{1} Origins of Dewey's Idealism

It is more or less of a commonplace to speak of the crisis which has been caused by the progress of the natural sciences in the past few centuries. . . . This effect of modern science has, it is notorious, set the main problems for modern philosophy. How is science to be accepted and yet the realm of values to be conserved? This question forms the philosophical version of the popular conflict of science and religion.

The Quest for Certainty

John Dewey's historical sketch of Western philosophy, *The Quest for Certainty*, like most philosophers' histories of their own discipline, is more revealing about the sources, interests, and idées fixes of its author than of the discipline of which he writes.[1] And so it has been natural to suspect that the "crisis" Dewey describes as the driving force behind the development of modern Western philosophy was probably the driving force in Dewey's own development—in particular, the development of his pragmatic, value-friendly conceptions of science, knowledge, and judgment.

The circumstances of Dewey's own philosophical training seem to confirm that suspicion. When Dewey arrived at Johns Hopkins University to take up his graduate studies in 1882, a 'crisis' in the direction of the Department of Philosophy already existed. G. S. Morris, a theistic idealist, and G. Stanley Hall, a Darwinian empiricist, were both holders of half-year appointments in philosophy and thus in competition for the same philosophy chair through the period Dewey was in attendance (1882–84).[2] Whether Dewey liked it or not, the crisis between science

1. See John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), *LW* 4.

2. A third member of the department, C. S. Peirce, had also been in competition but was disqualified from serious consideration on grounds of character. See, e.g., Hugh Hawkins, *Pioneer: A History of the Johns Hopkins University, 1874–1889* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), pp. 195–97.

and values was thrust upon him from the outset of his professional career.

Because Dewey enthusiastically endorsed both the theistic form of absolute idealism professed by Morris and the 'new psychology' (physiological psychology) imported from Germany by Hall, his early philosophy has widely been read as an unhappy attempt to merge Hall's scientism with Morris's theistic idealism. This project Dewey is supposed to have abandoned in the mid-1890s, when the impossibility of success had at last sunk in. So, for example, in his biography, *Young John Dewey*, Neil Coughlan interprets Dewey in the 1880s as "torn between Morris and Hall, between his loyalties and his nascent ambitions," torn because as Coughlan sees it, "science for [Dewey] was Hall's experimental psychology, and theistic philosophy was Morris's Hegelianism. Bringing the one into a genuinely sustaining relationship with the other looked to be impossible."[3] In this respect at least, Coughlan is in agreement with Dewey's earlier biographers George Dykhuizen and Morton G. White.[4] Dykhuizen sees Dewey's graduate and early postgraduate philosophy as strained by the respective pulls of "Neo-Hegelianism and the new psychology," and "the problem of bringing the two together—a problem that was to engage his very best efforts over the next few years."[5] And White specifically identifies two of Dewey's 1884 articles as evidence of the respective pulls of Morris and Hall: "Kant and Philosophic Method" and "The New Psychology."[6] White remarks, "The first was an expression of his idealism, the second an eloquent appraisal of the latest developments in psychology. The first testified his allegiance to Morris, while the second aligned him with Hall."[7] But although the competition between Hall and Morris did in a sense enact a wider "crisis" in contemporary philosophy, it is unlikely that Dewey would have experienced the crisis as personal or as a choice between science and religious or moral values. His crisis was professional: had scientific progress rendered his chosen career obsolete?

Because Anglo-American neo-Hegelianism is typically recalled, if recalled at all, primarily for its defense of theistic metaphysics and Chris-

3. Neil Coughlan, *Young John Dewey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 49.

4. See George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), and Morton G. White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (New York: Octagon, 1964).

5. Dykhuizen, *Life and Mind of John Dewey*, p. 38.

6. See John Dewey, "Kant and Philosophic Method," *EW* 1:34–47; and "The New Psychology," *EW* 1:48–60.

7. White, *Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism*, p. 34.

tian virtues, it is often assumed that to the university's president, Daniel Coit Gilman, and board of trustees, Morris would have represented "Religion" in competition with Hall as the representative of "Science." But in fact, neo-Hegelianism was not simply Christian apologia; it was a philosophical program offering radical analyses of epistemology, theory of mind, morals, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Furthermore, Morris himself was not simply a theist, and his philosophical works are no more limited to Christian apologetics than Hall's were free of them. If the choice Morris and Hall represented for Gilman had been between Science and Religion, Hall would not have been given the chair. No university president in the 1880s could afford to choose 'science' over 'religion,' least of all Gilman, who needed to placate a local community still scandalized by T. H. Huxley's address at the university's founding. Hall could not have been a serious candidate if Gilman had not been personally assured that Hall was both friendly to religion and willing to defend theistic interpretations of mind and morals against 'materialist' and agnostic attacks.[8]

Hall himself described the competition as having been between two varieties of philosophy, "my more experimental type" versus Morris's "history of philosophy."[9] But it would probably be more correct to describe the situation as a competition between science and philosophy. Since the university's need for instruction in both 'facts' and 'values' could be provided for simultaneously by Hall (who held a degree in divinity), 'philosophy' was a luxury Gilman could do without.[10]

For Dewey, then, the crisis the competition represented was professional: inductive science (girded by religion) was threatening to render the discipline of philosophy extinct. As he remarks in *The Quest for Certainty*, "as long as the view obtained that nature itself is truly known by the same rational method [as philosophy employs]. . . . [t]here was no break between philosophy and genuine science—or what was conceived to be such. In fact, there was not even a distinction; there were simply various branches of philosophy, metaphysical, logical, natural,

8. See Hawkins, *Pioneer*, chap. 11. On the need to find a candidate for the philosophy chair of sufficient orthodoxy to quell local concerns over Huxley's appearance, see p. 189 n. 9.

9. Ibid., p. 201.

10. Hall had evidently given assurances to Gilman on his willingness to cultivate a rapprochement with religion and its local representatives. See Dorothy Ross, *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), chap. 8, and Hawkins, *Pioneer*, pp. 194 and 202.

moral, etc., in a descending scale of demonstrative certainty."[11] But by the 1880s, there had not only been a 'break'; there had been a permanent rupture. Inanimate nature had long since been ceded to the inductive sciences. The rapid progress of chemistry and the biological sciences in the nineteenth century suggested that philosophy's remaining territory—the mental and moral sciences—ought to be ceded as well. Whether philosophy could or should continue to exist as an independent discipline was thus a matter of dispute.

Since Dewey was not personally interested in making a career in either inductive psychology or anthropology, he would have had little reason to expect that his nascent career ambitions would be well served by promoting Hall's vision of philosophy or reconciling it with Morris's in his own philosophical work. He would instead have had good professional reasons for siding with Morris and against Hall, even had he not found Morris's idealist philosophy appealing. Gratitude or personal loyalty to Hall himself might nevertheless have given Dewey reason to attempt the merger attributed to him—if, in fact, he ever felt any. There is no evidence that he did. Neither his own 1930 autobiographical essay, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," nor his daughter Jane's "Biography of John Dewey," drawn from Dewey's notes,[12] supports the suggestion that he felt indebted to Hall personally or philosophically.

The only grounds for supposing that Hall did exert a continuing influence on Dewey's philosophy of the 1880s and 1890s, an influence distorting and ultimately undermining his faith in absolute idealism, appears to be Dewey's enthusiasm for the new physiological psychology. His knowledge of the new German psychological research was due to Hall. Nevertheless, Dewey's continuing interest in the subject could reasonably be attributed to the influence of Hall only if such an interest could not have been sustained by the neo-Hegelian approach to human psychology Dewey had learned from Morris and if Dewey's views on the nature or significance of the new psychology were substantially similar to Hall's. Neither appears to be the case.

First, absolute idealism was not inherently antithetical to physiological research into human mental life. What absolute idealists, Morris among them, opposed was the thesis that *all* psychological phenomena are reducible to physical phenomena and the implication that a nonem-

11. *Quest for Certainty*, *LW* 4:22.

12. See John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" (1930), *LW* 5:147–60, and Jane Dewey, "Biography of John Dewey," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Paul Arthur Schlipp (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1939), pp. 3–45.

pirical, philosophical 'science' of mind or morals has no unique contribution to make to these subjects. This opposition Dewey shared well into the 1890s. Second, Dewey's view of the nature and significance of physiological investigations of mind does not resemble Hall's. As we shall see, Dewey's conceptions of science, scientific method, and scientific psychology were vehemently opposed to Hall's. Dewey's reconciliation of philosophical and physiological sciences of mind and morals in the 1880s and early 1890s owed more to Morris than to Hall, and more to Hegel than to either.

BACKGROUND OF DEWEY'S IDEALISM

Dewey's adoption of neo-Hegelianism as a graduate student is often explained in psychobiographical terms. The approach is invited by Dewey's own description of his encounter with Hegelian thought as "an immense release, a liberation" from "divisions and separations that were . . . a heritage of New England culture, divisions by way of isolation of self from the world, of soul from body, of nature from God." Hegelian thought appealed to Dewey because it "supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet was a hunger only an intellectualized subject-matter could satisfy." But it would be a mistake to imagine that the attraction of neo-Hegelianism was purely emotional. As Dewey further remarks, Anglo-American absolute idealism was "the vital and constructive [movement] in philosophy"[13] in the latter half of the nineteenth century, one that could justifiably claim to be working on the cutting edge.

The crisis of confidence in philosophy that played itself out so theatrically at Johns Hopkins University in the early 1880s was by no means a provincial matter. Nineteenth-century fascination with inductive science and its offshoots created an insatiable demand for books, journals, lectures, and instruction in the physical sciences in this period. Demand for philosophical treatments of the same topics did not rise in proportion. In colleges and universities throughout the English-speaking world, there was increasing pressure on academic institutions to shift resources from the 'unscientific' disciplines such as philosophy to the rapidly expanding body of 'scientific' disciplines. The crisis for philosophy was particularly acute in the universities and colleges of the United States, where philosophy had never been firmly established in the cur-

13. "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," pp. 153, 152.

riculum and the most desirable credential any philosopher could have was still a degree in divinity. As British idealist T. H. Green ruefully remarked, in an atmosphere of such hostility to traditional philosophy, "with such opinion in the air all around him, it must be with much misgiving that one who has no prophetic utterance to offer in regard to conduct, but who still believes in the necessity of a philosophy of morals which no adaptation of natural science can supply, undertakes to make good his position."[14]

Of the prevailing schools of thought, only absolute idealism was interested in or capable of mounting a creditable case for the continuing viability of philosophy as a vehicle of inquiry. The alternatives—empiricism and intuitionism—lacked the will, the credibility, or both. For example, positivism and (Spencerian) evolutionary empiricism each argued for the reconstitution of philosophy as the theory of science and scientific reasoning and for the abandonment of speculative and other traditional branches of philosophy that exceeded the boundaries of epistemology of science. Other empiricists of a more skeptical bent had no use for even this attenuated conception of philosophy. Hall was probably speaking in jest when he once described philosophical epistemologists as suffering from a "morbid neurosis" so severe that "these so-called epistemological vagaries [are] in some forms hardly less than the physiological equivalents of self-abuse."[15] But what he said, others, equally impatient with philosophers' inability to achieve consensus, must certainly have been thinking.

Intuitionists, usually but not exclusively allied to the school of 'Scottish' philosophy, were more favorably inclined toward the retention of philosophy as the chief exponent of the mental and moral sciences. But the critical attacks of more skeptical empiricists against intuitionist theories of knowledge and morals, bolstered by the implications of Darwinism, had left this school largely discredited in philosophically minded circles by the second half of the nineteenth century.

Thus the field was left clear for absolute idealism to promote and defend its conception of philosophy as the only viable game in town. It was no accident that absolute idealism's abrupt rise to prominence among Anglo-American philosophers in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with the growing threat to philosophy's posi-

14. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 3d ed., ed. A. C. Bradley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 3. The first edition appeared in 1883.

15. Ross, *G. Stanley Hall*, p. 254. Hall's incomprehension of Josiah Royce's anger over the remark suggests that Hall was speaking at least partly in jest.

tion within academia. Nor was it an accident that absolute idealism began its equally abrupt fall from favor after the turn of the century just as philosophy's status as a discipline was becoming secure once more. To Dewey and his contemporaries, absolute idealism's appeal was not only emotional but also intellectual and professional: it offered a coherent body of theory and research together with a persuasive case for believing that philosophical research could make original contributions to the mental and moral sciences without collapsing into a branch of the natural sciences.

To understand the conceptions of philosophy, science, and value that were to drive Dewey's philosophical development, we must first understand the conceptions from which he started, conceptions supplied by his mentor, Morris, and other idealist sources. In theory, Anglo-American absolute idealism, like most philosophical movements, was unified by its members' commitment to a shared set of principles and conceptions. In practice, absolute idealism, like most philosophical movements, was unified by its members' commitment to the overthrow of the shared principles and conceptions of rival schools of thought. Absolute idealism was unusual only in the degree of the practical consensus it achieved. Whatever the personal views of a given idealist about the nature of the absolute mind, the human mind, or the physical universe, he or she was bound to attack substantially the same empiricist and materialist doctrines and in substantially the same ways as other idealists.

Absolute idealism's most vehement attacks focused on the empiricist contentions that (1) all knowledge is empirical and thus accessible by the means and methods of the natural sciences and (2) the mental and moral sciences must each be empirical natural sciences. So, for example, in Morris's 1882 defense of philosophy, "Philosophy and Its Specific Problems," the stalking horse is an unnamed German author said to contend that it should be "the task of a new generation to study philosophy not simply with the aid of the physical sciences, but through and in them alone—in short, to resolve philosophy into physical science."[16] In case we should suppose the view typical of German thought, Morris hastily assures us of its true origin and his proper target: "the wisdom of Britain's philosophic sages . . . from the time of Francis Bacon down to this day" (209), that is, those contemporary positivists and evolutionary empiricists who claimed Bacon as their patron saint and inspiration.

16. G. S. Morris, "Philosophy and Its Specific Problems," *Princeton Review* N.S. 9 (1882):208.

The preferred response to such charges was invariably to construct reductio ad absurdums upon the premises of empiricist epistemological arguments. Morris's paper again provides a typical example. He begins his rebuttal by accepting for the sake of argument that (1) "all science is physical science" and (2) all physical science is "of sensible phenomena and of nothing else. Its legitimate and only concern is to ascertain precisely what the phenomena are, and to point out the rules of their coexistence in space and of their sequence in time" (210, 211). He then argues that the two premises and their implications are contradictory. The unqualified claim that all science, all *knowing*, takes the form of inductive, physical science, is neither a claim about sensible phenomena nor confirmable by induction from empirical data available to us. In other words, an empiricist can know that all knowledge is knowledge of and about sensible phenomena only if some knowledge is not. Thus the empiricist account of knowledge is incoherent.

Nonskeptical forms of empiricism, especially evolutionism, peculiarly lent themselves to this sort of burlesquing. Morris and his fellow idealists took full advantage. In reply to evolutionists' assertions that empirical science proves the determination of human nature by natural forces, Morris happily pointed out that the conclusion was incompatible with the premises from which it was derived:

> Hume . . . but anticipated the now universal voice of physical science. . . . which honestly and honorably confesses the limitations of its true province, when it restricts this province to the field of sensible phenomena and . . . professes to find no reality of power or "force," but only phenomena of motion. For it force is an "abstraction," a convenient, and perhaps practically necessary "auxiliary," or working "idea," but not an object of scientific knowledge, not a scientific reality. It is not an object of sensible observation, it is not a "phenomenon," and if it makes its way into the armory of scientific ideas, it is . . . an interloper there.[17]

As far as Morris was concerned, the only consistent form of empiricism was Humean skepticism, a conclusion in which he delighted because he considered Hume's skeptical conclusions paradoxical and evidently absurd. He writes:

> The "empirical philosopher" first determines that all our knowledge or experience is strictly of a sensible nature. This means . . . that all that I know is

17. G. S. Morris, *British Thought and Thinkers* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1880), p. 350.

> rigorously confined to the consciousness of my own individual mental states or "feelings." The immediate inference then is that I have no knowledge, properly speaking, of the "external world" which my consciousness is popularly supposed to represent, nor of myself as a knowing agent. . . . I and the external world are, if we really exist at all, "*meta*-physical" entities. . . . The "belief" in our existence is indeed inexpugnable [*sic*], but it is wholly unaccountable, mysterious.[18]

Because he thought it ridiculous to think that we do not and cannot know that we and the world exist, Morris insists that our experience of the world is not wholly sensible.

Morris's conclusion invites the questions by what means our nonempirical experience is gained and whether and how philosophy can make sense of that experience in a way physical science cannot. The absolute idealist response is that we must reconsider our received notions of how ordinary 'perception' actually works. According to empiricist interpretations, 'perception' is a state of consciousness that arises from the collision of impenetrable, material objects. The content of a particular state of consciousness is determined by the 'impression' made upon the percipient's sense organs and nervous system by the colliding external object. As the object that gives rise to a state of consciousness internal to the percipient's mind is not itself internal to or immediately present to the percipient, the percipient can only guess as to the nature of the cause of its perceptions. Thus skepticism is the necessary conclusion of the interpretation of perception as a *mechanical* interaction.

But why assume the interaction is mechanical? Since this assumption cannot be used to explain how it is that we know we and the world exist, a new conception is needed. Specifically, we need a conception that can allow for the immediate presence of the objects of perception to the perceiving mind. As Morris put it, "the immediate lesson of the science of knowledge is that all true consciousness is self-consciousness, all knowledge self-knowledge, all experience self-experience. But then in order to recognize the substantive, objective truth of this, we have to revise and enlarge the individualistic conception of 'self.'"[19] In other words, if the world and the percipient are internal and immediately present to the percipient's mind or self, the percipient must be conceived as containing the universe within itself—an enlargement indeed!

According to absolute idealism, there is nothing absurd or unrealistic

18. Morris, "Philosophy and Its Specific Problems," p. 213.
19. Ibid., p. 227.

about readjusting our notions of ourselves in this way. The world and ourselves remain what they are. All that changes is the relation between them. We give up conceiving of the relation that perception establishes between its 'subject' and 'object' as a mechanical interaction of mutually exclusive entities and substitute a conception of an organic relation between the functionally distinct but mutually interdependent components of a single entity. Morris gives the following illustration. A naturalist can determine the identity both of an animal and of its environment from the examination of a single bone. Now the bone is in one sense a discrete component of the creature to which it belonged, functionally distinct from, and mechanically interacting with, the other bones and organs of their common owner. Yet at the same time, the bone and the other organs are all 'one flesh,' all constituents of one organism. The bone's identity, its character and characteristics, are determined by the whole of which it is a part. At the same time, the identity of the whole creature, its character and characteristics, is likewise determined (in part) by its possession of that particular bone. The relation of each to the other is 'internal' to or constitutive of each. Thus their relationship is different in kind from the 'external' and nonconstitutive relations that obtain between mechanically interacting bodies.

If we conceive of the subject and object of perception as organically related, then subject and object must be 'of one flesh,' mutually constitutive components of a larger whole. Continuing with his example of the bone, Morris writes:

> Now suppose the bone restored to its original place in the whole and living organism, and then endowed with the capacity of consciousness. . . . [T]he bone will be the immediate, empirical subject of consciousness, and the rest of the organism will be the direct or empirical object. Can we, now, suppose the subject to have true and complete consciousness of itself, unless this consciousness include the consciousness . . . of the whole organic structure which is implied in and revealed in itself? Can the "subject" bone have real consciousness of itself, unless it see itself, not merely . . . in itself, *qua* individual, but in its other, its so-called object, which, while numerically other than, is yet ideally and organically one with . . . the individual bone?[20]

A conscious bone might be conscious of itself and of its surroundings in either of two ways. It might be conscious of the physical/mechanical interactions occurring between itself and the surrounding organs as

20. Ibid., pp. 225–26.

each performs its own distinguishing function. Of course, if this were the bone's sole source of information about its surroundings, it would have to be skeptical of its capacity to know what its surroundings were or even whether they existed. But the bone has another means of acquaintance with its own external form and surroundings: the examination of its own consciousness. The bone's nature is one with the nature of the whole of which it is part, so that if the bone determines that it is, for example, certain of its own consciousness, reality, and material existence, then the same must be true of the whole in which it participates. The whole too must possess consciousness, reality, and material existence.

Since human percipients appear to know or be acquainted directly with truths about themselves and their external world that sensible perception could not provide, idealists argued that the logical conclusion was that human perception is not merely sensible. And if it is not merely sensible, then the conclusion that human beings are organically rather than merely mechanically related to their world is not wholly unreasonable. In Morris's words: "We must regard self as not only individual, but also universal or participating in—organically one with—the universal."[21] We find the stuff of the universe given or immediately present within us because we are of that stuff. Whatever is essentially true of it is, therefore, true of us, and vice versa.

Empiricists generally conceded that empirical methods of investigation were incapable of establishing the existence of the very subject matter to which those methods were intended to apply: matter and force. As their idealist rivals saw it, empiricists were also obliged to concede that their methods were incapable of establishing what must be established if inductive reasoning is to be fruitfully applied: that matter and force behave uniformly through changes in time or space. Philosophy thus complements the inductive physical sciences by providing the analysis and justification of the fundamental presuppositions physical scientists necessarily make. Specifically, philosophical inquiry explains how it is we do know that there is a real material world outside our minds, containing real forces, by appeal to the organic relations underlying the merely mechanical or chemical relations scientists study. Philosophy provides the intellectual underpinnings that allow physical science to get on with its own particular work.

The same relation obtains between philosophic and scientific method

21. Ibid., p. 227.

with regard to mental and moral phenomena. The organic relations that give rise to the mental and moral phenomena of our experience also give rise to physical, empirically observable phenomena. And to the extent that mechanical or other physical interactions play a role in mental and moral life and action, there is a role for empirical methods of inquiry. But that role is far more circumscribed than empirical psychologists have imagined.

To make their case, idealists employed critical strategies similar to those sketched above. A typical rebuttal of contemporary forms of psychophysical reductionism opened by granting, for the sake of argument, some reasonably representative set of premises supporting the conclusion that minds are merely material organs. For example, it might be granted for the sake of argument that human beings had evolved from lower animals; that there exist mental processes of the association of ideas analogous to physical processes of combination and disintegration; and even that what we call the mind might be nothing more than the collection of all the intellectual processes occurring to an individual at a given moment. F. H. Bradley followed this procedure to devastating effect in his first book, *Ethical Studies*.

To illustrate, Bradley invites the reader to picture the mind's relation to the body as analogous to the relation of a ripple's wispy crest of foam to the ripple. The picture looks plausible enough, he points out, up to the moment we try to incorporate the phenomenon of self-consciousness. He writes:

> We can see the stream is a flux, and that the wisp which plays on it has really no more of permanence than the stream; but how that wisp is ever to think about these things, and to delude itself into the belief, and to publish the theory, that it can not help thinking of itself as one being, and that yet after all it is nothing but a wisp—to see how this is seems really impossible. The only way to represent it is to picture a delusion, which is nothing but a delusion, and which, after belief that it is *not* a delusion, has at length found out that it really *is* a delusion. And . . . this is the conclusion to which 'inductive' psychology, if we carry it out, seems necessarily to lead.[22]

The absurdity of the 'mind' of empirical psychologists is, as far as Bradley was concerned, sufficient proof of the errors of their claims.

The point Bradley and other idealists were trying to make, in raising

22. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 39. The first edition appeared in 1876.

objections like the one above, was that the empirical psychologists' inability to directly observe the self whose phenomenal manifestations they describe does not entail the conclusion that the self is nothing other than its manifestations. As Morris put it:

> British empirical psychology, deriving its model of method from physical "inductive" science, naturally arrives by it at results analogous to those reached by physical science. It furnishes a more or less admirable description of the field of conscious phenomena, with their rules of coexistence and sequence. But it does not go behind them, objectively or subjectively. Naturally, as physical science finds no "force" among the subjects of its analytical observation, so empirical psychology "hits upon" no "power" among conscious phenomena.[23]

That we cannot observe gravity or causal processes directly does not lead us to conclude that they do not exist. It is only by postulating the existence of forces and causes that a coherent theory of the natural world can be formed. Likewise, only on the postulate that a nonnatural principle exists in the human mind, self-consciousness, is it possible to make sense of human mental life. This active principle is the explanation of the unity and continuity of mental life as we know it.

Both are justified by our own immediate awareness. We know that force exists and operates in the world because acquaintance with the existence and operation of a force (volition) is given in our own internal experience. So we are not just making use of a convenient fiction when we attribute events we observe in the external world to the action of causal forces. Similarly, in conceiving of ourselves as more than mere collections of physically generated phenomena—as 'spiritual' as well as material beings—we are not just making use of a convenient fiction. Nor do we do so when we attribute spirit or consciousness to the universal whole of which we are members. As explanations of our own behavior make reference to the force of our volitions supervening upon the merely physical forces operating upon our bodies, so also may our explanations of events in the universe make reference to an analogous force underlying and directing the physical forces whose operations scientists record. Thus empirical methods of inquiry are inadequate to comprehend the whole of human nature, either as an individual conscious subject of experience or as part of a greater, universal conscious-

23. Morris, *British Thought and Thinkers*, pp. 253–54.

ness. Morris spoke clearly, if bluntly, for his fellow idealists when he wrote:

> We are justified in insisting, in special behalf of British philosophy, that the *coup de grace* be at last administered to the idea that has so long had all the power of a superstition, that so-called empirical, phenomenally descriptive, sensational, or physiological psychology, or that physical science, be its highest law evolution or gravitation, is, *as such*, either philosophy or any specific part of philosophy, or has any competence whatever to answer, even negatively, philosophical questions.[24]

But it would be a mistake to conclude that Morris, Green, Bradley, or their colleagues were all actually opposed to empirical, physiological psychology. On the contrary, they were willing to tolerate and even applaud the new psychology provided it remembered its limitations and its place. Nor were they in general opposed to the application of evolutionary theory to the study of human nature. They simply insisted that over and above the physical forces driving the natural selection of characteristics in such species as *Homo sapiens*, there must be another, nonphysical force or influence whose operations supervene upon the merely physical. That purely physical forces operating on randomly generated variations in inheritance could have resulted in a being like man was incredible to them—in the most literal sense. It had required the conscious volition of generations of human beings supervening upon natural selection to create the physical variations in domesticated species that Darwin had cited as evidence of evolution. They presumed the same must have been true of the gradual development of the human form. Some conscious volition must have lain behind the so-called spontaneous variations on which natural selection worked: a consciousness determined that the world should develop organisms capable of sharing its consciousness. So, for example, Green could recommend the study of the merely natural processes involved in the modification of species for the "purpose of improving man's estate," and then go on to remark:

> That countless generations should have passed during which a transmitted organism was progressively modified by reaction on its surroundings, by struggle for existence, or otherwise, till its functions became such that an eternal consciousness could realize or reproduce itself through them—this

24. Ibid., p. 387.

> might add to the wonder with which the consideration of what we do and are must always fill us. . . . If such be discovered to be the case, the discovery cannot affect the analysis of knowledge—of what is implied in there being a world to be known and in our knowing it,—on which we found our theory of the action of a free or self-conditioned and eternal mind in man.[25]

That evolution operated, prior to the existence of human consciousness, to produce a biological form adequate to the needs of that consciousness was viewed as evidence by neo-Hegelians that consciousness is an essential feature of the universe as a whole and not a unique attribute of the human species or its immediate ancestors.

Moreover, inductive physical science is no more sufficient for the comprehension of moral phenomena than it is for the comprehension of mental phenomena. Empirical investigation can give us much valuable information about what in fact people believe, how in fact they behave. But as Green noted, "it has generally been expected of a moralist, however, that he should explain not only how men do act, but how they should act."[26]

From the observation and inductive generalization of human behavior, the only valid conclusions we can draw are descriptive. No amount of purely empirical investigation can justify a moral principle or settle a moral question. So if we propose to reconstruct morality on a purely scientific basis, we will be forced to interpret all moral principles, opinions, and debates as expressions of arbitrary tastes, without any scientifically meaningful foundation. Green correctly predicted that "when this consequence is found to follow logically from the conception of man as in his moral attributes a subject of natural science, it may lead to a reconsideration of a doctrine which would otherwise have been taken for granted as the most important outcome of modern enlightenment."[27] As naturalistic ethical theories came to be seen as fallaciously deriving normative conclusions from descriptive premises, nonnaturalistic alternatives took on a new appeal.

By these and other devices, neo-Hegelians sought to establish a partition between philosophy and science, paralleling the metaphysical divide between what is and what is not yet real. Absolute idealism held that the world is an organism evolving through embryonic stages toward an end state of infinite and perfect self-realization. Thus their

25. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, pp. 87–88.
26. Ibid., p. 9.
27. Ibid., pp. 10–11.

philosophical program in all its branches focused on the issue of "becoming": for example, the becoming of the world as we know it, the becoming of consciousness in that world, and the becoming of individual and social character through social and historical processes. In every case, the objective is ultimately to grasp the process itself—the method or design according to which the absolute's self-determined evolution is occurring. Thus what as a matter of fact happens to be true of the phenomena of any particular state of the world at any particular time was, relatively speaking, a triviality they were happy to leave to observation (physical science) to record.

Following Hegel, the method favored for isolating and abstracting the absolute's underlying design or method of construction was logical analysis of the most fundamental categories and concepts implied or given in our conscious experience. As we are finite beings, the merest fragments of the absolute's all-inclusive consciousness, our minds are not able to grasp in full the design in which we participate. That we are able to do so in part was supposed to be evident from our ability to perceive ourselves as objects as well as subjects of experience. The phenomenon of viewing oneself and others from an impersonal, objective point of view, it was thought, would be impossible if we were truly limited to one, personal perspective. Since objectivity does not seem to be beyond us, this capacity stands in need of explanation. Absolute idealism explained it as a capacity to partially reproduce the absolute's objective point of view within our own subjective consciousness.

We are nearest to grasping the absolute's thought when we reproduce its impartial, impersonal standpoint in our consciousnesses. And we seem most purely to achieve and maintain this condition when we are engaged in logical analysis and proof. Green holds:

> The consciousness which varies from moment to moment, which is in succession, and of which each successive state depends on a series of 'external and internal' events. . . . consists in what may properly be called phenomena . . . media for the realisation of an eternal consciousness, but which are not this consciousness. On the other hand, it is this latter consciousness, as so far realised in or communicated to us . . . that constitutes our knowledge, with the relations, characteristic of knowledge, into which time does not enter, which are not in becoming but are once and for all what they are.[28]

28. Ibid., pp. 72–73.

Temporal relations cannot enter into the absolute's consciousness, because, for the absolute, time does not exist. Temporal relations are internal to the absolute, beginning with the beginning of its evolution, ending with the realization of its objective. Just as temporal relations in the purely physical world are now supposed to have begun with the Big Bang and to hold only between changes of state occurring within the universe since that event and not to the universe as a whole, so absolute idealists reasoned that temporal relations could not apply to the absolute as a whole or inform its view of itself. Logical operations are operations into which time does not enter. Thus we more accurately reproduce the absolute's objective understanding when we engage in logical modes of inquiry.

NEO-HEGELIAN ETHICAL THEORY

Although the idealist movement was certainly committed to rebutting any epistemology that rendered values subjective, arbitrary, or unreal, construction of an ethical theory consistent with idealist epistemology and metaphysics represented a serious problem. Its solution demanded a radical departure from contemporary naturalistic or intuitional ethical theories.

The problem was that ethics is practical. It deals with the evaluation of past and future actions. Temporal relations are inexpungible from its subject matter. So it would seem that none of our ethical thinking could be an accurate reproduction of the absolute's objective evaluations. Not only could the absolute never be in doubt about what objectively it should do; it could not even conceive of its acts as to be done or having been done. Since its perception of itself does not involve time, it must perceive all its activity as simultaneously occurring phenomena of its self-realization.

The solution adopted was to recast the central question of ethical life, 'what ought I to do?' as 'am I what I ought to be?'(Although the absolute could never be in doubt about the answer to the latter question, the latter could at least be meaningful to it, whereas the former could not.) The job of the moralist was likewise recast. When Green said moralists were expected to tell men how they ought to act, he was reporting a fact, not making a recommendation. His recommendation was that moralists confine themselves to understanding what men ought to *be*. By these means, idealists endeavored to transform ethics from a practi-

cal 'art' into a purely analytic or 'logical' mode of inquiry from which temporal relations could be excluded. By their rejection of normative ethics in favor of what we would now call 'metaethics,' idealist ethical theorists laid the groundwork for the analytic moralists who were to succeed them.

At the same time, this move left idealists with a problem. A case for recasting ethics as an analytic, theoretical inquiry, rather than a practical art, made on metaphysical grounds would carry weight with the metaphysically minded. But in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the metaphysically minded were decreasing in numbers. Anglo-American neo-Hegelians needed a more immediately appealing case for reorienting contemporary ethical thought. They got it from F. H. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*. Since Bradley's work was to play an important role in the development of Dewey's early ethics, I will review his arguments in some detail.

Bradley recognized that in an era of enthusiasm for the inductive sciences, neo-Hegelian idealism was likely to seem "a bad metaphysical dream, a stale old story . . . which cannot hold its own against the logic of facts."[29] *Ethical Studies* was written to rebut that impression and to turn it against the rival doctrines of utilitarianism and Kantianism. Bradley aimed to show that on the one hand, neo-Hegelian ethics alone was truly defensible in terms of the data of our ordinary experience and, on the other, that Kantianism and utilitarianism were the 'bad metaphysical dreams' to be avoided.

In his review of the book, Henry Sidgwick criticized Bradley's style of composition as "vehemently propagandist" and Bradley himself for having used "all the rhetorical resources at his command—more perhaps than the canons of good taste would permit—to bring his audience to the acceptance of a set of doctrines, chiefly derived from Hegel." Bradley's criticisms of his opponents were condemned as "rather superficial and sometimes even unintelligent," owing to a lack "of patient effort of intellectual sympathy which Mr. Bradley has never learned to make."[30] Sidgwick did not exaggerate. *Ethical Studies* is unabashedly vituperative in its criticism of doctrines Bradley rejects. It defends vigorously, even melodramatically, the claims of Hegelian moral theory. It is by far the most 'Hegelian' of Bradley's several books, in both inspiration and content. But though partisan in his analyses, Bradley was neither

29. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 163.

30. Henry Sidgwick, review of *Ethical Studies*, by F. H. Bradley, *Mind* 1 (1876):545.

unfair in his criticisms of opponents nor unwilling to subject his own views to criticism. If his criticisms of classical hedonism were not original, they were comprehensive and destructive. Though his criticisms of Kant rely upon a Hegelian reading of Kant not now accepted, they are not toothless. Despite Sidgwick's low opinion, Bradley's text was widely read for its critical analyses well into this century.

By contrast with Sidgwick's own painstaking, meticulous exegesis of common-sense morality, *Methods of Ethics*, Bradley's *Ethical Studies* is superficial and sometimes obscure. But it is never unintelligent or wholly unpersuasive. Its central thesis is that the object of morality is "self-realization"—that is, the realization of all one's latent, potential personhood. And because 'personhood' is a social product rather than a property or quality of individual human beings, self-realization is at once humanity's private and public summum bonum. Absolute idealists held that 'personal identity' was not the property of an individual but the product of social practices and institutions. Thus *Ethical Studies* argues that there can be no absolute, universal principles of moral action. Although there is only one moral end, the end that reproduces the absolute's impersonal, objective purposes, the social institutions and practices that are the essential means to human self-realization are relative to times and places. Consequently, moral practical reasoning about the means one may adopt toward the realization of one's end cannot be a form of discursive reasoning from absolute principles to particular cases. Theoretical moral analysis cannot generate universally applicable rules or principles of conduct.

That self-realization is our end, Bradley treats as a self-evident truth. Though we can argue about how to interpret 'self-realization,' the ultimate aim of every act is to produce an effect of some kind in the agent. Value attaches to acts and objects only when and because they have such effects.[31] So Bradley baldly asserts: "In desire what we want, so far as we want it, is ourselves in some form, or is some state of ourselves; and that our wanting anything else would be psychologically inexplicable" (*Ethical Studies*, p. 68).

According to Bradley, a common philosophical failing is the habit of reflecting on human experience "not to find the facts, but to prove our theories at the expense of them" (2). Since neither Kantians nor utilitarians deny that the object of human action is to promote certain states

31. Certainly few contemporary moralists have held that acts or objects can have value independent of effects upon some conscious self (G. E. Moore being a rare and thus notable twentieth-century exception).

of or within ourselves, this is not a fact they can be accused of overlooking. What Bradley does claim they overlook are the further facts that when we act, we act for the *whole* self and that the 'whole' for which we act is not simple but complex.

First, it is necessarily the whole rather than a part of the self that we act for, because it is impossible for us to induce one sort of internal state—say, sensual pleasure—without inducing changes of state throughout the whole of the self. This is borne out, Bradley argues, by ordinary practical reason: in ordinary life our desires to bring about one sort of change of state within ourselves is always qualified by the thought of the other, perhaps less desirable, consequences we will also endure. Second, the whole for which we act is not a simple quality, property, or state of ourselves but a complex of several incommensurable constituents. This is again, according to Bradley, borne out by our ordinary moral experience. Common-sense morality advises us always to consider our desires in terms of our long-term goals. Common-sense morality does this, he thinks, because whatever the desire in question, it is not the only desire we have ever had or are ever likely to have. Usually, our willingness to satisfy a given desire is qualified by the thought that the satisfaction will come at the price of delaying or sacrificing other desires or interests.

Both Mill and Kant had, of course, built some complexity into their moral ideals: Mill, a complex of qualitatively distinct pleasures; Kant, a complex of pleasure and purity. But neither, according to Bradley, was willing or able to accommodate theoretically the true scope of our ultimate ends. Each assumes at the outset of his inquiry that people can only desire some particular finite set of ends that are in principle obtainable, the content of which is predetermined by their antecedent assumptions about human moral psychology. Instead of accepting all desires as equally real facts of moral life to be explained, each acknowledges as genuine only those desires or objectives that are consistent with his psychological assumptions. If the plain man reports that he has had a desire the investigator thinks no one could have, the plain man's observation will be treated as an illusion. Bradley argues that Mill and Kant were guilty of trimming their facts to fit their theories in this fashion.

Bradley retorts, "We have no right first to find out just what we happen to be and to have, and then to contract our wants to that limit. We can not do it if we would, and morality calls to us that, if we try to do it, we are false to ourselves" (74). The facts of moral life do not support the postulation that our desires are finite in number or bear any relation to the possibility of their being satisfied by human effort. Anyone can de-

sire any and every thing of which he or she can however vaguely conceive. An ethics mindful of actual moral experience must recognize that the end of human action is infinite, that the object of self-realization is to realize ourselves as persons of infinite powers and capacities. Or as Bradley puts it, "'Realize yourself' does not mean merely 'Be a whole' but 'Be an infinite whole'" (74).

Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of how one realizes oneself as an infinite whole, let us continue with Bradley's indictment of utilitarian and Kantian moral methodologies. Each school stands accused of allowing its own metaphysics of mind to blur its vision of the nature of moral life. The distortions produced are still more glaring, Bradley argues, when we consider the nature of moral practical reasoning.

On either the utilitarian or Kantian approach, moral practical judgments are (or should be) conclusions of discursive reasoning from universal principles. Utilitarianism holds that the rightness or wrongness of acts is a function of their consequences. A practical judgment that 'this act is right' is supposed to be a conclusion derived from a major premise, 'acts that maximize pleasurable consequences are right,' and a minor premise or premises about the probable pleasantness of this act and any alternatives. On the Kantian interpretation, practical judgment operates on a different major premise, but the general form is the same. 'This act is right' is supposed to be a conclusion derived from a major premise, the Categorical Imperative, and minor premises establishing that the motive for the act is consistent with the Categorical Imperative.

Bradley replies that this is nonsense. Ordinary people do not arrive at their moral practical judgments by way of explicit discursive reasoning from principles. They report instead that they *perceive* acts *as* wrong or right. Bradley remarks:

> In practical morality no doubt we *may* reflect on our principles, but I think it is not too much to say that we never do so, except where we have come upon a difficulty of particular application. If anyone thinks that a man's *ordinary* judgment, 'this is right or wrong,' comes from the having a rule *before* the mind and bringing the particular case under it, he may be right; and I can not try to show that he is wrong. I can only leave it to the reader to judge for himself. We say we 'see' and we 'feel' in these cases, not we 'conclude.' (194)

And common-sense morality is unapologetic on the point. Bradley notes: "There is a general belief that the having a reason for all your actions is pedantic and absurd. . . . [and] sometimes very dangerous. Not only the woman but the man who 'deliberates' may be 'lost'" (195).

Now presumably, he would agree that some practical judgments, such as nonmoral practical judgments, do involve explicit discursive reasoning: for example, 'if you want to catch the next train to Boston, you must leave the house by noon.' So he cannot mean that no practical judgments are conclusions of discursive reasoning. His point is rather that we take a false step when we try to assimilate moral practical judgments to nonmoral practical judgments. We must suppose that a moral practical judgment is a conditional judgment to the effect that 'if you want to be moral, this is the right act to do.' Such a judgment would involve reasoning from theoretical moral principles defining the nature of morality and the properties of action relevant to moral judgments. But this, Bradley insists, is not what ordinary people mean when they say that an act is right. They do not mean that they have determined that given certain fundamental principles of action, the act is right. All they mean is that they *perceive* that the act is right. If this is correct, then ordinary moral judgments more closely resemble observation statements (in Bradley's terms, "judgments of perception") than they do nonmoral practical judgments.

The ordinary person's ordinary judgment that 'this act is right' is as immediate as the judgments that 'this is a tree' or 'that log is aflame.' On Bradley's account, such immediate judgments, though not discursively formed, nevertheless "start from and rest on a certain basis" (194). For example, one's ability to judge that 'this is a tree' depends upon (has as its basis) one's possessing procedures for classifying one's experience into various categories and kinds. It is important to note that the relation of these procedures to the particular identifications made with them is not a relation of justification. For example, if someone misapplies the procedures for identifying perceptions as perceptions of 'trees,' and so mistakenly refers to a cow as a 'tree,' one would not call her mistake a mistake of judgment. One would not assume that a judgment had been made. One would assume that she misunderstood the rules for classifying her perceptions. She *misapplied* a concept but did not *reason* incorrectly from it.

What Bradley calls judgments of perception, we would call 'observations' or 'observation statements.' Observations are precisely what Bradley argues a moral judgment like 'this act is right' reports. Consequently, he argues that we should give up the idea that ordinary moral practical judgments depend upon or require the justification of theoretical moral principles. An observation that the sun rises over the eastern horizon, for example, does not depend upon or require the justification of any

particular theory of the constitution of the solar system. It is the theory of the solar system that depends upon and requires the justification of such observations. The relation of moral practical judgments to theoretical moral principles is analogous. Moral practical judgments justify, rather than require the justification of, theoretical moral principles. Kantian and utilitarian ethical theorists ignored this fundamental truth, to the detriment of their own inquiries. As Bradley sees it, the methodological errors these schools commit condemn their respective theories as dogmatic and unscientific woolgathering.

What Bradley believes we observe when we perceive an act as right or wrong is a relation between ourselves and the act. Right acts are those whose performance would tend to promote our self-realization. Wrong acts are those whose performance would tend to the reverse. A consequence of this view is that there may be less moral disagreement in the world than one might imagine. For example, if one person calls an act 'right' while another calls it 'wrong,' it does not follow that they disagree. Their different observations may simply be the result of different points of view, so that "A is struck by one aspect of the case, B by another" (195). Or it may be that they each correctly observe the different potential the act has for their own personal self-realizations. To understand precisely what this means, however, we must now determine in what sense the object of human desire is *infinite* self-realization and how it can be achieved by the performance of *finite* acts.

To be 'infinite' is to be boundless in some sense, but not necessarily the same sense in every case. For example, Bradley holds, mathematics' conception of infinity as limitlessness or indeterminateness of extension or number, though appropriate to the abstract entities with which mathematics deals, is inappropriate to real concrete beings like ourselves. Everything real is particular. No real particular is 'limitless' or indeterminate in number or extension. So Bradley argues that the difference between infinite and finite particulars cannot be that the latter are determinate and the former are not. The difference lies instead in the nature and origin of the determinateness in each case. Finite things are determined by objects and forces external to them. An infinite thing must then be a thing that is not externally but rather internally determined, neither molded nor shaped by things external to itself. If this is correct, then the object of desire, to realize one's self as an infinite whole, is a desire to be self-determined, or as Dewey and other idealists sometimes put it, to be 'free.'

The fundamental problem of human life and conduct is, for Bradley,

"How can I be extended so as to take in my external relations? Goethe has said, 'Be a whole *or* join a whole', but to that we must answer, 'You can not be a whole, *unless* you join a whole'" (79). To join a whole is to become part of a greater self, all of whose relations are internal. Take a softball team, for example. To join a team is to commit one's self to a common goal and to take on an identity determined by the role one performs within the team. The players' identities or roles—catcher, shortstop, and so forth—are not determined by external forces but are internal to the game and its purpose. Realization of that purpose, moreover, requires "team spirit," the mutual sublimation of personal ego for the sake of the group's common goal. Likewise, an individual who joins a society with its many complex group activities and shares the society's ends joins a 'whole' and, in effect, becomes part of a greater self whose differentiation into particular personal roles is internally determined.

One might object that Bradley is reading too much into collective action. Surely, the members of any group were already persons when they joined. Moreover, each joined in furtherance of particular personal ends. Their identities are not substantially altered by their membership in the group even during the periods of their participation in the group's activities. The so-called group spirit is an illusion. To suggest otherwise is simply metaphysical nonsense.

In Essay V, "My Station and Its Duties," Bradley argues that the conception of personal identity employed in this objection is a 'dogma' imported from the objector's preconceived metaphysical notions. The facts of human life, he says, "lead us in another direction. To the assertion, then, that selves are 'individual' in the sense of exclusive of other selves, we oppose the (equally justified) assertion, that this is a mere fancy. We say that, out of theory, no such individual men exist" (166). It is Bradley's contention that the idealist theory of the nonexclusivity of personal identity can alone claim the justification of being a generalization from observation and consistent with common sense.

Bradley argues that (1) common-sense views of human development, moral training, and moral responsibility all operate on the implicit hypothesis that individual selves are really internally individuated components of a common social self and (2) our experience supports this hypothesis. His argument is unnecessarily confusing at times, because he uses the term 'individual' in two distinct senses throughout. To avoid misunderstanding, in what follows I use the term 'person' rather than 'individual' where Bradley means by the term 'individuated self.' I follow Bradley's usage of 'individual' when it has the more ordinary sense of 'particular' or 'single.'

Human beings are (or are housed in) particular, impenetrable organic bodies and so are mutually exclusive physical entities. But in addition, human beings can be persons. Personality is not a property of the human organism but a function, or rather a complex of functions, that human properties can be used to perform. To be a person is to be able to perform these functions in accordance with certain general criteria. Bradley does not specify exactly what the criteria are, but his examples suggest that they include competence in at least one language, an ability to reason logically, the capacity to recognize social rules and exercise rights. He argues that it is not sufficient to be a person that one is biologically human. Humanity is not even a necessary condition of personality, since nonhumans (e.g., God, angels, the absolute) are also thought capable of personality. That personality is a matter of function, not material, is implicit in the different behavior ordinary people think appropriate toward humans who behave as persons and those who from youth or incapacity do not. To be recognized and treated as a person, one must demonstrate one's ability to act as other persons do and in accordance with the socially instituted rules others observe. Personality is thus no more a private property or possession than language.

To the objection that exclusive personal identity predates one's becoming a person, Bradley replies that the contention is incoherent. One cannot be a 'person' prior to learning and performing the functions that comprise personality. Moreover, it cannot even be said that personality is something a prepersonal self chooses to acquire. Long before an infant has any sense of himself as an entity separate from his world, the community around him has already habituated him to performances of person-defining activities (spoken to him, played with him, etc.). By the time the child is sufficiently self-conscious to be in a position to make such a choice, he can no longer think of himself except as a *person*, and that in the terms his social group has established. Bradley writes: "The soul within him is saturated, is filled, is qualified by, it has assimilated, has got its substance, has built itself up from, it *is* one and the same life with the universal life, and if he turns against this he turns against himself" (172). In any case, the very idea of a nonpersonal self choosing to become a person is incoherent. Only a person has the capacity to make such a choice or understand what it means.

Before becoming a person, everyone has a body exclusively one's own, but it is the use of one's body to realize personality that makes one a person and the sort of person one is. Were one to try to strip from one's self all the person-constituting functions one performs in the same ways and to the same ends others do, in the romantic hope of finding

one's true personal identity underneath, what would one find? Not one's true personality but no personality at all.

Returning to the problem of self-realization, Bradley argues that self-realization cannot be a purely private achievement, possession, or even goal for persons. All persons are persons only because they belong to a greater whole (society) and participate in a common endeavor (the realization of personality). What distinguishes particular persons are the contributions they make to the common social project. The realization of that project exceeds the capacities of any one person to achieve, hence the division of labor of realizing the various functions of personality among members of social groups. Every social group apportions the essential functions among various mutually supporting social roles, or in Bradley's terms, social stations. What sort of person one is, one's individual realization of personality, is given by one's choice and performance of particular roles. Or as Bradley put it, "what he has to do depends on what his place is, what his function is, and that all comes from his station in the [social] organism" (173).

On this understanding of the nature of persons and their relations to one another, Bradley holds, we can at last understand the role of morality in pursuit of the object of desire. The object of desire is realization of one's self as a whole by realizing oneself as a member of one self-determining whole. This necessarily involves desiring and willing that the internal relations of the whole be as fully realized as possible by each member, including oneself: that necessary 'stations' be established and the duties of each be attended to. Or in other words, implicit in the object of desire is the desire that those relations we call *moral*, signified by rights and duties, be recognized and fulfilled by persons. Realizing oneself as a person involves the realization of moral relations between one's self and others.

What in particular are persons morally obligated to do? Whatever acts are integral to the stations they undertake. If I am a citizen, parent, friend, employee, what I am obliged to do is whatever is essential to being a citizen, parent, friend, or employee, as these stations are currently defined. To the degree that I meet the duties of my stations, I am as I ought to be. If I do not meet those duties, or do so in a consciously piecemeal, desultory fashion, I am not as I ought to be. I transform my relations to the surrounding community into external relations. Were I simply to leave my community and live and act in physical exile, the actions would be merely amoral. But if I remain within the sphere of the group so as to benefit from the common achievement of personal life

without undertaking roles essential to the maintenance of that way of life, I am a parasite on society, weakening its internal unity and coherence of purpose.

Because one's individual personality is the complex of one's stations, whose definitions are generally understood, people can usually observe the rightness or wrongness of one another's acts and personality directly. One can often tell at a glance whether an act is consistent with an agent's role and thus whether the agent is meeting or trying to meet the duties that he is bound to attempt to fulfill. In fact, we can see that no one quite fulfills all the duties of his stations to the fullest possible extent. No one is all what he ought to be or ever does all that he ought. But so long as we are conscientious about our duties, our conduct and character are morally good.

The stress on observation and experience up to this point in Bradley's argument gives the impression that after all morality might be a matter for natural scientific investigation. If it is a fact that we do invariably desire and act for our self-realization, then morality consists primarily in the discovery and execution of the means by which this object can best be accomplished. Surely, morality and self-realization would benefit from more explicitly scientific, empirical methods of inquiry. Bradley's reply is that neither morality nor self-realization can be studied in the way we study the physical world, because neither operates as physical phenomena do. First, the world of moral stations, relations, rights, and duties is not the sort of coherent system the physical world is. Unlike the physical world, the moral world is an incoherent patchwork that cannot be reduced to a single complete and consistent order of things and events by scientific induction or any other rational means. Second, morality cannot be reduced to an applied science of realization-engineering, because morality is neither sufficient for nor always conducive to our self-realization.

Induction from observation of the moral world will not yield a consistent set of generalizations on which predictions or explanations of the future can be constructed, because the phenomena are never consistent. Bradley writes:

> A man cannot take his morality simply from the moral world . . . for many reasons. (a) That moral world, being in a state of historical development, is not and can not be self-consistent; and the man must thus stand before and above inconsistencies, and reflect on them. . . . With this co-operates (b) what may be called cosmopolitan morality. Men nowadays know to some extent

> what is thought right and wrong in other communities now, and . . . at other times; and this leads to a notion of goodness not of any particular time and country. (204)

No one living through the enormous social changes brought about by the industrial revolution could doubt that social institutions and practices evolve over time or that between relatively stable periods there occur 'transitional forms' in which vestiges of prior social arrangements coexist with the new and incompatible forms that eventually replace them. Moreover, because even stable periods are only relatively so, every social arrangement is to some degree transitional and inconsistent in its internal arrangements. Thus observation of the workings of a society's constituent stations will necessarily lead to inconsistent generalizations about both what stations are really essential to that society and what the duties of those stations really are.

Knowledge of the different social arrangements, past and present, complicates the situation further. If we try to explicate trends in our own society by analogy to others, we simply multiply our observations and likewise the inconsistencies in our data. Thus conscientious moral agents find they must go beyond the data available to them, to create their own hypotheses about (1) what stations really are essential to their own society, (2) which are essential to any and all societies' progress toward self-realization, and (3) what exactly the duties of those stations are. Once the agent forms (and acts) upon such hypotheses, she abandons the scientific outlook, according to Bradley, for creative speculation. The agent's hypotheses are *ideals* constructed in the absence of evidence to support them. Every conscientious agent who forms and acts upon the basis of ideals indulges in what Bradley calls a leap of faith, a leap that takes the agent beyond observation and scientific reasoning.

This is not the sort of leap a scientific investigator makes when he tentatively adopts a hypothesis in advance of experimentation to confirm or disconfirm it. The hypotheses or ideals upon which conscientious moral agents act are not hypotheses about what people in fact do. They are hypotheses about what people should do for their own self-realization. Nor can these hypothetical prescriptions be generated from or confirmed by scientific or even philosophical investigation. Bradley holds that the job of the moral theorist, scientific or philosophical, is to "understand morals which exist, not to make them or give directions for making them" (193). Observation of current social roles tells us what

people are obligated to do under current arrangements. It does not provide grounds for saying how the inconsistencies should be remedied. Self-realization is more art than science and relies more heavily on imagination and inspiration than observation and induction. As for the second problem, Bradley argues that it is manifestly not the case that moral realization is self-realization. Indeed, the more conscientious agents are in fulfilling the duties of their stations, the more likely they are to find that their other capacities are frustrated and ignored. Not all our capacities for personhood are capacities for social action. Creativity, discovery, and invention, for example, are not inherently social. Bradley remarks:

> The making myself better does not always directly involve relation to others. The production of truth and beauty (together with what is called 'culture') may be recognized as a duty; and it will be hard to reduce it in all cases to a duty of any station that I can see. If we like to say that these duties to myself are duties to humanity, that perhaps is true; but we must remember that humanity is not a visible community. If you mean by it only past, present, and future human beings, then you can not show that in all cases my culture is of use . . . to any one but myself. Unless you are prepared to restrict science and fine art to what is useful, i.e., to common arts and 'accomplishments,' you can not hope to 'verify' such an assertion. (205)

Realization of ourselves as the best, most fully self-determined persons we can be may demand the development of talents not used in our various stations in life. The development of such talents is often incompatible with the performance of our social duties.

Conscientious agents must again resort to idealization to bridge the gaps or conflicts that arise between their personal and their moral self-realizations. In such cases, not only do agents have to form ideals of what their roles are under the existing social order or what roles should exist as constituents of that order; they have to form ideals about the moral relations that compose that order. They solve their dilemmas, in other words, by forming and acting upon hypothetical ideals about what moral relations ought to exist and what those relations entail, so that their moral and personal realizations may be rendered coherent. But in so doing, they add to the incoherence of the moral world.

The theory that humanity's summum bonum is self-realization through collective social action, and that one's realization as a moral being lies in doing the duties of one's station, differs significantly from

other moral theories. It does not provide the kind of principles or premises that tell us what we should do in particular cases. It cannot even tell us to do the duties of our stations in all cases. Bradley himself believed that the presumption should always be in favor of existing over ideal social arrangements. He declares: "Common morality [is] both the cradle and protecting nurse of its aspiring offspring, and, if we ever forget that, we lie open to the charge of ingratitude and baseness. Some neglect is unavoidable; but open and direct outrage on the standing moral institutions which make society and human life what it is, can be justified . . . only on the plea of overpowering moral necessity" (227).

There are and probably never will be absolute or universal rules of evidence that could determine when a moral necessity is sufficiently overpowering to justify abandoning an old family custom, a rule of etiquette, or a political institution. Judgments about the preferability of an ideal to the real are, like moral practical judgments, more intuitive than discursive. They 'rest upon and proceed from' the basis of ordinary morality and its institutions and practices, but are neither deduced nor induced from it. This ultimately is the point of Bradley's critical analysis of the limitations of the morality of 'my station and its duties.' Bradley is not advocating the abandonment of a self-realization ethics in favor of a more complete, consistent, and instructive 'science' of ethics, empirical or philosophical. He is advocating the abandonment of the centuries-old struggle to construct a 'science' of ethics that can tell us what we ought to do.

In his concluding remarks to *Ethical Studies*, Bradley argues that the gaps between our moral and full personal realization can be reconciled only by faith that there is more contributing to our realization than we can see—that we are part of an organic whole larger and more potent than humanity. This he considers an essentially religious attitude to the world and our ultimate destiny. Bradley's pessimism about the practical value of a philosophical ethical inquiry for the improvement of the social institutions and practices that now hinder our realization was greater than that felt by some of his idealist colleagues.[32] But in his pessimism about the practical value of attempting to construct an empirical, natural science of ethics, he spoke for many.

Morris's views were in keeping with those of the British neo-He-

32. Green came very close, however. In *Prolegomena to Ethics*, he writes, "One is sometimes, indeed, tempted to think that Moral Philosophy is only needed to remedy the evils which it has itself caused" (339).

gelians, whose work he regularly introduced to students at Johns Hopkins University and subsequently at the University of Michigan. To Morris, there was a solid partition between philosophy and physical science which neither could usefully step over. Not surprisingly, he was willing and actually enthusiastic about working at Johns Hopkins with Hall, whose research Morris saw as a complement and aid to his own.[33] But as we shall see, the young John Dewey rejected the rapprochement his mentor and British idealist sources had so painstakingly constructed between philosophy and physical science in favor of more radically Hegelian conceptions. In his early papers, Dewey sought to turn the tables on those who meant to collapse philosophy into physical science by collapsing physical science into philosophy instead.

33. Hawkins, *Pioneer*, p. 200.