, accordingly, is now 'a whole of parts which in their action and reaction are determined by the plan of the whole.' This is obviously very abstract. To be determined by the plan of the whole must mean to go on *according* to the plan of the whole, since we do not regard the plan as an independent agent. But if it is merely according to the plan of the whole, it does not differ from mechanism, for a mechanism also proceeds according to a fixed plan, which is the plan of the whole. The only difference will be that in mechanism you look at the thing from the side of the parts for which a plan is fixed; in organism from the side of the whole. And thus ταὐτὸ μέν ἐστι, τὸ δὲ εἶναι αὐτῷ ἕτερον, Organism is compatible with Mechanism even so far that every organism is a mechanism.

This does not seem, of course, to make sufficient allowance for the difference in the concepts which we started by trying to indicate. But I think that, to enforce such a difference, one has to pass definitely forward into another category from that of Organism, namely, into Teleology. Trying to

introduce into Organism the distinction we have lost, we may seek to do it in this way. 'It is true that Organism and Mechanism are at one in being determinations of parts according to a ground plan of the whole. The point we have missed is that in Organism it is a different *kind* of plan.' This is likely enough. But when a description of the kind of plan proper to Organism is pressed for, it is likely, I think, to be that, as against the determination by mere consequent and antecedent which characterises mechanism, the plan of an organism is determination of events as means towards an end. And this is Teleology.

To Teleology, then, let us proceed. And, first, as to this matter of means and end, which are the simplest terms to define it in. Clearly, if the end is fixed, the means must be supposed fixed. That is to say, the conception of a means is something which universally produces a certain result, the desired end. That is, there is a uniform, universal, cause and effect relation between the item we choose as means and the item we desiderate as end. And so Teleology, as determination of events as means towards an end, must presuppose mechanical determination, and so cannot contradict it. Teleology, in fact, can only exist in a world which has the characteristics of a mechanism.

I shall return to some of the deeper implications of this view shortly. Meanwhile, note that ordinary human teleology, *prima facie*, at all events,

involves beyond itself an order which, so far as the particular purpose of the individual is concerned, is merely uniform, and so mechanical, unteleological. And we may clearly affirm that human teleology is the original teleology; that is, that the concept of Teleology, however far it comes to be extended, applies originally to the sphere of human practice, as determined by conceived ends to the choice and use of particular means. And though, to obtain a generalised category of teleology, of universal import, it may be necessary to rid ourselves, in thought, of some of the limitations of human or merely finite teleology, I do not think that the reference to an independent order which is *used*, and which *non nisi parendo vincitur*, can be so dispensed with. For, subtract this, and what is left seems tc be not Teleology at all, but Creation. The ideal content, which is conceived as End, produces itself, or its object, independently of any conditions which could constitute means to its attainment. And this unconditioned activity is not what we can recognise as meant by the word Teleology.

This becomes plainer when we attempt to use the concept—so understood in the sense of 'unconditioned activity'—as a philosophical category for the interpretation of the sum of things. For in this absolute case, at any rate, there can be no distinction between an end for the sake of which other things are, and those other things as means.

If the activity is really unconditioned, really creative, only what strictly belongs to the end is created. Thus the end or object of such an activity must be the whole order of existent things. The world does not, in this case, exist for some realisable end not fully revealed in it; the world as a whole, and in its every detail, *is* the end. God made all created things 'for his own glory,' *i.e.*, because he chose to make them, and to make them so and not otherwise.

All this holds, and holds perhaps even more clearly, when we try to drop the quasi-theological formulation, and try to regard Teleology as simply an abstract truth about the world as it is. This, so far as I understand it, is what Prof. Bosanquet, for instance, is trying to do. Teleology is somehow to lose its reference to a special purpose, and to become only a form, a more concrete form than Mechanism, in which to express the nature of the system which is Reality; and with this endeavour one may have all sympathy. But this way of doing it does not seem altogether satisfactory. If there is no *special* purpose or end to determine the scheme of things as teleological, the whole sum of things must once more be the end, and, again, the sum of things must likewise be the means. And if we do not make any further distinction between the aspect in which it is end and the aspect in which it is means, this seems valueless. Sometimes, however, when the system

is described as teleological, as by Mr. Joachim, there seems to be a somewhat obscure implication that the aspects distinguished are (1) the whole conceived as a system of universals or rules, and (2) the whole as a sum of things acting according to those rules: the system of rules, as the plan of the whole, being the end fulfilled, and the sum of particulars determined by that plan being regarded as a means to the fulfilment of that end. So at least I interpret Mr. Joachim's expressions, otherwise very difficult, about the ideal of knowledge being a 'teleological system, self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled.'

I am not concerned to know whether this interpretation of Teleology really comes up to the requirements of the notion, though I know what people of a Pragmatic turn would say of it, and have said of similar attempts. It is rather my business to point out that once more, as reduced to this generalised formula, Teleology is not inconsistent with, and indeed implies, Mechanism. When we distinguish the plan as determining from the parts as determined, we imply just what was stated in Mechanism as a multiplicity of parts connected according to definite laws. The distinctions of Mechanism, Organism, and Teleology as thus conceived are dependent on point of view. In Mechanism we neglect the whole and regard the parts as determining one another according to rules; in Organism we take cognisance of the

whole, identify it with the general character of the system, and regard it as determining the special parts or members of the system. In Teleology, again, we take cognisance of the whole, identify it rather with the sum of members, and regard it as determined by and 'fulfilling' the plan, which thus appears to take up the position of an independent part, as End of the whole.

This, no doubt, seems too symmetrical to be true ; and indeed I do not regard it as satisfactory ; for we seem once more to have lost the differentia of the concept we were seeking. Yet perhaps when we do find that differentia we shall not be inclined to call the category that contains it Teleology. But before we go on to Activity or Freedom, or whatever we call the final stage, I should like to be permitted some further liberty of digression by way of illustration.

Clearly, if Teleology as we first wished to describe it—as presupposing a fixed order, which it cannot alter, but, obeying it, can use—if such Teleology exists, there must be some point at which the purposive train of events begins to evolve itself within the mechanical, a point where the will towards a certain end is imposed upon the indifferent order of things. And here, it would seem, there is a contravention of the mechanical order, since some additional change, however slight, must be made in the order of things if any real progress is to be made towards the end. This

seems obvious: yet there are possible criticisms. A miracle, for instance, may be conceived as such an interference with an established mechanical order. It presents, at any rate, the fundamentally paradoxical character of a miracle. The miracle must, it would seem, be an interference with a universal order, otherwise there would be no miracle, but only an unusual occurrence; yet it must interfere with, contradict, this order, or, once more, there would be no miracle, and this seems to make the order cease to be universal. But is the miracle, then, conceived as itself unconditioned? By no means. For those for whom there can be question of miracles, the miracle proceeds from the same world-ground as does the order which it contradicts, *viz.*, the will of God, and the combination of world-order and miracle is conceived as, in its wholeness, the means to the divine end. And so we have a new, higher order, in which miraculous occurrences have their legitimate place. And with this, so far, we need not quarrel. For, when the miraculous takes its place in the whole, it is now no longer a means to a far-off divine end in any sense in which the rest of the whole is not. The real divine end must be that certain results should be achieved, indeed, but by and through certain conditions; and the special conditions are as essential as the special results. Thus the real and final end is, once more, just as it was before, the whole system or order.

And so, once more, we get out of the range of Teleology, as usually understood, into the sphere of Free Activity or Creation; Creation being the theological name, we may take it, for a something that still remains to be discussed. I should perhaps here remark, if only because it is obvious, that neither this nor, as I consider, any other philosophical discussion of the concept of a miracle can have any bearing whatever on the determination of the question whether a certain event or group of events regarded as miraculous took place. To say that one can prove *a priori* that miracles cannot happen is, in one point of view, a truism; in another it indicates only a certain personal point of view. And it is by such points of view, personally and experientially attained—points of view, not, of course, ultimately removed from philosophical criticism, but certainly disconnected from this kind of criticism of concepts—it is by such points of view that it is determined into what scales shall be put the *evidence* for any set of miracles. And every particular miracle is, of course, a question of evidence.

But there is an important aspect of the system or order which we have just been led to consider, the higher order which, in one sense, is wholly miraculous. Though such a world is systematic or orderly, though, therefore, every part or event has its definite, regular and, therefore, in some sense, universal relations to all others, yet some

of these events have the further aspect of being unique. This does not, I contend, then, contradict the character of the system as conforming to the concept of mechanism. Let the unique event be, *e.g.*, a certain incarnation, and let it be granted that such an event in no other instances occurs under those directly connected circumstances which accompanied and conditioned it in this case. Then the universal rules seem to be broken; but in fact they must, in a completed whole of knowledge, be restated, with a vast and far-reaching qualification; to the effect that under certain spiritual conditions of the race, at a particular point in the history of a certain people, in a particular condition of world empire and social disintegration, these laws shall be suspended in a definite way, and a determinate alternative shall have place. Thus we do not get away from Law, but only from a seeming law to a real law much more deep-reaching in its provisos. My digression has gone further than I intended. Yet perhaps it has indicated another thread which may now be picked up. Absolute Teleology, when pushed to its extreme in one direction, the theological one, becomes Creation, an absolute, that is unconditioned, activity or spontaneity proceeding outwards. And it is in such an activity that Teleology on the finite scale also seemed to terminate, in a conception which may have various names applied to it, such as Freedom, Liberty,

Self-Determination, Self-Activity, or simply, as I prefer to call it, Activity. The point at which finite human Teleology seemed likely to present itself as really free activity was the consideration that, while the series of means to an end presupposed, and took place in, and so did not contradict, the mechanical order of causes and effects, the initiation of the series, such as was necessary if the natural order was really to be diverted towards the production of the end, seemed to involve a direct change of the natural order, and so a perfectly free and unconditioned activity exerted upon that order at a certain point.

Of course—though perhaps I ought not to point it out—this is, as applied to human beings, the whole question of Free Will, which it is somewhat hazardous to tackle as a concluding item. Since, however, the substance of the question raised by this category of Activity concerns the human will, one cannot be blamed for drawing one's illustrations from that sphere. Consider first, as intermediate between Teleology and Activity, what is presupposed in the interference of a purpose, an end, with the natural order. This is, that a certain end should be conceived as an idea present to the thought of a particular subject; and that the content of this idea should be desired and willed. Now, in this attitude of desire and will itself, it may be sought to find the heart of the mystery. Desire, or will, or both, may be said to be ulti-

mate, or a still more ultimate metaphysical principle may be introduced to explain them. But, independently of such entities, it may be made clear, I think, that the process within the mind itself does not exclude what we must call natural causation. The content of the idea presented is in a certain kind of harmony with the characteristics of the individual mind, its temperament, natural or acquired, its tendencies permanent or temporary; and the idea in consequence sets in motion certain processes, within the masses of feeling which constitute the 'self,' which lead to its being identified, 'felt as one,' with the 'self'; and this, which is desire, is also will when the consciousness of the presence of certain necessary conditions of action is added to the consciousness of the end. Now in this—and in this or some similar way it seems to me necessary to describe the phenomena of the conative attitude—though the attitude as a whole is teleological, the processes which constitute it are such as can be described and might be definitely formulated in laws. Given certain conditions, *viz.*, certain characteristics of the mind as a whole, certain characteristics of the ideal content, the processes which we recognise as a special instance of desire and will necessarily follow. The whole process is distinguished, indeed, from an ordinary mechanical whole, but distinguished only by the nature of one of the parts or factors, as being the content of an idea, not by

the nature of the processes and relations in which it is concerned. These have the uniformity and necessity of causal sequence which distinguish mechanism; and the whole is, in consequence, a mechanical whole.

For, if it is not this—and this is my main point—it cannot even be teleological. If the ideal content does not act upon the self as a condition with consequences; if self and conceived end do not interact in definite ways determined by their several natures, relations and environment, then nothing at all can be said about the attitude they jointly form. You may call it conation or will, but it is not teleological; it is a mere indeterminate chaos. Teleology is always something wider and larger than Mechanism, and here, as in a previous case, when we try to analyse Teleology to see how it works, we find, as its fundamental cog-wheels, Mechanism.

If, then, the process by which an idea becomes such an end as can be active in promoting its own realisation, is itself mechanical, what is the meaning of the character of Self-Activity, Freedom, or Spontaneity which undoubtedly in some sense is to be attributed to our conative or practical attitudes? I can only mention and dismiss one alternative before taking up what I consider the true one.

It may be thought that, even if it be admitted that the outer order is fully mechanical, and the inner order, the process of conation, is likewise

determinate, at the point where the two *meet*, at the point where desire becomes will to act, the fiat to change in some particular the order of the external world, there is an exercise of an indeterminate spontaneity, and that in this consists our freedom. The problem of freedom of the will at this point becomes—as it is treated, for example, by Mr. Boyce-Gibson in *Personal Idealism*—confounded with the problem of the relation of mind to matter. And I can only indicate that here there is, on no theory, any room for that complete indeterminateness which this view demands. There are two general views of the relation of the mental to the material; the parallelistic view, of which the epiphenomenal is for our purpose a case, and the interactionist view. On the former theory there is no transference of power from the mental to the material world, and therefore *a fortiori* no indeterminate transference. On the latter view there is a transference; but if, on the material side, there is mechanism, and on the mental side there is, as I have maintained, also, in the phenomena of conation, only a more subtle mechanism, the reasons for contravening the mechanical order in the relations of these mechanisms disappear. Both become part of one larger, all-embracing mechanism, of which the mental and material are alike parts; and the transferences from the one to the other will be 'mechanical' in our general sense of constant, determinate, according to universal rule.

On the other hand, if we try to determine to ourselves what, apart from such sophisticated notions of indeterminateness, we really mean to ourselves when we think of our freedom, it is possible enough to arrive at a conclusion not inharmonious with the general trend of this paper. I am free if, when I will, it is really *I* who will, and so far as what I seem to will is really the object of my will. Just as I am not free when undergoing physical coercion, so I am not free when what I will is other than it appears, and, finally, when the I who appear to will it am merely the sport of blind accident, the product of a cosmic coincidence, determined by an illimitable background of irrelevancies that lie outside of me, and not at all by the characteristics that belong to my own nature. If the self is to be free, in short, it must not be determined by anything that really lies outside it; it must, therefore, be determined by grounds that are wholly internal to itself. And in determination by an idea, the self—inasmuch as it is only as a self of such and such a nature that it is moved as it is by the idea—approximates to the condition of self-determination, and feels itself free as identifying itself with, realising itself in, the idea.

On this view of Free Activity as self-determination, then, the freedom depends upon the degree of completeness in which the self is really determined by conditions which lie within it; anything is free or active in so far as it embraces such a totality of

conditions of its own further states. And ultimately as a philosophical category, we must regard Activity as being the determination of a whole by itself. Such complete self-determination, it seems obvious, nothing finite can possess. A man, *e.g.*, is controlled by accidental circumstances which force him, in spite of his likings, one way rather than another; and he is controlled from without not less in so far as those very likings, his whole character, all that presents itself to him as truly himself, have been made not by him, but for him, 'before God fashioned star and sun,' and thus also he fails to include in himself the totality of his own conditions. This determination by a partially unrealised self, for which one is not ever *quite* responsible, pervades our most deliberate actions; for if we had been made different the idea would have struck or attracted us differently.

It is therefore only in its absolute use that we can hope to find pure freedom; and in its absolute use, as we have seen, it seems to mean mere completeness of conditions, or determination of a whole by its whole self. As such it goes well enough into a sort of schema that can be drawn up of the four categories I have dealt with: Thus:

Mechanism = Determination of Part by Part.
Organism = Determination of Part by Whole.
Teleology = Determination of Whole by Part.
Activity = Determination of Whole by Whole.

For this schema I claim nothing except that it helps to put the four categories in relation, and by being put thus into relation they perhaps show more clearly in what way I conceive that Organism, Teleology, and Activity are all consistent with, and indeed imply, Mechanism, as the uniform determination of part by part. The real essence of each category lies, of course, in the determination of the sense that is involved for Whole or Part in each case, and this I have in previous cases only attempted to indicate.

But, in connection with Activity, I may, to conclude, try to say something more of what such wholeness implies. For it is not, after all, a truism that the world is, and can be thought as, a whole. As it presents itself to us, Reality is *not* a whole, but infinite—infinite in extent, infinite in depth of content, and so infinite in potentiality of analysis. Any part of the universe might turn out to be unique, and, similarly, the Reality in general is through and through unique, has an unanalysed infinity of relations.

But this uniqueness involves that the determination of such part by other parts must be carried out in thought until it becomes a determination of the part by the whole; and this is always an ideal, for the whole is never exhausted. Hence the apparent disparateness of the character of Mechanism, as a category implying no explicit reference to the whole, and of the higher categories,

which do introduce such a reference. We can go on construing any part of our experience in terms of uniformity and law and causation, and so Mechanism seems to be something ever present and real; but we never get to the point of seeing those uniformities, causes, and laws, as constituting a complete system, and so the higher categories present themselves only as ideals. Thus, for Kant, the distinction between the mechanical categories, as constitutive of experience, and the teleological view, as merely regulative, and an ideal of Reason, was absolute. And it may seem that the only legitimate application of such categories must be, after all, to those objects from which they were in the first place derived, their imperfect instances of natural organism, animal teleology, and human free will, since in this application no demand is likely to be made that the finite instance shall come fully up to the conception. And thus Mechanism, as having the more universal application, would seem to have the superior value, and, even on Pragmatic principles, to be the 'truer' category.

But we must note that this is only true in so far as we regard a wholeness in things as being for ever beyond our reach—so far (I may say) as we doubt whether things really form a whole at all. And so far as we lose this doubt, so far as, by deeper analysis and wider comprehension, we approximate to a view of the universe as a single

and unique whole, so far the concepts which involve a reference to such a whole will be of value for us.

The final difficulty, perhaps, is, that, in fact, the wholeness of Reality seems to be connected with that aspect in which it is most opposed to analysis and comprehension of any sort. So far as it is Reality as it first presents itself to us, unique and unanalysed, it seems to have, for feeling, a sort of wholeness; but, so far as we analyse it, it seems to resolve itself into a series of interconnections of parts, without limit. Its wholeness seems to be opposed to its comprehension. But this raises questions with which I am not here concerned to deal.

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