

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

CONCERNING PHILOSOPHY¹

THERE are various ways of characterizing modern philosophy, and of stating the difference between modern philosophy and medieval or ancient. Ancient philosophy sets out from an aesthetic viewpoint which finally invents the logical form as its instrument, desires to see the world as a whole, and intends to appreciate the world for what it is. And since the ancient viewpoint was worked out generally within groups engaged in discussion, it followed a corporative method and sought an end not bounded by the limitations of the individual observer. Its object was a corporate aesthetic whole, whose status and situs were determined only by other objects of identical nature. It had no relation or quality in any way derived from, or referent to, experience.

The medieval viewpoint was religious, in the peculiar oriental sense that it constructed its world out of the objective necessities of its life, out of those objects of life which were necessary to supplement the inadequacies of the world of experience. It was contemplative in its attitude to its world; it had no purpose to do anything about the inadequacies; even the full realization of what it regarded as its object, the transformation of its object into an objective, was to be realized in another world by the instrumentality of divine grace. And divine grace was itself an instrument, objective and not under their control, its efficacy outside experience, by means of which human limitations were to be gratuitously evened out. Also, the medieval view was a view of the whole from the whole, that is, it contemplated an end in which the particular

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would be assumed and subsumed, and the significance of the end lay in the fact that it embodied in an institutional structure the human purpose represented in the whole.

Thus the philosophic quest of the Greeks sought its object through a corporative method and, presupposing an institutional structure, had for its end an ideal whole; the medieval quest followed an institutional method, and had its end in a corporate structure. Is there anything suggested here that effectively characterizes the modern viewpoint?

It is the accepted commonplace to say that modern philosophy is scientific, analytic, humanistic, naturalistic, antischolastic, "anthropocentric"; "internalized", says Windelband; "illumination", says Falckenberg—"Philosophy as illumination, as a factor in general culture, is an exclusively modern phenomenon." The two characters perhaps most frequently named, both intended to indicate a superiority in modern philosophy, are its uniform reference, in some unique way, to the "inner" man, and its finding its object in nature; it has its source and ground, its medium and its method, in subjective inwardness, yet it is purely and disinterestedly and objectively scientific, with the world as its goal. It is thus no accident that its major problem is epistemology. That these two motives are incorrigibly contradictory does not in the least disturb the blatant egotism with which we congratulate ourselves upon possessing the final view. We know that our modern viewpoint is scientific, that it seeks the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; that it has its source, its original impulse, its goal and consummation, in the mysterious depths of the inner man and the eternal inwardness of nature. And putting together the two claims and giving the monstrosity its appropriate name, it is atomic mysticism.

I say we approve with enthusiasm the modern viewpoint, and emphasize various particulars in which it is superior to the ancient and medieval. We tend to look upon the earlier views as if they were at best mere premises, with a suspected negative implication, from which we draw the modern conclusion, and to regard the only thing sound about the premises that they render the conclusion final. I should like to suggest that the only sound element in the conclusion is that it summarizes the weaknesses of both premises,

and thereby reduces itself to futility. But let us look for a moment at the assumed weaknesses of the ancient view and the medieval view.

Greek philosophy started out with a correct formulation of the philosophic problem. Thales asked plainly and in prose what the poets had already asked in figurate beauty many times before: What is it all about? With the problem stated, the Greek went on with characteristic human indecision to make all the mistakes he could, and, the mistakes formulated, to find all the corrections there are. There was naturally among the Greeks, as with us, the tribe of meticulous, those who could see the reality only when writ small and broken into its ultimate parts, who find the end of the intellect only in the process of building structures of abstractions to stand only tentatively while plans are being made to knock them down again. This was, with them as with us, the pursuit of truth. And there were among the Greeks, as among us, those who could see the reality only as realities ensconced within the seeing, where they required only to be re-presented in the symbols by which they were writ.

But there was also Plato, the artist-philosopher, the spirit, the form, of the Greek race. And with him and his kind the shortcomings of Greek philosophy were all corrected in Greek art. What is could not be realized directly; it could only be represented, and what was represented was redesigned and transfigured and embodied in the instrument of design—in the drama, in sculpture, in architecture, and in a special and synoptic way in the art of politics. And here the first and greatest of truths the Greeks knew, and which we have not yet found out, that “justice”, as ultimate synoptic principle in thought and the law within reality, is the harmony of the state when the state is the status of nature and as that status is determined by the principle of the Good, and where the principle of the Good is just the *nisus* to the whole, and the whole is representable not quantitatively as totality but qualitatively as integrity. In this state the particular, through the philosophic law, attains the universal, or the universal is realized through the law in the particular, so that the principle of the state is the perfection of the work of art, and the work of art is perfect as the real in the state. The principle of perfection, once more, is that which

states the corporate identity of the particular as existent or substant with the universal as subsistant or circumstant in the individual.

As individual, and hence concrete, the perfect was defined in terms of nature as that which can live in spite of limitations, and in terms of thought as that which endures or abides without reference to limitation. As a function in nature it maintains the continuity of individuals in the universal, thus laying the basis of the species or type, which, as idea, is the primary condition of all thought. Perfection, then, is the principle of that which can live or be and be intelligible, and the fullness with which intelligible being is present at any point is the key to its status in reality. The real is therefore the perfect which incorporates the actual, so that to find reality in the instance we must go beyond the scheme of nature to the nature which is completed in art. And, if any definition of life or being is demanded here, it can be given as that active medium within which the continuity of nature is transformed into the continuum of the species or idea; and as the transformation effects their identity, the identity becomes both the locus of the act of judgment and the medium-stuff out of which the real content of every true judgment is formed. This medium appears in experience as feeling, where it is the subject-matter of aesthetics. So that the problem of aesthetics is to demonstrate the objectivity of feeling, to show that feeling can only be as substance.

That is to say, the limitations that inhered in Greek philosophy were replica-statements of flaws that are discernible in the nature of things in so far as the nature of things is regarded as an object of thought. The flaws then are as real as the nature that is to be known; they constitute the qualifying characters of nature through which the knowing process is to have access to nature. The flaw then is the basis of the primary element of method by which the reality of things is to be represented. In logic it is called the principle of difference, and in inductive procedures it is the ground upon which all proof is supposed to lie. In the art-philosophy which came to be the full realization of Greek life and thought this principle was the principle of Tragedy; and it was fundamental for all forms of Greek thought in the law that lay at the basis of ethics and politics. It is the eternal breach between the actual and the ideal-real that determines the necessity for action; it also consti-

tutes the ideal plan or design of the end that gives action its meaning. And it is the permanence of the breach in the nature of things that makes action the continuing instrument by which life is to realize itself; the breach is also the endless emptiness of desire which as substantial feeling constitutes the eternal occasion for action and the stuff out of which life is to be realized. Hence desire has no inwardness, but is hard substance like any other matter, and psychology knows nothing of it.

In politics also, as the Philosopher-Artist of Greece also saw, this primordial flaw is the continuing ground of the life of the State, and thus the subject-matter of politics. It becomes a political entity by virtue of the fact that it is the universal of the condition that makes action necessary for the individual, and, as such universal, it is the ground condition of order as the basis upon which the state can and must rest. The fact that the flaw in the conditions of nature is incorrigible is what gives to the state its perpetuity. And this fact also determines that all theory of the state must be formulated in eschatological terms, that the only thought-structure that can always be true of the state is the Utopianism of a theory of ends. It is this tragic fact, this fact of enduring tragedy, that gives to the real the substantial character of the universal by which the real is to be equated by identity with the intelligible; only the identity is not the identity of mathematics and logic but the analogical identity of aesthetic structure.

When therefore we define the perfect in terms of ability to be or endure (viability, for the scientist), and connect viability as characterizing quality with the substance by which things are real, and recognize enduring being as the principle of continuity in nature, and then observe that nature in the factual aspect is the perfect instance of discontinuity (the condition that renders the scientific concept of cause a logical surd), we have the facts on a basis of which the law of Tragedy is to be formulated. It is simply stated as Nature negating the function of perfection in enduring life, nature negating itself in God and withdrawing from contact with the actual while yet refusing itself access to the ideal-real, where it represents itself as Tragic Will in a form higher than that of the actual of life. This is the object transfigured in the objective of the tragic design.

The State then as tragic object is the fullest reality and the perfect work of art. It can live, and it is the thing that gives life to what can live beyond nature and the mere lifespan of the individual. The state is thus the ground in being of the universal. But in the actual state there are embodied elements fatal to the maintenance of its integrity. These are the empirical factors, instanced in the always practical thought of the scientist, who must see unity in terms of its elements where there are no elements; and in the spastic thought of the mystic who demands that reality be given exclusively and exhaustively in the part, where there are not parts. Hence the scientific attitude is subjective and becomes contradictory in its demand that reality remain partial and dependent for its character upon the procedures of science. But the mystic, who lies hidden in the shadow of the scientist, is of another color, and we shall have to watch him closely.

So Greek philosophy is objective in that it postulates a corporate structure for reality, and finds this structure instanced in the fact of corporately ordered life. It is objective in that it is a direct representation or expression of reality without involving the subjective element—that is, without its thought becoming conscious of the fact that it was itself an integral part of the reality expressed—so that the diremption of subject-object is never made because the possibility of such a distinction as that between mind and object, design and its end, has never come to consciousness. It is this becoming aware of possible distinction, by thought, of its own process from the object in which it expresses itself, from the being which it thinks, and then confusing its process with the object, that marks the subjective the distinguishing characteristic of modern philosophy. The absence of the distinction of thought from the being which it thinks is the distinguishing feature of ancient philosophy.

A philosophy thus corporately structured in ethical and political ideas could not survive the collapse of the state in which those ideas had their substance. And the period of several centuries after the breakdown of the Classical state has a place in history only in the story of the attempts of those ideas to find a solid landing place somewhere within the sphere of life, which they assumed could be substantiated on other ground than nature. This haven could not be anywhere within the scheme of nature, for it was the in-

herent weakness of the natural scheme that was responsible for the collapse of the moral-political system. It could also not be within the system of the ideas as detached from nature, because as thus detached the ideas lacked the element of concreteness that supplied them with substance. There was left then only the realm of the fanciful—not the fanciful as definitely structured in the objects of imagination, for that is the sphere of art and rests upon nature—but the fanciful pictured in terms of the felt need for an object that was nowhere to be found, and hence could only be symbolized by the inner and emotional phases of experience itself. They attempted vainly to substantiate feeling in the mere fact of its being felt. Thus the very nature of the objects pictured was negative, they are represented in terms of their absence as inwardly felt, so as objects of experience they could only be referred to a world which was characterized by qualities the opposite of those that were given in knowledge. Thus we see that where philosophy and art were united in the life of the state there could be nothing of a substantial nature left after the state had broken down, so that this very nothingness became the basis of whatever construction was possible. That is, all construction must be in and of experience alone, which presents itself as a substantial nothing. It is thus that the period is subjective and religious rather than philosophical, and that it has its roots, so far as there are any, in negation.

But the negation here postulated was not the mere methodological negation of scepticism. This can be turned to constructive use. The negation of the religious period was postulated upon a substantial ground, and that which was significant by its absence had a positive character which gave it a constructive power in reverse. And as the ideas of the period got their content from a reference to inner emotional states, the negative principle assumed the positive function of denial, and was identified in experience with misery, suffering. But since the potency of the principle of misery is positive, it is an aggressive and emphatic negation, and would have to be given a ground in any case; so it was identified with the fact of distortion in nature which the Greeks had recognized, and nature became the symbol and reality of all that was unreal. This unreal reality, this positive negation, was imaginatively personified as evil, and the primary purpose and function of life and

conduct were the evasion and avoidance of evil; that is to say, life had a negative purpose. These evasions and avoidances were also objectified, as negations, in the principles and practices of magic, and magic developed into a system of ritual. The system of all these ideas centered about negation became the foundation of the institutionalism of the succeeding medieval period, and magic became religious science.

Another phase of this system of negation with its technique of magic laid down the cornerstone of the foundation of thought in the modern period. Connecting the aggressive negative principle with the stuff of emotional experience led to the attribution of causal efficacy to the emotional center, so that the reality implied in the negation was identified with the subjective factors in the individual. The individual thus became responsible for evil; but he was also, as the primary condition of the universal, the causal power by which evil was to be met, and, as spiritual conqueror, he became the symbol of all that was ideal, and was worshipped as the hero-saint. This deification of the individual persisted to become the major premise of all thought for the modern period, and we notice it later. But what we must not fail to note here is that, with the collapse of the state and the consequent necessary emphasis upon negation, with the contradictions which negation made manifest in experience, the endowing with fictitious substance the absence of objects as represented in desire, and the general practice of hypostasis of abstraction, with the overemphasis upon the subjective, and the dependence upon specialized technical processes as in magic and ritual, with the attributing of causal efficacy to the mere inwardness of ideas and subjective processes, with all these we have the complete system of the assumptions of the empirical philosophy, and suggestions as to its connections with primitive magic and the mysticism inherent in an overemphasis upon empirical content.

But all these assumptions are mere empirical distortions of profound truths. The first and most important of these truths is that nature is an aborted effort to realize life in the actual. The shallowness of the empirical philosophy has always been a consequence of failure to see what is to be seen in nature, the plain implication of a reality which the religious instinct apprehends, to be sure, but

nevertheless tends to distort in the directions of its peculiar interest. This is the contradiction that exists between the metaphysical intent of nature and its purpose to express life. If we may put the problem in terms of the tradition we can call the metaphysical intent of nature God; then the life-principle in nature will be at direct variance with God's intent, and the struggle between the two is on. This could be better stated perhaps as the eternal effort on the part of God to reproduce himself, where the divine seminal *Urschleim* became the nebula of nature with its infinite capacity for indecision. The effort at selfreproduction succeeded a little less badly in the creation of man, since in man it attained the image, at least, but it was the weakness of the eternal will that came to be the basis of human nature. However it may be stated, this elementary contradiction in the substance of things was conceived to lie at the basis of life, so that when life comes up for formulation in the medieval scheme, and when the quality of immortality, which it had for faith, is seen to require objective verification, the method required that the verification should be in terms of experience, and the only conclusion possible was the selfcontradictory proposition that life had its principle of objectification in the eternal experience of misery, that life has its object in its subjective intent.

The two terms of the persistent contradiction are thus the existence-principle that makes nature real and the sentience-principle that becomes the basis of all judgments of any sort about nature when nature is regarded as the locus of the functions of life.

Life then is objectified through the principle of misery, where misery is taken as the product of the friction between existence on the one side and sentience on the other. The imposition, by the creative or reproductive force, of existence upon sentiency, or the immolation of sentiency upon the hard altar of existence, thus becomes the ultimate fact; and, regarded as experience, becomes the starting-point for modern philosophy in all its forms, and remains to this day the common fallacy of all philosophies. In the attempt to find the objective in the element of existence and to write it down in terms of universals of experience, ignoring the fact that there are no universals *in* or *for* experience, the modern mind created science; but, as there is no universality for experience, the attempt was made to force universality upon existence by taking its mere

abstract extensive continuity and applying infinity to it. So the formula was forced upon it as number and quantity, and the apotheosis of the abstraction laid the blessing upon mathematics as scientific method. Science was therefore mathematical physics, an abstract existentialism, and so it remains to this day, the presupposition of a metaphysics that finds its soul in magic.

In a similar way and by the same techniques it was attempted to find objectivity for sentiency in its imposed relation to existence. As objectivity in the science of existence turns out to be abstract exteriority symbolically characterized by mathematics and manipulated as magic, so the science of sentiency, "social science", finds its ground of objectivity in abstract inwardness, interiority imaged in the reversed recession of time, withinness reduced to abstract negation, and determined by its qualitative emptiness to assume the form of the mathematics of lapse. This is mysticism. Its method is infinity in reverse, zero over zero, and is at present exemplified in the "sciences" of psychology and sociology. There was once a philosophy that was called social psychology.

Thus the philosophy that grew out of the contradictions that religion had discovered at the base of things, invented a pseudo-content as a ground against which to formulate the contradictions. This pseudo content is experience, sentiency forcibly wedded to abstract existence. Its method for dealing with this empty content is, appropriately, magic, a symbolism which *is* the reality it symbolizes, and which it also took over from the religious method of incantation. Its temple is the Laboratory, dedicated to the Great Unknown, the God Omniscience. Modern philosophy therefore is the philosophy of experience; its attitude or point of view, its "perspective", is mysticism; and its method is a newer and better and blacker magic.

Modern philosophy thus undertakes to interpret a subjective reality by and in terms of a subjective principle. Its subject-matter, its method, its point of view, all are subjective; and the final commentary and estimate is subjectivism, in the nugatory and derogatory sense, the sense that finds its failure catastrophic.

Philosophy derives from, and lives and functions within, a cultural medium, from which it gets not only its attitudinal direction, but also its peculiar substance. So ancient philosophy got its essen-

tial characters from a medium of a political state whose substance was ethical and aesthetic; medieval philosophy came into being within a medium of negative religious institutionalism dominated by feeling, and it took its characters from that feeling; modern philosophy formed within a cultural substance whose essence was the inwardness and immediacy of a feeling that demanded a positive reference to nature, where nature itself was imaged as the inward essence of the feeling conceived as active will. Reality was thus determined by the postulate of that will, which acts in pure spontaneity, pure liberty, requiring no reference but to itself. It is essentially irrational, and its baseless postulates become unquestioned and unquestionable grounds merely and solely as a consequence of their assertion; its act is simple, unconditioned; and the object of its act, which is also a product and a project of its act, is unconditioned, being characterized by simplicity; so its reality has an individuality that is undivided, atomic, and can only be exemplified, never defined. Thus the physical and metaphysical atom, the mathematical point, the windowless monad, the "individual", the infinitesimal. All these ideas are functions of pure magic, symbols deified, and they operate within a medium of a mysticism which differs from religious mysticism only in being abstract, vacuous and dried out. They all sum up in the attitude of subjectivism, by which we express the weakness, inadequacy and negation of all the forms of modern philosophy.

The Renaissance, as the earliest modern cultural formulation, can be described as nature turned inward and directed upon itself, appearing phenomenally to itself as consciousness, whose substance is measured in terms of its own felt intensity to differentiate it from the symbolic extensity of the earlier abstraction. Referring the philosophy of the Renaissance to this consciousness as its cultural medium, we can give a brief characterization of its various phases in ethics, politics, law, and art. Ethically, the Renaissance is negation, that strange positive, emphatic, aggressive negation of the negations of the middle ages, which becomes, in practice, irresponsible assertion, the outburst of the atomic and autonomous undivided will of the individual which acts without reference to anything. This negation, become aggressive, lays the foundation for our modern ideas of freedom and the peculiar type of unprin-

ciplined order which we hope to make the foundation of our political life. Politics in the Renaissance thus implies the realization of the universal within the peculiar individual described above, where the universal and objective element in the individual will demands the organization of the state as the instrument of the individual will itself. This is, of course, a flat contradiction; but it becomes the basis of the politics of democracy: the superstition that the state exists to fulfill and realize the will of the individual. The final implicate of this assumption is, of course, the apotheosis of pure abstract and irresponsible force, as will particularized must be mere force, as we see happens to the democracies after they have come to envisage purposes in the negative economic terms of needs and wants. Machiavelli's Prince and Hobbes' Monarch are absolute, but they can only realize their unlimited power and exercise irresponsible force after they have achieved a democratic incarnation in the modern businessman and are thus de-moralized.

Law had been the objective type of the universal and had been considered as final principle in the universalism of the Church. In the Renaissance law is conceived as the expression of the inner power of the irresponsible individual; so will becomes the "law" of unlimited force, the universal force or energy of materialistic metaphysics, for which universality means quantitative infinity. Whereas for the church of the middle ages the law had been an expression of the ubiquity of God, a principle operating over the individual and giving him objective moral guidance, the law for the new day, identified as it is with the will of the individual, is justified by the supposition that the will has the quantitative universality of the abstract reason. This new principle of law comes to being in the ambition of the princes of the European communities, now trying to organize themselves as states which shall, in mundane affairs, at least, be independent of the Church. In abandoning the Church as the ground of the universality and thus of the authority of the law, the law came to be broken into as many fragments as there were contending princes, and that fragment tended to acquire authority which had the power to prevail over the others. Thus we have our notion of "the law backed by force", which is nothing but a simple identification of law with force, and this means that force supersedes the law, as the princes found when

they began to assert authority over powerful private organizations of interest. Thus again the peculiar affinity of the subjective for the purely mechanical is evident.

With respect to Renaissance art a similar statement holds. Art becomes the instrument of expression of pure subjectivity: emotion in its raw psychological inwardness with all the particularizing characters of the individual. And here also the same reversal takes place: emotion completely individualized within the subject as his inner state becomes the substance of an art to which the formal aspects must conform. And while a very high type of form proved to be possible for this content so long as it identified itself with the religious emotion of love, the subjective motive transformed and individualized this emotion as the sex impulse, which is recalcitrant to any form, and this materialized motive became the basis of the formlessness of "romantic" literature, and is now showing itself to be the Nemesis of all genuine art. The subjective and individualistic character of the art of the period shows itself in poetry, where the sonnet and the canzone were characteristic forms. The sonnet tended to be the form of a single spastic pulse of feeling, individualized and expressing intensity rather than quality, emotion at its heroic greatest intensity, for which the stiff constricting form of the sonnet was inevitable.

In all these phases of the culture of the period there is the same dominance of the subjective. All are concerned with nature, but it is nature in reverse, *naturans*, nature as immediately and inwardly felt and regarded on that account as ultimate.

As we approach the modern period proper, it is not surprising, in view of the motives we have found dominating the middle ages, to find the period opening with an outburst of science and religion, magic and mysticism. As this field is familiar, I can be brief, although I do not believe that we have yet seen the real significance of the two movements. Galileo, a scientist, undertakes to give us a philosophy of existence, and there is perhaps no doubt that he intended to give an interpretation of existence strictly in terms of itself, without the confusions that necessarily come from viewing it in relation to its opposite principle of sentience. But the reference of facts to themselves is still subjectivism; so existence is explained as subjectively spontaneous and dominated by its own internal

force; and this reference to the fact, especially when the force is particularized in the concrete specific fact, is magic, and calling it force is only giving it a family name to take the place of such individual names as gnome or salamander. And this subjectivism is not overcome when we abstract from the concreteness of the facts to their external relations, and hope by quantifying the relations to attain the objective; the relations as thus thought become pure constructs of the process of thought, and there is little to be gained by exchanging the abstract process of thought for its mystic content as found in the immediacy of feeling. It might even be possible to show that the feeling must be presupposed before the process is intelligible in any terms; but in any case it is not possible to avoid subjectivism by any of the tricks of science. I forbear to mention the stratospheric ventures of contemporary mathematical logic.

Galileo's magical attempt to bootstrap himself out of the subjectivism of the time was matched or bettered at every point by Luther and the religionists. Galileo, at the last resort, could *find* nature only in the mathematically ordered successive impulses of his own inner reason. Luther, whose quest was also for nature, but whose magic demanded vicarious approach through God, could only find it within the depths of inner feeling where it as such was inaccessible to the reason, because in those depths it identified itself with God, and was not to be approached except on the knees of faith. It could therefore not be stated in its essence by the reason, but could only be argued about by the reason. This is pure mysticism, of course, and it is a mysticism formally identical with that of Galileo (even their magics have been recently identified—God is a mathematician); so there is no ground of preference for the one over the other. And it is to be noticed that Luther's mysticism comes to practical contradiction just as did Galileo's, only in a different content. Galileo came out with material energy and the abstract mathematical "law" and a universe of particulars; Luther, after throwing his inkstand at the objective in nature, came out with the abstract divine right of the individual (king) and, materially, with a numerous family.

So whether we look to the scientific or to the religious phases of

the modern period we find the subjectivist point of view completely dominant.

The philosophers tell the same story. As soon as the philosophic phase of the modern movement was under way in Locke and Descartes it was evident that the prevailing tendency was to be emphasis upon inner experience as the reality for the philosopher. Locke's system was based upon psychological analysis, and it was he who gave impetus to sceptical doubts whether there was or could be anything real at all besides the mental states, a type of scepticism that reached the selfcontradictory stage in Hume and Kant. And I suppose the tendency of the modern movement to regard Hume and Kant as its greatest achievements comes from the fact that the one of them carries the empirical point of view of the scientific tradition to its and philosophy's last extremity; while the other did the same for the empirical attitude as it was formulated in its mathematical aspects by Newton and in its religious phases by the pietistic movement. That is to say that the whole of reality was rounded up by Hume and Kant within the corral of the inner experience; there was nothing but nothing left outside by Hume, and for Kant the only thing left outside experience was the vacancy left by the inclusion within experience of that which was its own efficient cause, the contradiction of the thing-in-itself and the autonomous will. For both, all reality is either experience or that which represents experience in its potential state. And this potential experience, the "possibility of experience", becomes objective irrationality—nonsense—in Freud.

Even Spinoza and Hegel, who perhaps come nearer to philosophy than anybody else in the modern period, and who in their metaphysical systems come as near a genuine objectivity as modern thought ever does, both seem to resort to psychology in their practical philosophy, and especially in their reflections on politics. It is hardly the objective mind of Plato and the Stoics that one sees in Spinoza's God or the Hegelian Reason, and one suspects elements of the subjectivist egoism of the modern in both.

I hesitate to attempt comment on the contemporary scene, for I have had no interest in the classifications of the philosophic systems, and slightly less interest in the systems themselves. But it is

hard to see in, *e.g.*, the idealism of the present any way out of the pit of subjectivism, rather a deepening and broadening of the way in. It is encouraging indeed to follow Bradley in denying the philosophic claims of the concepts of science and in showing the logical contradictions involved in attempting to elevate those concepts to the status of philosophic ideas; in the scepticism and criticism necessary to put science in its place and thus open the way to philosophy, Bradley has done great work. And in laying bare the weaknesses of the empirical philosophy which issues from science, particularly in ethics, his success seems secure. But he has still not freed himself from mathematical abstractionism, as his doctrine of the Absolute shows clearly; in fact it shows what in some other directions is completely proved, that he was not as safe from certain religious presuppositions as he had supposed. He falls, that is, for an empiricism of the very worst type when he comes to put his finger upon reality so as to identify it. Reality, he says, is experience as given in feeling; thus he identifies himself with a mysticism of the most primitive sort, which, if it has any logical status whatever, undoes all the work his scepticism had built up. The same mysticism of the crude religious sort is obvious in Green and Royce and Whitehead, so that since Hegel idealism has had very little to say for itself; it has done well in denying a scientific basis for philosophy, but it has not avoided mathematical abstractionism nor religious mysticism.

Nor has realism fared better. Where the realistic attitude expresses itself in a doctrine of nature, its acceptance of science usually forces it to an abstract atomism, or if it has the mystic tendency it ends in a pantheism or panpsychism of some sort. It may take the way of mathematical physics to a pure abstractionism which, where tinged with the mystic coloring, becomes subjective idealism. And in any case the commitment to empiricism forces upon the realists the methodological *how*, and their answer to this is the analysis of perception. Thus the reality the realist so courageously and so justly accepts and posits as the basis for any philosophy tends to disappear hopelessly within the bare process of sense-perception, the process by which his empiricism demands he find it in fact; his philosophic postulate becomes the psychological prejudice that reality is discoverable in empirical fact, and the

methods by which it is to be made known are psychological. It is the philosophic tragedy ; no man who reaches philosophic maturity will accept a metaphysics which has not its bases laid in realistic presuppositions ; it is tragic to see these bases rot out in scientism or develop the fantastic overgrowths of mysticism. The canker of the age has infected philosophy at its base in realism ; the empiricism which bloats itself in science where it can, and prostrates itself in mysticism where it must, has blighted philosophy at its root. The story of this tragic event is the history of modern philosophy.

There are but two possibilities in philosophy, idealism and realism. And any approach to finality will unite the two as complementary phases in a whole where their differences will provide a status for all the negatives that critical scepticism may require, and where their agreements will lay the basis for every positive judgment that knowledge can demand. All these negatives and affirmations will rest upon a ground that is not experience, but will accept and embrace all that experience can show to be consistent with that ground. Reality is not experience, nor is philosophy about experience. It is not even about language as the instrument of expression for experience. Nor is it about ideas, nor active impulses, nor about the shadows of the shadows. So it is not positivism, nor pragmatism, nor phenomenism. It is not even an instrument of prestige to impress its votary's dignity upon the public mind ; nor is it a commercial commodity seeking new markets. It is barely possible, and this may be conceding overmuch, that pragmatism had its original impulse in a realization of the emptiness of the assumption that reality is experience, and that there was in it a genuine motive to find a solid ground in action ; but it flounders between the Scylla of Peirce's scientism and the Charybdis of James' mysticism, and goes under finally in the tool philosophy, leaving a sea of experience placid with a deadly calm and glassy with a brittle emptiness.

It is the function of philosophy to find the objective reality within a world whose existence and basic empirical characteristics are known. *How* the world is *to be* known is not an intelligible question. Questions about the *how* are technical questions, questions of science, and science is not philosophy. There is no *how* of Knowledge, and Knowledge is the concern of philosophy. Science

cannot know, its motive is action. It is the function of philosophy to lay out the primary veins of the world's structure as universals which are to be principle-postulates for the various human spheres of concern. Its purpose, that is, is to lay down basic postulates of action as the foundation of ethics; to formulate postulates of being or existence for science; to work out postulates of order for politics; but a philosophy cannot be made out of any of these sets of postulates. And when it has done that, and has pointed out the directions in which corollaries can be derived for each succeeding age for various practical disciplines, its task is done. And the fact that each generation must do all this for itself does not mean that each should find a new philosophy, but merely that the world of reality that is to be formulated has changed. For change it will whether we philosophize or not, and whatever may be the type of our philosophizing.

These reflections, though melancholy, are not as dark as the fact. The fundamental fact that meets us now is a world in chaos, a cosmic chaos, a *contradictio in substantia* for which there is no description black enough. Falling into the pit of subjectivism has left us without a morality, no vestige of character remains. For a mess of garbage man has sold his soul to the business man, and the world of reality is sold out. So there is no obligation, for there is nothing to be responsible *to*. God died, and the world dissolved, when man found his destiny in himself. And the responsibility for the situation is philosophy's. We have furnished no ethical foundation for the human world; no principles of order for the political world; no laws for the control of our attitude to existence, nor for the control of the practical activities that depend on these laws. Our ethical endeavors have sought the end within experience, ignoring the fact that for experience there is no end. Our political thought has sought the rules in law for the subjective control and guidance of the eternal conflict of man with man which it has accepted as a postulate, being ignorant of the fact that the function of law is the elimination of conflict. Our scientific thought has abandoned the search for the realities of existence, and has sought nothing but technical means and processes by which the realities and the values could be reduced to terms of our interests, forgetting that for interests there is neither substance nor law, neither

reality nor value. And while we have in our egoistic stupidity insisted that the world should come to terms with our subjective purposes, the world has laughed in our face and has gone its own way, which is not the way that human wish or subjective motives would have it, but a way determined by its own inertia, and so leads to no end. And our refusal to see and follow the reality to the end that the reality be made conscious of its destiny has left us without a destiny.

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