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PRESENT PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES

A CRITICAL SURVEY OF NATURALISM IDEALISM PRAGMATISM AND REALISM TOGETHER WITH A SYNOPSIS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF WILLIAM JAMES

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CHAPTER XII

A REALISTIC THEORY OF MIND

I. Introductory

§ 1. Realism has thus far appeared in these pages mainly as a polemic. This polemic may conveniently be summarized in terms of the general errors of which it finds rival tendencies to be guilty.[1]

Realism as a Polemic

'Argument from the ego-centric predicament,' that is, from the circumstantial presence of the knower in all cases of things known, is peculiar to idealism. 'Definition by initial predication,' the assumption of the priority of a familiar or accidental relationship, is based on the more fundamental error of 'exclusive particularity,' or the supposition that an identical term can figure in only *one* relationship. These two errors together appear in all *exclusive* philosophies, such as dualism, and monisms of matter or mind. The error of 'pseudo-simplicity,' which amounts virtually to the abandonment of analysis, and the notion of 'indefinite potentiality,' which is the sequel to the last, are characteristic of 'substance' philosophies, and especially of all forms of 'activism,' whether naturalistic, idealistic, or pragmatistic. The 'speculative dogma,' the assumption of an all-general, all-sufficient first principle, is the primary motive in 'absolutism.' Finally, the error of 'verbal suggestion,' or 'equivocation,' is the means through which the real fruitlessness of the other errors may be concealed, and the philosophy

[1] The full statement of these errors will be found above, especially pp. 64–68, 126–132, 169–171.

employing them given a meretricious plausibility and popular vogue.

As has already appeared, realism is nevertheless in agreement with naturalism, idealism, and pragmatism respecting many important doctrines. With naturalism, for example, it maintains the unimpeachable truth of the accredited results of science, and the independence of physical nature on knowledge; with idealism it maintains the validity and irreducibility of logical and moral science; and with pragmatism, the practical and empirical character of the knowledge process, and the presumptively pluralistic constitution of the universe.

A new movement invariably arises as a protest against tradition, and bases its hope of constructive achievement on the correction of certain established habits of thought. Realism is as yet in a phase in which this critical motive dominates and affords the best promise of initial agreement. But war has developed a class consciousness, and the time is near at hand, if, indeed, it has not already arrived, when one realist may recognize another. This dawning spirit of fellowship, accompanied as it is by a desire for a better understanding and a more effective coöperation,[1] justifies an attempt to summarize the central doctrines of a constructive realistic philosophy.

§ 2. The crucial problem for contemporary philosophy is the problem of knowledge. It is upon this question that its chief tendencies divide, and it is from their several solutions of this problem that these tendencies derive their characteristic interpretations of life. In giving a brief outline of a realistic philosophy, I shall therefore have to do mainly with the realistic theory of knowledge. I propose, however, to adopt a somewhat novel order of procedure. The problem of knowledge reduces, in the last analysis, to the problem of the relation between a mind and that which is related to a mind as its object. The constant feature of this relationship is *mind*. Instead, therefore, of dealing first with knowledge, leaving mind to be defined only incidentally or not at all, I propose first to discover what manner of thing mind is, in order that we may profit by such a discovery in our study of knowledge.[1]

Fundamental Importance of the Problem of Mind

[1] Cf. "The Program and First Platform of Six Realists," by E. B. Holt, W. T. Marvin, W. P. Montague, R. B. Perry, W. B. Pitkin, and E. G. Spaulding, *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VII, 1910; and the volume entitled *The New Realism*, by the same writers. Cf. also the author's "Realism as a Polemic and Program of Reform," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VII, 1910.

Accounts of mind differ characteristically according as they are based on the *observation* of mind in nature and society, or on *introspection*. What is said of mind by historians, sociologists, comparative psychologists, and, among technical philosophers, most notably by Plato and Aristotle, is based mainly or wholly on general observation. Mind lies in the open field of experience, having its own typical form and mode of action, but, so far as knowledge of it is concerned, as generally accessible, as free to all comers, as the motions of stars or the civilization of cities. On the other hand, what is said of mind by religious teachers, by human psychologists of the modern school, whether rational or empirical, and, among technical philosophers, by such writers as St. Augustine, Descartes, and Berkeley, is based on self-consciousness. The investigator generalizes the nature of mind from an exclusive examination of his own.

The results of these two modes of inquiry differ so strikingly as to appear almost irrelevant, and it is commonly argued that it cannot be mind that is directly apprehended in both cases. It is assumed, furthermore, that one's own mind, or the mind at home, must be preferred as more genuine than the mind abroad. The conclusion follows that the

[1] Cf. my article "A Division of the Problem of Epistemology," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VI, 1909. The remainder of the present chapter is reprinted in part from a series of articles entitled "The Hiddenness of Mind," "The Mind's Familiarity with Itself," and "The Mind Within and the Mind Without," *Journal of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VI, 1909, Nos. 2, 5, 7.

latter is not mind at all, but a mere exterior of mind, serving only as a ground for inference. Thus we reach the widely popular view that mind is encased in a non-mental and impenetrable shell, within which it may cherish the secret of its own essence without ever being disturbed by inquisitive intruders. Now one might easily ask embarrassing questions. It is curious that if its exterior is impenetrable a mind should give such marked evidence of itself as to permit the safest inferences as to its presence within. It is curious, too, that such an inward mind should forever be making sallies into the neighborhood without being caught or followed back into its retreat. It must evidently be supplied with means of egress that bar ingress, with orifices of outlook that are closed to one who seeks to look in. But rather than urge these difficulties, I shall attempt to obviate them. This is possible only through a version of the two minds, the mind within and the mind without, that shall prove them to be in reality one. To unite them it is necessary to replace them by *the whole mind*, in which they appear plainly as parts. The traditional shield looks concave on one side and convex on the other. That this should be so is entirely intelligible in view of the nature of the entire shield and the several ways in which it may be approached. The whole shield may be known from either side when the initial bias is overcome. Similarly, I propose to describe the mind within and the mind without as parts of mind, either of which may assume prominence according to the cognitive starting-point; the whole mind by implication lying in the general field of experience where every initial one-sidedness may be overcome.

In addition to this difference of method, there is another distinction that it will prove not only convenient to employ, but important to emphasize—the distinction between the *action* and the *content* of consciousness. Every type of consciousness exhibits this duality. There is 'thinking' and 'thought,' 'perceiving' and 'percept,' 'remembering' and 'memory.' A similar duality between sensing and sense-content accounts for the ambiguity of the term 'sensation.' In the discussion that follows I shall employ first the method of introspection and then the method of observation; examining by each method, first, the contents of mind, and second, the action of mind.

II. The Method of Introspection

§ 3. It is well known that much the most convenient method of discovering *what is in* my mind is to consult me. I can affirm the fact with superior ease and certainty. At the same time, of course, I may be absolutely ignorant of the meaning of the fact. The subject of a psychological experiment is best qualified when he has no ideas concerning the nature of his mind. He is called on to affirm or deny awareness of a given object, to register the time of his awareness, or to report the object (not given) of which he is aware. Introspection thus yields an identification and inventory of mental contents.

Mental Content as Revealed by Introspection

Suppose my mind to be an object of study. In the first place, it is necessary to collect my past experiences. For this purpose the method of introspection is convenient and fruitful. I have myself been keeping a record of my experiences automatically, and by virtue of the capacity of recollection I can recover them at will. This method is reserved for the use of the mind that originally had the experiences. This does not mean that the facts cannot be known except in so far as remembered by me. It would be absurd to say that the fact that I saw the King of Saxony in the year 1903, is lost to knowledge except in so far as I can retrospectively recover it. An observant bystander would have known it at the time, or it may be a matter of general knowledge. But the convenience afforded by my memory is apparent. For in this way I may recall and verify the experience in question, and thus

secure something approximately equivalent to its empirical presence; and, furthermore, my memory preserves not only this, but also other experiences likewise mine, and so already selected and grouped with reference to a study of my particular mind.

Or, suppose that the study of my mind requires knowledge of its *present* content. I, who must in the nature of the case be having the object in mind, can have before me simultaneously the additional fact of its being in my mind. Such an introspective experience is commonly available, and while it is not a penetrating or definitive *knowledge* of the fact, it *is* a *discovery* of the fact.

It is doubtless true, then, that a record of the contents of a mind is most conveniently obtained by introspection. This superior or even unique accessibility of certain facts to certain observers is not unusual; indeed, it is a corollary of the method of observation. Every natural object has what may be called its cognitive orientation, defining vantage points of observation. Data concerning the surface of the earth are peculiarly accessible to man, and data concerning the twentieth century to those alive at the time. But this does not mean that man knows the earth best, or that we of the present day know the twentieth century best. Still less does it mean that our knowledge is exclusive. It means only that we are so situated as to enjoy certain *inductive advantages*. If a man were to add up his property as he accumulated it, he would always be in a position to report promptly on the past and present amount thereof; but it would not be profitable to argue that property is, therefore, such as to be known only, or even best, by its owner. So any individual mind is most handily acquainted with its own experiences, past and present. The circumstances of its history and organization are such that without any exertion, or even any special theoretical interest, it is familiar with the facts. But this argues nothing unique or momentous. It may easily be that while introspection is the best method of collecting

cases of mental content, it is the poorest method of defining their nature.

§ 4. When I attempt to discover the generic character of the contents revealed by introspection, I meet at once with a most significant fact. *Distributively*, these contents coincide with other manifolds, such as nature, history, and the contents of other minds. In other words, in so far as I divide them into elements, the contents of my mind exhibit *no* generic character. I find the quality 'blue,' but this I ascribe also to the book which lies before me on the table; I find 'hardness,' but this I ascribe also to the physical adamant; or I find number, which my neighbor finds also in his mind. In other words, the elements of the introspective manifold are in themselves neither peculiarly mental nor peculiarly mine; they are *neutral and interchangeable.*

The Neutral Elements of Mental Content. The Need of a Unifying Relation

It is only with respect to their grouping and interrelations that the elements of mental content exhibit any peculiarity.[1] When my attention is directed to this, I find that mental contents, as compared, for example, with physical nature, possess a characteristic fragmentariness. *Not all* of physical nature, nor of any given natural body, is in my mind. And the particular abstract that is in my mind does not exactly coincide with the particular abstract that is in my neighbor's mind. Furthermore, the fragments of nature that find their way into my mind acquire thereby a peculiar interrelation and compose a peculiar pattern.

The so-called "relational theory of consciousness" has emphasized this fact that mental content is distinguished, not by the stuff or elements of which it is composed, but by the *way* in which these elements are composed; in other words, by the composing relation. "In consciousness,"

[1] For a more ample treatment of this matter, cf. my article, "Conceptions and Misconceptions of Consciousness," *Psychological Review*, Vol. XI, 1904.

says Professor Woodbridge, "we have simply an instance of the existence of different things together, . . . consciousness is only a form of connection of objects, a relation between them." As James expresses it, "consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being." [1] Neither of these authors, however, offers a clear account of what this peculiar relation or form of connection is. James at times identifies it with "the function of knowing." When one thing *means* or *represents* another, and thus assumes the status of idea, it becomes a conscious element. But, as Professor Woodbridge points out, this relation can scarcely be the *generic* relation of consciousness, because the terms between which it holds are already 'experienced.' And James himself explicitly recognizes the possibility of immediately experiencing, without the mediation of ideas at all. 'Meaning' would seem to be the relation characteristic of *discursive* consciousness, rather than of consciousness in general. As respects such a general type of relationship, the results are on the whole negative. James shows that it is *different* from the physical type of relationship ("mental fire is what won't burn real sticks"). Professor Woodbridge "lays greater stress on what consciousness does not appear to be than on . . . that type of connection which it constitutes between objects." [2]

Now what light do such results throw on the nature of mind? It seems to me clear that they contribute only a preliminary induction. They doubtless afford unmistakable evidence of a special and important grouping of objects; but *they do not reveal the principle which defines the group*. It is admitted that contents of mind coincide

[1] F. J. E. Woodbridge: "The Nature of Consciousness," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. II. 1905, pp. 120, 125; James: "Does Consciousness Exist," in the same Journal, Vol. I, 1904, p. 486. Cf. also B. H. Bode: "Some Recent Definitions of Consciousness," *Psychological Review*, Vol. XV, 1908.

[2] Woodbridge: *loc. cit.*; James. *op. cit.*, pp. 478, 489. For the pragmatist view of discursive consciousness, cf. above, pp.200 ff. For James's more complete view, cf. below, pp. 350–354.

distributively, or element for element, with parts of nature. It is important, then, to show how parts of nature become contents of mind. Natural objects do not enter wholly into mind. Then what determines their foreshortening and abridgment? An individual mind gathers into itself a characteristic assemblage of fragments of nature. Under what conditions does this occur? When things are in mind, one may mean or represent another. What constitutes *being in mind?*

Until such questions are answered realism cannot boast of having greatly improved upon idealism. "Consciousness," says Professor Natorp, "is inexplicable and hardly describable, yet all conscious experiences have this in common, that what we call their content has this peculiar reference to a center for which 'self' is the name, in virtue of which reference alone, the content is subjectively given, or appears." It is as important for the realist to show what he means by his "form of connection " as it is for the idealist to show what he means by "this peculiar reference to a center." [1]

Mental Action. The Alleged Self-intuition of a Pure Spiritual Activity

§ 5. We shall find that it is impossible to find the common bond of things mental, until we abandon the introspective method and view mind as it operates in the open field of nature and history. But before adopting this course we have two other alternatives.

In the first and more popular of these alternative views, it is admitted that it is impossible to find a unique quality in mental contents, or even a unique interrelation among them. It is maintained that things derive their mental character from that which *acts on them*. My contents are the passive objects of my active perceiving, thinking, or willing. This action of mind is not itself content, but is the common and unifying correlate of all content. So far this view is, I think, substantially correct. The defining relation of mind is a kind of action, and it will not be found

[1] Paul Natorp: *Einleitung in die Psychologie*, pp. 14, 112; quoted by James, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

amidst the content which it defines. But in the present view it is further maintained that the action of mind is nevertheless *introspectively accessible in a peculiar way.*

I refer to the time-honored theory that the action of mind is revealed to the agent himself in an immediate intuition. "Such is the nature of Spirit, or that which acts," says Berkeley, "that it cannot be of itself perceived . . . though it must be owned at the same time that we have some *notion* of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind." The inner activity of consciousness is that "life-form of immediate reality" which "is lost if the psychological abstractions make it a describable object."[1]

Berkeley's view met its classic refutation in Hume. He showed that the most exhaustive introspective analysis reveals no such 'creative power,' but only a manifold and nexus of contents. Taken "psychologically," says Mr. Bradley, "the revelation is fraudulent. There is no original experience of anything like activity." The supposition that there is such a revelation is possible only provided one refuses to analyze a certain experience into its elements. When the so-called experience of mental activity *is* so analyzed, no activity-element is found. The refusal to analyze what can be and has been analyzed cannot be justified by any canon of rigorous theoretical procedure.[2] In other words, the intuitionist theory of mental activity is an instance of the fallacy of 'pseudo-simplicity.' "The simplicity, however, of the representation of a subject is not therefore a knowledge of the simplicity of the subject," says Kant. The intuitionist argument rests upon a confusion between the lack of complexity in the *knowledge* of the subject matter, and a lack of complexity in the subject matter itself.[3]

[1] Berkeley: *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Fraser's edition, Vol. I, p. 272; Münsterberg: *The Eternal Values*, p. 393.

[2] Hume: *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. Section VII, Part I, *passim;* Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 116.

[3] Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Max Müller, Second Edition, pp. 289–290. Cf. above, pp. 261–264.

Philosophy is peculiarly liable to this fallacy in the case of self-knowledge, because of the extraordinary familiarity of 'self.' No one is so well acquainted with me as I am with myself. Primarily this means that whereas I have known myself repeatedly, and perhaps for considerable intervals continuously, others have known me only intermittently or not at all. To myself I am so much an old story that I may easily weary of myself. I do weary of myself, however, not because I understand myself so well, but because I live with myself so much. I may be familiar to the point of *ennui* with things I understand scarcely at all. Thus I may be excessively familiar with a volume in the family library without having ever looked between the covers. Indeed, degrees of knowledge are as likely to be inversely, as directly, proportional to degrees of familiarity. Familiarity is arbitrary like all habit, and there is nothing to prevent it from fixing and confirming a false or shallow opinion. The man whom we meet daily on the street is a familiar object. But we do not tend to know him better. On the contrary, our opinion tends to be as unalterable as it is accidental and one-sided. Everyone is familiar with a typical facial expression of the President, but who will claim that such familiarity conduces to knowledge of him? Similarly my familiarity with myself may actually stand in the way of my better knowledge. Because of it I may be too easily satisfied that I know myself, and will almost inevitably believe that my mind as I commonly know it is my mind in its essence. It cannot be said, then, that the individual mind's extraordinary familiarity with itself necessarily means that its knowledge of itself is exclusive or even superior. On the contrary, it means that in respect of knowledge of itself every mind is peculiarly liable to *over-simplification* — to the assumption that knowledge is complete when, as a matter of fact, it has not yet begun.

These considerations also discredit, I think, the virtue so frequently attributed to self-consciousness. I am in-

clined to believe that the prominence of this experience in traditional accounts of mind is due to the fact that it is characteristically habitual with philosophers. What but bias could have led to the opinion that self-consciousness is typical of mind? Surely nothing could be farther from the truth. If self-consciousness means anything, it means mind functioning in an elaborately complicated way. Now one may *test* a definition by applying it to complex and derivative forms, but one learns to *isolate* and *identify* a genus from a study of its *simple* forms. It would be consistent with sound procedure, then, to expect to understand mind-knowing-itself, only after one has an elementary knowledge of the general nature of mind and the special function of knowing. Surely in this respect, at least, philosophy has traditionally lacked the sound instinct that has guided science.

But waiving methodological considerations, what is to be said of the cognitive value of my self-consciousness? Suppose me to be as habitually self-conscious as the most confirmed philosopher. Have I on that account an expert knowledge of self? There could not, it seems to me, be a clearer case of the mistaking of habit for insight. Upon examination my self-consciousness resolves itself mainly into familiar images, and familiar phrases containing my name or the first personal pronoun, such as 'I am,' 'I will,' 'I think,' 'I act.' But these phrases are perfectly typical of the fixed and stereotyped character that may be acquired by a confused experience, or, indeed, by an experience that is nothing more than the verbal formulation of a problem. And the more fixed and stereotyped such experiences, the more their confusion or emptiness is neglected. This is the true explanation, I think, of what is the normal state of mind in the matter of self-knowledge. Your average man knows himself, "of course," and grasps eagerly at words and phrases imputing to him an esoteric knowledge of soul; but he can render no intelligible account of it. That he has never attempted;

he is secure only when among those as easily satisfied as himself.

Who is so familiar with farming as the farmer? But he despises the innovations of the theorist, because routine has warped, limited, and at the same time intensified his opinions; with the consequence that while no one is more intimately familiar with farming than he, no one, perhaps, is more hopelessly blinded to its real principles. Now it is my lot to be a self-conscious mind. I have practised self-consciousness habitually, and it is certain that no one is so familiar with myself as I. But I have little to show for it all: the articulatory image of my name, the visual image of my social presence, and a few poor phrases. There *is* a complex state to which I can turn when I will, but it is a page more thumbed than read. And I am lucky if I have not long ago become glibly innocent of my ignorance and joined the ranks of those who deliver confusion with the unction of profundity, and the name of the problem with the pride of mastery. No — so far I cannot see that the royal road to a knowledge of self-activity has led beyond the slough of complacency. Either appeal is made to what everyone "of course" knows, to the mere dogma of familiarity, or stereotyped verbalisms and other confused experiences are solemnly cherished as though the warmth of the philosophical bosom could somehow invest them with life.

§ 6. I am confident that the nature of mental action is discoverable neither by an analysis of mental contents nor by self-intuition; that it is necessary, in short, to abandon the method of self-knowledge altogether, and substitute that of general observation. But in the interests of thoroughness it is desirable to examine what at first glance appears to afford a reasonable compromise. I refer to the view that construes mental action as a *peculiar introspective complex*. This view is commonly held by those who reject the last. The intuition of a "Simon-pure activity," or an "activity

Mental Action as the Feeling of Bodily Action

an sich" is rejected on grounds of introspective analysis. But analysis at the same time reveals a characteristic activity *process*, composed of sensations of bodily exertion and strain, or of feelings of "the tendency, the obstacle, the will, the strain, the triumph, or the passive giving up." James has suggested that this process can be reduced to still smaller proportions. "Whenever my introspective glance succeeds in turning round quickly enough to catch one of these manifestations of spontaneity in the act, all it can ever feel distinctly is some bodily process, for the most part taking place within the head." "It would follow that our entire feeling of spiritual activity, or what commonly passes by that name, is really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked."[1]

There are several objections to this version of mental action. In the first place, it is evident that the *feeling* of action belongs to the content of the mind, and therefore cannot be that general action by virtue of which things become content. It is not the correlate of content in general, but only of certain other content such as percepts and ideas. There is need of a kind of mental action that shall account for the presence in mind of this very activity-complex itself.

Furthermore, there is an evident confusion in regarding the *feeling* of action as itself action. It is necessary, as the spiritists and transcendentalists have rightly maintained, to suppose some kind of action that shall bring contents together, and give them the peculiar *within-mind unity* which they possess. A consciousness of *a and b* is not a consciousness of *a* and a consciousness of *b*. And the feeling of action is no more capable of effecting this conjunction than is any other content. A consciousness of "intra-cephalic movements" *and* the movements of an external body, a unity of consciousness in which these are *present together*, cannot derive its unity from a consciousness of the one any more than from the consciousness of the other. Both movements must be subtended by some action that operates on them *jointly*. James is correct in supposing that the experience of bodily action is peculiarly significant. It constitutes a core or nucleus of content that is more constant than the rest. It constitutes a permanent background which persists while the more conspicuous objects in the foreground vary; and is thus an important factor in the sense of personal identity. But it is none the less *content*, and so prevented from serving as the agency which defines content as such, and gives it its characteristic unity.

[1] James: *Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 376, 380; *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 300, 301–302; cf. below, pp. 354–356.

The true solution of the matter lies near at hand. If instead of defining mental action in terms of the *feeling* of bodily activities, he had defined it in terms of the bodily action itself, as he sometimes appears to do, these difficulties would have been obviated.[1] But this would have required the abandonment of the introspective method. For those bodily actions which now become most significant are only accidentally, if at all, felt by the conscious agent himself. A sound 'listened to' or 'heard,' is, by virtue of that action, mental content. Several sounds listened to or heard jointly compose a mental unity. But precisely what is the nature of listening or hearing? He who listens or hears is poorly qualified to say. The way it *feels* to listen or hear has little if anything to do with the matter. For listening and hearing are operations of the living organism, or specific operations of the nervous system, which lie in the field of general observation. And it is no more necessary to suppose that their nature is revealed to the agent which exercises them, than to suppose that the nature of breathing is revealed to him who breathes.

[1] "So far as we are 'persons,' and contrasted and opposed to an 'environment,' movements in our body figure as our activities." (*Pluralistic Universe*, p. 379, note.)

III. The Method of General Observation

§ 7. While proceeding to treat mind as though, like any other thing, it were open to general observation, I shall at the same time seek to reply to the objections which are ordinarily urged against such procedure. Most philosophers assume that it is essentially characteristic of a mind to be accessible only to itself. This proposition is rarely supported by evidence; it is commonly held to be sufficient to call attention to it. Thus it is asserted that "the essence of a person is not what he is for another, but what he is for himself. It is there that his *principium individuationis* is to be found—in what he is, when looked at from the inside."[1] As another writer expresses it, "That the mind of each human being forms a region inaccessible to all save its possessor, is one of the commonplaces of reflection."[2]

The Alleged Impossibility of Observing the Contents of Another Mind

These are formulations of an almost universal presupposition. I believe this presupposition, as ill-defined and unreasonable as it is universal, to be the greatest present obstacle to the clear and conclusive definition of mind. There can be no doubt of the propriety of distinguishing 'internal' and 'external' views of the mind, and there can be no doubt of the practical or other circumstantial importance of emphasizing self-knowledge. But I do not believe that such distinction and emphasis lead properly to any generalization such as those which I have quoted; nor do I believe that they contribute fundamentally to the definition of mind.

The notion of the privacy of mental contents rests mainly upon the fallacy of 'exclusive particularity.' It is characteristic of content of mind, such as perceptions and ideas, to belong to individual minds. My idea is mine; and in some sense, then, falls within my mind. From

[1] H. Rashdall, in *Personal Idealism*, edited by H. Sturt, p. 383.
[2] M. F. Washburn, *The Animal Mind*, p. 1.

this it is hastily concluded that it is therefore exclusively mine. Now it is clear that my idea cannot be alienated from my mind, without contradiction. It must not be attributed to the *not-my-mind* which is the other term of a disjunctive dichotomy. ***But it does not follow that my idea may not also be your idea.*** There are many such cases. Friends are essentially such as to belong to friends, and my friend is veritably mine; but he may, without contradiction, become yours also. Similarly, my home, my parents, my country, although in order to be what they are they must be possessed by such as me, may without logical difficulty be shared with you.

But I may seem to have overlooked a vital point. Although one thing can be the object both of my idea and of yours, can *my idea itself* be also yours? Does not the whole being of *my* idea lie in its relation to me? Doubtless Neptune may become my idea, and also yours; but can my idea of Neptune ever become an idea of yours? Now this clearly depends upon whether the determination of Neptune which makes it my idea can itself submit to another determination of the same type. There is no *a priori* objection that would not beg the very question under discussion. Here again cases from other classes of objects are very common. The sum of three and three may itself be added to three; you may paint me in the act of painting my model; the general may fear the fear of his army. And, similarly, a thing's relation to me as my idea, may enter into another such relation to you and become your idea. It will doubtless remain true that my idea simply, and your idea of my idea, will differ through the accession of the last cognitive relationship; and that in this sense my idea cannot be completely identical with your idea. But it is impossible even to state this trivial proposition without granting that you may know my idea, which is the point at issue.

The mere fact, then, that ideas are always included within some mind, and thereby excluded from what is

altogether not that mind, contributes no evidence for the absolute privacy of mind. Any group whatsoever is private, in the sense that what is in it cannot by definition be outside of it, nor what is outside of it in it. But this does not prevent what is inside of it from being *also* inside of something else, nor does it prevent the entire group from being inside of another like group. Everything depends on the particular nature of the groups in question. And we have already found it necessary to classify minds among intersecting rather than exclusive systems. Indeed, such a classification would seem to be necessarily implied in the general conception of social intercourse. How, then, are we to explain the widespread disposition to regard minds as exclusive?

In the first place, we readily extend to our minds the group relation which holds in the case of our bodies. There is a special sense in which things are inside and outside of the mind, but it tends naturally to be confused with the sense in which things are inside and outside of the body. The tendency is partly a misuse of schematic imagery, and partly a practical bias for the bodily aspect of the mind. Suffice it here to remark that the mutual exclusiveness of our bodies is so highly emphasized, that even the vaguest supposition that our minds are within our skins, is sufficient to give rise to a notion that they too are wholly outside one another. Such a supposition is generally admitted to be false, but it nevertheless lingers on the scene; and not only falsifies the grouping of mind, but exaggerates the difficulty of knowing mind from the standpoint of general observation.

In the second place, various motives, methodological, religious, and social, have so emphasized the difference between mind and mind, or between the individual mind and the outer world, that this difference tends to be transformed into a relation of exclusiveness. Psychological introspection, when superficially interpreted, defines a region set apart from nature and society. Religious

introspection heightens the difference between the inner life and the life of the world. The problems of personal morality under complex social conditions tend to heighten the difference between individual lives. Such a proposition as "No one else can understand me" has only to become familiar and practically intensified, to be converted readily into an absolute principle. Thus the *difficulty* of knowing certain aspects of another mind tends to be mistaken for *the impossibility* of the entrance of mind into mind. Proverbial difficulties easily become logical impossibilities. To avoid gross confusion it is necessary to examine the difficulties concretely and circumstantially; to point out the conditions under which they arise, and the elements of mind which they tend to obscure.

§ 8. Beyond question the content of an individual mind at any given time may be successfully hidden from general observation. But this in itself does not imply any general proposition to the effect that a mind is *essentially* such as to be *absolutely* cut off from such observation. It may be that your inability to discover what I am imagining, thinking about, or remembering, is only like the assessor's inability to discover the amount of my property; and no one has asserted that property is essentially knowable only to its owner. Let us examine the circumstances.

The Difficulty of Observing Mental Content. The Case of Perception

In the first place, it is evident that under favorable circumstances you have no difficulty in following my mind. Where, for example, we are engaged in such intercourse as involves a bodily dealing with physical objects, it is as easy as it is indispensable for each to know what is in the mind of the other. The objects themselves here provide mutually accessible content in a manner that is unmistakable. A clear case in point is the exchange of currency for merchandise; but to illustrate the experience exhaustively would be to traverse nine-tenths of life. Such mutual apprehension of the physical things which you and I have

in mind is the condition of all intercourse between us; we could not shake hands without it.

There is another way in which you readily follow my mind, namely, through my verbal report. We do not often sit down and deliberately disclose our minds to one another; more commonly we use language to the end that we may together think the same things. But if you are a psychologist, or an interpreter of dreams, I may "tell" you what is in my mind. Now it is frequently assumed by the sophisticated that when I thus verbally reveal my mind you do not *directly* know it. You are supposed directly to know only my words. But I cannot understand such a supposition, unless it means simply that you know my mind only *after* and *through* hearing my words. If it is necessary for you to take a book from the shelf and turn over its pages before you can discover the date of Kant's birth, or walk across the street before you can discover the number of your neighbor's house, do you therefore not know these things directly when you do know them? And if you must wait until I tell you before you know what image is in my mind, do you therefore not know the image directly when you do know it? If not, then what *do* you know directly when the matter is concluded? Surely not the word; for this having served its turn, receives no further notice. It is not the word which is communicated, except in the wholly exceptional cases in which the word is not understood and so does not fulfil its function. And it is certainly implied in all of our subsequent action and intercourse relating to the image, that we have access to it jointly, just as we do to our money and our lands; that you know it now even as I know it.

It is important to labor under no misapprehension concerning the general function of language. Language does not arise as the external manifestation of an internal idea, but as the means of fixing and identifying abstract aspects of experience. If I wish to direct your attention to the ring on my finger, it is sufficient for me to point to it or hand

it to you. In seeing me thus deal with the ring, you know that it engages my attention, and there occurs a moment of communication in which our minds unite on the object. The ring figures in your mind even as it does in mine; indeed the fact that the ring does so figure in my mind will probably occur to you when it does not to me. If, however, I wish to call your attention to the yellowness of the ring, it will not do simply to handle it. The whole object will not suffice as a means of identifying its element. Hence the need of a system of symbols complex enough to keep pace with the subtlety of discrimination. Now the important thing to bear in mind is the fact that as a certain practical dealing with bodies constitutes gross communication, so language constitutes refined communication. There is no difference of objectivity or subjectivity. In the one case as in the other, mind is open to mind, making possible a coalescence of content and the convergence of action on a common object.

For purposes of further illustration, consider the case of disguised perception. I am watching you "out of the corner of my eye," hoping to deceive you as to my real thoughts. If the strategy is successful it proves that I can render equivocal the evidence you commonly rely on. But does any one seriously suppose that the direction of my thoughts is not discoverably there in the retinal and nervous process responding to your body, and in my intention to deceive? Where my mind is the object to be known, I can embarrass the observer because I can control the object. I can even make and unmake my mind. As you seek to follow my thoughts, I may accelerate them or double on my tracks to throw you off the scent. But I enjoy the same advantage over you if you are an assessor seeking to know my property, and neither in the one case nor in the other is it proved that the facts are not there for you to know as well as I. Indeed the special qualifying conditions to which we are compelled to refer when describing the hidden mind, leave no doubt that the difficulties

in this case are essentially like the difficulties which check or thwart any cognitive enterprise. Some things are more difficult to observe than others, and all things are difficult to observe under certain circumstances. This is true of mind in no mysterious or unique way.

§ 9. Sensations of the internal states of the organism itself present a peculiar case, that is of sufficient importance to receive independent treatment. Concerning certain happenings within my body, I am, so to speak, the only eye-witness. This circumstance plays a very important part in the unique self-knowledge imputed to the mind, and in particular, I believe, lends specious significance to the self-conscious and introspective experiences which have just been examined. Let us first set down the general facts in the case.

Proprio-ceptive Sensations

A leading physiologist writes as follows: "Bedded in the surface layer of the organism are numbers of receptor cells constituted in adaptation to the stimuli delivered by environmental agencies. [These receptors the author calls "*extero*-ceptors."] But the organism itself, like the world surrounding it, is a field of ceaseless change, where internal energy is continually being liberated, whence chemical, thermal, mechanical, and electrical effects appear. It is a microcosm in which forces which can act as stimuli are at work as in the macrocosm around. The deep tissues . . . have receptors specific to themselves. The receptors which lie in the depth of the organism are adapted for excitation consonantly with changes going on in the organism itself, particularly in its muscles and their accessory organs (tendons, joints, blood-vessels, etc.). Since in this field the stimuli to the receptors are given by the organism itself, their field may be called the *proprio-ceptive* field." [1]

Now my body lies beyond the periphery of every other body, and can, therefore, be generally observed only by "extero-ceptive" organs, such as those of vision, touch, etc.

[1] C. S. Sherrington: *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, pp. 129–130.

But while I may also observe myself in this fashion, my "proprio-ceptors" enable me alone to know my body in another way. There is no occult reason for this; it is a matter of physiological organization. I am sensible of interior pressure and strain, or of the motion and muscular control of my limbs, in a manner impossible for any other observer, simply because no other observer is nervously connected with them as I am. I alone can be specifically sensible of loss of equilibrium, because my semicircular canals, though visible and tangible to others, have a continuous nervous connection with my brain alone. More important is the fact that I am sensible in a very complex way of states and changes in my visceral, circulatory, and respiratory systems. Here, again, I am possessed of sensations from which other observers are cut off for lack of certain nerve fibres which connect these organs only with *my* cerebral centres.

Now what is the inference from these facts? In the first place, it is to be observed that these sensations constitute knowledge of the body, and not of mind in the traditional sense. I have a species of cognitive access to the interior of my body from which all other knowers are excluded. My heart palpitates for me as it palpitates for no one else. But as it has never been argued that a physical organism is a thing known only to the mind inhabiting it, let us present the matter in another way. My mind possesses sense-contents that can not be similarly presented in any other mind. I alone can "have" these sensations. But does it follow that you cannot know them? Firstly, there is nothing *in* the sensation that you cannot know. The peculiar quality of heart-palpitation is known to you in other instances; and the bodily locality which makes it mine is immediately perceived by you. These factors must, it is true, be put together by you, but the result is nevertheless knowledge. And secondly, there is nothing *about* the sensation that you cannot know even better than I. If I were to follow up the mere presentation of the sensa-

tion, and proceed to an adequate knowledge of it, I would necessarily rely on anatomical and physiological methods that have from the first been open to you. Indeed, here I am seriously embarrassed; for as you are cut off from proprio-ceptive sensations of my bodily interior, so I am largely cut off from the extero-ceptive sensations which are much more indispensable to a knowledge of sense-structure and function. In short, certain things are presented in a characteristic way to me alone. I alone can have proprio-ceptive sensations of my own body. In order that you may know the interior of my body it is necessary for you to use your imagination, or some other relatively elaborate process.

Is this what is meant by saying that mind can be known only by itself? If so, then that contention loses all of its momentousness. For this is only a case of a very large class. It may even be contended that all existent things are such as to be presented instantly and simply only to a privileged group of knowers. In so far as spacial, events can be sensibly known only by those who enjoy a certain definable proximity, and in so far as temporal only by contemporaries. But this does not withdraw them from the general field of knowledge. I must use my imagination to know what the East Indian may know by opening his eyes; but my knowledge may none the less exceed his. And furthermore, even if it were granted that proprio-ceptive sensations can be known only introspectively, I can scarcely believe that those who emphasize the uniquely internal character of mind mean that the mind consists in a confused and partial knowledge of the interior of the physical body!

A word more is necessary to show the full importance of the matter. The experiences on which I most rely for a knowledge of myself as mental agent or subject contain an admixture of proprio-ceptive sensations. The very act of self-consciousness is itself attended by characteristic sensations due to bodily posture and respiratory changes. But

above all, the experience of self-activity or effort is largely made up of sensations of internal motion and strain. These experiences are stereotyped, obscure, and largely accidental. But there is, nevertheless, a propriety not commonly recognized, in regarding the proprio-ceptive experience so far as it goes as really a knowledge of self. For my proprio-ceptive experience is largely a knowledge of *my organic action on the environment*, and it is this action when construed in a certain manner that really constitutes mental action.[1]

§ 10. As respects the accessibility of my mental contents to your observation, the most important general fact is this: that your observation will be baffled *just in so far as my dealings with the content of my mind are not peripheral.* Contrary to a common philosophical opinion, my purpose, intention, or desire is least likely to escape you. This element of my mind is revealed even in my gross action, in the motions of my body as a whole. Your apprehension of it is as sure and as indispensable to social relations as your apprehension of the physical objects that engage my attention. The content of my purpose, that is, the realization proposed, and my more or less consistent devotion to it, are in your full view, whether you be a historian of character or a familiar companion. It is not, then, the desiderative element in mind that escapes observation, nor is it any such typical element, but all content in so far as the mind's dealings with it do not reach the visible exterior of the body. But what is implied in this very statement?

The Content of Desire, Memory and Thought

In the first place, we imply that the content in question

[1] Cf. Sherrington, *op. cit.*: "The other character of the stimulations in this field (the *proprio-ceptive*) we held to be that the stimuli are given in much greater measure than in the surface field of reception, by actions of the organism itself, especially by mass movement of its parts. . . . The immediate stimulus for the reflex started at the deep receptor is thus supplied by some part of the organism itself as agent" (p. 336). Cf. below, pp. 298–301.

is such as to be knowable by me if I can identify it. Commonly, doubt exists only as to which of several things, all plainly known to you, is at the moment known to me. I may tell you, and when I do, one is selected and the others fall away. Or you may conjecture, and if your conjecture be true you possess the content, though without being sure of the relation to my mind.

But in the second place (and I here anticipate a charge of grave omission) the relation of the content to my mind must be supposed to be *objectively and discoverably there*, even when I do not acknowledge it by a verbal report. It is impossible to formulate a case of memory, for example, without affirming a connection between the past event which contributes the content and the locally present mind that is recalling it. If I am in fact here and now recollecting a visit to London in 1905, a complex is defined, the essential terms of which are in your plain view. And the connection must be homogeneous with the terms. The past event as it was, must be engaged or dealt with by me as I stand before you. In other words, the original perceptual response must be *continued into the present*. But this is possible only through the identity of the nervous system. The link of recollection, connecting past and present, lies in a retrospective functioning of my body, which can be accounted for only by its *history*. And this is as accessible as any natural or moral process. When you know that I am looking at the moon, the salient facts are before you, the focalized posture of my body and its organ of vision, the concentration and consistency of my action, and, most important of all, the moon. In the case of my recollection of London the facts are more complicated, and even in part inaccessible, but equally with the facts just cited, they are in the context of your possible knowledge. They consist in such elements as my central attentive process, certain persisting modifications of my cerebrum, my original dealings, practical and neural, with London, and — London itself.

The same general consideration will apply also to thought. When I am thinking abstractions, the contents of my mind, namely the abstractions themselves, are such as you also may think. They are not possessed by me in any exclusive sense. And the fact that they are my contents means that they are somehow bound up with the history of my nervous system. The contents, and the linkage which makes them mine, are alike common objects, lying in the field of general observation and study.

§ 11. When mental content is thus arrived at by general observation rather than by introspection, the action which is correlative to it, which invests it with a new status and brings it together in a new way, is revealed at the same time. You observe the contents of my mind by following my glance or my words; so that at the same time that you observe the contents, you may also observe the action, namely my *visual or verbal response* to these contents. But we must deal here with the traditional objection that it is paradoxical or contradictory to suppose that mental action can be observed, as other things are observed. Mental action, it is argued, is active; and to be observed it would have to become passive, and so lose its distinctive nature. Or, mental action is subject, and so can never be object without forfeiting its identity.

The Alleged Impossibility of Observing Mental Action

The objection rests obviously upon the error of 'exclusive particularity.' It presupposes that what is active cannot also be passive, or that what is subject cannot also be object. Knowledge, it is asserted, always assumes the form (*S*) *R* (*O*) (subject-knowing-object). And in this abstract scheme, *S* cannot change its place without forfeiting its nature, since, like the hypothenuse of a right-angle triangle, its nature *is* its place. But it does not follow that *the same concrete entity* may not change its place, and having once been *S* now become *O*; as the same straight line, having been the hypothenuse of one triangle may become

the side of another. The same soul or nervous system, or whatever was filling the office of subject, might come to fill also the office of object. Or, while a given entity was filling the office of subject in relation to an object, it might at the same time be itself filling the office of object in relation to a second subject. And the nature of the office of subject, as exemplified in the first subject, could thus be known in the ordinary way by the second subject. Thus there is nothing whatsoever to stand in the way of the supposition that the bodily action wherewith I deal with things and make them my objects, may itself be similarly dealt with and made object by another bodily agent; or in supposing that the bodily process which in my own experience functions as mental action, and does not appear as content, should be the content of another mind. And on this supposition, it would naturally be agreed that the person best qualified to report on the nature of my mental action would be not myself, the user of it, but the physiologist or moralist who is the beholder of it.

§ 12. We are now prepared for a statement of the nature of mental action in terms of general observation. And in the first place, it is to be observed that mental action is a property of the physical organism. This view is contained in principle in Mach's notion that an element is mental in so far as it stands in a relation of functional dependence to a certain specific set of elements, which he calls the elements *K L M* . . .; these elements corresponding to what is generally known as the nervous system.[1] To this notion of Mach's must be added the so-called "motor theory" of consciousness, which is steadily winning a general acceptance among psychologists. "We are compelled to believe," says Professor McDougall, "that the nervous processes of the brain are of the type of the reflex processes of the spinal cord, and consist in the transmission of physical impulses through channels of great

Mental Action as Nervous System

[1] Cf. above, pp. 78–79.

complexity from the sensory to, or towards, the motor nerves, and to believe that *all psychical* processes are accompanied by nervous processes of this character."[1] We are thus led to the view that elements become mental content *when reacted to in the specific manner characteristic of the central nervous system.*[2]

This conclusion is approximated by at least two recent writers of wide influence. Richard Avenarius, the founder of the so-called "Immanence School" in Germany, employs a peculiar terminology of his own.[3] The central nervous system he terms "system *C*." This system he conceives, after the naturalistic fashion, as situated in an environment from which it receives stimulations ("*R*-values"), and to which it gives back a characteristic response ("*E*-values"). Experience or mental content consists of these *E*-values, or responses of system *C*. Avenarius, however, leaves us in doubt whether the reaction of system *C* does not *create* contents. It would appear that the "*E*-values" are more than actions; that they embrace mental constructs not given in the environment.

The correct view is more closely approached in Bergson's theory of pure perception. This writer concludes that "the living body in general, and the nervous system in particular, are only channels for the transmission of movements, which, received in the form of stimulation, are transmitted in the form of action, reflex or voluntary. That is to say, it is vain to attribute to the cerebral substance the property of *engendering representations*." Its function is selective; and those parts of the environment which it selects by its action, whether virtual, nascent, or actual, *are* the content of perception. "If we suppose an extended *continuum*, and, in this *continuum*, the center

[1] W. McDougall, *Physiological Psychology*, p. 7 (italics mine). Cf. also H. Münsterberg: *Grundzüge der Psychologie*, pp. 525–562.

[2] See note on p. 305.

[3] Cf. W. T. Bush: *Avenarius and the Standpoint of Pure Experience*, pp. 39 sq.; Avenarius: *Der Menschliche Weltbegriff*, *passim*. The present leader of the "Immanence School" is Joseph Petzoldt; cf. his *Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*.

of real action which is represented by our body, its activity will appear to illumine all those parts of matter with which at each successive moment it can deal." In other words, mental content consists of portions of the surrounding environment "illumined" by the action of the organism.[1]

§ 13. Bergson's view does not suffice as a thoroughgoing theory of mind, because it is limited to perception. A creative function is reserved for mind in its other operations.[2] But he states with admirable clearness a principle which can readily be extended to the higher functions of mind. And furthermore his statement of the principle possesses the additional advantage of emphasizing the essentially teleological character of mental action. "Conscious perception," he says, "does not compass the whole of matter, since it consists, in as far as it is conscious, in the separation, or 'discernment,' of that which, in matter, *interests our various needs*."[3] The action of the nervous system is a function of the organism, and like the organism it exhibits *the control of interest.* So that a physiological account of the action of mind must be supplemented by a moral account. And content of mind must be defined *as that portion of the surrounding environment which is taken account of by the organism in serving its interests;* the nervous system, physiologically regarded, being the mechanism which is employed.

Mental Action as Interest

As mind appears in nature and society, it consists primarily in interested behavior. Such behavior is promptly and almost unerringly distinguished by all save the most rudimentary intelligences. Indeed, the capacity of making such a distinction is one of the conditions of survival. Upon the lowest plane of social intercourse a mind is a potentiality of bodily contact, and is marked and dealt

[1] Bergson: *Matter and Memory*, trans. by Paul and Palmer, pp. 81, 309 (first italics mine). Cf. Ch. I, *passim.*

[2] Cf. *op. cit.*, Ch. II, III; and above, pp. 239–240, 261–265.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 78 (italics mine). A similar idea is contained in Avenarius's conception of the "*E*-values" as determined by the endeavor of "system *C*" to maintain its equilibrium. Cf. Bush, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41.

with accordingly. But even upon a comparatively low plane there is recognition of a characteristic difference between minds and other bodily things. Minds exhibit spontaneity and waywardness, a certain isolation of control *in their own interest.* Individually they manifest persistent hostility, which is feared in them, or persistent friendliness, which is courted in them. Such a recognition of mind is already present in a mind's discriminating reaction to anger, or to a hereditary foe, as denoting a marked or constant source of danger.

Where social relations are more subtle and indirect, the element of interest tends to supplant the merely physical and mechanical element of mind altogether. In my dealings with my neighbor I am most concerned with his desires or his consistent plan of action. I can injure him by checkmating his interests, or profit by him through combining my interests with his. It is most important for me to know what he consistently seeks. He is a living policy or purpose of which I must obtain the key-motive if I would make either peace or war.

I am also familiar with my own propensities. In so far as I am reflective, my impulses and ideals are repeatedly the objects of my contemplation and scrutiny. They are defined, adopted, rejected, or reaffirmed in every moral crisis. But if be true that my interests are myself, in the deepest sense, it is no less true that they are evident to any intelligent observer. They are the defining forms of my life. In so far as they move me they cannot be hidden away within me. They mark me among my fellows, and give me my place, humble or obscure, in the open field of history. It is possible, doubtless, to emphasize the introspective factor of desire. But desire in so far as content, merely, is not desire at all. Desire as moral, as a form of determination, belongs not to the domestic mind, but to mind at large in nature and society.

§ 14. And precisely as a mind's interests are evident to general observation, so are the objects on which it acts

interestedly. If I am to deal with my friend or enemy at close range, it is clear that I must think with him, or always to some extent traverse with him the objects in his field of view. Upon higher planes of intercourse, in narrative, in straightforward and companionable discussion, another's mind consists more of objects than anything else. Its bodily aspect falls away, and even its impelling interest tends to be neglected. But it needs only a shifting of the attention to correct the perspective. I may deliberately take pains to discover and supply a mind's objects. To do so I have only to observe what the mind selects from its environment.

Mental Content as Identified by Interested Action

Is this not what is done, for example, by the student of the animal mind? We are told that the amœba has four general reactions of the organic type. One of these is described as *positive*: "a pseudo-podium is pushed forward in the direction of the stimulus, and the animal moves towards the solid." The solidity of bodies enters into this animal's practical economy: "the positive reaction is useful in securing contact with a support on which to creep."[1] Here is an element of the environment that is marked and isolated by a response which expresses the organism's self-preservative impulse. Do we, then, not know the content of the amœba's mind? Should I ever understand the matter better by contracting my own mind to amœba-like proportions? I grant that as I have loosely described the matter, much doubt exists as to how far the amœba's discrimination goes, but in his studies of sensory discrimination the comparative psychologist has already devised methods which open the way to greater exactness.[2] Conditions may be contrived which make it to the animal's interest to notice differences, and these may be progressively refined until the animal is pressed to the limit of his sensibility. When after such tests the conclusion is reached that the animal *feels the solid or sees blue*, what remains to be

[1] Washburn, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, Ch. IV.

said by way of "interpretation?"[1] The amœba does not, it is true, feel the solid as we do. Therefore let us *observe the amœba*, and not undertake to say how we should feel if we were amœbæ. We shall then find that which is presented to the amœba to be distinguished from the fuller environment that lies before us, by the *amœba's interested action*.

There will still persist, I feel sure, a belief to the effect that mental content can never be known in this way. Such belief appears to me to be due, at least in part, to a curiously perverse habit of thought. It is customary to look for the content *within the body*, and then solemnly declare that it is not to be found. Though long since theoretically discredited, the 'subcutaneous' mind still haunts the imagination of every one who deals with this problem. But why not look for the object where it belongs, and where it is easily accessible — namely, in the environment? Is it not in truth the environment which the amœba or any other organism *is sensing*? If, then, we are in search of content, why take so much pains to turn our backs on it, and look for it where by definition it must escape use. Such procedure is due, I think, simply to a failure to group together *behavior, and those elements of the environment selected by the behavior* — the reaction, *and* the stimulus. It is true that neither behavior, nor even conduct, is mind; but only because mind is behavior, or conduct, *together with* the objects which these employ and isolate.

§ 15. In conclusion let me briefly summarize the parts of mind which the analysis has revealed.

(1) In the first place, a mind is a complex so organized

[1] I have reference here to such statements of method as the following: "Knowledge regarding the animal mind, like knowledge of human minds other than our own, must come by way of *inference from behavior*. Two fundamental questions then confront the comparative psychologist. First, by what method shall he find out how an animal behaves? Second, how shall he *interpret* the conscious aspect of that behavior?" (The italics are mine.) *Ibid.*, p. 4.

as to act desideratively or interestedly. I mean here to indicate that character which distinguishes the living organism, having originally the instinct of self-preservation, and acquiring in the course of its development a variety of special interests. I use the term *interest* primarily in its biological rather than in its psychological sense. Certain natural processes act consistently in such wise as to isolate, protect, and renew themselves. (2) But such processes, interested in their general form, possess characteristic instrumentalities, notably a bodily nervous system which localizes the interest and conditions the refinement and range of its intercourse with its environment. (3) Finally, a mind embraces certain contents or parts of the environment, with which it deals through its instrumentalities and in behalf of its interests.

A Summary Definition of Mind

The natural mind, as here and now existing, is thus an organization possessing as distinguishable, but complementary, aspects, *interest, nervous system, and contents.* Or, if interest and nervous system be taken together as constituting the action of mind, we may summarize mind as *action* and *contents*.

The evolution of mind appears on the one hand in the multiplication and coördination of the interests which govern it, and on the other hand in its enrichment of content through gain in discrimination and range. The latter, in turn, means the increase of that proportion of the environment of which its improved capacities enable it to take account. The human mind is preëminent in respect both of discrimination and range. In other words, it acts on abstractions and principles, on an innumerable variety of complex objects, and on remote regions of space and time; all of which lie outside the practical economy of animals comparatively deficient in sense, memory, imagination, and thought.

It is only just to admit that mind as observed introspectively differs characteristically from mind as observed

in nature and society. But this does not prove that in either case it is not directly known, or that what is known is not the real mind. Every complex object presents its parts in a different order when approached in different ways, but in the object as wholly known these parts fit and supplement one another. As introspection obscures the instrumental and action factors of mind, so general observation obscures its content factor. But when these factors are united, they compose a whole mind, having a structure and a function that may be known by any knower, whatever his initial bias.

[NOTE (see p. 299). — Since this book was written Professor E. B. Holt's views to which the author had already been indebted, have been published. Holt's *Concept of Consciousness*, and "Response and Cognition" in *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. XII, Nos. 14 and 15, now constitute the most able statement of the above theory with special emphasis on its physiological aspects.]

CHAPTER XIII

A REALISTIC THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

I. The Theory of Immanence

§ 1. The new realism is a revival of what has been referred to as the "antiquated metaphysics, which talks about existence *per se*, out of all relation to minds." [1] But lest it be thought that this theory is altogether antiquated, it is important to point out its precise relation to earlier forms of realism. The most remarkable parallel which the past affords is to be found in a theory which Hume entertained provisionally as a natural sequel to his analysis of mind. This parallel is so instructive as to warrant its being quoted in full.

The Old Realism and the New

"We may observe," writes Hume, "that what we call a *mind*, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos'd, tho' falsely, to be endow'd with a perfect simplicity and identity. Now as every perception is distinguishable from another, and may be consider'd as separately existent; it evidently follows, that there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking being. . . . If the name of *perception* renders not this separation from a mind absurd and contradictory, the name of *object*, standing for the very same thing, can never render their conjunction impossible. External objects are seen, and felt, and become present to the mind; that is, they acquire such a relation to a connected heap of perceptions, as to influence them very considerably in augmenting their

[1] G. H. Howison: *The Limits of Evolution, and Other Essays*, p. 21.

number by present reflections and passions, and in storing the memory with ideas. The same continu'd and uninterrupted Being may, therefore, be sometimes present to the mind, and sometimes absent from it, without any real or essential change in the Being itself." [1]

It will be noted that Hume here regards things not only as possessing being independently of the mind, but also as *identical with perceptions when present to the mind.* Indeed, he was first convinced of their identity with perceptions, and suggested their independence only as an afterthought. In this respect Hume's view is to be distinguished from the "natural realism" of the Scottish School of Reid and Hamilton. These writers were concerned primarily to avert the sceptical and absurd consequences of the "ideal philosophy," which merged external reality into the mind's ideas. They sought to restore the traditional substances, the mind within and the nature without; and regarded both as distinct from the ideas that "suggest" them. In the case of the "primary" physical qualities, "extension, solidity, and motion," they did, it is true, assert a doctrine of "real presentationism." But they did not explain how bodies can be "suggested," "presented," or "conceived," without becoming ideas; or how without the mediating function of ideas, minds can know bodies. In other words, the dualistic difficulty was aggravated and not relieved.[2]

Modern realism is closer to the monistic realism of "ideas," suggested by Hume, than to the dualistic realism of mind and matter, propounded by the Scottish School; and this in spite of the fact that the Scottish philosophy was primarily a polemic, in the name of "realism," against

[1] Hume: *Treatise of Human Nature* (Selby-Bigge's edition), p. 207. Cf. above, pp. 137–138. Professor W. P. Montague called attention to this aspect of Hume in an article entitled "A Neglected Point in Hume's Philosophy," *Phil. Review*, Vol. XIV, 1905.

[2] Thomas Reid: *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (1764), ch. I, V, VII; Sir William Hamilton: *Notes B, C, D*, appended to his edition of the *Philosophical Works of Thomas Reid;* especially, eighth edition, p. 825. Cf. J. S. Mill: *Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, Ch. II.

Hume, as the last and most outrageous of the idealists. The new realism, while it insists, as all realism must, that things are *independent*, asserts that when things are known, they *are* ideas of the mind. They may enter *directly into* the mind; and when they do, they become what are called 'ideas.' So that ideas are only things in a certain relation; or, things, in respect of being known, are ideas.

It is important, therefore, in expounding the general realistic theory of knowledge, to distinguish two component theories. The first I shall call the theory of 'immanence.' This is the same theory as that which I have in another connection termed 'epistemological monism.'[1] It means that when a given thing, *a*, is known, *a itself* enters into a relation which constitutes it the idea or content of a mind. The second I shall call the theory of 'independence;' and it means that although *a may* thus enter into mind, and assume the status of content, it is not dependent on this status for its being, or nature. After discussing these two theories, which deal with the problem of the relation of knowledge to its objects, I shall apply them briefly to the problem of truth.

§ 2. There are two varieties of dualism which the theory of immanence makes it possible to escape; the dualism between mind and body, and the dualism between thought and things. The theory of immanence escapes these dualisms by employing the notion of *relation* in place of the notion of *substance*.[2]

The Duality of Mind and Body as a Difference of Organization

The dualism between mind and body received its classic formulation, as we have seen, in the philosophy of Descartes. This was essentially a 'substance-attribute'

[1] Cf. above, pp. 124–126.

[2] It has been suggested that the categories of *substance*, *quality*, and *relation* represent natural stages in the evolution and refinement of thought. Cf. Ludwig Stein: "Der Neo-Idealismus unserer Tage," in his *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, Vol. IX, 1903; referred to by W. P. Montague: "The Relational Theory of Consciousness and its Realistic Implications," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. II, 1905.

philosophy. Mind and body were conceived as two self-contained and mutually exclusive spheres, characterized and distinguished by the two attributes, 'thought' and 'extension.' These two attributes Descartes regarded as *ultimately* different, and as involving a complete disjunction between the substances which they qualified. The Cartesian dualism gave rise to the most baffling perplexities. If mind and body be disjoined by definition, how explain the empirical fact of their union? For those facts which are so prominently in evidence in philosophy, namely, the processes of perception and of voluntary action, are neither exclusively mental nor exclusively bodily, but a blend of the two. In perception a process which begins as bodily ends as mental; and in volition a process which begins as mental ends as bodily. Notwithstanding these difficulties the Cartesian dualism has been perpetually confirmed by the habits of common sense; and still remains the most plausible, and superficially the most intelligible, doctrine. For it is customary and instinctive to think of all duality as exclusive, like the duality of bodies or non-intersecting spaces. Gesture and symbol — in short, every method of sensuous representation, exhibit the same type of duality; so that it requires more than the ordinary precision of thought to avoid the assumption of its universality.

Human experience abounds, however, in dualities of another type. Social aggregates, for example, are distinguished not by the inherent nature of their contents, but by some unifying relation. Thus the residents of the United States are divided into sexes, political parties, races, ages, and innumerably many other groups; and these groups *overlap and intersect*. They do not possess their members exclusively, but share their members. The difference between any two groups, such, for example, as the Democratic party and the proletariat, is not a difference of members — for it is conceivable that their membership should exactly coincide; but a difference of

principle of organization. In respect of one relation the members constitute one group, and in respect of another relation the same members constitute another group.

The theory of immanence applies this type of difference to the duality of mind and body. The application becomes possible, indeed necessary, the moment it is recognized that mind and body are both complexes capable of being analyzed into more primitive terms. Neither mind nor body is really simple; although common sense and philosophical tradition have conspired to make them appear so.[1] And when they are submitted to analysis, it appears that the more primitive terms of which they are composed are, in many cases at least, interchangeable. There are sensible qualities and logical categories common to both. Indeed it is impossible to find ground for asserting that there is *any* term of the bodily complex that is disqualified from entering the mental complex.

This view is best set forth in Ernst Mach's little book, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen*, which deserves to be numbered among the classics of modern realism.[2] The *elements* of the physical and the psychical, according to this author, are the same. But while physics studies one type of relationship, such as the relation of a color to the source of light, psychology studies its peculiar relation to the retina or nervous system of a sentient organism. The color itself is *neither physical nor psychical.*[3]

While Mach's statement of the theory is correct in principle, it is colored by the author's naturalistic predilections. He neglects the logical aspect of knowledge. Physical and psychical complexes have in common not only sensible qualities, but also certain more fundamental formal relationships, such as implication, order, causation, time, and the like. These relations in their purity can be discovered only by carrying analysis beyond the bounds

[1] Cf. above, pp. 51–53, 279–283.

[2] There is an English translation by C. M. Williams, already referred to above, pp. 78–79. Cf. also Mach: *Erkenntnis und Irrtum.*

[3] Cf. above, pp. 277–279; and below, pp. 364–365.

of sensible discrimination. They require, in short, *logical* analysis.[1] Those who have adequately recognized the importance of logic have, on their side, usually neglected the specific question of the relation of mind and body. The full scope of the theory of immanence appears only when it is recognized that the same elements compose both mind and body; and that these common elements embrace both sense *qualia* and also logical abstractions. Then, instead of conceiving of reality as divided absolutely between two impenetrable spheres, we may conceive it as a field of interpenetrating relationships, among which those described by physics and psychology are the most familiar and typical, and those described by logic the most simple and universal.

When mind and body are so conceived, there is no longer any peculiar difficulty involved in the perception of bodily objects.[2] For the relationship which invests a term with a bodily character does not preëmpt it; so that at the same time that it is bodily by virtue of one relation, it may also be content of perception by virtue of another relation. When I perceive Mars, the sun's satellite (body) is my percept (mind); and there is no more contradiction than in supposing that my uncle is my father's brother.

Representation as an Immanent Relation

§ 3. The second dualism which the theory of immanence makes it possible to escape is that between knowledge and things. This dualism is not based merely on a disjunction of substances defined by dissimilar attributes, but on the alleged 'self-transcendence' of knowledge. It would appear that knowledge is 'about' things other than itself. This has given rise to the notion of the 'thing in itself,' as that to which knowledge points or refers, but which is always 'other' than the content of knowledge. The difficulty is evident. All qualities and characters, in so far as known, are annexed by knowledge and withdrawn from reality. The thing

[1] Cf. above, p. 108.

[2] Nor in the voluntary control of bodily actions. Cf. below, pp. 341–342.

in itself, thus distinguished from all content, is reduced to a bare X, entirely devoid of qualities and characters. Thus the self-transcendence of thought seems to imply agnosticism. Knowledge can do no more than point beyond to the reality which it can never grasp. It is a confession of failure.

The theory of immanence rectifies this dualism by asserting that the difference between knowledge and things, like that between mind and body, is a relational and functional difference, and not a difference of content. In the first place, we must distinguish between *immediate* knowledge and *mediate* knowledge. In the case of immediate knowledge, the thing and the knowledge are identical, except as respects their relations. Thus *a* is knowledge by virtue of its relation to a nervous system, and its presence in a context of other elements similarly related. But *a* is also 'thing in itself' by virtue of its intrinsic quality, or by virtue of its sustaining other relations than those of the type just indicated. When I perceive Mars, it is knowledge by virtue of its relation to my perceiving activity and to my other percepts, my memories, plans, feelings, etc.; but it is also 'thing in itself' by virtue of its volume, and its distance from the sun.

In the second place, however, it is necessary to recognize that in mediate knowledge, or discursive thought, there *is* a more complete difference between the knowledge and the thing. There are even cases in which the knowledge and the thing known possess little, if any, identical content. One may think about *a*, in terms of *b*, *c*, etc., as when one thinks about Mars in terms of the *words*, "Mars," "sun," etc. The theory of immanence explains these cases by saying that the thing thought about, and the thought, are both experienced. The thing transcends the thought, but it remains perceivable, or in some such manner immediately accessible; and possesses the qualities and characters which such an immediate knowledge reveals. "In such pieces of knowledge-of-acquaintance,"

says James, "all our knowledge-about must end." Or, as Dewey expresses it, "the meaning is one thing; the thing meant is another thing, and is . . . *a thing presented as not given in the same way as is the thing which means.*" In other words, things do not transcend knowledge, but the thing mediated or 'represented' transcends the representation; while this whole process of transcendence lies within the field of things immediately presented.[1]

The theory of immanence thus recognizes two sorts of transcendence: first, a thing's transcendence of the cognitive relation by virtue of its possession of an intrinsic quality of its own, or by virtue of its possession of other relations, such, for example, as physical relations; second, a thing's transcendence of its representation, *within* the field of cognition itself.

II. The Theory of Independence

§ 4. The theory of immanence not only fails to establish realism;[2] but appears even to disprove it by bringing the transcendent directly into mind. It is now necessary to show that the immanent may at the same time be independent. It would not, I think, be far from the truth to say that the cardinal principle of neo-realism is *the independence of the immanent.*[3] To prepare the way for the understanding of this principle, it is necessary first to dispose of two theories which approach it so closely as to be frequently confused with it.

The Half-realisms. Independence of Finite Knowledge

The first of these "half-realisms" is the doctrine promulgated by objective and absolute idealism, to the effect that reality is independent of *finite knowledge.* Reality is a norm or ideal, that cannot be dependent on finite knowl-

[1] James: *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 39; Dewey: *Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and other Essays*, p. 103, note (italics mine).

[2] The theory of immanence is held in one form or another by nearly all contemporary philosophers.

[3] I have discussed the term 'independence' more fully in "A Realistic Theory of Independence," contributed to *The New Realism.*

edge because it is *presupposed* by it. Transcendental idealism "discovers the final ground of every immanent being, neither in that being itself, nor in a transcendent reality, but in a transcendent ideal which the knowing subject has to realize." This transcendent ideal is independent of all approximations to it, "because of the logical priority of the *ought* (Sollen) to the *is* (Sein)."

But this view (whether expressed in voluntaristic or in intellectualistic terms) is non-realistic, for two reasons. In the first place, "it accepts no being but that which is immediately given in the idea" — it moves entirely within the limits of experience; and in the second place, "it sets over against the judging subject as an object to which it must conform, only an ought," which can have no meaning apart from the activity of thought.[1] In short, things are dependent on experience, and experience on thought; and either form of dependence would be fatal to realism.

§ 5. There is a much closer approximation to realism in the pragmatist doctrine that *experience is independent of thought*. Indeed by many pragmatists this doctrine is thought to constitute realism. According to this doctrine thought is a special process of mediation; which arises within experience, and employs its terms, but without preëmpting them. The subject-object relation, the relation of meaning, the judgment of truth, these and other intellectual processes, are not essential to experience; they are arrangements into which experiences fall owing to certain practical exigencies, such as the interruption of habit, or the insufficiency of immediate knowledge. The terms of the intellectual process are intellectual only accidentally, and by virtue of certain special relationships into which they enter.

Independence of Mediate Knowledge

But what shall we say of experience itself? Are *things* essentially *experience*, or is this, too, a peculiar and accidental relationship? On this point, pragmatism, like most contemporary thought, is profoundly ambiguous. It would

[1] H. Rickert: *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 165.

appear that while Dewey, for example, rescues reality from dependence on intellect, he is satisfied to leave it in the grasp of that more universal experience which is "a matter of functions and habits, of active adjustments and readjustments, of coördinations and activities, rather than of states of consciousness."[1] In any case the issue is clear. A thorough-going realism must assert independence not only of thought, but of any variety whatsoever of *experiencing*, whether it be perception, feeling, or even the instinctive response of the organism to its environment.

§ 6. We are now prepared for a final statement of the realistic theory of independence. It means that things may be, and are, directly experienced *without owing either their being or their nature to that circumstance.*

Thorough-going Realism. Independence of Experience or Consciousness

The radical character of this doctrine appears most clearly in connection with the contemporary use of the word 'experience.' According to realism, experience may be expressed as (*a*) R^e, where *a* is that which is experienced, and R^e the experience-relation; and where *a* is independent of R^e. Now the term 'experience' may be used loosely to mean either *a*, R^e, or (*a*) R^e. But if we are to regard experience as the most comprehensive manifold, it is of crucial importance to distinguish these uses of the term. To use it in either of the last two senses, in which it embraces R^e, is to arrive at a phenomenalism or panpsychism, in which the ultimate components of reality are *experiences*.[2] To use it in the former sense, to mean what is or may be experienced, but which need not be experienced, will lead to realism.

But it is better that realism should reject the term 'experience' (or even "pure experience")[3] altogether, in this

[1] Dewey: *op. cit.*, p. 157; cf. above, p. 225.

[2] Cf. W. K. Clifford: "The elementary feeling is a thing in itself," *Lectures and Essays*, pp. 283, sq.

[3] Cf. James: "A World of Pure Experience," in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. For James's use of the term experience, cf. above, pp. 224–225 and below, pp. 264–265.

ultimate application — for it gives disproportionate emphasis to an accidental feature of things. Since R^e is not necessary to things, there is no reason for limiting 'things' even to what can be experienced. Such a circumscription is groundless and misleading. Professor Montague has proposed the term "pan-objectivism";[1] but this is not altogether satisfactory, because it suggests the correlation of object and subject. The expression, 'neutral entities,' will perhaps serve better to emphasize the indifference of the terms of experience, not only to their subjective relations, but to their physical relations as well. We need some such expression with which to refer to the *alphabet* of being, as distinguished from any and all of the familiar groupings which its elements compose.

The realist, in short, must resist every impulse to provide a home for the elements of experience, even in 'experience' itself. To bestow on them this independence may seem but a bad return for their usefulness, "since thereby they are turned out of house and home, and set adrift in the world, without friend or connection, without a rag to cover their nakedness."[2] The idealist will doubtless inquire how the facts can be "*there* independently and in themselves," without being somewhere;[3] and will be uneasy until he has brought them home to consciousness. But the realist must be satisfied to say that in the last analysis the elements of experience are not anywhere; they simply are what they are. They find a place when they enter into relationships; but they bring into these relationships a character which they possess quite independently and by themselves.

§ 7. We must now examine the arguments by which neo-realism seeks to prove its cardinal principle of independence. Owing to the present state of the question, realists have been largely occupied with the disproof of the contrary thesis to the effect that the cognitive consciousness conditions being. This contrary thesis, maintained by idealism, has obtained so wide an acceptance as to create a presumption against the theory of independence. Before establishing realism, then, it is necessary to refute idealism.

The Arguments for Independence. The Negative Argument

[1] W. P. Montague: "Contemporary Realism and the Problems of Perception," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. IV, 1907, p. 377.

[2] Reid's comment on Hume, in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, p. 103.

[3] H. H. Joachim: *The Nature of Truth*, p. 40.

In the first place, realism contends that idealism has not proved its case. It has depended for such proof upon fallacious forms of procedure, such as those which I have named 'argument from the ego-centric predicament,' and 'definition by initial predication.' Post-Kantian idealism has contributed a further argument to the effect that the synthetic unity, or logical structure, which must be imputed to reality, is an act of thought. But this argument is also fallacious, in that it either virtually relies on one of the former fallacies, or invests 'thought' with a peculiar unifying power of which no one has ever given any intelligible account. Since the proofs of idealism have already been examined, it is unnecessary to enter into detail here.[1]

We have also found, in the second place, that idealism is beset with a difficulty of its own invention — the difficulty of *subjectivism* or *solipsism*. If consciousness is construed as owning its objects, so that they arise and perish with its several acts or states, then the knowledge of the same thing by different knowers or by the same knower at different times becomes impossible. There can be no *real* identity, but only a manifold of unique and irrelevant units of consciousness. "If we say that they resemble one another, we can only mean that the judgment that they resemble one another exists, and this, in turn, can only mean that some one judges that this judgment exists, and so on. And if we say that the *same* presentation may exist in

[1] See above, pp. 156–162.

different instances, this again can only mean that some one judges it to be so."[1] When, in order to escape this difficulty, idealism conceives of "a world *already determined by thought*," that is "prior to, and conditions, our individual acquaintance with it," then idealism has virtually withdrawn its initial version of consciousness as owning its objects, with the result that both the difficulty and the solution become gratuitous.[2] In other words, idealism cannot affirm its central thesis without taking up a position which is on its own admission untenable.

This is a suitable occasion, in the third place, for introducing an objection which idealism in its turn urges against realism. It is a negative application of 'the ego-centric predicament.' If this predicament does not prove idealism, it is argued that it at least renders it impossible to prove realism. We cannot, perhaps, prove that everything is known; but we certainly cannot, without contradiction, *know* that there is anything that is *not* known. In so far as this objection is purely dialectical, it has been sufficiently answered by Mr. Russell. "When we know a general proposition," he says, "that does not require that we should know all or any of the instances of it. 'All the multiplication-sums that never have been and never will be thought of by any human being deal with numbers over 1,000' is obviously a true proposition, although no instance of such a sum can ever be given. It is therefore perfectly possible to know that there are propositions we do not know, in spite of the fact that we can give no instance of such a proposition."[3]

The reasons for supposing that there are things that are not known must now be introduced. We have thus far

[1] B. Russell: "Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions," III, *Mind*, N. S., Vol. XIII, 1904, p. 513. Cf. *passim*.

[2] T. H. Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics*, third edition, p. 38 (italics mine). Cf. above, pp. 162–163.

[3] B. Russell: "The Basis of Realism," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VIII, 1911, pp. 160–161. For the idealistic argument, cf. J. F. Ferrier, on "Agnoiology," or Theory of Ignorance, *Institutes of Metaphysics*, pp. 405, sq.

done no more than to prepare the way for the realistic theory of independence, by refuting the contrary theory, and by denying the charge that the realistic theory is inherently absurd.

The Argument from the Externality of Relations

§ 8. The most general argument for realism is an application of the theory of the *external* or *extrinsic* character of relations. According to the contrary view, relations penetrate, possess, and compromise their terms, so that it is impossible to separate the terms from the relation without destroying them. But according to the theory of the externality of relations, terms acquire from their new relations an added character, which does not either condition, or necessarily alter, the character which they already possess.

The procedure of logic and mathematics — any procedure, in fact, which employs the method of analysis — is necessarily committed to the acceptance of the externality of relations. The method of analysis presupposes that the nature and arrangement of the parts supplies the character of the whole. If such were not the case the specification of the parts and their arrangement would not afford a description of the whole, and one would have to be content with an immediate or mystical apprehension of it. Analysis and description by specification would not constitute knowledge at all, did not things actually possess the structure $(a)R(b)$, made up of the intrinsic characters a and b, in the relation R. This does not mean that complexes may not be dependent on one another, that $(a)R(b)$ may not cause $(c)R(d)$; but only that if such is the case, the relations are nevertheless something *added to the terms*. Just as a does not derive its content from $R(b)$, so $(c)R(d)$ does not derive its content from the causal relation to $(a)R(b)$; it simply possesses that causal relation *over and above* the content it possesses by virtue of its component terms and relation. It happens that that which is c and d in the relation R is *also* causally dependent on $(a)R(b)$.

Now what is the application of this to the question of the

dependence of things on knowledge?[1] It shows, in the first place, that the *content* of things is in no case made up of relations beyond themselves. So the content of a thing cannot be made up of its relation to consciousness. Of course, the *consciousness of a thing* is made up of the thing and its relation to consciousness. But the thing then contributes its own nature to the conscious complex, and does not derive it therefrom. If *a* is in relation to consciousness, then *consciousness-of-a* is constituted in part of *a*, but *a* itself is not constituted of consciousness. It follows, in the second place, that whether the relation of a thing to consciousness is a relation of dependence or not, is an empirical question. It is necessary *to examine the relation, and see.* In other words, it is impossible to infer dependence simply from the fact of relation. It is impossible to argue that 'independent reals' must stand absolutely out of relation to consciousness, if they are to be independent.

The theory of the externality of relations is not sufficient in itself to establish the case for realism. Indeed it is so general in scope as to argue pluralism rather than realism.[2] It shows that the nature of things is prior to the relations into which they enter, and that the nature of these relations, whether of dependence or not, is an extrinsic fact. So that we are left to conclude that many things are interdependent or not, as the facts may prove. But it remains for realism to investigate the precise nature of the relation of things to consciousness, to discover whether or no this is a relation of dependence. And this is now a question of fact, like the question of the relation of the tides to the moon, or the relation of Mother Goose to the atomic weight of hydrogen.

[1] Cf. Russell: *op. cit.*, and "On the Nature of Truth," *Proc. Aristotelian Soc.*, N.S., Vol. VII, 1906–1907, pp. 37–44; E. G. Spaulding: "*The Logical Structure of Self-Refuting Systems*," *Phil. Review*, Vol. XIX, 1910, pp. 276–301; and above, pp. 244–246.

[2] Precisely as the contrary theory argues monism rather than idealism, cf. Royce: "*The World and the Individual*, Vol. I, Lect. III. For pluralism, cf. above, pp. 242–249.

§ 9. The empirical argument for realism turns upon the nature of mind, and the specific kind of relationship which the mind's objects sustain to it. It must, of course, be assumed that consciousness *is* a relationship, as has been shown in the foregoing chapter. But first I propose to consider an intermediate argument to the effect that consciousness is *different* from its object This is the main contention of Mr. G. E. Moore in the several papers which he has contributed to this subject. The idealist "maintains that object and subject are necessarily connected, mainly because he fails to see that they are *distinct*, that they are *two*, at all. When he thinks of 'yellow' and when he thinks of the 'sensation of yellow,' he fails to see that there is anything whatever in the latter which is not in the former." But it is evident that "sensation of yellow," contains over and above "yellow," the element, "sensation," which is contained also in "sensation of blue," "sensation of green," etc. "Yellow exists" is one thing; and "sensing" it is another thing.

The Argument from the Distinction between Object and Awareness

In other words, the object of a sensation is not the sensation itself. In order that a sensation shall be an object, it is necessary to introduce yet another awareness, such as introspection, which is not at all essential to the meaning of the sensation itself. And "the existence of a table in space is related to my experience of *it* in precisely the same way as the existence of my own experience is related to my experience of *that.*" In both cases awareness is evidently a "distinct and unique relation," "of such a nature that its object, when we are aware of it, is precisely what it would be, if one were not aware."[1]

But what awareness is, further than this, Mr. Moore does not inform us. Mr. Russell adds that it is "utterly unlike other relations, except that of whole and part, in that one

[1] G. E. Moore: "The Refutation of Idealism," *Mind*, N.S., Vol. XII, 1903, pp. 442, 449, 453. Cf. also, "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception," *Proc. of the Aristotelian Soc.*, N.S., Vol. VI, 1905–06.

of its terms presupposes the other. A presentation . . . must have an object."[1] But there is so little to stand for it *besides* the object, that one could scarcely be blamed if he allowed Mr. Moore's distinction to lapse. Furthermore, while Mr. Moore's argument does prove that the object does not contain or by itself imply being experienced, it does not prove that it may not actually stand in some sort of dependent relation to that circumstance. The 'table is in my room,' does not contain awareness. But neither does it contain 'transportation,' although it may, as a matter of fact, have been put there by an expressman. And similarly it may, despite Mr. Moore's argument, have been put there by awareness. Such indeed would be the case, were I merely *imagining* the table to be in my room, or judging *falsely* that the table was in my room. As Mr. Russell himself admits in a later discussion, it is possible that 'table,' 'my room,' and the relation 'in,' should all be related to mind, and compose an aggregate on that account, although the table is not actually *in* the room.[2] In other words, awareness creates an indirect relation among its objects, by virtue of bringing them severally into the direct relation of awareness. And it is open to anyone to maintain that this indirect relation is the *only* relation which things have *inter se;* or that any specific relation, such as the physical relation, is a case of this indirect relation; or that things are actually brought into new cross-relations by means of this indirect relation.

§ 10. We need, in other words, to forsake dialectics, and observe what actually transpires. We then find that consciousness is a species of function, exercised by an organism. The organism is correlated with an environment, from which it evolved, and on which it acts. Consciousness is a selective response

The Argument from the Nature of Mind

[1] B. Russell: *op. cit.*, p. 515.

[2] "Every judgment is a relation of a mind to several objects, one of which is a relation; the judgment is *true* when the relation which is one of the objects relates the other objects, otherwise it is false." B. Russell: *Philosophical Essays*, p. 181.

to a preëxisting and independently existing environment. There must be something to be responded to, if there is to be any response. The spacial and temporal distribution of bodies in its field of action, and the more abstract logical and mathematical relationships which this field contains, determine the possible objects of consciousness. The actual objects of consciousness are selected from this manifold of possibilities in obedience to the various exigencies of life.

It follows that the objects selected by any individual responding organism compose an aggregate defined by that relationship. What such an aggregate derives from consciousness will then be its *aggregation, and nothing more.* A subjective manifold will be any manifold whose inclusion and arrangement of contents can be attributed to the order and the range of some particular organism's response. The number of the planets, for example, and their relative distances from the sun, cannot be so accounted for; but the number of the planets *which I have seen*, the temporal order in which *I have seen them*, and their *apparent* distances, *can* be so accounted for. In other words, the full astronomical nature of the planetary system, together with the particular circumstances of my sensibility, defines a limited manifold which is called the planetary system *for me*, or so far as belonging to my mental history. The physical planetary system is thus prior to and independent of each and every mental planetary system. And every question of subjectivity or objectivity is to be tested in the same fashion.

III. Truth and Error

§ 11. The proof of the independence theory from an examination of the concrete nature of mind, defines at the same time the principle which must be employed in solving the problems connected with subjectivity. We have found that the selective action of consciousness not only invests things with the character

The Realm of Subjectivity

of 'object' or 'content;' but at the same time, according as it excludes or includes, also defines characteristic fragments, foreshortenings, and assemblages of things, that may not coincide with physical and logical lines of cleavage. And these may be said to be subjective.

The clearest instance of subjectivity in this sense is *perspective*, or *point of view*; in which a projection defined by the position of the organism is abstracted from the plenum of nature. Such an experience does not create its content but distinguishes it, by virtue of bringing some of the environment into a specific relation that is not sustained by the rest. The so-called 'secondary qualities,' such as heat, color, sound, etc., must be dealt with by the same principle. The simple qualities themselves evidently cannot be subjective, any more than they can be physical. How far, if at all, the spacial and temporal relations of these qualities may be regarded as subjective, will depend entirely on how far these relations may be attributed to the sentient action of the organism.[1]

Subjective manifolds, or fictions, once instituted by the action of consciousness, may become stereotyped. They may be remembered or described; and through tradition and art, they may be incorporated more or less permanently into the environment. Such being the case, they may be mistaken for what they are not, and thus give rise to illusion and error.

§ 12. Subjectivity accounts for the possibility of error; but it does not in itself constitute error. It is possible for the mind to "entertain" daring and original speculations, go "wool-gathering," build "castles in Spain," or "imagine a vain thing," without committing error. A highly speculative or imaginative mind incurs a peculiar liability to error,

The Sphere of Truth and Error

[1] For the application of this method, cf. W. P. Montague: "Contemporary Realism and the Problems of Perception," *Jour. of Phil., Psych., and Scientific Methods*, Vol. IV, 1907, No. 14; T. P. Nunn: "Are Secondary Qualities Independent of Perception?" *Proc. Aristotelian Soc.*, N.S., Vol. I, 1900–01; E. B. Holt: "The Place of Illusory Experience in a Realistic World," in *The New Realism*.

which is the price it pays for its greater chance of truth. But there is no error until fiction is mistaken for fact; and there is no truth in the correlative sense, until a content of mind is rightly taken to be fact. Error and truth arise from the practical discrepancy or harmony between subjective manifolds and the manifolds of some independent order.

It is characteristic of truth, says Mr. Russell, to be a "mixture of dependence upon mind and independence of mind." Contemporary controversies concerning truth have been largely due to the attempt to place it wholly without mind or wholly within. The former attempt, illustrated by Mr. Russell's earlier view, leads inevitably to the admission of "objective falsehoods," an admission which is "the very reverse of plausible."[1] The attempt, on the other hand, to place truth wholly within the mind, leads to even more insuperable difficulties. This attempt is illustrated by Mr. Joachim's monistic-idealistic theory of truth, according to which truth is the "systematic coherence" of the absolute whole of experience. The distinction between truth and error reduces to the difference between complete and partial experience. But the result is that, humanly speaking, there can be no truth, even the truth that there is truth; since even Mr. Joachim's experience is partial, and there is thus no way of distinguishing his theory of truth from error.[2]

Pragmatism alone has consistently maintained that truth and error have to do with the action of mind in relation to an environment. Truth is neither coherence among *things* merely, nor the complete internal coherence of *thought;* but *a harmony between thought and things*. Similarly, error is neither an incoherence among things merely, nor the incom-

[1] B. Russell: *op. cit.*, pp. 184, 177, 173. Cf. "On the Nature of Truth," *Proc. Aristotelian Soc.*, N.S., Vol. VII, 1906–1907, pp. 44–49.

[2] H. Joachim: *The Nature of Truth*, ch. III; cf. above, pp. 184–188. Mr. Joachim himself admits the difficulties of his position; cf. Ch. IV. For Mr. Russell's criticism, see "The Monistic Theory of Truth," *Philosophical Essays*.

plete coherence of thought; but a discrepancy between thought and things. Pragmatism has maintained, furthermore, that the harmony and discrepancy in question is practical. It is not sufficient to say that a true belief must have a thing corresponding to it, for false belief has its object as well. Nor will it do to say that a true belief must resemble a thing: because, in the first place, that is not sufficient, since a belief must *mean* its object; and because, in the second place, it is contrary to fact, since it *need* not resemble its object. There seems to remain only the alternative of regarding truth as a kind of right action on a thing, and error as a kind of mistake.

But pragmatism, also, has been betrayed into a characteristic difficulty. Through excessive emphasis on the practical aspect of truth, it has seemed to make truth after all subjective; and without that insurance against a vicious relativism which idealism obtains from its conception of an absolute subject.[1] It is possible, I think, to formulate a theory that shall possess the merits of these views without succumbing to their difficulties.

§ 13. Truth and error arise when some content of mind is further dealt with in a characteristic fashion. It is pos-

Mistaking and Right Judging

sible for the mind to apprehend, speculate, or imagine, merely; but in this there is neither truth nor error. It is also possible for the mind to *believe*, that is, *adopt*, for the purpose of action. The truth or error of the belief is then relative to the interest and the circumstances which determine the success of the action. Thus I may accept the content of my perception as something to be dealt with physically, in the interest of self-preservation. In case such action is well taken, it is true; in case it is mistaken, it is false, or illusory. But the same content may be dealt with in another fashion without error. I may, for example, disbelieve it, or discount it, with reference to my physical action; or being interested, let us say, in the collection of instances of illusion, I may count it as one.

[1] For the pragmatist theory, cf. above, pp. 203–213.

On the other hand consider the case of an idea in the discursive sense, an idea *of* something. It is an idea of something by virtue of the fact that it is connected through my plans or expectations with some portion of the environment. And in this case, there is nothing intrinsically either true or false in *a*, or in any relation of *a* to *b*, except that of my intention. Whatever *a* be, whether fact or fiction, it is then true only when the use I make of it is successful; or false when the plans I form with it, or the expectations I base on it, fail.

If this be regarded as subjectivistic, it can only be because of the assumption that the determination of success and failure is subjective. But such is not the case. Success and failure are determined by interest, means, *and circumstance*.[1] If it will not do to fish for mermaids, this is because the facts are not consistent with the method I employ in the interests of livelihood. In the last analysis the reason for my folly lies in the fact that the image of a mermaid is a composite generated by the selective abstracting and grouping of consciousness. The fact loosely expressed in the judgment, 'there are no mermaids,' is that mermaid is a subjective, and not a physical, manifold. Hence it must be treated accordingly, if one is to deal with it successfully. And similarly, if my theoretical hypothesis is a mistaken one, this is because the locality to which my hypothesis refers me thwarts the theoretical purpose for which I have the hypothesis.

So far is it from being true that success and failure are subjective, that the subjective satisfaction or discontent may themselves be misleading. I may have the right idea when I am most discontented; I may serenely mistake fiction for fact, and heartily enjoy my illusions. And success and failure may be foredoomed without being consummated, as one may have the right key without unlocking the door, or play the fool without paying the penalty.

[1] Cf. below, pp. 333–334.

The absolute thus reappears in the commonplace guise of fact. Mind operates in an environment, and succeeds or fails, according as it meets or violates the terms which the environment dictates. Truth is the achievement, and error the risk, incidental to the great adventure of knowledge. But eternal being, and the order of nature, are not implicated in its vicissitudes. So that if there be any virtue in these terms "Eternal," "Order," or "Absolute," they can be transposed without loss.

CHAPTER XIV

A REALISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

§ 1. It will doubtless appear to most readers of this book that realism is a philosophy of disillusionment. And in a sense this is the case. As a polemic, realism is principally concerned to discredit romanticism; that is the philosophy which regards reality as *necessarily* ideal, owing to the dependence of things on knowledge. Realism, in other words, rejects the doctrine that things must be good or beautiful or spiritual in order to be at all. It recognizes the being of things that are wholly non-spiritual, of things that are only accidentally spiritual, and of things that, while they belong to the domain of spirit, nevertheless antagonize its needs and aspirations. The universe, or collective totality of being, contains things good, bad, and indifferent. But before one hastily concludes that realism discourages endeavor and discredits faith, one will do well to recall that there is a sense in which disillusionment is a source of power.

Enlightenment and Disillusionment

Life has maintained itself, and promoted its interests, in proportion as it has become aware of the actual character of its environment. It is the practical function of intelligence, not to read goodness into the facts, but to lay bare the facts in all their indifference and brutality; so that action may be contrived to fit them, to the end that goodness may prevail. Well doing is conditioned by clear seeing. The development of intelligence as an instrument of power has consisted mainly in freeing it from the importunity of ulterior motives; and in rendering it an organ of discovery, through which the native constitution of things is illuminated and brought within the range of action.