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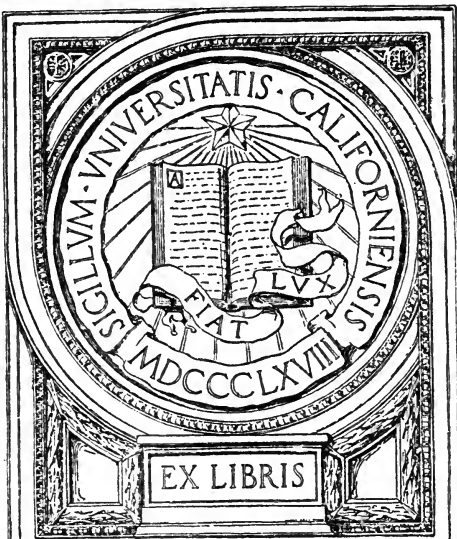
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THE PRINCIPLE OF
INDIVIDUALITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY
OF THOMAS HILL GREEN

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY



BY

HARVEY GATES TOWNSEND, A.B.

PRESS OF
THE NEW ERA PRINTING COMPANY
LANCASTER, PA.

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PREFACE.

IN this monograph no attempt will be made to deal with Green's ethical or political theories, the purpose being rather to examine and define the deeper lying metaphysical principles of which his ethical and political philosophy is but the expression. Such an aim is in keeping with the spirit of Green's philosophy, for he himself tells us that a metaphysic of morals is "the proper foundation, though not the whole, of every system of Ethics" (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, sec. 2.) It is common enough to deny that there is any vital connection between ethics and metaphysics, and this opinion was probably just as common when Green wrote as it is today, as the Introduction to the *Prolegomena* clearly shows. With the arguments again which may be brought in support of either side of this question the present study is not concerned; for however such a controversy may eventuate in the abstract, we are not at liberty when we discuss Green's ethics to neglect his own view of the matter. For if he believed, as he most certainly did, that his ethics was intimately and organically bound up with his metaphysics, we would be greatly increasing our chances of failure to understand his ethics by a refusal to study his metaphysics. A lack of deep appreciation of the metaphysics has, I believe, vitiated a great deal of the criticism of the later, and perhaps more dogmatic parts of Green's system. Taking the position that he did, he had a right to assume that his reader would become familiar with his metaphysics and, in case of a disagreement, that the discussion would embrace a consideration of metaphysical principles rather than confine itself to a disputation about rules of morality from the uncritical or factual standpoint of ordinary life. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance for the understanding of Green's philosophy that we first become acquainted with the principles of his metaphysics.

Green's social theory, which includes the application of his philosophy to moral, political, educational, or religious situa-

tions, reveals throughout a philosophic or speculative motive. He was not one of those who seem content to live from hand to mouth in philosophy, lost in the flux of experience as it comes; but he was above all anxious to 'see life steadily and to see it whole.' A fragment was never to him a mere piece of something or other to be accepted unreflectingly, but it was a challenge which set his mind to reconstruct the concrete whole of which it is a part, and it led him ultimately to a view of the whole universe. It is this motive in his philosophy with which we are here concerned. What did he do toward exhibiting the unity and variety of experience? (This is, of course, to be distinguished from the question sometimes asked, Is there any unity in experience? If there is to be any immediate datum of consciousness the unity is unquestionably as immediate as the variety.) In a word, the question is not, Is the world one *or* many? But, How is the world one *and* many? This question is as old as the history of philosophy and has been uniformly looked upon as a question of a fundamental kind. "If I find any man," says Socrates, "who is able to see unity and plurality in nature, him I follow and walk in his steps as if he were a God" (*Phaedrus*, 266.) The purpose of the following discussion, therefore, is to set forth Green's metaphysic of the one and the many, as given in his treatment of the individual, introducing only as much illustrative material and application as is necessary to hold fast the central idea.

The individual may be defined at once as the concrete embodiment of particularity and universality, that is to say, the individual is both *one and many*. We shall follow Green's attempt to explain the category of individuality and to apply it successively to the object, the subject, and finally, to the universe as a whole, conceived as a subject-object complex. As a basis for such a study it seemed wise to begin with an examination of the problem and method of Green's metaphysics in order to dispel a misunderstanding regarding his position on these points which has, I think, stood in the way of a correct interpretation of his entire system of philosophy.

I am grateful to Professor J. E. Creighton and to other mem-

bers of the faculty of the Sage School of Philosophy for criticism and guidance in the preparation of this monograph, and to my wife for valuable assistance in verifying references and reading proof.

NORTHAMPTON, MASS.,

August 3, 1914.

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THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUALITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS HILL GREEN

CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF GREEN'S METAPHYSICS.

"ABOUT Locke, as about every other philosopher, the essential questions are, What was his problem, and what was his method?"¹ Thus, at the beginning of his introduction to Hume, Green expressed his idea of the true way to study a system of philosophy. Three years later he wrote: "When we understand what the questions exactly were that a philosopher put to himself, and how he came to put them as he did, we are more than half-way towards understanding the answer."² In undertaking a serious examination of a fundamental conception of Green's philosophy we can do no better than to follow the spirit expressed in the above words, for if these statements are true regarding any philosophy they are peculiarly true of Green's. He was a pioneer in England of the form of thought commonly known as German Idealism. He broke away from the common-sense method of English Empiricism and substituted for it a logical criticism almost if not quite as subtle and as unusual as that of Hegel himself. His thought was a reaction against the dominant empiricism of his day and especially against the loose and hasty application of biological theory to metaphysical and ethical questions. Although his treatment of evolution shows that he grasped the real significance as well as the limita-

¹ *Works of Thomas Hill Green*, edited by R. L. Nettleship. Longmans, Green, and Co., 1885. Vol. I, p. 5. (Hereafter referred to merely by volume and page.) The essay in which the quotation occurs was first published in 1874 as an introduction to Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* in an edition of Hume's *Works* edited by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose.

² III, 134.

tions of Darwin's results, we must remember that he wrote in reply to evolutionary theory without the help of the great body of literature to which the modern writer can appeal.¹ The theory, moreover, was then in its crudest form and not so free from careless generalizations as it is today. Green's language seems to be at times unsympathetic or even hostile toward the evolutionary method and results partly because we forget the distinction between early and more recent forms of evolutionary theory; but largely because the reader does not understand what the questions exactly were that Green "put to himself and how he came to put them as he did." It is, therefore, fitting to begin with an examination of his problem and his method.²

The form as well as the content of Green's question resembles that of Kant, 'How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?' Green declares that the primary question of metaphysics is, '*How is knowledge possible?*' In explanation he adds: "It is not to be confused with a question upon which metaphysicians are sometimes supposed to waste their time—'Is knowledge possible?' . . . Metaphysic is no such superfluous labor. . . . *It is simply the consideration of what is implied in the fact of our knowing or coming to know a world, or, conversely, in the fact of there being a world for us to know.*"³ He believes, moreover, that this is the universal problem of metaphysics, common not only to the German Idealists, but to Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. He complains that the English philosophers of his day, unlike Kant, had been unable to read the "movement of speculation, which issued in Hume's Treatise"⁴ with an understanding mind; so that, instead of "putting the metaphysical problem in its true and distinctive form," they had lost it outright and were even congratulating themselves on being "wise enough to drop metaphysics betimes and occupy themselves with psychology."⁵

¹ He recognized in evolutionary theory a "valuable formulation of our knowledge of animal life," but he also saw clearly that it was not fitted for "the explanation of knowledge." I, 385.

² Cf. Edward Caird, "Idealism and the Theory of Knowledge," *Queen's Quarterly*, XII, 105.

³ I, 374. Italics mine.

⁴ I, 375.

⁵ *Ibid.* What he understood by psychology and why he rejected the psychological method will appear as we proceed.

In an age which was flooded with 'scientific facts' from all sides and in which the sciences seemed to be vying with each other in gathering data, Green did not hope to discover any new fact. Science was everywhere asking, 'What are the facts?'; he was asking, '*What is a fact?*' For the rational statement of his problem it was by no means necessary that the deliverances of physics, or biology, or psychology should be true, but merely that they should claim to be true. His interest, like Kant's, was to discover the rational basis of science or knowledge; and toward the understanding of this problem the specific results of any particular science could contribute but little. The matter of first importance for Green was not to prove or disprove this or that scientific law, but to show that scientific law is possible only on certain assumptions regarding the nature of reality in general. In keeping with this he seldom or never questions the results of science as such.¹ He was wise enough to accept its results as infinitely better than any *a priori* guesswork of philosophers and theologians.² Science, however, is totally distinct from philosophy, in this: it "takes for granted just what metaphysic, as a theory of knowledge, seeks to explain."³ The question at issue between metaphysic and a science should not be looked upon as one "between two coördinate sciences, as if a theory of the human body were claiming also to be a theory of the human soul, and the theory of the soul were resisting the aggression. The question is, whether the conceptions which all the departmental sciences alike presuppose shall have an account given of them or no."⁴

In opposition to the tendencies of his own day to treat psychology as a universal science which could answer all questions, Green lays great emphasis on the distinction between metaphysics and psychology. The problem of all critical philosophy is to search out the foundations of knowledge, whereas psy-

¹ To be sure he protested against advancing the results of science in answer to metaphysical or ethical questions.

² Cf. I, 384 f.

³ I, 164. Green always treats psychology as one of the sciences and consequently refers to it along with others in the quotation. Cf. I, 373.

⁴ I, 164.

chology deals with the facts of individual psychic experience. Psychology can hardly be said to raise general questions of validity and much less to answer them. The psychologist treats mind as his field of investigation in much the same way as the botanist deals with plants. Both seek facts which may be observed and tabulated, without being in the least concerned to know what the existence of facts implies regarding the nature of the whole of reality.¹ Green did not question the facts of psychology (which he understood to be concerned with the *phenomena* of the mental life) any more than he questioned the facts of biology; for his was a further question concerning the presuppositions of any science which deals with facts. He does not, for instance, suppose that the teaching of "our best psychologists" that the knowledge we possess "results from the production of feeling in us by the external world" is false.² It is especially noteworthy that he does not attempt to show that knowledge has had a miraculous birth or to dispute its relation to the animal organism and the physical order. The following quotation will make clear his position on this point: "If the alternative really lay between experience and ready-made unaccountable intuition as sources of knowledge; if the point in dispute were whether theories about nature should be tested merely by logical consistency or experimentally verified—whether subjective beliefs should be put in the place of objective facts, or brought into correspondence with them—the experientialists would be entitled to all the self-confidence which they show. That the question does not so stand, they can scarcely be expected to admit till their opponents constrain them to it; and in England hitherto, whether from want of penetration or under the influence of a theological *arrière pensée*, their opponents have virtually put the antithesis in the form which yields the experi-

¹ See Green's distinction between Kant's problem and that of psychology, I, 384. The literature on the meaning of Kant's problem is far too extensive and well known to require citations here, but it may be worth while to refer to two characteristic illustrations of it. Andrew Seth, "Philosophy as Criticism of Categories," found in the volume, *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane (1883); Edw. Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, Vol. I, Chapter I.

² I, 376.

entialists such an easy triumph. Both sides are in fact beating the air till they meet upon the question, What constitutes the experience which it is agreed is to us the sole conveyance of knowledge? What do we mean by a fact? In what lies the objectivity of the objective world?"¹

In spite of the care which Green has taken to distinguish his question from that of the sciences in general and from that of the science of psychology in particular there has been a singular confusion regarding the nature of his problem. The real question, What are the implications of the possibility of knowledge? is taken to mean, What are the psychological facts of my individual consciousness?² As a consequence of this misapprehension of his problem some of Green's critics persist in an attempt to convict him of wrong conclusions regarding the latter question, although we have no evidence that he undertook or cared to answer it. It is quite surprising to find a recent writer begin his criticism by classing Green as one of the "modern psychologists."³ Nor is this mistake confined, as might be supposed, to those who reject Green's general conclusions. Mr. W. H. Fairbrother, a sympathetic and enthusiastic interpreter of Green's philosophy, has fallen into the same strange misrepresentation of its problem and method. He declares that the "two primary questions" of Green's metaphysics are, "What are the facts of my own individual consciousness?" and, "What is the simplest explanation I can give of the origin of these facts?"⁴ It would be difficult to formulate two questions less representative of the spirit and purpose of Green, since he is *neither* directly interested in the facts of his own individual consciousness *nor* in the origin of those facts.

"The basis of practice," writes one of Green's critics, "can hardly be disclosed by a study of cognition. Still less can this be looked for when knowledge is interpreted with neglect of its

¹ I, 385.

² Considering the number of times that this distinction of questions has been made since the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* it ought to be uncalled for now in a discussion of critical idealism. That it is not uncalled for cannot better be illustrated than by these criticisms of Green.

³ G. S. Fullerton, *Psychological Review*, Vol. IV, p. 8.

⁴ *The Philosophy of Thomas Hill Green* (1896), p. 14.

dynamic and purposive implications.”¹ Would the author of the *Prolegomena to Ethics* recognize his metaphysics when described as “a study of cognition?” This phrase taken by itself, would suggest that Green is supposed to be trying to found ethics on a psychological introspection of his own mind rather than upon a critical examination of the logical implications of knowledge. But the last sentence of the quotation quite clearly indicates the fundamental misinterpretation of Green’s question upon which Mr. Sturt’s criticism proceeds. In this, as in the general context, the critic seems tacitly to identify a study of cognition with an analysis of knowledge. And this becomes still more apparent when we read: “The idols that beset Green’s philosophy are, . . . Intellectualism and Subjectivism.”² Now the charge of intellectualism, although it is not directly concerned in the present discussion, is particularly inappropriate to Green’s philosophy. A careful examination of the *Prolegomena to Ethics* will show that no writer in modern times has had a firmer grasp of the “dynamic and purposive implications of knowledge” than has Green. The charge of subjectivism, however, more clearly illustrates the almost total misapprehension of Green’s problem and method. Mr. Sturt seems to believe that Green was trying to spin the world out of his own abstract subjective experience; but Green has actually forestalled this charge by his clear distinction between the psychological subject, with which he is not directly concerned, and the subject of knowledge, with which he is concerned. “It is important not to confuse the relation of subject and object,” he writes, “with the relation of matter to the psychical organism. It is a common delusion that one sort of phænomena are ‘subjective,’ another ‘objective.’ In truth, ‘mental phænomena’ are just as objective as any, phænomena of matter just as subjective as any. If mind and matter = two orders of phænomena, they do not = subject and object, for subject and object are correlative factors of everything as known.”³ Here as elsewhere he insists that he is not concerned with the individual processes of knowing, but with “what

¹ Henry Sturt, *Idoli Theatri* (1906), p. 227.

² *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³ II, 181 (note). Cf. I, 387.

is implied in the fact of our knowing," or in the "fact of there being a world for us to know." Not only did he protest emphatically against substituting subjective whims and fancies for objective facts, as will later appear in the discussion of consciousness, but he approached the whole problem of philosophy with a particularly strong aversion for a subjective method. Subjectivism, in whatever form it appeared, brought forth his determined opposition, but it was the subjectivism of the traditional method of English philosophy upon which his attack was most persistent and effective.

Other writers who do not explicitly label Green as a psychologist, nevertheless, treat him as such.¹ The radical distinction which he makes between the problem of metaphysics and that of psychology seems to be forgotten. If the distinction is unwarranted the critic should devote himself to the task of showing that there are no intelligible questions beyond those which psychology raises; if it is warranted it should be maintained. The distinction in question may or may not be permanently valid. It is at least permanently significant in an account of Green's philosophy. The psychology of his day claimed to be one of the natural sciences and to have adopted the problems and methods of natural science. Green was willing that psychology should be accepted at its own estimate and persistently treated it in that light. As one of the natural sciences he believed that it could properly raise and answer questions of analysis, origin, or other relation. The question which Green raised, on the other hand, is consistently called metaphysical and is sharply and emphatically differentiated from scientific problems in general and from psychological problems in particular. Effective criticism of Green's philosophy must be metaphysical and must at least discuss his statement of the problem of metaphysics. Since the only problem he tries to answer is a metaphysical one it is manifestly unfair and unconvincing to treat him explicitly or implicitly as a psychologist.

¹ Cf. G. F. Stout's attempt to refute a phase of Green's metaphysics by introspective analysis, in *Mind*, N. S. IX, p. 1 ff.; A. J. Balfour, *Mind*, IX, 86 ff.; A. E. Taylor, *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 71 ff. The content of these objections is not necessarily introduced here. I merely refer to them as fair examples of attempts to criticize Green from the psychological viewpoint.

Green fully believed that the problem he had chosen was one common to all modern philosophy. In particular, he had satisfied himself that English empiricism had been groping after a statement of the same problem; but he was equally certain that his method differed completely from that of his fellow countrymen. The method which he attributed to them was the psychological, by which he meant essentially what psychologists mean today by introspection. That the workings of the mind could be made an *object* of knowledge Green did not question. Psychology, he writes, has "a region where it is truly independent of metaphysical questions, . . . but this region . . . has definite limits."¹ On the other hand, the question confronting the metaphysician, and which the psychologists cannot evade, "concerns the *object* of knowledge, and must be answered before the subjective process can be investigated."² The question, "What are the conditions implied in the existence of such an object?" demands an answer as a "necessary prolegomenon to all valid psychology."³

In the *Introduction to Hume's Treatise of Human Nature* the author takes great pains to point out the fallacy involved in attempting to solve a metaphysical problem by looking within one's 'own breast.' Locke's plan of looking within his own mind to see "how it wrought," however valuable for certain purposes, is quite inadequate as a method of metaphysics.⁴ Indeed, the whole of the *Introduction* might be looked upon as an attempt to show that Hume's scepticism was the necessary outcome of adopting this method of 'looking within.'⁵ The weakness inherent in British empiricism was due, according to Green, not to the fact that it had asked the wrong questions, but that it had taken a hopeless method of answering them. There is, indeed, no contention more often advanced throughout his writings than that it is absolutely futile to try to answer an ultimate metaphysical question by appeal to particular facts. This general proposition applies as well in the case of psychical

¹ I, 375.

² I, 377. Marginal note.

³ I, 377. Cf. II, 21.

⁴ Cf. I, 170; I, 121; I, 375.

⁵ I, 6.

facts as in the case of physical facts. No enumeration of the subjective facts of consciousness can explain the consciousness of facts, any more than an enumeration of objective facts can explain or unify the world. It is no answer to the question, How is experience of facts possible? to point out the facts of experience. We inquire into the implications of the existence of *fact* and are presented with an alphabetical catalogue of facts. We ask for bread and receive a stone.

The method which Green proposed to use was critical rather than empirical. That is, it was essentially the method of Kant; although Green objected to the use of the term 'transcendental,'¹ probably because of the danger of being misunderstood. Kant's use of the term had justly laid him open to severe criticism. There is something in this terminology which smacks of the 'extra-experiential,' and it was precisely this error which Green was seeking to avoid. His object was to discover an immanent principle of organization within experience, not a world of 'things by themselves' beyond it. Kant sought the *a priori* conditions of experience; Green the logical implications of experience. The difference in terminology, however, should not blind us to the similarity of the two methods. Both philosophers are really interested in getting beyond the mere immediacy of a given experience to what Kant would call a 'synthetic judgment.' How shall we have any significant judgment unless we can, in some sense, get beyond a mere 'given'? This question came to both Kant and Green with great force; but on the other hand, it is now safe to say that neither Kant nor Green was really hunting for that chimera—a super-experiential reality.² Green was well aware that Kant's world of 'things by themselves' was an impossible and absurd abstraction, but he believed that such a world was not the necessary result of the Kantian method. The world of bare things was a mere aberration due to the formal way in which Kant conceived the mind, not the

¹ H. Sidgwick, *Mind*, N. S., X, 18 f.

² Unless we understand experience in its narrowest psychological significance. Cf. "Mr. Lewes' Account of Experience," Green's *Works*, I, 442 ff. The "only valid idealism" is defined in this essay as "that idealism which trusts, not to a guess about what is beyond experience, but to analysis of what is within it." *Ibid.*, 449.

essential outcome of the critical method. Indeed, so far is this from being the true outcome, that it is to the critical method alone that we must look for the correction of the fallacy involved. Kant, as Green thought, had discovered the only possible basis from which the real futility of a search for a world beyond possible experience could be shown. Green, therefore, accepted Kant's attempt to analyze experience or knowledge as a final statement of the method of philosophy; but it was this very method which led him to abandon 'things-in-themselves,' together with Kant's formal schema of the categories and faculties. Before we can proceed to Green's analysis, however, we must seek an answer to the question, What did he mean by the experience which he proposes to examine?

It is doubtful whether any philosopher ever imagined himself to be dealing with anything else but experience, yet the word is subject to most extravagant and ambiguous use.¹ The issue became especially clouded when the British philosophers took the word as a shiboleth of true philosophy and as mark of distinction from continental thought, which was falsely supposed to be dealing with some other world. But as Green says, "It is not those, we know, who cry Lord, Lord! the loudest, that enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor does the strongest assertion of our dependence on experience imply a true insight into its nature."² Any experience which is to yield knowledge "must not be merely an experience in the sense in which, for instance, a plant might be said to experience a succession of atmospheric or chemical changes, or in which we ourselves pass through a definite physical experience during sleep or in respect of the numberless events which affect us but of which we are not aware. Such an experience may no doubt gradually alter to any extent the mode in which the physical organism reacts upon the stimulus. It may be the condition of its becoming organic to intellectual processes, but between it and experience of the kind which is to yield a knowledge of nature there is a chasm which no one, except by confusion of speech, has attempted to fill. Or to speak more precisely, between the two senses of experience there

¹ Cf. R. B. C. Johnson, *Princeton Studies*, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 10.

² I, 291.

is all the difference that exists between change and consciousness of change. Experience of the latter kind must be experience of matters of fact *recognized as such*. . . . For this reason an intelligent experience, or experience as the source of knowledge, can neither be constituted by events of which it is the experience, nor be a product of them."¹ Passages of this kind, which are not uncommon in Green's writings, help to throw light on the question, How is experience possible? He means *significant experience*, that is, "matters of fact recognized as such." The experience, therefore, of which Green is seeking a rational account, is conscious or intelligent experience; but conscious experience is experience *of* an object *by* a subject. Such an experience, not constituted by feelings (psychical events) but by judgments,² and therefore, necessarily involving subject and object, is the kind of experience in which "the object has no real existence apart from the subject any more than the subject apart from the object."³

While this definition of experience in terms of the subject-object complex does not distinguish Green from other idealistic philosophers, his method of analyzing the complex is more peculiarly his own. Although he believes that a careful examination of either one of these two distinguishable but inseparable factors within experience would necessarily involve and reveal the nature of the other, he prefers to begin by a study of the object. "A theory of consciousness, to be worth anything," he says, "must rest on an examination of objects."⁴ This point is of the utmost importance and is a distinguishing characteristic of Green's idealism. In a suggestive review of John Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, which Green wrote a little less than two years before his death, he states his objection to Hegelianism in unambiguous language. Admitting that Hegel's conclusion is "the last word of philosophy,"⁵ he still feels much dissatisfied with the method which Hegel used in

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, sections 15, 16.

² Cf. I, 448.

³ I, 522. Cf. I, 141.

⁴ I, 483. Cf. I, 377; II, 21.

⁵ III, 141.

obtaining it. He has an "uneasy sense that it is little likely to carry conviction." "When we think out the problem left by previous inquirers," he continues, "we find ourselves led to it [*i. e.*, Hegel's doctrine] by an intellectual necessity; but on reflection we become aware that we are Hegelian, so to speak, with only a fraction of our thoughts—on the Sundays of speculation, not on the weekdays of ordinary thought."¹ He concludes that Hegel's results need to be "put in a form which will command some general acceptance," for "we suspect that all along *Hegel's method has stood in the way of an acceptance of his conclusion, because he, at any rate, seemed to arrive at his conclusion as to the spirituality of the world, not by interrogating the world, but by interrogating his own thoughts.*"²

Green constantly shows throughout his writing that he prefers to begin in an objective fashion with an examination of the object of knowledge. Even in the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, where he would be most expected to interrogate the subject rather than the world, nearly half of the first book is given up to a discussion of the 'Spiritual Principle in Nature,' which is essentially an examination of the objective phase of experience. We must not be misled by the phrase 'Spiritual Principle' into supposing that Green is treating nature as even quasi-subjective.³ Nature means for him the world of phenomena, that is, the objective aspect of experience; and the spiritual principle refers merely to the necessary interrelation and organization of the objective world, through which each thing is limited and constituted by all others—through which the objective world is a cosmos. Nevertheless, this characteristic bias of Green's method is easily overlooked if we confine our study solely or largely to the ethics. For, inasmuch as ethics deals with persons, it is quite natural that the emphasis should there be given to the subjective aspect of experience. Moreover, Green did not pretend to stop with an interrogation of the objective world, but only to begin with it. In order to understand the full value of his choice of method

¹ *Ibid.*

² III, 146. Italics mine.

³ For Green the opposite of 'natural' is not 'supernatural,' but 'spiritual'; 'supernatural' being a "mere phrase to which no reality corresponds." III, 265.

it is, therefore, advisable to turn from the ethics, which was the culmination of his thought, to his earlier and more strictly logical writings.

He who would grasp the full significance of Green's examination of the object must first of all totally abandon the Kantian 'thing-in-itself,' and accept the obvious implications which such an abandonment carries with it. Foremost among these implications is the doctrine that, since reality is composed of possible objects of experience, a true account of experience will also be a true account of reality. Or, to put the matter in less ambiguous terms, Green would say that true knowledge is knowledge of reality. As one writer puts it: "Knowledge professes to be knowledge of reality; and thus if we raise the question 'How is knowledge possible?' or even the sceptical question 'Is knowledge possible at all?' we are *ipso facto* dealing with the question 'What is reality—the only reality we can know or intelligently talk about?'"¹ We find this thesis in the writing of Green repeated in one way or another with tiresome iteration; but it is only fair to remember that it was not so generally accepted when Green wrote as it is now. The basis for such a conclusion was definitely laid in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but it did not become explicit until the later idealists had disentangled the positive from the negative results of Kant's work. Strictly speaking it was not, perhaps, until Hegel that philosophy was consciously ready to abandon 'things-in-themselves' and to look for an answer to its question within rather than beyond experience. Green quotes Hume to the effect that "the double existence of perceptions and objects is a gratuitous fiction of philosophers, of which vulgar thinking is entirely innocent," and remarks that Hume builded better than he knew; for although the statement is inconsistent with Hume's own principles, it is a true account of the intimate relation between thought and reality.² He declares that contradictions "under whatever disguise, must attach to every philosophy that admits a reality either in things as apart from thought or in thought as apart

¹ D. G. Ritchie, *Philosophical Review*, III, 17.

² Cf. I, 261.

from things, and only disappear when the thing as thought of, and through thought individualized by the relations which constitute its community with the universe, is recognized as alone the real."¹ Earlier in the same essay we read: "Of the real as outside consciousness nothing can be said; and of that again within consciousness, which is supposed to represent it, nothing can be said."²

It is a common supposition that one or more qualities belong to the object in its own right, but that the others are added by the mind, and that when the latter are stripped off there still remains the unknown existence of the thing. Green's criticism of this view is clearly implied in his rejection of 'things-in-themselves' and in his thoroughgoing belief that *all objects are objects of knowledge*. Even if one could be credulous enough to accept the statement that things unknown are unrelated (on the authority of a speaker who belies his own words by forming a judgment about these hypothetical reals), one would still be puzzled to know or even to imagine what truth the statement could have or how it differed in the least from falsehood. Green is inclined to treat this contention as the uncertain attempt of careless thinking to state the ground for a distinction between truth and falsehood, but put in such a way that it conveys no meaning. But may we not at least *suppose* that there is such an unknown, unrelated thing corresponding to our idea even though we can know nothing about it? Probably Green would admit that we may suppose anything we like, but, as he contends on another occasion, that which is a *mere* possibility does not exist.³ Locke, for instance, treats the supposition that there is a mere body to correspond to the given idea, not, to be sure, as knowledge, but as "an assurance that deserves the name of knowledge."⁴ Upon this distinction of Locke's between knowledge and assurance Green comments as follows: "To seek escape from this dilemma by calling the consciousness of the

¹ I, 141.

² I, 71.

³ III, 221 ff.

⁴ Quoted by Green (I, 48) from Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV, Chapter II, Sec. 14, and XI, 3.

agreement in question an assurance instead of knowledge is a mere verbal subterfuge. There can be no assurance of agreement between an idea and that which is no object of consciousness at all. If, however, existence is an object of consciousness, it can, according to Locke, be nothing but an idea, and the question as to the *assurance* of agreement is no less unmeaning than the question as to the *knowledge* of it. The raising of the question in fact, as Locke puts it, implies the impossibility of answering it. It cannot be raised with any significance, unless existence is external to and other than an idea. It cannot be answered unless existence is, or is given in, an object of consciousness, *i. e.*, an idea."¹

There is no place in Green's philosophy for speculations about what may be possible in some land of day dreams. The business of philosophy does not permit holiday excursions into the region of myth. The only objects with which speculation can deal are knowable objects, *i. e.*, objects vitally connected with subjects. This is sure to suggest that all of Green's profession to deal first with the object was but a pretext to conceal his underlying subjectivism; for no sooner does he mention the object than he becomes involved in a discussion of thought. Does he not straightway give up his contention that a true theory of consciousness must be founded on an examination of the object by thus declaring that consciousness and its object can never be separated? This criticism may appear plausible at first sight; but upon closer scrutiny it turns out to be unjustified, since Green's assumption is one that lies at the root of all criticism. He simply articulates the presupposition of all theories of objectivity, namely, that a proposal to deal with the object as a thing abiding alone is a suicidal method. His declaration means simply that the statements which he is about to make concerning the object are serious, and at least not hopeless, attempts to get at the real object, rather than empty guesses forever beyond verification.

That all objects are objects of consciousness or knowledge is not synonymous with the claim that we can know nothing beyond

¹ I, 49.

our *states of consciousness*, or, as Locke would say, that knowledge is concerned with 'the agreement and disagreement of our ideas.'¹ Indeed, it is the very refutation of such a doctrine; for as Green puts it, "It is quite a tenable position to deny that an object is a *state of consciousness*, and yet to hold that only for a thinking consciousness has it any reality."² It would be just as true and just as false to maintain that we can know nothing which is *not* beyond our states of consciousness. Both of these extreme statements are false because each implies a fundamental separation between consciousness and its object. The truth is more nearly approached when we give up all such antitheses and cease to talk of the object as it is known as even implicitly opposed to the object as it is not known. We should content ourselves with a discussion of the object of knowledge—the only object there is. Indeed, the expression 'object of knowledge' is, for Green, redundant except in so far as it serves to exhibit the fallacy of the 'thing-in-itself.'

The conclusion thus far reached is that Green's philosophy is best understood when looked upon as a reaction against the classic British school of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. He objected to breaking experience up into atomic parts and dealing with those parts as independent reals. Such an abstract procedure resulted, he believed, in Hume's denial of the possibility of knowledge. It was this situation which led Kant to inquire "How is experience possible?", and it was this situation modified by the results of Kant's work which was the point of departure for Green's speculation. The problem which Green undertook to solve closely resembles that of Kant; indeed, in-form and substance the metaphysical questions of the two philosophers are identical.³

¹ *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. IV, Ch. I, Sec. 2.

² I, 423. Cf. I, 141; II, 73, 212 ff. Contrast with this statement of Green's that of Alfred Barratt, one of his older contemporaries at Oxford: "Thus we have seen from every point of view that all that we can know is ourselves, and that every hypothesis that we can frame is nothing but an extension of ourselves. Hence on the one hand, we perceive the futility of Metaphysics or Ontology, which is in truth nothing but an Agnology, a Non-Science of Ignorance." *Physical Ethics* (1869), p. 360. In this connection notice may also be taken of Bradley's statement that to be real is to be indissolubly one thing with sentience. *Appearance and Reality* (1893), p. 146.

³ Cf. D. G. Ritchie, *Contemporary Review*, LI, p. 843; also Mark Pattison, *Memoir*, p. 167.

There is, however, a considerable difference in their respective methods and results. The lapse of time between the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the middle of the nineteenth century had served to modify the formalism of Kant's critical procedure so that it had become at once more critical and more plastic. The non-essential parts of Kant's method, such as the separation of the phenomenal from the noumenal, the form from the matter of experience, and the rigid table of categories had been purged away. The essential method of searching out the principles of organization within experience remained, however, and was epitomized in the persistent question "How is experience possible?" Such a question, according to Green, does not involve a discussion as to whether or not experience is possible, nor yet a psychological account of the origin of experience by means of sensation or otherwise. By experience Green means "matters of fact recognized as such," and by an examination of such an experience he hoped to discover the constitution of reality through which experience is possible. In his examination he chose to begin in a purely objective fashion with a study of the object. He objected to beginning, as he believed Hegel had begun, with an examination of his own thought; but would instead inquire into the nature of thought's object. It is to be remembered, however, that he distinctly proposes to deal with *thought's* object; not with an hypothetical object, as it might be carelessly supposed to exist, independent of thought. When Green abandoned the Kantian 'thing-in-itself' he gave up, once and for all time, the hope of getting outside of experience to a realm of independent reals untouched by thought. Such a position is not, however, synonymous with the contention that we can know nothing beyond our states of consciousness; for *states of consciousness* themselves are objects of knowledge. The relation of objects to *psychic states* and the relation of objects to *knowledge* are fundamentally different. All objects whatever are objects of knowledge.

CHAPTER II.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE OBJECT.

WHETHER Green is discussing logic, ethics, politics, education, or religion one idea controls his thought. This idea is that our philosophical and social theory must be founded upon a broad and adequate notion of the individual. Green's life work may be properly characterized as an emphatic and sustained protest against the abstract particular, and an attempt to substitute for the particular the true notion of the individual. He probably did more than any one else in England to point out, what is now generally recognized, that the besetting sin of British philosophy was its tendency to treat experience as a sum of atomic parts. The often quoted remark that Hume failed to see the forest for the trees has fixed this criticism in the minds of many who do not know that it was Green who first had the patience to work it out in detail. Yet it was largely through his efforts in defining the nature of the individual that British speculation was saved from being lost in the abyss of Hume's scepticism.

Green particularly objected to the fallacy of the abstract particular as it was expressed in the logic and metaphysics of his generation. The theories of knowledge which had been developed in England had resulted, as Green believed, in a general denial of the possibility of knowledge. The reason for this outcome was to be sought in the philosophy of Locke, whose original assumptions Hume had but developed to their necessary conclusion. If we start with unconnected 'bits of knowledge stuff' we shall never get beyond them, for no true account of knowledge can be given on the supposition that it originates in that which is not knowledge. Whatever metaphysics had survived the failure of a theory of knowledge had survived, as might be expected, in a common-sense revolt against scepticism. At least the majority of those who rejected Hume were satisfied to base their objections on uncriticized metaphysical assumptions, the

very assumptions, in fact, from which scepticism had resulted. While they revolted at Hume's conclusions they were unwilling to abandon Hume's premises as found in Locke. Nor could any other result be hoped for until the movement from Locke to Hume should be reviewed by a critic with sufficient insight to detect and emphasize the fallacy of the abstract particular which formed the leading presupposition of that movement. The Kantian philosophy, to be sure, had offered the required criticism, but in such a form that England had, up to that time, received but little enlightenment from it. In addition to the foreign sound of the critical philosophy, its implicit criticism of Hume needed to be explicated before it could be of wide influence. However much a follower of Kant or Hegel Green may have been, it is quite certain that he was more able than either Kant or Hegel to interpret the success and failure of the English philosophy to the English people. He was firmly convinced that there was but one way to escape the tangle of scepticism and that that way consisted in recognizing the true nature of the individual, as an organic union of the universal and the particular; or, in terms of Hegel's philosophy, as the concrete universal. Therefore, Green's philosophy may properly be said to begin and end with a discussion of the nature of the individual.¹

Although Green's treatment of the individual person is generally regarded as the distinguishing mark of his philosophy, it is the culmination rather than the beginning of his thought. His conception of the human individual is founded on an exhaustive and labored criticism of the individual, as such. The charge, so often made, that Green reaches his conclusions about man and God *per saltum* carries greatest conviction to those who have neglected the more subtle passages in his works for the more readable. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to set forth his treatment of the individual as an object and thus to lay bare the logical foundation upon which rests his later, and perhaps more attractive treatment of personality.

¹ This may account for the fact that Green gave no systematic treatment of the categories. He has been blamed for neglecting this (*cf.* A. Eastwood, *Mind*, XVI, 243 ff.; H. Haldar, *Philosophical Review*, III, 172 ff.; R. B. C. Johnson, *Princeton Studies*, I, 3, 18); but what category is there which is not involved in a discussion of the individual?

Probably everyone will admit on reflection that each object as we know it is related to other objects. And the more we study the object the more complicated and far-reaching do its relations become. Objects are related most obviously to each other in space and time, but there are also relations of origin and decay and the still more subtle relations of function or reciprocity. Each object is not only connected with other objects, but it is ultimately connected in some sense with *all* other objects in the varied process of the universe. So much is a commonplace of philosophy, though chiefly commonplace because it is not carried out to its full logical significance, but is taken simply to mean that reality is composed of a great number of particulars, in their own nature unrelated, though connected with each other in an external fashion as sticks might be bound together with a cord. This idea of a mechanical relation is definitely opposed by Green since it seems to assume that things are there before they are related. In criticizing this conception of external relations he proposes to show that the unrelated does not exist in any sense whatever. Moreover, the latter statement must be taken as a simple, unmetaphorical truth. It admits of no qualification which would tend to destroy its radical character. Green's treatment of objectivity does not deserve attention because it is based upon the common observation that objects are related to each other, but because it results in the conclusion that the relations are internal to the object, that is to say, that the relations *constitute* the object.

Before proceeding to Green's exposition of this radical thesis, however, it is necessary to dispose of the general objection that things must be there to relate before they can be related.¹ The implication is that Green's language reveals a subtle self-contradiction, that all his talk of relations would carry no weight unless he surreptitiously introduced the conception of something beside the relations, namely, that which is related. The objection seems based on a misunderstanding of the force of Green's argument, since it assumes that existence is not a relation; which is the very point at issue. In the words of William

¹ Cf. A. J. Balfour, *Mind*, IX, 80 f.

Wallace: "The refuter does not take unrelated in all its bitter truth, its absoluteness and utterness: he still leaves it in its comparative sense, indicating the absence of those relations without which the being may still exist and perform its function."¹ In the case of any given relation there is no doubt that we do refer to end terms, more or less properly known as the *things which are related*; but Green's contention is significant just at this point, for the things which are related, when further examined, turn out to be themselves made up of relations.

The "Introduction to Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*" is essentially a protest against an account of experience in quasi-physical or mechanical terms. Here Green enters into an exhaustive criticism of the foundations of British idealism, exposing with untiring zeal the inconsistencies of Locke's method, which had, as he believed, led to the objectionable results of Hume. Eight years earlier, however, in his essay on "The Philosophy of Aristotle," printed in the *North British Review*, Green had already clearly defined his protest against the abstract particular. In this essay the author is at his best both in style and subject matter, and the essay clearly reveals the influence which the study of Greek thought had upon his philosophy. He found Greek thinking kindred to his own and believed that he saw ample support in it for his own objection to the abstract universal as well as to the abstract particular.

His contention that the unrelated does not exist is practically identical with the notion, which played so great a part in Greek philosophy, that the indeterminate is the same as non-being. This is a view, says Green, "which first finds distinct utterance in the dictum of Heraclitus, that objects of sense, as such, cannot be known. The sensible is the indeterminate (τὸ ἀπειρον), and the becoming (τὸ γιγνόμενον)."² The "object of sense" as the indeterminate non-being is contrasted with the "object of knowledge," the determinate and related.

Green constantly reveals his own view in expounding that of Aristotle. Adopting the above contrast between the "object of

¹ *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics* (1898), p. 562.

² III, 53.

sense" and the "object of knowledge," he agrees with the Greek notion that the object of sense can "only be described as that which is incapable of description, only determined as the indeterminate, or, to take a figure from the sphere of art, it is a matter as yet without form; not, however, such a matter as the artist uses, already formed by the eternal Demiurge, but the negation of all form. In other words, it is nothing, for to be anything it must have a form of some kind."¹ On the other hand, the "object of knowledge" is capable of some sort of definition, it is, in fact, that which is related. "That which is known," he says, "must be susceptible of definition and description. If I say that I have knowledge of this bed as an object of sense, and try to describe it, it appears that I do this by its properties. These, however, are not properly sensible but intelligible. . . . The attempt to know the sensible at once transmutes it into the intelligible."²

In as much as Green is irrevocably committed to a treatment of the object of knowledge, or, to use his own suggestive phrase, of "matters of fact recognized as such,"³ his interest in what he here designates the object of sense must be looked upon as a means to an end. The object of sense in being absolutely undetermined does not really exist. When we attempt to think away the properties or relations of the object of knowledge we find that just at the point where definition becomes impossible, the object, properly speaking, ceases to exist—vanishes into the limbus of indetermination, and thus becomes non-being. "If we take as the germ of intelligent experience," he writes, "the simple consciousness of a sensation, this can only be expressed as the judgment, 'something is here.' The 'here,' however, is the next moment a 'there'; the one sensation is superseded by another."⁴ Without distinctions the object is not possible. The positive result, therefore, of Green's criticism of the 'object of sense' is the conviction that the real object, the 'object of knowledge,' is the limited, the defined, and that if we suppose

¹ III, 54.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Prolegomena*, sec. 16.

⁴ III, 52.

all definition, *i. e.*, all properties, absent, nothing remains. But the properties are relations to other objects. The most abstract object possible for us to deal with is at least a 'this,' and is therefore distinguished from some other object—it is named. To put the matter in Green's single sentence; "The object of knowledge and the true reality coincide."¹ Objectivity is through and through ideal or intelligible, *i. e.*, it is made up of relations.

This conclusion, however, is to be carefully distinguished from those theories which tend to reduce the objective world to 'states of consciousness,' or, as the saying is, to consider the object as but a *mere idea* in the mind. In this matter Green agrees wholly with the words of Bosanquet: "'The Sun' means 'the Sun'; and whatever that may be, it is not anything *merely* in my mind; not relative purely to me as a conscious organism; not a psychical fact in my individual history."² He had not the slightest notion of identifying himself with any idealism of the subjective type, indeed, his theory is fundamentally opposed to such an idealism. He objects first of all to the phrase "mere idea" because it is based upon a false antithesis between the real and the work of the mind—a distinction which gained currency through the 'new way of ideas' which from Locke onwards assumes that nothing is known except the order and connection of ideas within the mind. The very statement postulates a world of reality beyond our states of consciousness but would destroy all hope of coming into contact with it. Thomas Reid has well expressed the natural objection to this theory which limits our knowledge to the order and connection of our ideas, in the following language: "If this be true; supposing certain impressions and ideas to exist presently in my mind, I cannot, from their existence, infer the existence of any thing else; my impressions and ideas are the only existences of which I can have any knowledge or conception; and they are such fleeting and transitory beings, that they can have no existence at all, any longer than I am conscious of them. So that, upon this hypothesis, the whole universe about me, bodies and spirits, sun, moon, stars, and earth, friends and

¹ III, 54.

² *Logic* (second edition), I, 73.

relations, all things without exception, which I imagined to have a permanent existence whether I thought of them or not, vanish at once;

*And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a track behind."*¹

This protest voiced by Scottish philosophy was an open expression of a general dissatisfaction with British idealistic theory. Such a theory was well calculated to bring about a stout resistance from those who were apprehensive lest solid, objective facts should disappear into subjective whim. That such a resistance, however blind at first, was a just one was amply demonstrated in the course of the development from Locke to Hume. Locke had, to be sure, awkwardly tried to retain a grasp on the solid world by his famous distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of objects; but little by little the distinction had fallen of its own weight since it could not possibly be harmonized with his own more fundamental theory of knowledge. Berkeley with remorseless logic showed that the primary qualities could be reduced to the same terms with the secondary; that extension, for instance, no more truly existed within the object itself beyond our idea than does color or odor.

Berkeley's criticism was, however, unsatisfactory to the sober thinking of England because it had apparently destroyed the antithesis by transmuting the primary into the secondary qualities. In doing so Berkeley had kept the Lockean distinction in all its essentials; for in his hands all qualities became just what a part of them were for Locke. Instead of rising above the abstraction to a conception of the concrete relation of thought and its object, he had chosen the extreme which seemed to him furthest removed from the 'mathematical atheism,' which he so much desired to refute, and reduced the other extreme to it. "With Locke," says Green, "it was body or matter, as proximately, though in subordination to the Divine Will, the imprinter of those most lively ideas which we cannot make for ourselves. His followers insisted on the proximate, while they ignored the ultimate, reference. Hence, as Berkeley conceived,

¹ *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (third edition, Dublin, 1779), pp. v-vi; (Stewart edition, 1813), Vol. I, p. 168.

their Atheism, which he could cut from under their feet by the simple plan of eliminating the proximate reference altogether, and thus showing that God, not matter, is the immediate imprinter of ideas on the senses and the suggester of such ideas of imagination as the ideas of sense, in virtue of habitual association, constantly introduce."¹ The result of such a method was that matter became for Berkeley "a fiction" except in so far as its qualities "can be reduced to simple feelings."² "But in the hurry of theological advocacy," Green continues, "and under the influence of a misleading terminology, he failed to distinguish this true proposition—there is nothing real apart from thought—from this false one, its virtual contradictory—there is nothing other than feeling."³

At this point Green is diametrically opposed to Berkeleyan idealism as he understood it. The formula *esse est percipi* seemed to him to be a declaration that there is nothing other than feeling, *i. e.*, nothing beyond conscious states, and this he tells us is the virtual contradictory of his own theory that there is nothing real apart from thought. From such language it is evident then that Green had no intention of reducing the world of objects to the fleeting shadows of ideas or psychic states by the declaration that the unrelated does not exist. The object is just as real as thought, but neither is real apart from the other. They are to be conceived "as together in essential correlation constituting the real."⁴ Indeed, far from making the object unreal, its relation to thought is precisely that in which its reality consists, since it, like everything else, is real in its connection with other things and not by being somehow opposed to the unreal.

The antithesis between the real and the work of the mind is invalid, not necessarily because the real is the work of the mind, but, as Green says, "because the work of the mind is real."⁵ "Either the work of the mind," he says, "is a name for

¹ I, 139.

² I, 135.

³ I, 140, 141. Cf. II, 212 ff.

⁴ I, 141.

⁵ *Prolegomena*, sec. 24.

nothing, expressing a mere privation or indeterminateness, a mere absence of qualities—in which case nothing is conveyed by the proposition which opposes the real or anything else to it: or, on the other hand, *if it has qualities and relations of its own, then it is just as real as anything else.*"¹ But even if we were to admit, for the sake of the argument, that the work of the mind is unreal, it would then be clearly impossible to assign any meaning to its opposite, a supposed real; for, in the words of Green, "Whether we suppose it the quality of a mere sensation, as such, or of mere body, as such, we find that we are unawares defining it by relations which are themselves the work of the mind, and that after abstraction of these nothing remains to give the anti-thesis to the work of the mind any meaning."² If we try to consider the mere sensation as the real we must admit that such a "reality is in perpetual process of disappearing into the unreality of thought. No point can be fixed either in the flux of time or in the imaginary process from without to within the mind, on the one side of which can be placed real existence, on the other the mere idea."³

X Green's definition of the real is well summed up in the above phrase as that which "has qualities and relations of its own." This is but the positive form of the statement that the unrelated does not exist. It is on this account that the question "What is real?" seems to Green to be a "futile one," for it can be answered only by saying 'everything is real,' since everything with which we have to do "has qualities and relations of its own."⁴ It is therefore impossible to say 'this' is real, 'that' is unreal; for all designation is relation, and all relation is the mark of reality. The general question What is real? is, therefore, not complete. Before it can be understood and answered it must be changed so that it will have a content expressing a doubtful relation. I may ask of myself or another whether a given relation which I have assumed is really *as* I have assumed. Such a question can be answered in turn only by reference to other relations. But the

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 22. My italics.

² I, 93.

³ I, 70.

⁴ Cf. *Prolegomena*, sec. 24.

question, in general, is as barren as any proposed by the Schoolmen; it simply conveys no meaning and would not be supposed to do so were it not for the fact that the mind adds enough to the bare statement to make it determinate. We unhesitatingly interpret the question in its individual context and taking the will for the words we answer it as best we can. By the general question the speaker usually intends to inquire for a distinction between objective fact and subjective fancy; but *real* and *unreal* are not equivalent to *fact* and *fancy*. Every thoroughgoing philosophy must attempt some distinction between the latter pair, but to start with a distinction between the former is to make philosophy impossible.¹

Green devotes a great deal of attention to the distinction between fact and fancy. As we noted in Chapter I, he actually considers the question "What is a fact?" a fundamental one for metaphysic. 'Fact' for Green is virtually synonymous with 'object,' and his treatment of the object cannot be considered apart from his treatment of the nature of a fact. At first thought it may seem fanciful to identify fact and object, but when we remember that the object is the object of knowledge we get a glimpse of the identity. The characteristic features of the object and the characteristic arguments in Green's treatment of it will be found also in a discussion of the 'fact.' Like the object, the fact never stands alone in bare abstraction, but is constituted by its relations to other facts. Philosophy has to face the problem of the unrelated particular here just as it did in the case of objects. The common opinion seems to be that facts exist somehow as unyielding static things, and that the mind collects them and strings them together by attaching one to another in an external fashion. Facts are variously spoken of as 'immediate,' as 'given in sensation,' or, we are bidden to settle our disputes by observing the facts just as we have been told to compare our idea with its object in order to test the truth or adequacy of the idea. Facts are supposed to be the 'raw material' of knowledge, in their own peculiar nature quite without form or meaning, in short, quite unideal. No sooner do we get rid of the

¹ Cf. I, 268.

unrelated thing beyond knowledge than it appears again, this time within knowledge, as the unmeaning fact or *datum* out of which knowledge is supposed to arise. Green is more hostile, if possible, to the latter contention than he was to the former.

"The unscientific man," says Green, "if asked what an acid is, will say, perhaps, that it is that which sets his teeth on edge,"¹ thus revealing an essentially correct apprehension of the fact as a relation. If the 'unscientific man' is pressed, however, he will perhaps resort to the hypothesis that the facts are given and the relations added by the mind. This position is not peculiar, indeed, to the unscientific man. Much philosophical discussion has been founded on just this supposed difference in kind between fact and theory. That bare, crude facts exist prior to connection and interpretation is, perhaps, a more subtle error than that the thing is there before it is related; for here at least we do not propose to describe that which, by hypothesis, we have placed beyond the reach of description. Our *datum* is admittedly a *datum* within experience, but it is looked upon simply as a *datum*, a mere unmediated particular, an atom of knowledge. This fallacy is harder to refute because it is more widely held by all classes of people, and therefore more deeply entrenched in language and custom. Even the most sophisticated science speaks of collecting its data before it begins to interpret and of getting the 'facts before theories.'

X "Every kind of fact," says Bradley, "must possess these two sides of existence and content, . . . But there is a class of facts which possess another and additional third side. *They have a meaning.*"² Against such a view Green opposes the contention that there are no facts without meaning. It is the very nature of a fact to be in an intelligible relation, in the form of judgment,

¹ III, 53.

² *Principles of Logic* (1883), p. 3. Italics mine. There is no doubt that passages may be found in Bradley which are in general harmony with the views advanced by Green; e. g., "there exists a notion that ideality is something outside of facts, something imported into them, or imposed as a sort of layer above them; and we talk as if facts, when let alone, were in no sense ideal. But any such notion is illusory." (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 165.) Even here, however, the context leads the reader to conclude that the author is not firmly convinced of the truth of his own statement.

and thus to have a meaning. "Mere sensation," he writes, "is in truth a phrase that represents no reality. It is the result of a process of abstraction; but having got the phrase we give a confused meaning to it, we fill up the shell which our abstraction has left, by reintroducing the qualification which we assumed ourselves to have got rid of. We present the mere sensations to ourselves as determined by relation in a way that would be impossible in the absence of that connecting action which we assume to be absent in designating them *mere* sensations."¹ If such a position is defensible it means that there can be no antithesis between "thought, as that in which we are active, and experience, as that in which we are simply receptive," for "thought appears as a factor in experience even in its remotest germs."² It also follows that knowledge is not a process of conjuring meaning out of crude facts or unmeaning data. Facts, like sensations, are, for him, already judgments. In short, the 'mere datum of the senses,' the unpredicated particular, under whatever disguise, has no claim upon philosophy. It is but the result of inadequate thinking to suppose that facts exist prior to interpretation.³

Another reason which Green gives for rejecting the notion that facts are given as uninterpreted particulars is that such a view leads to wrong conclusions regarding the nature of thought. The 'general idea' comes to be regarded as the result of numerous repetitions in Hume's sense. Through sensation we are supposed to get the concrete facts, the function of thought being to supervene and strip off these attributes from the concrete, immediate experience, in order to 'recombine them' in the form of the universal which thus becomes a sort of 'mutilated particular.'⁴ In his lectures on "The Logic of the Formal Logicians," delivered at Oxford in 1874-75, Green deals in a very significant way with this conception of the universal as the

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 46.

² III, 52.

³ If there are animals which feel without thinking, their feelings are not facts for them but only for another. Green does not need to prove that there are no such animals but only that wherever there is knowledge there is something other than physiological processes. Cf. *Prolegomena*, sec. 48, also I, 142, 281, 282.

⁴ Cf. III, 48, 49.

abstract remnant of once living particulars. "The process of abstraction," he says, "as ordinarily described (as beginning with complex attributes and leaving out attributes till the notion is reached which has the minimum of determination), if it really took place, would consist in moving backwards. It would be a donkey-race. The man who had gone least way in it would have the advantage, in respect of fulness and definiteness of thinking, of the man who had gone furthest."¹ He says elsewhere that thinking "is not a progress from the less to the more abstract, but from the less to the more determinate. . . . If it separates one attribute from another, it is to make each not less but more definite in virtue of a new relation."²

These false notions concerning the nature of thought have been fostered and even promulgated by formal logic which, in Green's language, "is the science not of the method of knowledge (which implies relation to *objects*), but of those 'forms of thought' in conforming to which we think *correctly*, but in a way that contributes nothing to knowledge or truth."³ This conception of logic appealed to the Schoolmen, for "they did not want a method of arriving at truth, nor a theory of what knowledge consists in. . . . What they did want was a method of evolving what was involved in conceded propositions of the faith. Nominalism is the process by which scholastic logic destroys itself. It is the recognition of the fact that in its deductions from universals syllogistic logic was merely analysing the meaning of names. Hence the modern mind, in the effort to know the truth about nature itself, discards it."⁴ Such a logic serves a purpose, for it has a value as a "practical though not as a speculative science." Attempts to raise it to the rank of a speculative science, as an examination of formal thought, have failed; for the ostensible result of pure thinking "is exactly the same as its beginning," and therefore represents no *process* of thought whatever. "So long as the judgment stood, 'all men are mortal,'" says Green, "there was some color for saying that in

¹ II, 192.

² III, 53.

³ II, 159-60.

⁴ II, 161.

the judgment, 'some mortals are men,' there was a further act of thought: but put it as 'all men = some mortals,' and the conversion into 'some mortals = all men' loses all appearance of forming a further act of thought at all."¹

With Locke, therefore, Green agrees that syllogistic or formal logic can yield "no instructive propositions."² If we are to have knowledge at all, inference must be possible, and in order that inference should be possible logic must be more than formal thinking. Formal logic has laid philosophy open to the charge of putting into its premises whatever it desires to produce in its conclusion. Philosophical method, however, is in no sense identical with that of formal logic. The latter is the victim of a deep seated fault which makes it absolutely incapable of dealing with real inference, and therefore, with real knowledge. The root of this weakness is of ancient origin. Green traces the difficulty to Aristotle's failure to recognize the true and complete force of the doctrine of the *non-existence of the indeterminate*.

The error of Aristotelian logic is that of identifying the first determination of the 'sensible thing' by thought with its complete determination. Such a procedure leaves no room for the expansion of knowledge. The 'object of sense' is crystallized in a name, and logic becomes little better than a game wherein the words are counters or symbols of that which was once living reality but which is now lifeless abstraction. It represents the indolence of thought. There is a kind of inertia in all thinking which has perpetually to be overcome if thought is to be kept abreast of reality, and formal logic is an apotheosis of this indolence. It depends upon crystallized notions and rigid classes for its very existence. Having named a thing, the mind rests content. When this kind of logic is identified with thought it is easy to understand why protests are raised against the theory that thought is adequate to reality. But is thought limited to such a petty round of barren formalism? By no means, according to Green. Such thought is thought which dies in its infancy, or, to change the figure, is bound within arbitrary and

¹ II, 164. Cf. I, 21.

² I, 285.

accidental limits and becomes dwarfed. Its first movement, he tells us, is its last so that it "is for ever retracing the first steps of its childhood, which are represented by terms in received use; that it is working a treadmill, which, when it fancies itself laboriously ascending, brings it back to the simple predication of being with which it really began."¹

Green's language suggests a picture of formal logic as a kind of abortive thought, or as thought which had been blighted in its infancy. Moreover, this blight has vitiated the whole process of thought just as a morbid condition of an organism blights or destroys its entire function. The beginnings of formal logic are, indeed, normal. The first determination of the object of sense is "real and essential, as contrasted with the mere object of sense. It is determinate, and therefore something, while that was nothing. . . . But this determinate form is capable of infinitely numerous other determinations as it is brought into other relations. In other words, our first knowledge of a thing is not our ultimate knowledge of it; the first 'form' is not the final one; the mere universal is a shell to be filled up by particular attributes."² Having thus once identified the essence with the first determination of the thing, logic becomes a barren formalism in which thought is but a process of ascending "from sensible things to forms, and from the lower, *i. e.*, the less abstract and extensive forms, to the higher, *i. e.*, the more abstract and extensive."³ The 'sensible thing' has been crystallized into the class, and as such can only become the subject of judgments in which it is "brought under a class more extensive than itself, *i. e.*, in which that is predicated of it which is already involved in it." "By such a process," he continues, "its emptiness becomes yet more empty, and meanwhile the individual thing is asserting its independence. Instead of being regarded as that which becomes universal as soon as it is judged of or known, in virtue of the property under which it is known, it is connected with the universal as a thing with the class to which it belongs. In this position it is vain to deny its priority and independence.

¹ III, 61.

² III, 56.

³ III, 59.

Thus individuals come to be regarded as one set of knowable things, universals another."¹ Such crude realism which is 'virtually nominalism' holds the universal to be real "but it finds the universal simply in the meaning of a name."² "It makes its universal a class instead of a relation, and it takes as the essential attributes of the class those only which are connoted by its name, *i. e.*, the most superficial."³

In direct opposition to this entire scheme of the formal logicians Green holds that the universal aspect of the object is relation rather than class, and thinking is a progress "*from the less to the more determinate.*" To begin with, the object is seen to be related, as it were, only at one point; but it later shows itself to be more and more related to each and every other object. To be an object at all is to be related, but the relation is at first only in germ. To the object at this stage we can apply only the predicate of existence. But although existence is the simplest and least determination, it is nevertheless a determination of the object and therefore, removed *in toto cælo* from the object of sense, the indeterminate and the non-existent. At this low point of determination the object is nebulous, a mere 'this.' It falls within a class but has this significance that it is big with possibilities. It is "capable of infinitely numerous other determinations as it is brought into other relations."⁴

We have now reached the following conclusions. The object is the object of knowledge and as such it "unites the two sides of individuality and universality in the same way" as thought does. "It is a centre of relations, which constitute its properties. As differenced from all things else by the sum of these relations, it is individual, but to be so differenced from them all it must have an element in common with them. If it be said that it is individual, as momentarily presented to the sense, this very presentation can only be known or named, *i. e.*, can only have any meaning, as one property or relation of the thing amongst others."⁵ The object is at once, "the individual uni-

¹ III, 57.² III, 60.³ III, 61.⁴ III, 56.

⁵ III, 65. Green has used 'individual' in this quotation in the loose sense of 'particular.' The meaning is, however, unambiguous and need not be in the least confused with the technical use of the 'individual as the synthesis of the universal and the particular.'

versalized through its particular relations or qualities" and "the universal individualized through its particularity."¹ This process of individualization is a real process in which existence becomes more and more determinate through relations. In this sense the object may be said to be eternally incomplete; it is an individual object not when it is securely coralled within a class but in proportion as its implicit nature has been explicated by this process of universalizing through relations. Such a theory "admits in the fullest measure," says Green, "that the individual thing is real, and an object of knowledge, but maintains that it is so only in virtue of a relation which is universal, and without which the thing would have no intelligible properties at all."²

¹ III, 70.

² III, 60.

CHAPTER III.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF OBJECTIVITY.

WE have now reached a point from which we may proceed to an examination of Green's theory of consciousness which, as we have observed, rests on an examination of the object. The object has been exhibited as an individual, uniting particularity and universality through its relations in an objective order. A moment's reflection, however, will show that the term 'relation' is as yet unexplained. We have, so to speak, made use of the obvious fact of relations to portray the nature of objects, but have not yet inquired into the nature of relations as such. We have seen relations functioning in the world of objective things; but have not investigated the source of such relations. It is the purpose of this chapter to inquire into the character and implications of the relation which necessarily plays so large a part in every definition of the object; and to show in this way that the subjective factor is really involved in objectivity.¹

As long as the attention is fixed upon the object which is being defined by relations, *i. e.*, upon the content of the definition, we have no more need for a conscious subject than the astronomer who found no God when he swept the heavens with his telescope had for a God. Scientific theory is justly unconcerned with such a subject. But, on the other hand, philosophy cannot permanently escape the notion that a definition is somehow more than its content. It is by no means necessary to separate the form from the content, but it seems to be necessary to recognize that the content has a form. This recognition is a distinct step in the history of mental development. The child-like mind is always engulfed by the sheer objective reality, by

¹ Green's general contention that the object implies a subject is not based on the mere fact that subject and object are correlative terms. Such formal reasoning has been often used by philosophers, but Green is too well aware of the limitations of formal logic to rest his case on any such procedure. The implication with which he deals, as we shall soon discover, does not depend upon a superficial verbal definition of the object, but upon an examination of its inmost nature.

the meaning of its environment, without any apparent reflection upon the existence and nature of meaning itself. But upon a closer scrutiny it discovers that in finding its way about among other objects, and in dealing with them generally, it has always been concerned with meaning. Like *Monsieur Jourdain* when he discovered that he had been talking prose all his life, the mind discovers a deeper lying reality when it begins to reflect upon the meaning aspect of experience, although it has never known anything else but meaning. When the mind has once grasped the notion that the objective world is made up of relations, *i. e.*, that it is the very essence of the object to be related, it is but another step in the same direction to see that to be related is to have a meaning.

But in meaning we have to do with a reality of a different order, so far unlike the objects of experience that it cannot be discussed in terms appropriate to them. Objects of knowledge are in time and space, or they are connected in a causal series; but meaning is not related to objects as they are to each other. Although it is through these relations that objects exist and *have* a meaning, the meaning itself is unique. It is not, properly speaking, an object of knowledge at all, and yet it is never separated from objects of knowledge. If we define experience, as Green does, as "matters of fact recognized as such," we may perhaps say that in discussing objects we have to do with *matters of fact* recognized as such; while in discussing meaning we are interested in matters of fact *recognized as such*. They are inseparable but very different moments of a single reality.

The first step toward understanding the nature of meaning is to recognize that meaning and judgment are practically identical in Green's system, or that meaning is always meaning for some one and, therefore, in the form of judgment. Such an identification is no doubt wholly dependent upon how judgment is to be defined or conceived. To begin with, a judgment must obviously be distinguished from a proposition. The latter may be defined as a meaning expressed in a conventional language; perhaps it must even be still more limited in form to a subject and predicate bound together by a copula. At any rate, we see

at a glance that if judgment were to be so defined it would be a much narrower term than meaning; for meaning may be expressed by a single word, a gesture, or even an inhibition of movement.¹ Therefore, while every proposition probably represents a meaning,² it is not impossible that meaning may occur independently of propositions taken in this narrow sense. A judgment, on the contrary, is an act of knowledge which, regardless of its form of expression, deals intimately with the very relations which have been shown to constitute the objective order. To know, to judge, is first of all to apprehend a meaning. This brands every judgment, therefore, as an expression of meaning, and every meaning as a judgment. Like meaning, judgment is a distinctive characteristic, not of the merely objective phase of experience, but of concrete experience which has been defined as *matters of fact recognized as such*. Like meaning also it is not related to things as they are related to each other in terms of time, space, cause and effect, *et cetera*. Causality, for instance, is an intelligible relation, strictly adapted to the formation of judgment; but as an intelligible relation, it is neither the cause nor the effect of anything else. The same arguments apply in the case of space and time. Judgment is not another thing in space nor an event in time. In the judgment 'something is there now,' which is perhaps as abstract as any judgment, we immediately note that 'there' is distinguished from 'here,' and 'now' from some other time, past, or future, or both. The judgment, however, is neither here nor there, now nor then, unless we identify the written or spoken words with the act of knowledge, which they emphatically are not. Judgment is rather the organic unity of differences;³ the meaning of 'now' or of 'this.' We may, therefore, conclude that judgment is the meaning aspect of things, or, if we prefer it, that meaning is meaning for somebody, *i. e.*, judgment.

¹ Perhaps it may be shown that meaning is sometimes merely apprehended but unexpressed. This is, however, a psychological rather than a logical problem.

² Not every proposition as given represents a meaning in the mind of the speaker or writer, but every intelligible group of words represents a meaning for somebody at some time.

³ On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the differences which are unified in the judgment remain as differences. No judgment can be formed which is not in this sense both universal and particular.

Not only does meaning turn out to be the same as judgment; but when we reconsider Green's conception of fact as that which has meaning we see at once that even a *fact* in this sense is already a judgment. The truth is that facts, like judgments, are beyond the reach of the mechanical categories. No fact, as such, exists in space or time, and no fact is the cause of another fact. Facts exist only in experience, where *in* has no spatial significance. The world of facts is, therefore, the intelligible world. Space, time, and all the other categories are, no doubt, indispensable principles of intelligibility, but, as principles, are not related to intelligibility in a further hypothetical space and time, or in any external fashion whatever. As judgment is, for Green, the true type of knowledge or experience, it can "neither be constituted by events of which it is the experience, nor be a product of them."¹ But such a statement concerning judgment applies *mutatis mutandis* to all other terms which explicitly refer to the intelligible aspect of the universe. Meaning, judgment, fact, are neither things nor events, as such, but the intelligible nature of things and events. Green's actual treatment of judgment has, therefore, already been foreshadowed in his treatment of the object as relation and of facts as meaningful. For this reason it will not be necessary to dwell upon the subject of judgment at length in this chapter, but only to emphasize certain views, touched upon in the preceeding chapters, from this slightly modified standpoint.

First, judgment is the simplest component of knowledge. This view is exactly parallel to the theory noted above, that the unmeaning fact does not exist, and is diametrically opposed to the one commonly held that knowledge is built up out of sensations, or in the language of Locke, out of 'simple ideas which we do not make for ourselves.' According to the latter theory, judgment is a "mechanical combination of parts which remain outside each other."² This is to make judgment and proposition virtually synonymous. Against all such theories Green opposes the view that "the simplest fact" of sense impression "is already

¹ *Prolegomena*, section 16.

² Bosanquet, *Logic* (second edition), I, 31.

not a feeling but an explanation of a feeling.”¹ Following Locke, British classical philosophy held firmly to the ‘simple idea’ which was supposed to be the “datum or material of the mind, upon which it performs certain operations as upon something other than itself.”² “The fact is,” says Green, “that the simple idea with Locke, as the beginning of knowledge, is already at its minimum, the judgment, I have an idea different from other ideas, which I did not make for myself.”³ Here we have the keynote of Green’s criticism of sensationalism. To be a sensation means to be distinguished from other sensations. No consciousness could be built up out of a succession of present impressions unless the present were in some sense bound up with the past and the future. Green’s own language is vigorous and conclusive: “If we take as the germ of intelligent experience the simple consciousness of a sensation, this can only be expressed as the judgment ‘something is here.’ The ‘here,’ however, is the next moment a ‘there’; the one sensation is superseded by another.”⁴ The only datum of sense which can contribute in any way to knowledge is, therefore, already a judgment; or in other words, the judgment is the simplest element of knowledge.)

Secondly, judgment is a process of individualization, *i. e.*, the process of combining unity and variety. Reference has already been made to the process of definition through which the object gets its individuality. But definition does not take place in abstraction from knowledge; on the contrary, it is only in and through knowledge that definitions arise. To define the object is to give it a content, not merely to name it. Even the most abstract definitions of formal logic reveal this essentially concrete characteristic. We may take, as an instance, the definition, ‘Gold is a yellow metal soluble in aqua regia,’ in which we have given the traditional formal requirements of a definition—the genus and the differentia. It is to be noted, however, that Gold is not merely a name, as would be the case if we should say ‘Gold is Gold’; but in our definition Gold is arranged or given a

¹ I, 282.

² I, 19.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ III, 52. Quoted above, p. 22.

place in a system of knowledge; it is set off from other things. This extreme case illustrates the principle that *identity and difference* are indispensable to even the most unsatisfactory definition which can be called a definition at all. Indeed, the same thing may be discovered in the nebulous definitions which we give of our vaguest knowledge. 'A stalactite is a kind of stone,' or, 'Pumpernickel is a kind of bread' may be taken as examples of the barest knowledge, but here the differentia, if not quite explicit, is, nevertheless, implied in the phrase 'a kind of,' so common in everyday speech. Now this process of individualization, or of giving content to objects, is in reality judgment, for in the same sense that definition individualizes the particular object through universal relations, judgment holds its terms together, but at the same time holds them apart, *i. e.*, it deals with identity in difference. Green's rejection of the so-called equational logic, to which we have referred on a previous page, is based on the notion that judgment is a great deal more than an expression of identity; it must also express difference. In Green's own words, judgment "integrates just so far as it differentiates. Beginning with a simple assertion of being or identity with self, A is A , it goes on to bring A into relation to some other object, which in like manner has been arrested in its flux, This relation gives a contrast and difference. A is not B . But as not B it is something more than mere A . The difference has not taken something from it but added something to it. It has not become a fraction of what it was before but a fuller integer. It is no longer a bare unit, but a unity of differences, a center of manifold relations, a subject of properties. It is not an abstract universal, but it has an element of universality in virtue of which it can be brought into relation to all things else. Its universality is the condition of its particularization."¹

This brings us to the third, and for the present purpose the most important, characteristic of judgment. Judgment is the germ of all knowledge, *i. e.*, any judgment is capable of being developed further and further toward an ultimate system of knowledge. This is again exactly parallel with Green's conten-

¹ III, 63.

tion that the object is capable of infinitely numerous determinations. His belief that Aristotelian logic is wrong in identifying the first definition with complete definition is thus borne out by his own positive theory of the development of judgment. "The first act of thinking or knowing," he says, "is the judgment 'something is,' and the predicate of this judgment, 'being,' or the simple relation which it expresses, becomes gradually a subject of more and more determinate properties, as in successive judgments it is brought into new relations."¹ This means that no judgment is self-sufficient; that it is never complete, but always in the process of becoming complete by breaking down or giving way to a further and more concrete judgment. This is, indeed, but the other side of his contention that the first definition of an object is not the final or complete one; but when it is stated in this form it is seen to be essentially identical with the theory commonly advanced that all judgments are hypothetical.² Philosophy has practically abandoned the hope of the older rationalists that a single axiom or set of axioms could be found from which all other judgments may be deduced after the manner of Euclidean geometry. This general conviction, however, admits two very different interpretations. On the one hand, it leads to a relativism of the most indefensible variety. No sooner are some people convinced that there is no universal and necessary truth than they straightway conclude that there is no truth at all in the sense in which mankind has always believed in an objective truth.

On the other hand, a belief in the hypothetical character of judgment may mean, as it usually does in logical discussion, merely that any given judgment is essentially finite and incomplete. Such an interpretation, while holding to the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, is a very different view from the one commonly called relativism. The former is a logical or critical methodology and leads deeper into the questions of philosophy; the latter is uncritical dogmatism which leads nowhere, except

¹ III, 60. The thought expressed in this passage is clearly similar to the general Hegelian notion of the process of dialectic.

² Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, Chapter XXIV, p. 361; *Principles of Logic*, Bk. I, Chapter II; Bosanquet, *Logic* (second edition), I, 88 ff., 238 ff.

perhaps to its own destruction. No thoroughgoing thought can long remain ignorant of the far-reaching implications of the doctrine that every judgment is incomplete; for the hypothetical and categorical aspects of judgment can be neither permanently nor completely separated. They hang together in such a way that both must be recognized in any true account of knowledge. It is indeed the abstract separation of the two which has brought about the absurdities of extreme absolutism, on the one hand, and extreme relativism, on the other. Every hypothetical judgment, after all, is intimately connected with a categorical judgment, since it postulates something categorical regarding the nature of the whole of reality. This has been variously expressed by saying that the ultimate subject of every judgment is reality,¹ or that every judgment *claims* validity. "All hypothetical judgment," says Bosanquet, "rests on a categorical basis. That is to say, all relativity rests on an absolute datum and all necessity on fact. . . . Individuality is in self-relation, Necessity is in external relation."²

Green fully agrees with the latter interpretation of the hypothetical nature of judgment. Every judgment is, indeed, incomplete and finite, but every judgment is also a judgment about the real nature of things. The 'if so—then so' gets its significance from its categorical reference to reality. While recognizing, therefore, that all given judgments are incomplete Green really gives his attention to the implication of such a doctrine. The implication is briefly this, that there is a nature of things, a reality back of every relativity, through which the relativity gets its meaning; that finitude, by its very nature, looks beyond itself to a completion of itself in the infinite.³ In his philosophy

¹ Cf. Bosanquet, *Logic*, I, 71 ff., and Bradley, *Principles of Logic*, p. 365 ff.

² *Logic*, I, 241-242. See also I, 225. "We have self-relation, existence, or a categorical aspect, and external relation, necessity, or a hypothetical aspect."

³ Bosanquet speaks in this connection of the self as a "finite-infinite being." Cf. *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913). Although a later chapter will deal specifically with the relation of the finite and the infinite, attention may be called at this point to the direct bearing which Green's theory of the incomplete character of judgment must have upon his ultimate conception of God. Judgment is not only incomplete, *but it is becoming more complete*. Whatever Green's notion of God may prove to be, we may be quite sure that his God is to be found, if at

the emphasis is frankly laid on the ideally complete system as a basis for the successive steps of the judging activity rather than upon the finite character of each of the successive steps. If he tends to emphasize the *categorical basis* of hypothetical judgments rather more than later writers do, it is chiefly because his interest is clearly with what Bosanquet has called "individuality as self-relation" rather than with "relativity as external relation."

In the foregoing argument we have constantly observed Green's recourse to an explanatory principle other than the terms of the phenomenal series. How shall we conceive this principle? Regardless of the particular word which he uses, whether meaning, fact, relation, or judgment, he never fails to call attention to a phase of experience or a principle within experience which defies classification as one of the natural objects. We would go astray in thinking of this principle of relation or meaning as outside of, or beyond the series; but yet we are not permitted to identify it with any member of the series or with their sum. It is a principle of organization *throughout* the series. One fact does not exist for another, nor does the relation between the two exist for a third fact, nor yet for a fusion of the first two. The several facts exist together and yet they retain their severalty. When *matters of fact are recognized as such*, we have to do with a synthesis involving more than a sum, or mere aggregate of parts; we do indeed have unity, but a unity in which the parts are organized. On the other hand, we have a variety in which unity is immanent. Such a unity in variety in the case of objects has been previously designated 'individuality' which at once suggests the possibility of applying the category of individuality to our concrete experience. Is it not probable that individuality characterizes experience as a whole just as it does the items of experience which we have examined? If we answer in the affirmative we must say that objects are not only individuals through relation, but the experience of a world of objects, all, at the end of a series of judgments, progressively more and more concrete. It is to be kept steadily in mind that Green is fully committed to a conception of the infinite, or absolute, as the result of a process of greater and greater determination rather than as the outcome of a process of abstraction.

i. e., the *system* of relations which we know, is itself an individual combining unity and variety. This is, in fact, the hypothesis upon which Green's further speculation proceeds. From now on we shall be concerned in tracing his attempt to deal with finite experience and eventually with the ideally complete experience in terms of individuality.

This individuality of experience is, moreover, uniformly treated as a principle, not as a thing. Green sometimes expresses this idea by saying that in experience, or reality, there is a 'spiritual principle' which cannot be accounted for by a natural history. In dealing with concrete experience we leave the plane of things and strive for the plane of principles; for wherever we find facts or a distinction between truth and falsehood, *i. e.*, wherever we have the function of judgment, Green believes that we may justly assume that we have to deal with a spiritual principle rather than with a natural thing.

The spiritual principle, however, refers to no supernatural entity, or substance, or power of any kind, but is simply a way of designating the aspect of meaning or organization in whatsoever is. Green's contention, therefore, that there is a spiritual principle in nature is only that nature to its remotest parts means something; there is no place for the unrelated, unmeaning thing-in-itself. No 'natural history' can be given of this spiritual principle in nature; for the immanent relation must be presupposed as the condition of tracing its origin. His contention that there is a spiritual principle in knowledge is, again, simply that knowledge to its remotest element is meaningful, or in the form of judgment. There is no place for the unmeaning fact, the unmediated *datum* of sense. The particular in both cases is already, through meaning, more than a mere particular; it is, in fact, a universal particular—the *individual*, *i. e.*, the particular universalized through relations which constitute its individuality.

With such a principle of organization we are familiar in what we know as our intelligence. Our consciousness is, so to speak, at the center of the individuality of experience. The relations, and the judgments expressive of them are focused in a self-conscious, intelligent subject. The whole rational, purposive

agent, the *subject* of these objects of experience is thus literally implied—folded up—in such objectivity. This is at once a unique and a new factor in the problem before us of getting at the nature of experience. “No one and no number of a series of related events,” says Green, in emphatic summary, “can be the consciousness of the series as related.”¹

We have now shown that the relation which exists between objects is already meaning or judgment; it does not have to wait to be put into words. But judgment or relation is a reality of a unique character. Hitherto we have been dealing with objects related to one another; but when we consider the relation itself we find that the relation is not related as object to object. It is throughout the series, but not a member of the series. It is not a fact, but the meaning of fact. The meaning of fact, however, does not exist for another fact, nor for a sum of facts, but for a principle through which they are significant, *i. e., through which they are facts*. Such a principle has been tentatively identified with what we know as our intelligence—in a word, with consciousness in its broadest sense. It is this implied “consciousness of the series as related” which we have next to examine more in detail.

¹ *Prolegomena*, section 16.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE SUBJECT.

IN harmony with Green's plan to found the theory of consciousness upon an examination of objects, the discussion, up to this point, has been carried on as far as possible without reference to a theory of consciousness. Objectivity, however, has been shown to involve a principle of organization, not itself one of the objects, but that through which objects are possible. This principle of organization has also been tentatively identified with consciousness. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Green's conception of consciousness somewhat more in detail and especially to show how consciousness, as the *subject* of knowledge, is distinguished in his system from the *objects* of knowledge.

There are two typical methods of dealing with consciousness. First, it may be treated as an inner being or ego, of the existence of which we are immediately certain. This view is typified by the Cartesian expression *cogito ergo sum*. Second, it may be treated as an object of knowledge, subject to observation and quasi-mechanical explanation. The second view is typified by the procedure of Locke, who believed that he could discover the nature of consciousness by 'looking within his own mind to see how it wrought.' Both of these extreme views are rejected by Green, as we shall see in what immediately follows. In opposition to the former, he holds that knowledge of consciousness, far from being given to us intuitively as an immediate certainty, is arrived at only after a severe process of reflection, and the mediation of thought. In opposition to the latter, he holds that living consciousness is never an object but always the subject of knowledge. In support of the latter thesis he proposes to show that whenever consciousness is made an object of knowledge it is falsified; that when it is explained in quasi-mechanical terms its spirit is gone, leaving only an empty husk behind.¹

¹ Compare with this Bergson's statement that psychology can never deal with the true *moi qui dure*. The ultimate self eludes the grasp of the categories appro-

Philosophies of the first type have taken various forms, but there are some general features common to all. They agree in treating the existence of the self as more certain than anything else. They are ready with Descartes to doubt the existence of all objects in the whole world but to hold to the existence of a doubter.¹ The self, or subject, thus obtained is a pure, somewhat mystical 'ego,' given to us, we are told, by a sort of immediate intuition. By taking this intuitive self-knowledge as a starting point we are supposed to be able to deduce all other knowledge from it; it alone being the root of the tree of knowledge.²

We have already seen that Green distrusts such a philosophy,³ for it makes a wrong beginning which has laid idealism open to the charge of subjectivism. Common sense has fortunately refused to accept such a theory, because common sense is really much more immediately aware of objects than of a self. Without the doubtful aid of a formal dialectic no man doubts the existence of an objective world, although many men remain strangely unaware of selfhood.⁴ So far, it is safer to follow the lead of plain thinking. If either term is to be deduced we may more properly begin with the object than with the subject. No conscious being can be ignorant of an objective world; for consciousness is first of all concerned with content. On the other hand, although consciousness would be impossible without its subjective aspect, the subject is hidden, as it were, beneath the objective order. The consciousness of selfhood is the goal or result of thinking, rather than its beginning. We become aware

priate to a space world of identities. Up to this point Bergson and Green are in direct agreement. They do not, however, agree in a positive characterization of consciousness. Bergson tends to place consciousness beyond thought and to treat it as an object of immediate intuition, while Green simply places it beyond this type of thinking, although not beyond all rational conception, as we shall point out below.

¹ Cf. Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (Mitchell's translation, 1911), p. 1.

² The classic example of this position is, of course, found in Descartes.

³ Cf. Chapter I.

⁴ Cf. J. M. Baldwin, *Social and Ethical Interpretations* (4th edition); also Royce, *Studies in Good and Evil* (1899), pp. 143 ff. Royce quotes Fichte's declaration that "Most men could be more easily brought to believe themselves a piece of lava in the moon than to regard themselves as a self," p. 148; James Ward, *The Realm of Ends* (1911), p. 128 ff.

of it only after a certain stage in the development of knowledge has been reached.

The other type of philosophy, of which Locke may be taken as a typical representative, looks upon consciousness as the subject matter of the science of psychology. From this point of view ideas are regarded as phenomena of consciousness, and consciousness itself, as an object of knowledge,¹ which may be described or otherwise dealt with as the purposes of the science dictate. For Locke the task of philosophy was compassed by looking within his own mind to see how it wrought. Hume later essayed the task of building a true "science of *man*" upon the basis of observed experience, to take the place of "any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature."² But the experience within which he proposes to confine his investigations turns out to be an experience objectified, anatomized, in short, an object of knowledge rather than the concrete living reality of knowledge itself. "For to me it seems evident," writes Hume in the 'Introduction' to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, "that the essence of mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and *exact experiments*, and the *observation* of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations."³ The assumption of both Locke and Hume seems to be that if consciousness is to be known at all our knowledge of it must somehow be gained by what they term 'observation.' Hume contrasts the knowledge gained by observation which is to result in a 'science of man,' with the hypothetical or speculative knowledge of philosophers which results only in pretended knowledge of the ultimate qualities of human nature. Although Hume was doubtless right in rejecting the pretentious speculations of metaphysicians who gloried in the fact that their theories were uncontaminated by contact with experience, he certainly was wrong in supposing that observation

¹ Cf. *Creative Evolution*, p. 1 ff. Bergson's treatment of consciousness seems to illustrate both the intuitive and the psychological method.

² *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Selby-Bigge edition, 1896), p. xxi.

³ *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Selby-Bigge edition, 1896), p. xxi. Italics mine.

and experiment could answer all the legitimate questions which arise regarding the nature of consciousness, or experience in general.

There is a sense surely in which consciousness may become the object of knowledge, but there is also a sense in which the consciousness of objects is properly distinguished from the objects of consciousness. It always takes a consciousness to observe a consciousness, or in more technical language, there is a logical as well as a psychological aspect of consciousness. It is the logical question which interests Green. Admitting freely that consciousness may be an object of knowledge, he goes on to inquire about consciousness as the subject of knowledge. Psychology is certainly a worthy science, but there is a prior and more fundamental business for philosophy than the business of observing and describing consciousness. Philosophers must relate consciousness to the universe which consciousness knows and in which it has the power of placing itself among its own objects. A metaphysic of consciousness is, therefore, just as much needed as a psychology of consciousness, and, for better or for worse, it does pretend "to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature" which lie beyond the arbitrary limits of observation implied in Hume's definition of experience, although not, of course, beyond experience more broadly conceived. The 'consciousness' in which Green is interested, therefore, is not the self or consciousness with which psychology deals. Such a consciousness, by hypothesis, is, and remains, an object of knowledge: it is the being whom I know, rather than 'I' who know. Green most emphatically declares that he is not concerned with the 'phenomena of consciousness.' "The phenomena of matter, the phenomena of consciousness, the connection between the two sets of phenomena," he writes, "equally belong to an objective world, of which the objectivity is only possible for a subject."¹ He is concerned with the subject of knowledge, which, though not at first as apparent as the object, is later seen to be the very condition of the possibility of the objective world. The subject of knowledge is, he says, that

¹ I, 387.

"which we do not know but are, and through which we know."¹ This statement does not commit Green to any form of agnosticism regarding the nature of the self; for the point which he is emphasizing is that the self is not to be known as one object among others by means of the mechanical categories. In what sense it is known, and under what category, will best appear by an elimination of some of the categories which serve an excellent purpose in dealing with objects, but which show themselves to be inadequate whenever an attempt is made to apply them to the nature of the subject.

"The dominant notion of the self in Locke," says Green, "is that of the inward substance, or 'substratum of ideas,' coördinate with the outward."² Here we have the very root of the Lockean philosophy, to the destruction of which Green set himself in the *Introduction to Hume's Treatise of Human Nature*. "There are two propositions on which Locke is constantly insisting," he says, "one, that the object of his investigation is *his own* mind, the other, that his attitude toward this object is that of mere observation. He speaks of his own mind, it is to be noticed, just as he might of his own body. . . . He, just as much as the untutored Cartesian, regarded the 'minds' of different men as so many different things."³ The legitimate outcome of such a conception of the self is found in Hume's famous testimony: "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, . . . I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception."⁴ Any attempt such as Hume's is foredoomed to failure because it sets out in quest of that which is not to be found in heaven or earth, viz., a substance without attributes. But it is especially futile to search for consciousness under the form of substance; for it is through consciousness that substance gets whatever meaning it has.

Regardless of the terms in which it may be defined, substance

¹ III, 267.

² I, 108.

³ I, 6.

⁴ *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 252. Cf. p. 635.

is sure to be conceived as a thing; if not in space, at least coördinate with things in space. It is something which excludes something else. Substances may be lined up in a row and numbered or labeled by intelligence. Substance is clearly an object of knowledge, and no qualification of substance as 'thinking' can redeem it from its position as an object of knowledge to a position as a subject of knowledge. The subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge are as eternally distinct as the two ends of a stick are distinct.¹ A philosophy, therefore, which treats mind as an inner substance treats it merely as an object of knowledge. Mind, which constitutes both the inner and the outer, is, in the language of Green, "treated as itself the inner 'substratum which it accustoms itself to suppose.' It thus becomes the creature of its own suppositions. Nor is this all. This, indeed, is no more than the fate which it must suffer at the hands of every philosopher who, in Kantian language, brings the source of the Categories under the Categories."² Even if an object could be supposed to know itself as a substance among other similar objects, the knowledge thereof would still remain something quite different from a substance. Or suppose we agree to treat the *self* as a thing which has a consciousness of objects, we do not in the least advance toward giving an account of the consciousness of which the self is thus made a bearer. Whether or not we are convinced that the self is a thing, we still face the ultimate fact of the consciousness of objects, and this consciousness itself refuses to be treated as a thing. However far we force the matter back, we are driven sooner or later to admit a definite and fundamental difference between objects and consciousness of objects. We discover, moreover, that nothing whatever is to be gained by the device of supposing a substance as a supporter or possessor of consciousness. Such a super-numerary has long been on the retired list in philosophical discussion. We will therefore avoid pedantry by continuing to use 'consciousness' and 'self' as synonymous terms.

¹ Cf. Hegel's criticism of Spinoza's conception of substance and his estimate of the advance made by philosophy when it came to deal with 'subject.' *Logic*, translated by Wallace, sec. 151.

² I, 110.

Any theory which looks upon the self as an inner substance is, moreover, destined to become involved in the false antithesis of an 'internal' and an 'external' world. These two worlds represent what we usually understand by the psychical and the physical. The so-called internal world is the world of subjective experience, psychic states, etc., while the external world is the world of space and matter. No one can deny that the psychical and the physical are properly distinguished, but what meaning can we attach to the epithets 'internal' and 'external'? We might as well call the one blue and the other red. This antithesis gets its force from our tendency to think of consciousness as an object of knowledge. But whenever psychic states are treated as objects of knowledge they are exactly coördinate with all other objects of knowledge and come under the same rubrics.¹ The moment we pass, however, from mind as an object of knowledge to mind as the subject of knowledge we must use different tactics. The subject of knowledge cannot be a thing or substance. The so-called external world may, indeed, be external to the human body, inasmuch as the body also is in space; but how can it be external to the consciousness of externality? To speak of things as "outside the mind" is "nonsense," says Green.²

Space or extension is real as the "relation of mutual externality."³ But the relation of 'mutual externality' is meaning, judgment, knowledge, and is, therefore, not inside or outside of anything.⁴ It is quite appropriate to speak of a consciousness of space, but perfectly unmeaning to speak of a consciousness *in* space. 'Things' unquestionably exist in space, but consciousness

¹ Much discussion of the relation of mind and body has never risen above the plane of weighing one object over against another. In such discussions there is a constant tendency to treat mind as an object of knowledge. (Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, Chapter XXIII.) For this reason it is better to substitute Green's terms 'subject' and 'object' for 'mind' and 'body' of the older disputations.

² II, 200; also I, 482, and *Prolegomena*, sections 60 and 64.

³ I, 228; also II, 16.

⁴ Cf. *Prolegomena*, sections 52 and 60. Cf. Bergson's statement: "To ask whether the universe exists only in our thought, or outside of our thought, is to put the problem in terms that are insoluble, even if we suppose them to be intelligible;" *Matter and Memory* (translated by Paul and Palmer, 1911), p. 13.

as subject is not a 'thing.' Nothing is to be gained by such a confusion between thought and its object. They are eternally distinguished, although never separated, or separable. Their distinction, however, can not be put in quasi-spatial terms; one is not 'here,' the other 'there,' nor is one 'this' and the other 'that.' Green has summed up his distinction between things and the consciousness of things in the following language: "A motion can only be a motion, or a configuration a configuration, for a subject to which every stage of the one, every part of the other, is equally present with the rest; and what is such a subject but conscious?"¹

The attempt to conceive the mind as an inner substance fails, therefore, because it is an attempt to spatialize the meaning or knowledge of space. A corresponding error results from an attempt to place consciousness in time. As the older British philosophy had undertaken an account of the self in terms of substance, so the newer philosophy, that of Green's own time, was trying to conceive consciousness in terms of an event. Consciousness was to be explained by reference to events which preceded it. It was to take its place in the evolutionary series as one step in the progress. Against all this Green raises his characteristic protest: *Consciousness cannot be a member of the series of events of which it is the consciousness.* Phenomena are always in time, but meaning or the consciousness of phenomena is not a phenomenon.² Nothing in Green's philosophy has caused more perplexity than his contention that a 'natural history' of consciousness is impossible.³ This has been taken as a denial of the general laws of biological evolution. While there is no real basis for such a supposition, it must be admitted that Green allows himself to use expressions which, if taken by themselves, could be so interpreted. He distinctly declares, for

¹ I, 379.

² *Prolegomena*, sec. 57.

³ By 'natural history' Green referred to the kind of genetic account which seeks to place a phenomenon in a temporal series, to tell what preceded it, or when it arose in a larger history. Such a history may indeed be written about consciousness in so far as consciousness is a *phenomenon*, but it is altogether beside the mark or even impossible when we study consciousness as subject.

instance, that man is not a part of nature.¹ That the spirit of such a declaration, however, transcends the letter is made perfectly evident by his qualification of the word 'man.' It is man "for whom there is a cosmos of experience" of whom no 'natural history' can be written, or it is the "principle in man which knows nature" that is not to be looked upon as a 'part of nature.' When the matter is put in this way the contention that a 'natural history' of consciousness is impossible becomes not only defensible, but quite unquestionable or even commonplace. In whatever sense man is a member of the biological series man is a part of nature; but there is a sense in which man is a knower of the series, a formulator of its laws, and it is in the latter sense that he is not "an event or the product of an event." Green's contention, that the knower is not in time, is preposterous if the 'knower' means the psychic individual 'who rides in a coach from Oxford to London,' but the 'knower' with which Green is concerned means nothing of the kind. The 'knower' means for him not only the logical or metaphysical subject of knowledge; but it means that subject in its peculiar and single character of subjectivity.

"There could be no such thing as time," says Green, plainly enough, "if there were not a self-consciousness which is not in time."² It must be remembered that 'self-consciousness' is not the man who rides in a coach, or who was born on a certain day. Each man is born, passes through certain changes, and dies. Such facts are not here in question. Nor are we discussing mere change as it occurs in psychic processes; but the question is, What is presupposed in the 'consciousness of change'?³ It is the *consciousness of change* which he declares can "neither be constituted by events of which it is the experience, nor be a product of them."⁴ In a similar argument he writes: "We may decide all the questions that have been debated between materialists and spiritualists as to the explanation of particular facts in favor of the former, but the possibility of explaining them at

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 5.

² *Ibid.*, sec. 52. See also I, 128.

³ *Ibid.*, sec. 15 and 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 16.

all will still remain to be explained. We shall still be logically bound to admit that in a man who can know a nature—for whom there is a 'cosmos of experience'—there is a principle which is not natural and which cannot without a *ὑστερον πρότερον* be explained as we explain the facts of nature."¹ "That which happens," he says, "whether we reckon it an inward or an outward, a physical or a psychical event—and nothing but an event can, properly speaking, be observed—is as such in time. But the presence of consciousness to itself, though, as the true 'punctum stans' (Locke, Essay II, Chap. XVII, sec. 16) it is the condition of the observation of events in time, is not such an event itself. In the ordinary and proper sense of 'fact,' it is not a fact at all, nor yet a possible abstraction from facts."² In a similar connection he writes, "some suspicion may perhaps be created that a natural history of self-consciousness, and of the conceptions by which it makes the world its own, is impossible, since such a history must be of events, and self-consciousness is not reducible to a series of events."³ "Should the question be still asked," says Nettleship, in his *Memoir of Green*, "If the self-consciousness implied in moral action is not derived from nature or circumstances, what then is its origin? the answer must be that it has no origin. 'It never began because it never was not. It is the condition of there being such a thing as beginning or end.'"⁴

Such statements are likely to excite suspicion in the minds of those who are accustomed to rely upon evolutionary explanation as the only valid and sufficient solution of human problems; and they appear especially objectionable when taken out of their context and allowed to stand as bald assertions. A more careful interpretation of Green's language and a more sympathetic appreciation of his spirit will, however, dispel these misunderstandings. The "eternal self" may not be such a fearful

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 9. "By calling the principle not natural," says Green, "we mean that it is neither included among the phenomena which through its presence to them form a nature, nor consists in their series, nor is itself determined by any of the relations which it constitutes among them." *Prolegomena*, sec. 54.

² I, 121.

³ I, 166.

⁴ III, cxxxiii.

monster as some have imagined. In order to understand what Green had in mind we cannot insist too often that it is not the psychological self with which we have to do. This is of primary importance since Green's critics persistently fall into the error of treating him as a psychologist rather than as a metaphysician. He does not undertake to defend the existence of the eternal self by means of psychological introspection or by appeal to any *data of consciousness* whatever. His interest is to show that an eternal consciousness as the subject of knowledge is implied in the existence of objects. The *facts* of consciousness exist in time just as much for Green as they do for the psychologist. As events, the events of consciousness transpire just as really for Green's theory as they do for common-sense. His contention is simply and solely that the meaning of time, that is, the consciousness of time, is not an event.

A representative criticism of Green which illustrates this psychological bias is to be found in Professor A. E. Taylor's *The Problem of Conduct*. The burden of Taylor's disagreement with Green is that ethics is not dependent on metaphysics as Green taught. Inasmuch as this question is not germane to our present purpose, we pass at once to the incidental criticism of Green's conception of the self. In opposition to Green, Taylor makes what he himself calls two "rather sweeping assertions." They are: "(1) There is no such thing as the Eternal Self, in Green's sense of the term; (2) if there were such a thing as the Eternal Self, it would be of no value for the purposes of the student of Ethics."¹ Although both of the statements are indeed 'rather sweeping,' if we were to emphasize the conspicuous word *thing*, we should have assertions with which Green himself would heartily agree. That this suggestion is not a mere cavil will appear as we proceed to a discussion of Mr. Taylor's strictures.

"What Green intended to prove," he writes, "was, of course, that the individual consciousness of each of us, on one side at least, is something which is not a result of 'natural forces,' has not had a beginning in time nor in history, and consequently cannot be adequately described by the methods of 'natural' or

¹ *The Problem of Conduct* (1901), p. 65.

'empirical' science." So far, this passage gives an accurate statement of Green's purpose, but it is immediately followed by an interpretation much less satisfactory. Taylor seems to agree with Green that ethics cannot be based on 'physical' facts, but asks, "why may we not, . . . base our ethics in the main on the *observed facts*¹ of specifically *human* life?"² Simply, we must reply, because they are still *observed facts*, phenomena, which, according to Green, presuppose the ethical consciousness which is in question. The critic has lapsed into the old fallacy of treating a metaphysical principle as a psychological phenomenon. It is a mistake to suppose that Green objected only to reducing consciousness to a series of 'physical' as opposed to 'psychical' facts. The empirical sciences, for him, are those sciences which deal with the world of objects by means of the generally recognized categories of science, psychology being included among them.³

Professor Taylor sums up Green's argument in the following language: "Subject and object are relative terms which mutually imply one another, and cannot exist independently of each other; matter and motion and the physical world are objects, *ergo* matter is not subject, and conversely the subject which knows, desires, etc., is not matter. From this result, which we have no desire to impugn, he goes straight to the further conclusion that each and every self or subject, not being a secondary product of *physical* forces, cannot have come into being, and cannot have a natural history."⁴ Now, inasmuch as Green includes the 'psychical' (meaning thereby the phenomena of consciousness) along with the 'physical' world as an object of knowledge, we must insert the word 'psychical' into Mr. Taylor's second proposition so that it will read: 'matter and motion and the physical and psychical worlds are objects.' Having done this, the final conclusion, in the passage quoted, loses its apparent character of a *non sequitur* and becomes the only possible conclusion to be drawn. The implication of Professor Taylor's language is that Green did not take due account of the possibility of the self

¹ My italics.

² *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 66.

³ Cf. Bosanquet, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1901-02), p. 36 ff.

⁴ *The Problem of Conduct*, pp. 68 and 69. My italics.

being a product of *psychical* forces, whereas Green actually excludes such a possibility along with his denial that consciousness arises out of physical events. It is events, as such, which cannot account for the consciousness of them. Whether we choose to call those events physical or psychical is of no significance.

"What evidence, then," continues the critic, "does Green supply that might lead us to affirm the underived character not merely of consciousness, but of the 'self'? As far as I comprehend his reasonings, all the evidence for this important transition is offered by the consideration that a series of related events cannot possibly become aware of itself as a related series."¹ Again, the reader might be satisfied with this interpretation, did the author not hasten to add the footnote: "This position itself needs more qualification than Green gives it before it can be accepted as psychologically true." The author confesses that he is unable, by introspection, to verify Green's contention. "But of course," he writes, "an opponent may say that this is due to defective *observation*."² This seems an altogether singular position for one who is familiar with Green's convincing arguments against Hume's attempt to find such a 'self' by 'looking within his own mind.' This confusion between the self as a principle of unity in difference and the self as psychological and objective is at the root of this and of much misunderstanding of Green. The only reply to be made is the one made by D. G. Ritchie to Bradley's characterization of the 'timeless self' as a "psychological monster."³ The timeless self does not claim to be a psychological self, and Green protests against such an interpretation throughout his works. The timeless self is not the psychological self (which is by hypothesis in time, since it may be observed); but rather the knowing consciousness logically implied in the possibility of psychology. Such a self is not discovered by observation but by a rational disclosure of the nature of observation; it is not a fact but the meaning of fact.

The next step in Mr. Taylor's argument is that relative

¹ *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 70.

² *Loc. cit.*, note 2. My italics.

³ *Philosophical Review*, III, 28, 29. Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 113.

permanency of the self is all that is required to account for unity in diversity. "What is required," he says, "in order that the successive presentations *A, B, C* may all be recognized as experiences of the one soul or self *d*, is not that *d* itself shall stand in some mysterious way outside the time series, but simply that alongside of the transition *A, B, C* there shall remain elements in the experience of *d* which are the same at the moment when *C* is being experienced as when *A* was being experienced."¹ Here again the question is bound to arise—What can *relative permanency*, or 'change at a much less rapid rate' mean without the implicated consciousness for which such relative permanence is a fact? No point can be carried against Green's metaphysics by an appeal to psychological facts. They may be real and very important facts, but they are not relevant to the discussion. Our attention must be fixed on the question, 'What is a fact?', not 'What are the facts?' The spiritual principle which Green has called 'consciousness' is, by hypothesis, the meaning of facts and events, and as such, it is not a fact or an event.² Consciousness is a principle internal to events themselves by virtue of which they are constituted. Such a view of the nature of consciousness no more destroys the reality of time than a declaration of the non-spatial character of knowledge destroyed the reality of space in the former argument. It does, however, destroy the possibility of setting up time as an independent reality, or of making time serve as a universal category. Mind is the creator of time, not its creature. In whatever sense and degree consciousness knows a series of natural events, in that sense and to that degree it is not a member of the *natural* series.

¹ *The Problem of Conduct*, p. 72.

² From this it follows without argument that the subject is not to be conceived as that which existed prior to the beginning of events (*Prolegomena*, sec. 73), or as that which exists as an unmoving point outside of the series of events, in relation to which they move. Green's use of the expression '*punctum stans*' is shown by the above quotation to be borrowed from Locke in an attempt to meet Locke on his own ground. It is not native to Green's thought. Cf. Bosanquet, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1901-02), p. 39. "The first thing to remember seems to me to be that it [the *punctum stans* argument] does not at all stand alone, but that the main foundation of Green's argument is clearly and continually expressed in other terms, (e. g., *Prolegomena*, sections 36 and 83) referring to the nature of a true whole, and the progressive realization of such a whole in the human mind."

Green not only refuses to think of the self in spatial or temporal terms, but, in a similar manner, he argues against applying the categories of cause and effect to the self. Cause is a principle of intelligibility whereby consciousness knows the world of objects. It applies to objects, but not to knowledge of objects.¹ "A proposition," says Green, "which asserts divine causation for any phenomenon is not exactly false, but turns out on strict analysis to be unmeaning."² It is unmeaning because God, when truly conceived as the spiritual principle in the world, is in no sense interpolated as the supernatural into an otherwise natural series of events. In exactly the same sense our consciousness does not cause its object nor does the object cause consciousness.³ Numerous attempts have been made to show that consciousness is the effect of the interaction of organism and environment. All such attempts, according to Green, take certain relations between objects, "which only belong to them as being what consciousness has made them, to explain the fact of there being the consciousness to which they owe their existence. . . . A product of consciousness—or, to speak more precisely, a certain correlation of matter and organism belonging to the 'universe which arises in consciousness,' or to that objective world to the existence of which it is admitted that a subject is necessary—is thus employed to account for the origin of consciousness."⁴ Such a procedure, he continues, "can only remind us of Baron Munchausen's feat in swinging himself across a stream by the sleeve of his own coat."⁵

But enough has now been said of Green's treatment of the particular categories to prepare for his own positive conception of consciousness. We have seen that consciousness is not an object of knowledge in any ordinary sense. It is not a phenomenon in any sense of the word. It is not, therefore, related to objects as objects are related to each other. The categories

¹ Cf. *Prolegomena*, sections 16 and 17.

² III, 264.

³ "Intelligence, experience, knowledge, are no more a result of nature than nature of them." *Prolegomena*, sec. 36.

⁴ I, 482.

⁵ I, 482, 483.

of the empirical sciences do not apply to the source of the categories. "In vain," says M. Bergson in a slightly different context but in the same spirit, "we force the living into this or that one of our molds. All the molds crack. They are too narrow, above all too rigid, for what we try to put into them."¹ "The greatest writer," says Green, "must fall into confusions when he brings under the conceptions of cause and substance the self-conscious thought which is their source; and nothing else than this is involved in Locke's avowed enterprise of knowing that which renders knowledge possible as he might know any other object."²

So far, however, our conception of consciousness and its relation to its object is negative. 'Of what value,' it may be asked, 'is the proof for the reality of a mere principle which causes nothing, is nowhere, and about which no natural history can be written? Is it not a logical abstraction rather than real existence?' Green raises the same objection and answers it in the following language: "To the rejoinder that implication in the conception of nature does not prove real existence, the answer must be the question, What meaning has real existence, the antithesis of illusion, except such as is equivalent to this conception?"³ This summary, perhaps almost curt, reply to his critics should, by no means, lead us to suppose that Green was fully content to stop with a purely negative or formal characterization of the subject. His argument up to this point has been a means to an end. Little by little he has forced his reader to abandon the common habits of thinking *about* thought, or self-consciousness, as if it were an object of knowledge, and has brought him face to face with the subject of knowledge. By this method he has cleared the ground for a more adequate notion of the self as the *subject* related to the object through the unique, creative function of knowledge—*it knows the object*.

The subject, so understood, although it can never be conceived in the ordinary terms, is not left as a vague, mystic ab-

¹ *Creative Evolution* (translated by Mitchell, 1911), p. x. Cf. III, 228-229.

² I, 109.

³ I, 129.

straction about which nothing can be said.¹ On the contrary, it is arrived at by greater and greater determination through a process of mediating dialectic in which the mechanical categories are gradually shown to be inadequate and the nature of individuality correspondingly revealed. Reflection, in its initial stages, showed that objects are individualized through the categories. We are now ready to understand the positive nature of the subject, as the true individual, the true case of unity in variety. Speaking of objects, Green writes: "Abstract the many relations from the one thing, and there is nothing. They, being many, determine or constitute its definite unity. It is not the case that it first exists in its unity, and then is brought into various relations. Without the relations it would not exist at all. In like manner the one relation is a unity of the many things. They, in their manifold being, make the one relation. If these relations really exist, there is a real unity of the manifold, a real multiplicity of that which is one. But a plurality of things cannot of themselves unite in one relation, nor can a single thing of itself bring itself into a multitude of relations. It is true, as we have said, that the single things are nothing except as determined by relations which are the negation of their singleness, but they do not therefore cease to be single things. Their common being is not something into which their several existences disappear. On the contrary, if they did not survive in their singleness, there could be no relation between them—nothing but a blank featureless identity. There must, then, be something other than the manifold things themselves, which combines them without effacing their severalty. With such a combining agency we are familiar as our intelligence."²

Every intelligent experience does present this typical unity, combining the manifold things without effacing their severalty. The one category, therefore, which seems appropriate to consciousness is individuality. The same individuality which we discovered as the essential nature of judgment, the simplest form

¹ On this point Green is diametrically opposed to Bergson. Contrast the formula of Spinoza—*determinatio negatio est*. Epist. L.

² *Prolegomena*, sections 28 and 29. See also section 10 and Nettleship, *Memoir*, III, lxxvi.

of knowledge, also characterizes knowledge in all its complexity as we find it in the experience of a long life. Indeed, the whole of knowledge is but an expansion of the judgment. In judgment we have a key to the nature of consciousness and also to its relation to the object. As the terms of the judgment do not exist independently, but only in and through the judgment; so the objects of consciousness do not exist independently, but only in and through consciousness.

By the term 'consciousness' we here refer to the principle in man of which no natural history can be given, viz., his capacity or function of holding objects together in knowing them without effacing their severalty. The objects, as we pointed out above, exist only for consciousness and in that sense consciousness may be said to create them. This view of Green's, however, is to be sharply distinguished from that of Kant.¹ For Kant, the understanding makes nature by forming that which is given as the matter of experience. For Green, in whatever sense the understanding creates the form, it also creates the matter of experience. At this point Green leans more heavily on Aristotle than on Kant. Form and matter are not to be separated. We are not free to speak of the understanding as a kind of artisan who works up the material already at hand, for the material with which the artisan works is already formed. The understanding makes nature in making nature possible, but this function is not dependent upon having at hand a primeval clay out of which to mold its forms. To be is to be formed, to be related, or, in the language of Greek philosophy, the object of sense does not exist; to be is to be an "object of knowledge." Kant's idea is that without the understanding there would be a disordered world of things by themselves; Green's idea is that without the understanding there would be no world at all.

"Everything is obscure in the idea of creation," says Bergson, "if we think of *things* which are created and a *thing* which creates."² When we say that consciousness creates its object we are prone to form an image of consciousness working upon

¹ *Prolegomena*, sections 11 ff.

² *Creative Evolution*, p. 248.

something—engaged, as it were, in its manufacture. But this imagery is all wrong. The creation of which Green speaks must be thought of in a very different way. The process of creating the object has already been described as a process of determination, leading from an abstract, relatively unformed thing to the highly developed concrete individual thing. In this sense creation is internal to the object. The object, in truth, develops itself; since the relations of its individuality are not imposed from without, but, developing from within, expose or bring out the true nature of the object.

At other times Green speaks of the relation of consciousness to the object as that of parent to child. Consciousness can find its own life reproduced in its object. It knows, and, inasmuch as objectivity exists in and through the function of knowledge, consciousness may be said to be the father of the world. "But though the world of nature is, in this sense, a world of man's own creation, it is so in a different way from the world of art and of philosophy. Thought is indeed its parent, but thought in its primary stage fails to recognize it as its own, fails to transfer to it its own attributes of universality, and identity in difference. It sees outward objects merely in their diversity and isolation. It seeks to penetrate nature by endless dichotomy, glorying in that dissection of unity which is the abdication of its own prerogative."¹

But whatever metaphor Green uses, the essential character of the self as a true unity in plurality and plurality in unity is what he is most concerned to show. Although the ordinary terms appropriate to the object of knowledge do not apply to the subject of knowledge, the self, or subject, is, nevertheless, like the object in that it unites universality and particularity in individuality.² Along with the similarity, however, there is this difference. The individuality of the object is not for itself, but only for the subject who individualizes it in knowing it, while the subject is an individual for itself. The subject, by this self-returning activity, does actually know itself, not, to be sure,

¹ III, 21-22. Cf. *Prolegomena*, sections 10, 11 ff.

² Cf. Seth, *Man's Place in the Cosmos* (1897), pp. 163-164. "The thing and its qualities is a mere analogue of the self as a many in one."

under the forms of space, time, causality, and the like, but as a unity in variety. It knows itself not as its own object, but as the necessary correlate of the fact that it has an object. It is driven home to itself from its contact with objectivity, and then for the first time knows itself as that above all which made its first experience possible. It sees itself not as an object, but as a creative individual subject. This view is, of course, by no means original with Green. Hegel has made such language famous when describing the subject.¹ He defines individuality as "the reflection-into-self of the specific characters of universality and particularity."² In Green's language we call the subject a spiritual principle because "we are warranted in thinking of it as a self-distinguishing consciousness."³ "There is nothing 'für sich bestehend' but thought itself."⁴

Green's critical work, says Professor Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, has a "victorious" and "conclusive" character, "but as regards the nature of the Self or Spiritual Principle which is, in his hands, the instrument of victory, the candid reader of Green is forced to admit that almost everything is left vague."⁵ It may readily be admitted that there is a kind of vagueness about Green's account, as there must be about any account, of a principle which is shown to be beyond the usual methods of thought. The epitome of Green's attempt to define the self is revealed in the question: "What is that which retains a plurality in its plurality, and yet unifies it through relation, but consciousness?"⁶ It is that unity in which diversity is immanent; it is the true harmony of the universal and the particular, *i. e.*, the individual. Whatever vagueness there is in such an account of consciousness can be avoided only by a return to the plane of mechanism, where, waiving all ultimate questions, we abandon the hope of metaphysic. But if we would inquire into the nature of the subject we must use language applicable to its unique

¹ "The *idea* is truth in itself and for itself." *Logic* (Wallace), section 213.

² *Ibid.*, section 163.

³ *Prolegomena*, section 54.

⁴ II, II, note 1. Cf. II, 211.

⁵ *Hegelianism and Personality* (1887), p. 4.

⁶ II, 16.

character. Leaving the explanation of mechanism, we must go on to a conception of consciousness as in some sense the source of the mechanical relations. To him who can believe in the reality of those things only which his eyes have seen and his hands have handled, Green's talk of 'spiritual principles' will continue to be enigmatical. To such a one, consciousness must be put some place, or set in time, before it can claim reality; to say that consciousness is an *individual*, or a *unity in plurality* or a *principle*, is, so he thinks, to 'multiply words without knowledge.' But Green offers no concessions to such perverse scepticism. Like a teacher of old, when men say of consciousness, 'Lo, here, or Lo, there,' Green warns us to believe them not; if we would find consciousness we must seek it in the way of the spirit.¹

¹ Cf. *Mark*, 13, 21.

CHAPTER V.

GOD: THE COMPLETE INDIVIDUAL.

OUR theory of consciousness is not complete until we have seen not only what consciousness *is*, but what it is *to be*. As objects have been found to exhibit different degrees of concreteness or individuality, so there are degrees of individuality in the subject. Although the simplest recognition of matters of fact is infinitely removed from bare particularity, consciousness, in its early stages, is relatively nebulous and undetermined. But as the object of knowledge points beyond itself to a complete system of nature, so the finite subject finds its significance by reference to a total situation beyond its limitations. We have seen that the object becomes more and more complete through successive stages of definition; we have yet to trace the course of the finite subject through a similar development. The progress in each case is toward an ideal completion of individuality, but there is this fundamental difference: The ideal system of nature in which the object finds its complete definition exists not for the actual object of nature, but for man who conceives such a system; whereas, the ideally complete subject exists for the actual subject as his own self-conscious ideal.

The individuality which I discover in my own experience is, after all, but a fragment. I am limited on all sides. Not only do I often miss the truth, but I *always fall short of it*; and yet I am not limited by an absolute boundary as an animal is confined in a cage. The limitation of human knowledge, which no one disputes and which requires no proof, is the limitation inherent in the nature of knowledge. Knowledge, as Green has so frequently suggested, has to do with a situation in which there is a certain disparity between that which is and that which is not yet. The guiding thread in the study of an object is the ideal of a complete account of the object in its total relation. It is the nature of an ideal to be beyond the present grasp, and

yet the ideal, as a functional part of experience, is equally present in experience with that which is already grasped. There is a sense, therefore, in which knowledge sets its own limits. It sets a goal; approximates it, only to set another, and so on endlessly. Thus, although our knowledge is certainly finite, the limits are not fixed or imposed from without, but are incidental to the internal development of knowledge and are eternally being overcome. The finite mind, in knowing, exhibits itself as potentially infinite through this very process of setting up a limit and then of passing beyond its own limit. Our knowledge is never quite complete, but always finds its completion in a future judgment referring to that which lies beyond the present insight, or, in other words, to reality as a whole. No philosophy can ignore this forward-pointing characteristic of knowledge; since reality will never be adequately expressed in terms of finitude, and since what lies beyond our present grasp is, nevertheless, a very important aspect of the world and must be reckoned with. In what sense it is real and what relation it sustains with finite experience constitutes a fundamental problem for all types of metaphysical theory. Green faces this problem with confidence, although with great caution.

It is first necessary to remember that all predication is based upon an assumption that there is a nature of things or a basal reality by reference to which all judgments get their meaning, and through which truth is distinguished from falsehood. What the reality beyond the present is, is not now in question. "The complete determination of an event," writes Green, "it may be impossible for our intelligence to arrive at. There may always remain unascertained conditions which may render the relation between an appearance and such conditions of it as we know, liable to change. But that there is an unalterable order of relations, . . . is the presupposition of all our enquiry into the real nature of appearances."¹

We are justified in assuming the existence of such an objective totality² by reference to which our knowledge acquires validity.

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 26. See also sec. 70.

² Mr. A. J. Balfour doubts this statement. Cf. *Mind*, IX, 83.

because the scepticism which would deny its existence destroys itself in the same breath by assuming some such reality as the basis for its denial. Any conclusion based on the assumption that there is such a dependable system of relations will not, therefore, be weakened by the suggestion that "the validity of our conclusion, upon our own showing, depends upon there really being such an order of nature as our quest of knowledge supposes there to be, which remains unproven." For, Green continues, "as the sceptic in order to give his language a meaning, must necessarily make the same supposition—as he can give no meaning to reality but the one explained—his suggestion that there really may not be such an order of nature is one that conveys nothing at all."¹

Inasmuch as all thought proceeds on the assumption of the verifiability of its claims, those who would think are compelled to assume also the reality of a total objective situation as a basis for such a verification. To deny the existence of such a universe is to affirm it. It is also necessary to believe that the process of verification of tomorrow will be similar to the one of today. No body of knowledge could exist unless nature is in some sense uniform and continuous. On these considerations, Green rests his conclusion that there must be some kind of an objective criterion of judgment, a reality which gives meaning to the claim of validity.

This reality, however, to which our particular judgments are referred may be conceived in at least two very different ways. On the one hand, it may be conceived as a fixed reality outside of thought, to which our ideas correspond more or less accurately. Green unconditionally rejected this view.² Our ideas are in no sense copies of an alien reality; for a moment's reflection shows that ideas are included within reality. 'The work of the mind is real,' he tells us. If truth is to be defined as 'the agreement of thought with its object,' the definition must be reinterpreted. It can no longer take shelter behind a naïve assumption that thought may somehow be superimposed upon its object and found

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 26.

² Cf. Chapter II.

to match point by point. Another serious objection to this view is that reality is looked upon as a fixed quantum which admits of no essential change. Everything is there, once for all, in a static, substantial form. The dice are loaded so that whatever happens must take place along preëstablished lines: there is no room for actual change or freedom.

On the other hand, reality may be looked upon as a total concatenation, coherent as human experience is coherent, but in its totality beyond the grasp of the finite mind. According to such a theory, truth may be said to depend upon the degree of individuality which any experience has attained, *i. e.*, upon the degree to which the experience has transcended its fragmentary character and has become a systematization of otherwise abstract particulars. This is Green's conception of the nature of reality and truth. "Coherence . . .," he writes, "is only predicable of a system of relations, not felt but conceived; while incoherence arises from the attempt of an imperfect intelligence to think an object under relations which cannot ultimately be held together in thought."¹ This theory maintains that the reality which lies beyond our present apprehension is of a piece with the reality which I know. All possible experience must somehow be uniform with that already attained. The uniformity need not, however, be repetition; indeed it is never repetition, but there must be a certain consistency of relations throughout the whole. The relations themselves must be different, but they are still the same in *being relations*. The relations existing for the individual knower in the objective order are a guarantee of similar relations in the universe beyond his private experience. "The uniformity of nature," says Green, "does not mean that its constituents are everywhere the same, but that they are everywhere related; not that 'the thing which has been is that which shall be,' but that whatever occurs is determined by relation to all that has occurred, and contributes to determine all that will occur."² The rational character of *my* world would be denied by a proof of the irrationality of the universe. Unless the individuality

¹ I, 155.

² *Prolegomena*, sec. 33. Cf. sec. 73.

discoverable in finite experience is characteristic of the world as a whole, "we have asserted the unity of the world of our experience only to transfer that world to a larger chaos."¹

The first type of philosophy looks upon reality as a *permanent substance* more or less disconnected with knowledge; the second type looks upon it as a *permanent system of relations*, organically and vitally connected with knowledge. In spite of the external resemblance of the two accounts of objective reality there is really a very fundamental difference. In both cases the element of permanence is strongly emphasized, but in the first case the permanence is incompatible with change, in the second, change is a necessary and organic factor in the conception. According to the first notion, reality is a given object to which our ideas may be said to correspond. The idea is always external to reality and has nothing to do with its constitution. Change can be predicated, not of reality, but only of our thoughts concerning it. Reality, therefore, does not change; change is illusion, resulting from the false or incomplete representative character of our ideas. The second conception of being or reality, however, is very different. In it we talk no more of substances, but of relations. Now a world of relations is above everything else a world of meanings, or of judgments, *i. e.*, an intelligible world. When we return to Green's discussion of relations we recall that relations are not mere connecting links between substances, but that relations constitute the objective world of fact to its very core. There is nothing left over when relations are taken away. The 'facts,' therefore, of Green's system are spiritual or meaningful through and through, and, what is still more important, the facts or relations are 'capable of infinitely numerous other determinations as they are brought into new relations.' With these familiar doctrines kept well in mind we are at once able to see the tremendous difference between a reality defined in terms of things and substances and a reality defined in terms of meanings and relations. There is no such a thing in Green's philosophy as a fixed or static *meaning*, just as there is no such a thing as a complete and axiomatic judgment. When, therefore,

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 39.

reality is defined as a permanent system of relations the permanent has no reference to a static reality, immobile and changeless, but permanent in just the same sense that any truth is permanent in spite of the fact that it is 'capable of infinitely numerous other determinations.'

In view of the fact that the problem of change and development in Green's philosophy will later call for a somewhat more extended treatment, the matter may be allowed to rest for the present. It is to be noticed, however, that Green's attempt to define the nature of reality as a whole is put in the same terms which he used to describe the nature of each phase of experience with which he has dealt. Firmly convinced that finite experience is a systematic or relational whole, he does not hesitate to characterize the world of possible experience beyond the present grasp of a finite mind, as also a world of relations, continuous with the cosmos of finite experience; not necessarily intelligible under the exact forms which the finite mind now uses, but necessarily *intelligible, i. e.*, necessarily related to the present and characterized internally by relations. All experiences, actual or possible—"the experience of a thousand years ago and the experience of today, the experience which I have here and that which I might have in any other region of space,"—must somehow form a single system.¹

Having thus satisfied himself that there is an objective system of relations, Green proceeds to draw the conclusion that such a system implies a spiritual principle as the complete subject of that total system of objects. "The inference from nature," he writes, "to a being neither in time nor contingent but self-dependent and eternal, . . . is valid because the conception of nature, of a world to be known, already implies such a being."² It will be observed that Green's argument for the existence of this self-dependent being is identical with the argument by which he proved the spiritual principle in knowledge. In neither case

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 32.

² I, 129. See also *Prolegomena*, sections 19 f. and 69. At this stage in the discussion it is probably unnecessary to remind the reader that the implication of which Green speaks is never a mere verbal or associational connection. God is *implied* in nature just as subject in general is implied in objectivity. Cf. Chap. III.

is the appeal made to an immediate or intuitive apprehension, but the spiritual principle is said to be implied in the natural or objective order. The spiritual is discovered in the natural.¹ He has no hesitancy in arguing from a permanent system of relations to the existence of a spiritual principle, which he consistently calls God, implied in those relations. "*That* God is," he says, "it [human reason] entitles us to say with the same certainty as that the world is or that we ourselves are. *What* he is, it does not indeed enable us to say in the same way in which we make propositions about matters of fact."²

It is peculiarly unsatisfying to stop with the bare assertion, or proof, of God's existence, if this is to rest as the mere assertion of the undefined. In the language of Edward Caird: "There is a fundamental incoherence in a view which, though treating the infinite as a positive reality, and, indeed, as *the* reality that underlies all other realities, yet reduces it to that of which nothing can be said, except that it *is*."³ The human mind demands more than this. We want to know what relations we, as finite beings, have with this infinite being, God. What difference does it make to me *that* God exists if I must remain forever ignorant of his nature and his relation to us? We are less concerned today with the proof that God exists, just as we are less concerned with the proof that the human self exists, and more concerned with the character of God and the self. To prove the existence of anything is at best a very meagre result except in so far as it leads on to a deeper insight. According to Green's own theory 'everything exists' of which we speak, the

¹ It may also be noticed that Green's proof for the existence of the spiritual principle in nature is not the cosmological proof for the existence of God. The spiritual principle (God) is no more the cause of the objective order as a whole than consciousness is the cause of its object. In each case the two are distinguishable but inseparable features of a single reality. "We contradict ourselves," he says, "if we say that there was first a chaos and then came to be an order; for the 'first' and 'then' imply already an order of time, which is only possible through an action not in time." (*Prolegomena*, sec. 66.) Cf. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 220 ff. Furthermore, Green is not giving the ontological proof. He does not argue from the idea of a spiritual principle to its existence; but from the existence of nature to a spiritual principle through which nature is possible.

² III, 268. Cf. also *Prolegomena*, sec. 51.

³ *The Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 109.

important thing being to show how it exists or in what its existence consists. Perhaps Green expended a disproportionate amount of energy in showing *that* God is, to the neglect of a constructive attempt to tell us what he is,¹ but fortunately he has not left us wholly ignorant of his conception of God's nature.

His most significant attempt to tell us what God is is put in the form of an analogy. The spiritual principle in nature is, he says, "analogous to that of our understanding." It may, at first thought, seem rather unsatisfactory to rest such a far reaching conception on an analogy. The analogy, however, is not an ordinary one, and is not offered as a proof of God's existence, nor as a complete expression of his nature, but as an assistance to the mind in its attempt to conceive him. Like all analogies, this one doubtless has its limitations, and is based on differences as well as similarities.² The differences between God and man are just as significant for Green's theory as are the similarities. The analogy is drawn between man, the as yet incomplete, partially self-determined individual, and God, the complete, wholly self-determined individual.

God is like man in being the subject rather than an object of knowledge. He is not a thing, an event, a cause; by searching he cannot be found out. "You cannot know him," writes Green, "as you know a particular fact related to you, but neither can you so know yourself."³ Our knowledge of both man and God is gained by inference; the one by reflection on the nature of knowledge; the other by reflection on the universal system of relations through which knowledge is possible. Green's attempts to describe God as a spiritual principle implied in nature are stated in terms identical with those which he used in describing the spiritual principle in man. The arguments by which these conclusions are reached are also exactly alike point by point. In each case, the subjective principle is discovered as the implication of an objective order. It is, as it were, hidden from us, buried within the objective order, and comes to light only after

¹ Cf. Edw. Caird's criticism, *Mind*, O. S., VIII, 560 ff. Also John Watson, *Philosophical Review*, XVIII, 161.

² Cf. III, 225.

³ III, 272.

the labor of sober reflection. Green's language in describing the spiritual principle in nature will clearly reveal the sense in which God is like man. He says: "By calling the principle not natural we mean that it is neither included among the phenomena which through its presence to them form a nature, nor consists in their series, nor is itself determined by any of the relations which it constitutes among them. In saying more than this of it we must be careful not to fall into confusion. We are most safe in calling it spiritual, because, for reasons given, we are warranted in thinking of it as a self-distinguishing consciousness." It is misleading, he continues, to call it supernatural; "for we suggest a relation between it and nature of a kind which has really no place except *within* nature, as a relation of phenomenon to phenomenon. We convey the notion that it is above or beyond or before nature, that it is a cause of which nature is the effect, a substance of which the changing modes constitute nature; while in truth all the relations so expressed are relations which, indeed, but for the non-natural self-conscious subject would not exist, but which are not predicable of it."¹ And he sums the whole matter up by declaring that "we are entitled to say, positively, that it [*i. e.*, the spiritual principle in nature] is a self-distinguishing consciousness;" and, "negatively, that the relations by which, through its action, phenomena are determined are . . . not relations by which it is itself determined."²

So far Green treats God as "identical in principle" with the self-conscious human individual; but here the similarity ceases and difference begins. No one recognizes more fully than does Green the great differences between God and man. Man is entangled by the phenomenal order from which he is "evermore working himself free" in his struggle to realize the divinity within him and to grasp life's meaning in its entirety. God, on the other hand, is that ideal meaning itself. He is, therefore, all that it is possible for man to become. But this conception of God as the completion of the finite individual is a difficult one to express. Green resorts, at this point, to another figure of

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 54.

² *Prolegomena*, sec. 52.

speech. We can know *what* this spiritual principle is only "through its so far acting in us as to enable us, however partially and interruptedly, to have knowledge of a world or an intelligent experience."¹ Elsewhere he tells us that God makes the animal organism "the vehicle" of his "communication" to man,² and that "God gradually reproduces himself in us."³

The meaning of all these figures is that God is the ideal or possible self. Man, though the true type of individual, at least in so far as he 'partakes of self-consciousness,' is, nevertheless but the promise of a complete synthesis of life's variety. "There is but one real world," says Green, "the intelligible, which, however, is an actuality, of which to us sense is the potentiality."⁴ This gap between the potential and the actual is what gives scope for the growth of knowledge, which is but another name for the 'process of actualization' under consideration. But Green believes that a "process of actualization presupposes a complete actuality which is at once its beginning and its end."⁵ God is the ideal completion of the meaning of the finite self.

In this conception we see the basis for Green's statement that we can know *what* God is only "piecemeal" and never adequately. It is the nature of an ideal to be beyond the present grasp, and if it is to remain an ideal it must remain beyond the grasp. There is this fundamental difference, however, between Green's contention that God in his completeness is forever unknown to the finite mind and the theory, as formulated by Spencer, that God is the unknowable. There is a sense in which God is unknowable,

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 51.

² *Prolegomena*, sec. 67.

³ *Prolegomena*, sec. 71. The means which God uses of communicating himself to man are the gradual means of a rational progress in understanding the world. The revelation is no miraculous telling of special secrets as the result of divination or mystery, but the revelation of our coming to know the reality about us. Foremost among the instruments of communication Green names institutions. He treats an institution much as Hegel does, as "an elementary effort after a regulation of life." (*Prolegomena* sec. 205.) Social and political institutions are the outward expression of the life of reason in which each rational self-consciousness partakes in some degree. As we become more and more law abiding or well regulated in life, we approach nearer and nearer to a complete apprehension of God's nature. It is thus that he "communicates himself to us."

⁴ III, 84.

⁵ III, 85.

says Edward Caird, "but to say that we cannot know God to perfection, is only to say that we cannot know everything; while to say that we cannot know Him at all is to say that we can know nothing. We cannot know God to perfection, because we cannot know the world or ourselves to perfection; but all our knowledge is based on the presence of these three inseparable elements of consciousness within us, and all our knowledge is therefore a part of the knowledge of God. It is true that, just because he is the light of all our seeing, he can never be completely seen; for the return we make on the ultimate presupposition of our being can never be a final return."¹ It is in just this sense that Green holds that God is unknowable. To grasp God in his fullness would be to have achieved an ideal once for all, and, therefore, to have destroyed God and the ideal.

That both the total system of nature and the subject through which such a system is possible are ideal, *i. e.*, never actually realized in human experience, is, therefore, no reason for denying their existence. They exist as the ideal of a self-conscious being. Such an ideal is at the same time the highest reality because it is bound up with experience at every point. It is a characteristic feature of experience, indispensable to its very existence. "There may probably at first seem to be something offensive," says Green, "in the doctrine that the 'possible self,' the realization of which is the source of all action that can properly be called moral or immoral, is God, and that in our identity with it lies the true unity with God. Before it is rejected, however, let it be understood. On a first hearing it may seem to imply that God does not actually exist at all, but is a mere name for an empty ideal of what each of us would like to become. This is a misapprehension, which a better understanding of the relation between actual and possible will remove."²

It requires both the actual and the possible to make up a self conscious experience. Even in the case of the object, indeed, as we noticed in Chapter II, its totality is 'not there all at once.' An object is more than a present, limited actuality; it is a poten-

¹ *The Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, 139-140.

² III, 224.

tiality of the whole universe. It reaches out beyond the 'this' and the 'now' to find its final self in the completion of meaning to which it is determined through successive judgments. But if it is necessary to give an account of the object partly in terms of that which it is not yet, how much more clearly is this essential in the case of the subject. The ideal object exists for the conscious subject, but the subject is capable of setting its own ideal. The possible object and the possible subject are, therefore, *real* in the only truly consistent meaning of that word. To be real is to have "qualities and relations of its own." If, then, the ideal is so far related that it is indispensable to the simplest experience of objects, by what right do we suppose that it is not real? The statement that the ideal is not real, acquires its force, and its danger, from an equivocal use of the word *real*. At one time it is used as the opposite of unreal, and at another as a synonym for actual as opposed to possible. The first use has been shown above to be absolutely indefensible;¹ the second should be abandoned because it is easily confused with the first. If we mean that the ideal is not realized, or actualized, in finite experience we are merely explicating the meaning of the word. It is not only not achieved, but by its very nature it will never be achieved.

"To say then," says Green, "that God is the final cause of the moral life, the ideal self which no one, as a moral agent, is, but which everyone, as such an agent, is however blindly seeking to become, is not to make him unreal. It *is*, however (and this may seem at once more presumptuous and less reasonable), in a certain sense to identify him with man; and that not with an abstract or collective humanity but with the individual man."² This highly significant quotation indicates a very important element in Green's conception of God, and at the same time more fully justifies his use of the analogy between God and man. *God is like man in being strictly an individual.* As man in knowing combines his several experiences into one experience without effacing their severalty, so God is the unifying principle in nature which unites but at the same time differentiates the variety of

¹ Pp. 26 f.

² III, 225.

nature. In the same sense that thought creates its object, God creates the system of objects, *i. e.*, by making the system possible.

All idealistic philosophies have been frequently charged with neglecting the claims of life's variety in favor of its unity. Green, however, has, in reality, forestalled such criticism in his treatment of the individual and in identifying God "with the individual man." If it is particularity, abstract, and void of universal relations, which the objectors are desirous of saving from Green's conclusion, it is altogether too late to protest when a discussion of God is reached. The mere particular not only does not exist in the infinite, but it does not exist in the finite. The criticism is, therefore, beside the mark; for the mere particular exists nowhere, in heaven or earth. If, on the other hand, the critics fear that the individual is lost in the infinite, we have but to recall Green's definition of the real as that which has "qualities and relations of its own" to be convinced that such fears are without foundation. God is not said to be an ideal universal in which all particularity is swallowed up, but an *ideal individual* in which particularity and universality are united.¹ How can any individual thing which has "qualities and relations of its own" become less real or in danger of losing its reality altogether by the extension or intension of those qualities or relations through, or in, an ideally complete individuality?

Such criticism appears to tell against Green's philosophy for those only who persist in thinking of definition as a kind of abstraction; in a word, for those who still remain enslaved by the conceptions of formal logic. The exposition of Green's position on this point has already been given in Chapter II. There it was pointed out that for him a thing does not become less but more real as it is determined; the undetermined, being the only non-existent. Far from being the undetermined, Green holds that God is the highest reality and, therefore, the most, or even *the* completely *determined* being. It is the great virtue of the philosophy of individuality that it is peculiarly capable of retaining the many and the one in their truth; for it never separates

¹ See Green's discussion of Berkeley's conception of God as a μέγα ἕνον. I, 157 ff.

them. As it does not begin its speculation with the abstract particular, so it never ends with the abstract universal. Some kind of a unity in variety is the only solution which can satisfy the two fundamental demands of thought; but if the initial separation is once made between the particular and the universal, there can be no ultimately satisfactory synthesis. For through the procedure imposed by the method which has been adopted, thought is distorted and falsified, and reality is alienated at the very threshold of speculation. The sane and fundamental demand for a genuine rationalization of reality is made impossible of satisfaction by an arbitrary and abstract procedure of thought. The most hopeful way, therefore, is found in the way of individuality which Green has chosen.

"Logically," says Dewey, "all ultimates are alike; the difference between the Unconscious of von Hartmann, the Unknowable of Spencer, the Will of Schopenhauer, and the Thought or Self-consciousness of some of the Neo-Hegelians is not an intellectually definable difference."¹ But surely this is a most surprising statement. It is of course possible to use the term Thought or Self-consciousness without realizing what this principle involves; but as used by Green the term 'Self-consciousness' is radically different from the other ultimates with which it is here so strangely classed. Indeed, there is all the difference which obtains between substance and subject or between mechanism and teleology.² If the ultimate is defined or conceived in terms of the abstract or merely logical universal, we have a very different sort of ultimate from one conceived as an individual. The one is the absolutely undetermined and indeterminable, and therefore, according to Green, the unreal; the other is the completely determined and ultimate reality. The one is the *summum genus* of the formal logicians; the other, unity in variety typified in the concrete judgment. One depends on subsumption under classes; the other on articulation by relation. The one tends to

¹ John Dewey, *Philosophical Review*, XIX, p. 188.

² I do not wish to raise the question of the interpretation of the several ultimates mentioned, but merely to deny that 'all ultimates are alike,' and to suggest the essential difference between Green's 'Self-consciousness' which is individual and other ultimates which are merely universal.

obliterate distinctions; the other to preserve them. The one essentially denies multiplicity and development; the other affirms and interprets them. The one is reached by leaving out attributes; the other, by increasing determination. The one represents the extinction of the individual life and value; the other, their ideal completion. Such is the difference between the *concrete individual* of Green's system and the abstract universal of some others. It is comparatively easy to reach a conclusion in philosophy by ignoring a half of thought's demands. To take our stand for the ultimate unity *or* the ultimate variety of life is to solve too easily the gravest of philosophical problems. Green's mind could not rest after such a meagre sabbath day's journey but was compelled to press on to that goal of philosophical reflection—the interpretation of the paradox of the one and the many. This is an ancient and ever recurring demand of the human spirit which will not be thrust lightly aside by nominalism on the one hand, or realism on the other.

In evaluating any system of philosophy today the most persistent question is "How does it square with the doctrine and method of evolution?" To test the truth of any theory it is necessary to see whether the theory takes due account of change and leaves room for real development or whether it attempts to define reality in static terms. Such a test, although it may appear somewhat artificial when applied to theories developed before men were stirred by the new conception of change and development which grew out of the Darwinian revolution in biology, cannot be out of place when dealing with a philosophy written so recently as that of Green. Green, who was in the very midst of the controversies aroused by the new theories, was, perhaps, the most discriminating and independent philosophical writer of the time. He was certainly the most important of those who were convinced of the essential limitations of the Darwinian hypothesis when raised to the rank of a philosophy. His well known opposition to the evolutionary philosophers of his day, Spencer in particular, has led many serious students to discredit Green's philosophy without further examination on the ground that it is an antiquated semi-theological

system which has very little significance for the modern mind. Now, however, that Spencer's theories are no longer accepted without qualification in evolutionary philosophy,¹ it is profitable to turn to the philosophy of his most discerning contemporary and philosophical opponent. What was Green's attitude toward evolution, and in what sense, if any, does his own philosophy provide a basis for genuine change or growth?

Beginning with the examination of the object, and proceeding through a consideration of the spiritual principle in man and nature, Green has never lost sight of process. He shows, first, that no object exists in isolation, but that it is the very essence of the object to be related to other objects in a common world. We make a mistake, however, if we suppose that the relations of an object are so simple that they can be summed up in a definition, or so few that they can be completely tabulated and quantified. To be defined is the very soul of a real object, yet an object is always infinitely more than a given definition; in Green's language "it is capable of infinitely numerous other determinations."² Here is surely room for process or growth of some kind, and it is just at this point that his theory of objectivity is seen to have a direct bearing on evolution. According to the old formal logic, the object falls within a class, that class within a higher class, and so on until the highest class or genus is reached. The highest genus, since it includes everything else within it, is the least differentiated and the most abstract; while the individual object is thought of as *there* in a fixed or given reality, impaled forever by a name. Green reverses all this: in his philosophy no object is complete or finally made, but it is, in the true sense of the word, *in the making*. The object is universal through relations which are inexhaustible and infinite so that it is never quite complete. Green's abandonment of formal logic should satisfy the most radical, but he does not stop here. He postulates a total system of nature as a basis for change. To be sure, this system is represented as an ideal

¹ Cf. Bergson's criticism of Spencer. *Creative Evolution*, pp. 188 and 363 ff.; also J. Royce, *Herbert Spencer, An Estimate and Review*; also J. T. Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. III, p. 51.

² III, 56.

system, but it is, nevertheless, said to be a "permanent system." This reveals a note of paradox. The question at once arises, 'How shall we harmonize the infinite development of the object with a permanent system of objects?' "For reason," Green writes "(and, except for reason, there is no nature at all), nature is a system of becoming, which rests on unchangeable conditions."¹

Is it possible to meet this dilemma without denying the reality either of the permanence or of the change? This really constitutes the problem of modern philosophy. If the human mind could rest satisfied with either horn of the dilemma, the problem would have been solved long before our day and philosophers would not now be interested in it. As it is, every philosophy which pretends to rise above the plane of unreflective tradition must cope with the problem anew. Does Green's system leave room for real change or is change after all lost in permanence? In the language of Bosanquet: "How can progress be all included in, and belong to a timeless reality?"²

It is impossible to answer such questions except by reference to a subject for whom these relations exist. "It is," says Green, "the consciousness of possibilities in ourselves, unrealized but constantly in process of realization, that alone enables us to read the idea of development into what we observe of natural life, and to conceive that there must be such a thing as a plan of the world."³ The very condition of there being such a world, ordered in intelligible ways, is the consciousness of that world. If we would understand Green's notion of development, therefore, we must pass from the world of objects to the world of subjects. The relation of objects to each other in experience, whether that relation be one of development or of simple existence, implies a principle related to the series as knower to known, but not itself knowable in serial or quasi-serial forms. There is a unity in this experience taken as a whole; but it is not another unit over and above the unitary objects which it knows. This is the true individual; for in consciousness the many and the one

¹ II, 74 and 75. Cf. *Prolegomena*, sec. 18.

² *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913), p. 71.

³ *Prolegomena*, sec. 186.

are intimately and organically related so that the many are truly *many in one*. Human consciousness, indeed, like the object, is incomplete. It is, however, growing more and more complete; and, in addition to the mere fact of growth or development, it is capable of setting or apprehending its own completion as its goal of development. The goal of human struggle may be called indifferently the *possible self*, or *God*. Like the ideal object which is a complete and permanent system of nature, God may be said to be the complete self, the eternal self-consciousness, through which complete nature is possible.

Such is Green's account of the individual. Individuality is discoverable in the remotest germ or fragment of knowledge; there is no abstract particular. On the other hand, reality as a whole is also an individual; there is no abstract universal. The individuality of the object is the same in kind as the individuality of a system of nature; and the individuality of the simplest act of knowledge is the individuality of an eternal and complete consciousness. What sort of evolution does such a plan allow?

In the first place, it may be worth while to point out that for Green evolution cannot be defined in terms of motion in space. Change of place is not development. This statement may seem so obvious that there is danger of forgetting that attempts have been made to define evolution by just this kind of change. Spencer believes that the problem of philosophy is to find "the law of the *continuous redistribution of matter and motion*,"¹ and defines evolution as "an integration of matter and dissipation of motion."² Nevertheless, it has now become a commonplace that no amount of rearrangement of things in space can really be a process of evolution.³

Secondly, change of time is not development. This statement is perhaps less obviously true, but none the less really so. We get into the habit of thinking that it is the essential characteristic of evolution to consume time. Green warns us against an uncritical acceptance of this belief. "We must be on our guard," he says, "against lapsing into the notion that a process *ad*

¹ *First Principles*, sec. 92.

² *First Principles*, sec. 97.

³ Cf. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, pp. 363 ff.

infinitum, a process not relative to an end, can be a process of development at all."¹ Simple duration is probably a *sine qua non* of any real development, but development itself cannot be wholly reduced to duration. Even space could be shown to be an indispensable condition of all development since it is actually in a space-time world that our term 'development' has any significance. But, on the other hand, development is infinitely more than any mere shifting in space or time. It must be change toward a more valuable or higher state. There is an element of valuation, therefore, underlying all true development, an element which is not and can not be a matter of spatial or temporal sequence. Mere duration or existence *prolonged* is no better than existence. The truth seems to be that development is nothing if we try to define it in terms of a simple 'before' and 'after.' The sequence must be, or is, a *significant* before and after. The burden of Green's philosophy is that *significance* is the universal mark of reality. Development, like every other aspect of the world, must, consequently, have a meaning and a value before it can be truly real. But the condition of all value, as we have previously shown, is individuality made possible through judgment of a self-distinguishing consciousness, capable of apprehending and striving for an ideal. It is, indeed, not at all clear how *any* change could take place without this guiding thread of an ideal end, but it is certain that orderly change (the very essence of the idea of evolution) would be impossible without it. Progress will, therefore, consist in the constant realization of an *immanent ideal*.

It may readily be admitted that Green's philosophy does not lay any special significance on the reality of time. If evolution is possible only on a theory which admits that time is an ultimate and independent reality, then Green's theory does not furnish a basis for evolution. He is apparently committed to the belief that the total and permanent system of relations is not in time; man is not in time; God is not in time; reality itself is not in time. Notwithstanding this, he continues to speak confidently of change and development. The explanation of this

¹ *Prolegomena*, sec. 189.

paradox is found in the observation that none of the terms which Green uses in discussing development are names for objects of knowledge. The whole growth takes place in a spiritual world; from the single fact to the universal system of facts nothing can be pointed out as 'here' or 'now.' In an earlier section it was shown that it is only in a world of objects that the categories of time, space, cause, *et cetera*, have an application. 'This thing is behind that,' or 'the sound followed the blow,' and all other similar judgments are dependent upon these mechanical relations for their meaning; but the meaning of one of them is not related to the meaning of another in the same or a similar way, *i. e.*, no meaning fills more space than another, or takes more time. On the other hand, what ideas or meanings lose in this sort of existential reality they gain in a dynamic or developmental character. One meaning does not *cause* another, but one meaning grows out of another and this kind of growth is not dependent upon time for its significance. Briefly, Green's contention is *that time is a category of meaning, not meaning a category of time*. Whatever development such a system allows will be infinitely more than a temporal sequence, and an account of that development will be infinitely more than a 'natural history.' This kind of growth cannot be registered by the ticks of a clock, but must be told in stages of individuality.¹ It must be recorded in terms of the fragmentary and the more complete; the germ and the full fruit. The spirit does not grow from hour to hour but from less to greater perfection, not from particularity to universality, but from individuality to individuality. Such a development is best observed in the growth of the human soul.²

We have seen that God has been defined as the ideally com-

¹ The first part of this conception closely resembles Bergson's notion that 'pure duration' is not made up of moments of time. The second part, however, that development consists in realizing an immanent ideal, or that the germ of all is in the merest fragment of reality, seems to be foreign to Bergson's philosophy.

² As pointed out when discussing the relation of consciousness and the time series (Chapter IV), Green has no intention of abstracting spirit from the temporal order, but merely insists that we shall distinguish the relation of spirit *to* time from the relations *in* time. In this connection he applies the same general theory to the question of development. We must learn to distinguish the concrete relation of growth (which undoubtedly has a temporal aspect) and the abstract relation of a mere 'before and after.'

plete individual correlative with a system of reality through which all individuality is made possible. God is, therefore, identical in principle, but infinitely removed in degree from the finite individual. Such an interpretation of the nature of God frees Green at once from the charge of holding to a static absolute. God is not a predetermined goal to which we are coming nearer at each stage until at some far off future time we shall have attained it. God is in the process of being realized, in the sense that the ideal of the artist is *forever being realized*, although never actually realized because the ideal recedes as it is approximated, or better, the ideal is literally created in the process of actualization. "The ideal exists," writes Green, "in his [the artist's] consciousness, yet not in its full reality, for if it did it would be no longer an ideal."¹

Our struggle is a permanent process of becoming complete individuals, and is based upon an ideally complete individual apprehended by the finite self. It is to be noted that the relation of the actual to the possible is in this case not quite the same as it is in the partial and complete object. Such a process as we see exhibited in the growth of an acorn into an oak will hardly illustrate self-realization since the case is in some measure abstract, both of the terms being externalized. We cannot, for example, properly say that an acorn is forever becoming an

¹ III, 269. Compare with this view Bergson's remark that "no one, not even the artist, could have foreseen exactly what the portrait would be, for to predict it would have been to produce it before it was produced—an absurd hypothesis which is its own refutation. Even so with regard to the moments of our life, of which we are the artisans. Each of them is a kind of creation. And just as the talent of the painter is formed or deformed—in any case, is modified—under the very influence of the works he produces, so each of our states, at the moment of its issue, modifies our personality, being indeed the new form that we are just assuming." (*Creative Evolution*, p. 6.) There is this difference, however, between Green and Bergson: Bergson recognizes the actual incompleteness of any judgment just as Green does, but from this fact concludes that judgment must be cast aside, knowledge abandoned, and intuition substituted for it. By intuition he hopes to grasp that which for knowledge is an ideal. Green, on the other hand, while holding that the actual nature of ultimate reality is never quite grasped by knowledge, still holds that knowledge, or judgment, is the only means we have of grasping the ultimate. Indeed, it is just this paradox which, according to Green, constitutes the significance of consciousness. The ultimate is truly *forever beyond*, but beyond as an ideal is forever beyond conscious attainment. As the ideal makes the struggle significant, so the ideal infinite is the basis of finite valuation.

oak but never becomes one, because the ideal oak is one set up by an agency other than the acorn itself. "The acorn," says Green, "is in possibility identical with the oak, but the oak is nothing to the acorn. That is, the acorn has no consciousness which its virtual identity with the oak affects. The identity exists, not for it, but for a consciousness to which oak and acorn are alike relative. But in the process constituting the moral life, . . . the germ and the development, the possibility and its actualization, are one and the same consciousness of self. That in virtue of which I am I, and can in consequence so set before myself the realization of my own possibilities as to be a moral agent, is that in virtue of which I am one with God."¹

Such a system of philosophy offers the only true basis for a genuine evolution because the ideal is dynamic. The world in its totality is not a closed system. We cannot predict the future in detail. Although we know in general that it will be intelligible, we do not know the exact terms in which its intelligibility will appear.

It is a singular fact that the two most insistent criticisms of Green's philosophy cancel each other. On the one hand, the objection is raised that his philosophy allows no room for change; and on the other hand, that the process is interminable. That God is a fixed goal has already been sufficiently refuted by the foregoing account of the nature of an ideal. The ideal is that for which we ever strive but at which we never arrive. It is such a notion of an eternal process to which the second objection is raised. "Why a completely realized self should think it worth while," says Professor Dewey, "to duplicate itself in an unrealized, or relatively empty, self, how it could possibly do this even if it were thought worth while, and why after the complete self had produced the incomplete self, it should do so under conditions rendering impossible (seemingly eternally so) any adequate approach of the incomplete self to its own completeness . . . should make us wary of the conception."² If we are

¹ III, 226. Cf. especially *Prolegomena*, sec. 187.

² *Philosophical Review*, II, 654. If our interpretation is correct Green would be the first to agree with Professor Dewey's conclusion expressed at the close of the article cited. "The *fixed* ideal is an distinctly the bane of ethical science today

to understand that the 'Why?', to which the critic is seeking an answer, is synonymous with the question "Why is the universe as it is?", no one can hope to answer him. Green, for one, does not attempt such a demonstration.¹ In the words of Bosanquet, "All explanation is *within* the universe, not *of* it."² But if, on the other hand, the critic is complaining because Green did not set up a static goal, 'some far off divine event,' which might one day be reached, he is unconsciously crediting Green with the only basis for a true theory of development. Green's strength is shown in his refusal to adopt this type of explanation.

This result is unintelligible to a mechanical or naturalistic philosophy, which moves always within the most superficial aspect of the world of objectivity. In the world of objects we know that a goal is set up at the end of a course and that the runners approach it until they arrive, or pass beyond it.³ This naïve view of reality can only be overcome by the way of some such philosophy of the individual as Green has given. The shell of objectivity must be pierced to the very soul and then mechanism will be seen to rest on individuality. In reality itself the start and the goal and the runner are all included, but included in such a way as to preserve their severalty. There as the fixed universe of mediævalism was the bane of the natural science of the Renaissance." (P. 664. Italics mine.) It is but fair to say that in all of Green's talk of ideals he seems nowhere to refer to a *fixed ideal*. Perhaps he did not recognize that there could be such an ideal.

¹ Cf. *Prolegomena*, sec. 82.

² *Logic* (second edition), I, 137.

³ Here lies the fallacy of likening life to a game or a race where the goal may actually be reached. On the other hand, we are not assisted by supposing the goal to be a sort of mobile will-o'-the-wisp which goes on before us into the surrounding darkness, because we are still entangled with mechanical metaphors. Caird has better expressed the nature of the struggle; "It is true that 'the margin' of knowledge 'fades forever and forever as we move'; but, if we might correct the metaphor, it fades not *before* us merely, but also *into* us. We are not condemned to chase a phantom which continually flies before us, so that we are as near to it at first as at last. Rather, we are pursuing a course of self-development in which we are continually realizing more deeply and fully what the world, the object of all our thought and action, is, and what *we* are, who think and act upon it; and in which, by necessary consequence, we are continually learning more of God, who is the ultimate unity of our own life and of the life of the world." (*The Evolution of Religion*, Vol. I, pp. 139-140.) We make our own goal; we seek it; we fail to grasp it; not because it eludes our grasp, but because we despise it in the light of another.

is no better characterization of reality than in terms of individuality.

Whatever process there is in reality must, therefore, be an internal process of concretion; the very process, exhibited in the growth of individuality in which the finite individual, in being able to know, and to will an end, is already, in principle, one with the infinite individual. This is a *significant* change. Moreover, if the process is to remain significant the goal must remain beyond the present grasp. The key to Green's philosophy is found in the significance of individuality made possible in a world of struggle for completion.

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