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Fudamental Problems of Life

An Essay on Citizenship as Pursuit of Values

J.S. Mackenzie

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INTRODUCTION

PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

ACCORDING to Pope, 'the proper study of mankind is man'; and, in a similar way, Goethe has put into the mouth of Wilhelm Meister the saying that man is the only being who is interesting to man. Neither of these statements can be accepted without great qualifications. Certainly Goethe did not confine his interests to human affairs; and, if Pope did, it probably tended to limit his outlook on human life itself. It is surely clear that the proper study of mankind is everything in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and even some things that can hardly be properly said to be contained in either—such as mathematical and other general concepts (including the concept of value). At any rate, in dealing with human life, we are necessarily led to pay some attention to all the things that human beings deal with—*quicquid agunt homines*; and it would not be easy to set limits to these. It remains true, however, that human life concerns us more nearly than any other distinguishable aspect of the Universe in which we live. It is true also that, in some respects, we can study human life in ways in which it is hardly possible for us to study anything else. It may not be altogether right to say that no created spirit can penetrate into the inner secrets of nature; many of its secrets have been discovered; but, at least, the secrets of the human heart are more directly accessible to us. Its bitterness, as well as its sweetness, is apprehended in our own experience; and we can interpret, with some degree of confidence, the expressions that are given to them by others. We can hardly be quite as sure of the ways in which other animal beings feel; and it needs a very elaborate study to discover some of the ways in which more purely physical processes take place and influence one another. We know, in particular, from our own conscious experience, that our activities are directed towards the realization of more or less definitely

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conceived ends. We do not know, with any comparable degree of directness, how far the activities of more purely animal beings are guided by similar purposes. It is at least improbable that plants are so guided; and we have considerable grounds for believing that more purely physical processes do not imply any conscious pursuit of ends. This is not, however, necessarily to be taken as implying that these physical processes are in no way directed towards the realization of ends. Clocks and other human contrivances are so directed; and it may be that the processes of nature have somehow been similarly contrived, though in a much more recondite fashion. But about this we cannot at present do much more than speculate.

When the Greeks began to form speculative views about the processes of nature, they tended (probably under the influence of ideas that were derived, to some extent, from foreign sources[1]) to think that everything might be made intelligible by reference to certain simple elements, such as fire, air, water, and earth; but this method of interpretation was soon felt to be unsatisfactory, even as applied to purely physical processes; and conceptions derived from reflection on human life —such as those of Love and Strife—began to be introduced. It was gradually realized, however, that in human life at least forces of this kind do not operate in a purely mechanical fashion, but are to some extent guided by the idea of ends. It would seem to have been Socrates who first definitely called attention to this—taking his cue, to some extent, from Anaxagoras's emphasis on *Mind*. Plato, in a memorable and well-known passage in the *Phaedo*, represents him as blaming the earlier philosophers for their neglect of the idea of purpose, and as urging that his own activities at least could not be interpreted without reference to certain ends and guiding principles that were definitely present to his mind. And he suggested that it was probably incorrect to regard even the apparently blind processes of nature as being wholly without such guidance. He urged that even the place of the earth and its relations to other bodies could probably not be rightly understood without some attempt to show that its place and relations were the *best*. Few would now be prepared to maintain

[1] Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy* may be referred to on this subject.

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that it could be at all directly shown that such relations are the best. It is generally recognized that it is only to living things and their direct products that such teleological interpretations can be immediately applied, and that it is only in human life that the presence of definite purposes can be with any confidence known to be present. This recognition has led to the distinction between what are sometimes called the positive sciences, which are directed to the study of certain comprehensive aspects of the actual happenings in nature and in human life, and the normative sciences—chiefly Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics and Aesthetics[1]—which are concerned with the great ends of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, by which human life is more or less consciously guided. The consideration of these ends constitutes a main part of what is now understood by philosophy, as distinguished from the more purely physical sciences and even from the definitely psychological study of the processes that go on in the minds of men and that appear to go on, in a somewhat different way, in the minds of animals.[2] It is difficult—perhaps impossible—to make a quite

[1] Perhaps the mathematical sciences should be regarded as occupying an intermediate position between the two groups. On the meaning of 'normative,' reference may be made to Mr. W. E. Johnson's *Logic*, vol. i. pp. xx–i, and 225–6.

[2] See Bosanquet's essay on *Science and Philosophy* (in the volume of essays collected by our Editor-in-Chief, Professor Muirhead), where it is urged that the study of values is the essential task of philosophy, as distinguished from the special sciences. I believe this to be the best way of making the distinction; and I think it was in the development of Greek philosophy that the distinction was most clearly brought out. By the definite recognition of Value as the central problem of philosophy, Bosanquet succeeded more fully than any other recent writer in giving a complete account of its main problems in all their most essential aspects. Hence, in what follows, I have made more use of his work than of that of any other writer. Of course, like everyone else, he is open to some criticism in detail —especially, I think, in his references to the most ultimate metaphysical issues. In a good deal of modern philosophy these issues have tended to be somewhat obscured, chiefly owing to the predominance of the physical sciences which are only very gradually being brought into relation to philosophical conceptions. It has certainly become much more possible in recent years than it was in previous generations to make this relation clear, and we are thus tending to return to the Platonic (or perhaps Socratic) conception of the idea of Good as the ultimate interpretative principle. But we are only indirectly concerned with its larger implications in the present study. For further light on it, readers may be referred to Professor Muirhead's book on *Philosophy and Life* and to his very admirable Introduction to the second series of *Contemporary British Philosophy*.

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rigid division between these different studies. The results of any one, at least, have to be used in others; but, in our present study, we are almost exclusively concerned with human ends. The consideration of the most important and fundamental of these ends is what we understand by the study of Values; and the present essay is an attempt to examine their place and relations in human thought and life, with special reference to their bearing on social problems. The first part is concerned with the most general problems; the second is an attempt to deal, in a somewhat more detailed way, with those problems that are definitely social. The details of those that belong to the special provinces of Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics, as well as those that concern Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Religion, though not entirely ignored, are more slightly referred to.

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PART I

THE PROBLEM OF VALUE

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CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF VALUE

We have already noted that Socrates was one of the first, if not the very first, who emphasized the idea of Value by urging that we can only properly understand human life, and perhaps even the Universe within which that life is carried on, by asking what is *best*. This question, however, is not an altogether easy one to answer, even with reference to human life, and still more with reference to the Universe in general. We have, on the whole, to be content with giving some account of *how* things happen, rather than of *why* they happen as they do. Hume[1] and others have been somewhat sceptical as to the possibility of explaining, at all fully, even how physical events take place. We know, for instance, that if we throw an elastic ball against a smooth surface at a particular angle, it will rebound in a particular direction; but it is not at once apparent how it comes to move in that special way. Still less can it be said to be obvious that that is the best way in which it might move. Modern science, however, has gone a long way to explain the general conditions that lead it to behave as it does. Similarly, we know that if an apple becomes detached from the tree on which it grows, it falls to the ground. If we had not noticed this and a number of similar occurrences, we might have supposed that it was just as likely to fly upwards. Newton went a considerable way to account for its actual motion by connecting it with the general idea of gravitation, which helps to explain the motion of the planets and of the earth itself as well as the fall of apples; but it still left us in the dark as to why that tendency should be found in nature at all, and indeed even as to how it operated. The more recent theories that are specially associated with the name of Einstein have carried Newton's explanation a great deal farther; and have enabled us to connect the particular instance of gravitation with the

[1] Especially in his *Enquiry*.

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more general way in which events occur in the spatio-temporal order;[1] but even this does not enable us to see why there should be this particular spatio-temporal order at all. It does not enable us to see that it is the *best* way in which events might be supposed to occur. In human life, however, it does seem possible to see that certain modes of behaviour are better than others, especially when we take account, not merely of individual activities, but of the social groups within which these activities occur. We thus get a good deal nearer to the Why. This is the subject with which we are to be mainly concerned in what follows. In the meantime it may suffice to note that, even in the simplest individual actions, it is nearly always apparent that there is some quite definite purpose. Human beings have nearly always some discoverable end in view in their activities, though it may not always be quite clearly apparent even to themselves, and though it may not always be apparent to others either that the end is the best that they might pursue or that the means that they adopt are the best to secure it. Even if the activity in question is only of the nature of play, the player at least aims at winning the particular game in which he is engaged; or, if he does not, there is some discoverable ground for the absence of this desire. He may think it better that someone else should win it; and in that case the winning of it by someone else is the good that he seeks. Sometimes, no doubt, the precise ground for such desires may not be readily discoverable. There may be a prize to be secured by winning the game; or there may be some glory in winning it or some satisfaction in the exhibition of skill. Or again, the winning of the game may only be an end that is temporarily adopted in order to give definiteness to the activities. The real object may be to secure exercise or relaxation; and these may be sought for the sake of health or pleasure. Reflections of this kind have led many to think that the only ultimate ends are pleasure and the enhancement of vitality (the latter being perhaps only for the sake of the former).

[1] This is all that Mr. Russell, for instance, claims for it. 'It puts the law of gravitation in a recognizable place among physical principles, instead of leaving it, as heretofore, an isolated and unrelated law' (*The Analysis of Matter*, p. 80).

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If such a conclusion could be taken as valid, we should be led to the view that pleasure is the only thing that has intrinsic value in human life. This is a view to which some consideration will have to be given at a later stage, although the full discussion of it belongs properly to Ethics. On the face of it, it is not a wholly satisfactory answer as applied to the entire field of human activities. Still less could it be used to throw any direct light on the movements of the planets and other cosmic occurrences.

The difficulties involved in applying the conception of Ends or Values to the problems of human life, and still more to those of the Universe in general, have sometimes led to a certain depreciation of the study of them or, as it has often been called, the study of Final Causes. Bacon said that 'the research into final causes, like a virgin dedicated to God, is barren and produces nothing.' It does not appear, however, from his own investigations, that he intended altogether to condemn the inquiry into such causes. To be 'dedicated to God' may be the highest honour; and it is pretty clear that Bacon did not mean to deny this.[1] But we know that all excellent things are apt to be difficult; and it is certainly not easy to assure ourselves that we have reached a conception of Value that can be taken as final and complete; and the recognition of this difficulty has given rise to a tendency to deal mainly with values that clearly cannot be regarded as quite final or intrinsic. In our own country, in particular, the general study of Value was, until comparatively recent years, mainly confined to the investigation of the conditions that determine the values that are attached to economic goods and services. The interest that has been more recently aroused in the wider aspects of the subject is largely due to the influence of the great Austrian philosopher, Alexius Meinong, and his immediate followers. Even before he wrote, however, something had been done in our own country to extend the scope of the inquiry; and, as I am not attempting to write a systematic treatise on the whole subject of Value, it may be well to begin here with some reference to that.

[1] About this reference may be made to Dr. Broad's essay on *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, pp. 14–15.

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Ruskin, in his two books called *Unto this Last* and *Munera Pulveris*, rendered an important service by directing attention to the somewhat narrow sense in which the conception of Value was commonly employed in the treatment of economic problems. Further reference will have to be made to this at a later stage. In the meantime, a very short statement must suffice. When we speak of values in connection with things that can be bought and sold, we are apt to think primarily of what is called their Exchange Value, *i.e.* the price that we might get or that we might be required to give for them. In this sense, it has been commonly said that 'the value of a thing is just as much as it will bring.' But many things are 'priceless'; and, even when things have a price, the price may give very little indication of what the things are really worth to those who buy or sell; and still less of what they may be expected to contribute permanently to human well-being. The price of things depends more on the labour and difficulty involved in procuring them than on the contribution that they make to human welfare. But Wealth has been commonly interpreted as meaning the possession of things, including control over the services of persons, that are highly priced, or the possession of the means of procuring such things or services. In opposition to this interpretation, Ruskin declared emphatically that 'the only Wealth is Life'; and that Value should properly be taken to mean what 'avails' for the support or furtherance of Life. No doubt, this is partly a verbal question. What was meant might be otherwise expressed by saying that, in considering real values, what we have to estimate is the degree in which *Welfare* is promoted, rather than the degree in which *Wealth* is produced. Recent writers on Economics—notably Professor Pigou—have adopted the term Welfare as best expressing what is aimed at in the practical applications of economic theory.[1]

[1] Reference may also be made to the book on *Industry and Civilization* by Mr. C. Delisle Burns and to several other recent writings, especially those of Mr. J. A. Hobson. It can hardly be said, however, that either Mill or Marshall ignored the consideration of Welfare—certainly not the latter; but it is extremely difficult to determine in detail what constitutes welfare. Some considerations bearing upon it will be found in Part II, especially Chapter VII; but it is not possible in such a book as this to do more than touch on the fringes of the subject.

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No doubt, it may be urged that this also is a term that is not self-explanatory; nor is it self-evident what we are to understand by the promotion of Life. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Lloyd Morgan and others have discussed this a good deal, both from the biological and from the more purely human point of view; but into the results of such discussions we cannot enter at the present stage or indeed, with any completeness, at any stage in this study. It is sufficiently evident that human beings are higher in the biological scale than plants or what we refer to as the lower animals; but it is not so easy to say how the superiority of one human being or one stage of human civilization over another is properly to be estimated. Ruskin sought to give a clue to this by pointing to the connection of the term Value with the idea of *availing*, and by noting that there are other terms from the same root, especially Validity and Valour. What is valid may be said to avail in the pursuit of knowledge; and valour at least tends to avail in certain modes of action. Reflection on this suggests that there are different modes of Value, more or less definitely connected with what psychologists commonly distinguish as the three main aspects of our conscious life—the knowing aspect, the feeling aspect, and the active or conative aspect. We value knowledge; we value what yields direct enjoyment; and we value efficient action. Hence it has been commonly said that there are three great values in human life—Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Other things —such as Health, Wealth and particular forms of social organization—are then regarded as only instrumental to the achievement of those supreme ends. How far this can be accepted as a final account of the most purely intrinsic values is a question that we are not yet in a position to consider.[1] We must first inquire what these terms are to be taken

[1] The subject is discussed in Chapter VII of this Part. For the general philosophical theory of value, reference may be made to the book by Professor W. M. Urban, *Valuation, its Nature and Laws*. The more recent work by Professor Perry may also be consulted with advantage, together with Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures and Ward's *Realm of Ends*. It is also very ably discussed, though with a more specific reference, in Professor Sorley's book on *Moral Values and the Idea of God* and more fully in Professor G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*.

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to mean and how their meanings are related to one another. But at least they may serve to give us a starting-point for more detailed investigation, especially into the chief values that are pursued by human beings in their communal life.

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CHAPTER II

THE VALUE OF TRUTH

THAT a certain value is attached to Truth, is shown by the interest that is taken in pure science and philosophy, and indeed also in the details of human history. Truth, as Professor Alexander has urged,[1] always involves at least a certain *appreciation*. The value that is attached to it, however, is not always intrinsic. The interest that is taken in pure science is partly—sometimes even mainly—with a view to its practical applications; and even that which is taken in history and philosophy is partly created by the light that they throw on the fundamental problems of practical life. Philosophy is generally regarded as including the theory of the State and the education of the citizen for his place in it. It is only necessary to remember the prominent place that such discussions have in the Dialogues of Plato and in the writings of Rousseau, Fichte, Hegel, Comte, Mill, Spencer, Green, Bosanquet, and many others. Hence it is not quite clear that many people attach a supreme value to Truth, purely for its own sake.[2] It has even been said that 'where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise'; and more than one of the most eager votaries of knowledge have declared that, if they held truth in their hands, they would let it go again for the pleasure of pursuing it. Wordsworth went even farther, characterizing the results of scientific study as 'barren leaves,' and contrasting them unfavourably with the simple enjoyment of childhood. It is well to remember, however, that he accompanied this attitude with the attribution of a finer and deeper insight to the mind of the child, whom he addresses as 'mighty prophet, seer blest!' And, when it is said

[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. ii. p. 237.

[2] Professor Laird has definitely denied that Truth should be regarded as one of the intrinsic values (see *A Study in Realism*, p. 125), and he seems to think this too obvious to call for discussion. It will be seen, however, as we proceed, that there is a sense in which I am disposed to agree with him. The subject is more fully dealt with below, in Chapter VII.

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that ignorance may be bliss, it is perhaps forgotten that even madness or drunkenness may be bliss; yet few sane or sensible people would be willing to gain bliss at such a cost. Those who think of the pursuit of Truth, rather than the attaining of it, as that which possesses supreme value, are regarding it as a game; and it is true that some of those who have been most eager in the search—such as the late Dr. Bosanquet—have been rather fond of referring to their strenuous activities as a game that they played. Even in a game, there is generally some hope of winning; but it seems to be true that, if it could be won without playing, the interest in it would be largely gone. To admit that this is the case with regard to Truth itself, is not necessarily to deny that it has intrinsic value: it is at most only to deny that it is the only or complete value; just as, if Beauty is a supreme value, there may also be a value in the act of creating it. It must be admitted, I think, that those who seek for Truth generally have in their minds an anticipation of some purposes that it will serve; but those who fix their minds too exclusively upon these are apt to lose some of the ardour of pursuit. According to Bacon's metaphor, they are like Atalanta running after the golden apples and neglecting to pursue the race. Their curiosity is quenched when they are not able to see any direct uses to which the discovery can be put. They forget—to use another homely illustration—that a baby cannot be put to any immediate use. Happily babies have a way of forcing themselves on people's attention; but some other things of great importance lack this power. When there is not any such extraneous interest, it is doubtful whether many people can be said to care much for knowledge for its own sake. Even when Truth is valued in a quite disinterested way, it is generally correct to say that what is valued is not particular parts or aspects of knowledge, but rather the insight into the general structure of reality that these particular fragments of knowledge yield. So long as it can properly be said that 'knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,' the value that is attached to the knowledge is, in general, instrumental rather than intrinsic. Now, when knowledge becomes insight, it is not merely an apprehension of particular truths, but rather the partial apprehension of a

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complete and well co-ordinated system of reality. The value that is attached to such a system lies, at least to a large extent, in the appreciation of the beauty of such a harmonious totality. Apart from this, particular parts of knowledge may very well present themselves to us as 'odious truths,' or at least as truths that have no particular value in themselves. It may be true, for instance, that most of us know very little; and the apprehension of that truth has a certain instrumental value. It helps to keep us humble and anxious to know more; but it is not in itself beautiful, and it has no intrinsic value. Hence it may be thought that it is the beauty of certain ultimate truths that we value, rather than truth simply as such. In order, however, to be clear about this, it is necessary to inquire somewhat carefully into the meaning of Truth, about which several different theories have been held. There are three main theories, which are briefly characterized as the theory of Correspondence, the theory of working Hypotheses, and the theory of Coherence. Each of them contains a certain degree of truth; but I believe the third may be taken as combining what has value in the other two doctrines.

The clearest statement of the theory of Correspondence is, I think, that which has been given by Mr. Russell.[1] The application of the theory is best seen in simple matters of fact, such as the circumstances of human history. In a true history or accurate dramatic representation, the occurrences that are set before us correspond exactly to the events that have occurred in the past. This is seldom the case in dramatic performances and perhaps not even very often the case in the more sober records of history. Shakespeare's historical plays or Mr. Shaw's *Saint Joan*, or the romances of Sir Walter Scott, cannot be accepted as showing us exactly what happened in the past. Shakespeare certainly took very great liberties

[1] See especially the elaborate discussions in his *Philosophical Essays*. In order to maintain the theory of Correspondence, he finds it necessary to introduce many subtle distinctions which could not be properly discussed in such a sketch as the present. The chief instance that he uses is the fact that Charles I died on the scaffold. It would be generally admitted that this is true; but it is difficult to see how it could be held to have intrinsic value, in the sense in which beautiful music or a noble action may be held to have such value; nor, of course, does Mr. Russell contend that it has.

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even with English history. Perhaps some of Mr. Drinkwater's plays may be accepted as more exact representations. Some historians, on the other hand, are very reliable. Carlyle, although an imaginative writer, took great pains to find out what the real facts were; and probably there may be one or two other historians who are even more reliable. In such cases there may be said to be an exact correspondence between the records and the actual occurrences in the past. A similar correspondence may be found in the accurate accounts that are given of scientific experiments or of astronomical and other observations. Thus there is a very large field over which the theory of correspondence can be applied; and the ascertainment of truth in this sense has evidently great value; though often its value is instrumental rather than intrinsic. Knowledge of the facts of history yields important lessons; but it is doubtful whether the knowledge of every trivial detail would have much value. It would at least be too overwhelming for our limited minds. For most of us a judicious selection of the most important facts has more value; and it is not certain even that the occasional perversion of the facts that is usually to be found in stories or dramatic representations has not a greater value for us than an exact record of every detail would have. In general, it is not mere 'facts' that we value, but rather facts that have a certain place and significance in an interesting process of development. What we want in such studies is insight, rather than simple knowledge. This is, I believe, the meaning of Aristotle's saying that Drama is more philosophical and more serious than History. It brings out the significance of great events without unimportant details; and it is only significant truths that have much value.

But there are also some truths that do not directly relate to matters of fact. The truths of mathematics, for instance, are of this character. Even so simple a truth as that $2 + 2 = 4$ has been called in question on the ground that, in putting things together, some change is nearly always brought about. England and Wales, for instance, are two countries; and Scotland and Ireland are other two. But when they are made into a United Kingdom, they do not remain just as they were in isolation. Some of them tend to coalesce and others to split

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up. The same is even more apparent in the case of chemical combinations. Hence some have been led to deny the truth of the statement that $2 + 2 = 4$. But, of course, it is true in pure mathematics. Two and two do not always *make* four; but they always *are* four, so long as they remain two and two. Again, mathematicians are in the habit of using some expressions, such as $\sqrt{-1}$ and infinity; and, so far as I am aware, no objects can be pointed to that correspond directly to these expressions. Yet the results that are arrived at by the use of these conceptions appear to be true. Some of them at least can be tested by correspondence, though the conceptions themselves cannot be tested in that way. Hence some have been led to put forward a different theory of Truth, which brings out more definitely the way in which it may be said to have value. The Pragmatists (such as William James, Professor Dewey and Dr. Schiller) maintain that the right conception of Truth is not to be found in correspondence, but in working. And 'working' seems to mean *leading to valuable results*. From this point of view, both the mathematicians and the dramatists may be justified. We cannot point to anything that can be seen to be infinitely great or infinitely little; and it may be—I think it is the case[1]—that there are no such things; and yet it may be true that these conceptions are useful for the discovery of important truths; and it may be said that, for this reason, they may be regarded as themselves containing truth. Similarly, it may be said that Shakespeare's plays of *Henry IV* or Mr. Shaw's *Saint Joan*, though containing a good deal that does not exactly correspond to the historical occurrences, are nevertheless true in the sense that they enable us to see the significance of the historical occurrences in a way that more accurate details would not. It may be urged also that there are some cases in which truth depends on antecedent beliefs. There is a well-known phrase in Vergil's *Aeneid*, '*possunt quia posse videntur*,' 'They can because they think they can.' A confident belief that something can be done often enables us to do what, without such a belief, would hardly

[1] Hegel's conception of infinity as that which is complete in itself seems to be the only one that is capable of concrete realization. But this is a difficult subject that cannot be properly discussed here.

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have been possible; and, similarly, the belief that something is impossible makes it impossible for us. Hence a belief that works, in the sense of helping us to pursue what has value, has itself great instrumental value. But it is doubtful whether it is right to say that such a belief is true. For instance, particular religious beliefs are a great help to many people; and it may be right not to disturb them in such beliefs. But it does not follow that other people should be urged to adopt them. It is an argument for toleration, but not for proselytism. And we generally mean by truth what is valid for every one.[1] It may be well to conceal some truths from those who are not ripe to receive them; perhaps it may even be right to encourage people, especially children, to believe some things that are not strictly accurate; but it is a practice that often leads to trouble at a later stage.[2]

Thus, although it may be recognized that there is an element of value, at least of instrumental value, in each of these theories of Truth, it does not appear that either of them is wholly satisfactory. Hence a third view has been put forward, most clearly and cogently by F. H. Bradley, which is commonly referred to as the theory of Coherence. What this means, as I understand it, is that the truth about things constitutes an orderly system, and that all particular truths have a place within that system. In other words, what is maintained is that the Universe is a Cosmos, a system of orders; and that, in finding any particular truths, we are discovering their place within that coherent whole. This theory itself, of course, claims to be a truth. It is regarded as a comprehensive truth within which all other truths have a place. It is a great Postulate or Hypothesis, upon which the pursuit of all particular truths depends; and we have to ask how far it is capable of verification. I think the answer is that it can only be gradually verified by the application of the other two views. It is verified in so far

[1] Hence Professor Alexander notes that, for an absolutely solitary individual, the pragmatic test would be the only one available (*Space, Time and Deity*, vol. ii. p. 266).

[2] For further criticisms of the pragmatic view of Truth, I may refer to the very lucid essay on the subject in Professor G. E. Moore's *Philosophical Studies*. The discussion of it in Mr. Russell's *Philosophical Essays* may also be consulted with advantage.

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as it is found to correspond and to work. Hence I am disposed to regard all the three leading theories of Truth as having a place in the actual quest for Truth. But the coherence theory is the most comprehensive of the three, and may be said to include the other two. We can only find correspondences within a coherent system; and nothing can finally work except in so far as it fits into its place in such a system. It may be noted that, if the Correspondence theory were to be accepted as completely true, its truth would have to be taken to mean that it corresponds to something else; and it is not easy to see what it would correspond to. Similarly, if the pragmatic theory is true, it could only be accepted as a working hypothesis; whereas it seems to claim to be more than this. The coherence theory, though difficult to apply with any completeness, coheres both with itself and with the other two.

Now we have to ask in what sense it is to be held that Truth is one of the supreme Values. That it has instrumental value is pretty obvious. To know correspondences, to know what works, and to know in what respects the world in which we live forms a coherent system, is evidently of great value in the conduct of life. But we have still to ask whether it has an absolute and supreme value in itself. It is possible to doubt this. Milton, in referring to the story about the tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, says that knowledge of good was 'bought dear by knowing ill.' But evidently it is well to know what is evil as well as what is good, in order that we may avoid the one and pursue the other. But that only amounts to saying that such knowledge has a great instrumental value. Whether it has intrinsic value depends on the conclusion to which it points. The saying of Keats is often quoted, 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty'; and Browning has said, even more emphatically:—

> O world, as God has made it, all is Beauty;
> And knowing this is Love, and Love is Duty.

Against this must be set such a view as that which was so brilliantly stated by Mr. Bertrand Russell in his essay on *The Free Man's Worship*.[1] According to that view the world

[1] Published in his books *Mysticism and Logic* and *Philosophical Essays*.

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as a whole is not in the end adapted for the realization of the ultimate values at which men aim; but nevertheless we are justified in pursuing them. We have, of course, not yet reached a point at which this could be profitably discussed. We have only opened up the problem. It certainly seems, on the face of it, as if there were many things in the world, as we know it, that it would be better not to know, except in so far as the knowing of them helps us to avoid them or to cure them. It may be, however, that the avoiding of them or the curing of them is itself an important element in the Ultimate Good. It seems at least that, if all were good from the start, there would not be much purpose in human life. Or again, it may be that what we call evil is only Appearance, and that the reality behind Appearance is wholly good. That is a distinction that we must now proceed to consider briefly.

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CHAPTER III

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

TRUTH, as we have seen, appears to be best interpreted as meaning the apprehension of something that coheres with the whole of reality as a systematic order or Cosmos. But truth in this sense is not readily discoverable. We have usually to be content with something that falls short of reality, something that only corresponds to what can be somehow apprehended, or that proves serviceable as a working hypothesis. Yet what we discover in this way may have a good deal of value for us, both instrumental and intrinsic. Reality, in the fullest sense of the word, may be inaccessible to us. We seem to catch glimpses of it here and there; but we are continually discovering that the glimpses that we have got are very partial and unsatisfying; and sometimes we find that they have even been extremely misleading. We have to be continually reminding ourselves that things are not always what they seem. There are, of course, some rather extreme instances of this. Dr. Broad, for instance,[1] has taken as an example the 'pink rats' that are sometimes seen by people in a state of intoxication. Any vivid dream carries with it a similar illusion; and, even in our ordinary waking life, we are often subject to temporary misconceptions of what we apprehend. In such cases the objects that we apprehend are really seen. They really appear; but they are not really what they appear to be. The pink rats are not actual rodents. Their bite would be harmless. They are, in technical phraseology, epistemological objects, but not ontological. The full discussion of this distinction would carry us too far away from our present subject; but its general significance has some importance from the point of view of value. In pursuing ultimate values, it would seem—at least, *primâ facie*—that we have to include Truth among these values; and it appears best to regard Truth as involving the

[1] See *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, pp. 140–2.

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recognition of Reality as a coherent system, that corresponds to our apprehension when fully developed, and in accordance with which it is possible to 'work,' *i.e.* to carry on the essential activities of our lives. The complete apprehension of it, or perhaps even of any part of it, would, however, only be possible for omniscience; and from that we are certainly as yet far removed. But the apprehension of appearances gives us at least a partial glimpse of reality, which we may hope to make more and more complete. What appears must be in some degree real, and we have to try to find out gradually to what extent it can be so regarded. This has been strikingly brought out by F. H. Bradley in his great work on *Appearance and Reality*, in which he even urges that 'Reality lives in its Appearances.' This, no doubt, sounds somewhat paradoxical; but I think it may be made a little less perplexing if we use the term 'expression' rather than 'appearance.' Reality, it would seem, cannot be thought of as purely statical. It has at least a time aspect. Indeed, we have recently been taught to believe[1] that what exists in the Universe as we know it is always an 'event.' This does not necessarily mean that there is no aspect of persistence in the Universe; but it does mean that what we apprehend is always a passing aspect or temporal expression. When we see a flower, for example, we certainly see something that is not altogether unreal; but it is something that grows and fades; and what we apprehend at any time is one of its passing phases. We catch at any moment one of its appearances or expressions. We may know very little about it, in comparison with what is known by an expert botanist; and it may convey very little meaning to us, in comparison with what it might yield to a reflective poet like Wordsworth. It may even be true, as Tennyson said, that if we could understand what it is, 'root and all and all in all,' we should 'know what God and Man is.' At any rate, we should know a great deal more about it than what we directly see. What we see is only its temporary appearance or expression. To some it expresses much more than it does to others—much more to Wordsworth or to a botanist than to Peter Bell. What we

[1] Professor A. N. Whitehead has explained this very convincingly in his book on *Science and the Modern World*.

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directly see, however, is not nothing. Even the pink rat that the drunkard sees is not nothing. It is an appearance or expression; and so is a dream. Now, it is not altogether easy to get beyond appearances. Even Wordsworth and the botanist may not succeed in getting very far beyond them. To know what the flower really is would involve, on the one hand, a knowledge of the evolutionary process by which vegetable life is generated, and, on the other hand, a knowledge of the process by which the colour that it displays is produced; and of the former at least no one appears as yet to know very much. It might also raise the question of what it means for us in the way of suggestion, and how it comes to have such a meaning. Even the comparatively simple question of colour raises many problems for the physicist and the psychologist; and for the philosopher it may raise even more. Even Professor Alexander, who is reckoned to be among the realists, says[1] that colour is a spirit. At any rate, its immediate appearance is far from being all that there is to say about it. It is in this sense that we have to understand what Bradley has emphasized about 'Degrees of Truth and Reality.' Most of the truths that we apprehend are only true within their limited province. The whole truth even about comparatively simple objects is never apprehended by us; but what we apprehend may be true so far as it goes.

Now, it may be asked whether we can ever hope to get beyond appearances. It may be said that, in getting behind one appearance, we are only penetrating to another. Kant asked whether we can ever know the 'thing in itself'; and he answered in the negative. Similarly, it is very commonly thought in the East that the world of our ordinary knowledge is Mâya or illusion, and that Reality is something utterly different. But it may be asked further whether we have any right to postulate the existence of a 'thing in itself'; whether Bradley, for instance, may not be right in maintaining that 'Reality lives in its Appearances.' This is a question that we can hardly hope to answer with any completeness in such a sketch as the present, which is primarily concerned with values. It seems

[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. ii. pp. 59–60. He quotes Meredith, Pater and Bosanquet. By a spirit, however, he means an apparition, not a self-conscious being.

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clear that we attach a certain value to the apprehension of reality, certainly an instrumental value and probably even an intrinsic one; and it is mainly from that point of view that we have to consider the subject. Some have sought to remove the difficulty by contending that all reality is essentially mental —a view that was called by Henry Sidgwick 'mentalism.' Berkeley, at least in some of his earlier writings, maintained this very emphatically; and it has sometimes been supposed that all those who are called idealists are of this opinion.[1] Even Berkeley's view was somewhat qualified by the recognition of what he described as a Divine language, as well as by some other modifications in his later statements. Even the recognition of a language seems to carry us a little beyond individual minds. For a language is a medium of intercourse between minds, and can hardly be regarded as simply existing within any one mind. The precise nature of what we call the external world, or the spatio-temporal system, is very difficult to determine. It used to be thought of as made up of a vast collection of solid atoms. The atoms previously thought of as indivisible have been resolved into smaller constituents; and these are now thought of rather as centres of influence than as material particles. The material universe is now generally regarded as a system of electro-magnetic activities; and the view of it, as thus conceived, is not very far removed from what is meant in the East by Mâya, which does not appear to be necessarily understood as meaning mere illusion, but only as indicating that there are different degrees of Truth in our apprehension of Reality. It is now generally recognized that few things are just what they appear to be on a superficial view, or even what they appear to be after a good deal of careful observation and analysis. We are constantly finding that things are much more complex and that their explanations have to be much more subtle than was at first supposed. But it is certainly quite wrong to represent the reality that we apprehend as existing within our minds. It may, however,

[1] Dr. J. E. Turner, in his *Theory of Direct Realism*, has explicitly urged that Idealism, rightly understood, does not exclude Realism. I think this is true, and it has been more or less definitely recognized by many idealistic writers; but it is too large a subject to be properly discussed here.

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be an expression of mind, comparable to a language. This appears to involve the view that mind is essentially creative, capable of expressing itself through a medium that is distinguished from itself. Hegel urged, by a somewhat elaborate argument, that the universe can only be interpreted by the conception of creative Spirit. To discuss this here would carry us far beyond our present scope.[1] But what it is important for us to notice at the present stage is that this involves that the world that we apprehend is not to be supposed to be, in any proper sense, *in* our minds. It may be a projection of mental activity; but it has at least become distinct from particular minds, and it is not from our individual minds that it can be supposed to emanate. For us at least it is an external spatio-temporal system that we apprehend. Of course, the way in which we apprehend it is limited by the structure of our senses and by the interpretative powers of our individual intelligences. In that sense it is true that we live, to a large extent, in a world of our own construction. But the way in which we apprehend it does not vary very greatly from one mind to another, except in so far as their surroundings and their inherited aptitudes differ. That there may be a creative Intelligence from which it emanates is a hypothesis for which there may or may not be sufficient grounds. But they are highly speculative grounds, which cannot, in any direct way, be verified. The recognition of this, which is now almost universal, has given rise to those views that are commonly referred to as realistic. Many of the supporters of this—very notably Mr. Bertrand Russell—are specially interested in mathematics; and this forms a convenient bridge between what is mental and what is physical. Numbers and mathematical conceptions in general are not physical. They are 'ideal constructions' that we build up for the interpretation of physical facts and processes; and they can also be applied to some mental processes. They can be applied to everything that exists in the spatio-temporal system; and mental processes are at least temporal, and have also important spatial connections. Modern interpretations of the physical universe tend to become more and more mathematical. The analysis of matter has already carried

[1] But see below, Chapter IX.

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us far beyond the old view of solid atoms placed in a rigid spatial system. What is now thought of is a system of events occurring within a limited spatio-temporal whole, in which our individual minds have also a definite place, at least in so far as most of their activities are concerned.[1] The exact relation of our minds to our bodies is a problem that is still involved in a good deal of uncertainty.[2]

Modern realism, it is important to remember, cannot properly be called materialism. It is rather energism; and this conception can be, to some extent at least, applied to mental processes as well as to those that are more purely physical. We are thus led to a species of Monism, which is neither to be called Mentalism nor Materialism. But the distinction between mental and physical processes continues to exist, and the question of the exact relations between them is a very difficult problem. The Mind has very definite physical connections; and, on the other hand, it is at least not certain that physical processes can be fully interpreted without some reference to mind. It is here that the question of Value begins to enter in. In most of our mental activities we are pursuing values; and this aspect of mental life becomes more and more prominent as our minds develop. Language, for instance, owes its development to value. It arises and has been developed as a means of communication between minds. In certain simple forms it is so used by animals; and without its use it does not appear that their lives could be carried on at all. Cries of various kinds—sounds that can be produced and heard—serve as means for the expression of feelings and purposes; and in human life they become definite words of a more and more complex kind by which a great variety of meanings can be expressed. Most of these meanings involve something of the nature of purposes and choices, approvals and disapprovals, and all sorts of valuations. Eventually they involve definite determinations of Why as well as How particular activities are carried on. Such valuations do not simply exist in individual

[1] Reference may be made on this subject to Mr. Russell's *Analysis of Matter*. But the analysis is still proceeding.

[2] For an account of the various ways in which this relation may be conceived, reference may be made to Dr. Broad's luminous work on *The Mind and its Place in Nature*.

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minds. They involve, in their more developed form, the use of words and other signs—things that can be seen or heard—as means of intercourse between minds. We are learning more and more to make use of the various forces of nature for the communication of thoughts, feelings and purposes. Sound and light have long been used in this way. Electricity is now largely used for the same purpose; and perhaps we ought now to add hypnotic influence and telepathic vision—however these are to be explained. And, having thus learned to express our valuations through physical signs, we begin also to attach values to physical objects themselves. We learn the uses of plants and animals and of the various physical forces, and we apprehend beauty in the world around us. The light of the sun and stars, the moaning of the sea, the howling of the winds, the shapes of hills and valleys, the colours of living and lifeless things, affect us in many different ways. We fall into what Ruskin called the 'pathetic fallacy.' We apply our own valuations to many things that, so far as we know, have no apprehension of any values at all. And, in particular, we seek to know the truth about all these things; not merely because 'knowledge is power,' not merely because it has instrumental value, but because we are beings whose nature it is to know, and who can only realize ourselves through knowing, and perhaps also because we have an ineradicable conviction that the universe in which we live, in spite of its many difficulties and apparent evils, is worth knowing. But, to bring this out more fully, we must give further consideration to the antithesis between Nature and Spirit.

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CHAPTER IV

NATURE AND SPIRIT

It must be very evident, from what has already been stated, that it is necessary to clear up our ideas with regard to what is to be understood by Mind and Matter, Spirit and Nature. On a first view, very superficial ideas tend to prevail. At first the two things seem very sharply distinguishable; but we have learned to recognize that there is a gradual transition from the one to the other. Active and quick-witted peoples, like the ancient Greeks, with an eager outlook on the world in which they live, are very apt to start as materialists. They are impressed by the things they see around them, such as fire, air, earth and water, and the varieties and complications of these; and they are prone to think that everything might be accounted for by their modifications and transformations; and the developments of modern science have led many people in our own time and country to incline to a similar view. Meditative peoples, on the other hand, like most of the Indians, are comparatively little impressed by the phenomena of nature, and are more apt to be absorbed by the processes of their own minds. They are apt to think of nature as mere Mâya, *i.e.* at least very largely illusory. This attitude also has had its representatives among ourselves; and it is clear that we must try to arrive at some balance between the two ways of interpreting the Cosmos. A more comprehensive outlook, such as ultimately prevailed in Greece and to a somewhat less extent in India, leads to some sort of dualism or to a complicated scheme, such as we find in Aristotle's conception of Matter and Form or in the Cartesian opposition between Space and Thought. In the modern world the opposition has tended to become one between Science and Philosophy; and we are only beginning to see our way to a reconciliation between them. It is now our business to try to find a more thorough harmony between them.

On the one hand, we have to recognize that minds or spirits are not altogether self-contained, and cannot be properly

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understood without reference to their social relations as well as to the material system with which they are connected throughout the whole course of their development. On the other hand, it has to be recognized that the material system is a complex, formed out of elements that cannot themselves be characterized as material.

According to the newer conceptions of physical science, matter is capable of being analysed into modes of energy, concentrated at certain points within a spatio-temporal system, but extending its influence throughout the whole of that system. Minds, on the other hand, have also to be regarded as complex, and as acting and reacting in relation to the material system with which they are connected. Some part of these activities can be accounted for by what is now called Behaviourism; but there is an inner core of consciousness which does not seem to be capable of any purely mechanical interpretation. Some, indeed—notably Mr. Bertrand Russell—are inclined to believe that the two aspects—the material and the mental—may be supposed to have a common basis and to be present in varying degrees throughout the whole. In any case, it seems clear that they are distinguishable, even if and when they are present on both sides. Now, what are we to say about this distinction between two aspects in the world that we apprehend? Are we simply to accept it as an ultimate fact in the universe, or can we suppose that one of the aspects may be accounted for by means of the other?

Can we suppose that our conscious experiences may be fully accounted for by bodily movements? Some philosophers have at least come pretty near to this doctrine. Those who are called behaviourists hold that all our movements, including those that are expressive—our speech and other modes of communication—are simply complex nervous and muscular processes. The mental process that accompanies them is only an epiphenomenon. This is, on the face of it, highly paradoxical; but it is surprising how many distinguished thinkers have at least formed the habit of saying that they believe it.[1] Even the followers of Descartes, who laid so much stress on

[1] Some discussion of it will be found in Mr. Russell's *Analysis of Mind*, pp. 157, *etc.*

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thought, regarded the lower animals as automata. Certainly some animal expressions do not seem to imply much in the way of conscious process. The words that are used by parrots do not seem to imply any understanding of the meaning that we usually suppose words have for us; and it is true that much human expression is also based on habits that do not involve much reflection. Lord Kelvin had a famous parrot that often said things that appeared to be very apposite—such as 'Late again!' when its master came in somewhat tardily to dinner. It is pretty certain that this was merely a habit. But Lord Kelvin himself had certain habits of thought that it would not be easy to justify, and that might be said not to involve any real conscious process. It has been noted of him, in particular, that he refused to accept any methods of physical explanation that could not be represented by a mechanical model. It may be urged that this was merely a habit into which he had got—a more complicated habit than that of his parrot, but not implying much more in the way of reflection. And if once we admit this, it is an easy extension of the same principle to say that all expressions of thought are habitual reactions that might go on quite independently of any conscious process. Professor Alexander, for instance, seemed at one time to be disposed to accept this view.[1] But, besides being highly paradoxical, it appears to be open to physiological objections.[2] At the other extreme are those who are inclined to ascribe conscious preferences, not only to men and animals, but also to plants and perhaps even to modes of existence still lower in the scale. Wordsworth said that he believed that flowers enjoyed the air they breathed; and quite recently Sir J. C. Bose has ascribed sympathies and antipathies to trees.[3] These are matters on which it is not

[1] I understand that he has now been led to reject it. Reference may be made to the Preface to the new edition of *Space, Time and Deity*.

[2] This has been urged by Mr. Bartlett in a review in *Mind* (Oct. 1927).

[3] Reference may be made to the account of his life by Professor Patrick Geddes. It has been shown that there is a high degree of sensitivity in plants, but it is doubtful whether it can be said to have been shown that that sensitivity is accompanied by consciousness. The Cartesians doubted whether there is such consciousness even in the lower animals. It is possible at least that their degree of consciousness is slighter than it is in human life, even when the purely organic sensitiveness is equally great.

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