

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*. by John Dewey

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Source: *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jul., 1891), pp. 503-505

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2375496>

Accessed: 09-09-2018 16:32 UTC

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to fulfil its destiny" (p. 292). The result of this attitude towards his problem is that Dr. Fairbrain is not so much disposed as theological teachers have often been to put the moral ideals of the New Testament, regarded merely as moral ideals, on an inaccessible pinnacle, or to make their superhuman elevation itself a warrant for their divine authorship. The divinity of Christianity is shown on its "dynamic" side. Only grace gives man power to overcome sin. And it is as revelations of divine grace that Christianity and its founder are indeed, in our author's eyes, supreme and superhuman. The little volume deserves appreciation for its humane and kindly tone, its learning, and its conception of the wealth and complexity of the problems involved.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

OUTLINES OF A CRITICAL THEORY OF ETHICS. By John Dewey, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Register Publication Company, 1891. Pp. viii., 253.

The author, one of the most brilliant, clearly conscious, and enviably confident of all our philosophical writers in America, has offered us in this admirable little volume a welcome gift. The backbone of his theory is "the conception of the will as the expression of ideas, and of social ideas; the notion of an objective ethical world realized in institutions which afford moral ideals, theatre, and impetus to the individual; the notion of the moral life as growth in freedom, as the individual finds and conforms to the law of his social placing." The author acknowledges, of course, most obligation to Green, Bradley, Edward Caird, and Hegel, together with one or two others near to the same general point of view. The Hegelian conception, both of the "individual" and the "universal" informs the whole exposition. The "moral end or the good" is the "realization of individuality" by a "person,"—*i.e.*, by "a being capable of conduct,—a being capable of proposing to himself ends and of attempting to realize them." And "individuality," which is the end that the "person" has to realize, has itself two aspects. "On one side it means special disposition, temperament, gifts, bent, or inclination; on the other side, it means special station, situation, limitations, surroundings, opportunities, etc. Or, let us say, it means *specific capacity* and *specific environment*" (p. 97). The "universal," meanwhile, which controls this realization of the individual, is the "fitting in," which gives the "law" of the "whole man" (p. 96). "What is required to give unity to the sphere of conduct is . . . a principle which shall comprehend all the motives to action, giving each its due place in contributing to the whole,—a universal which shall organize the various particular acts into a harmonious system" (pp. 87, 88). The law of a man's life should then be to find his place as "individual" in the "universal" of which he is an organic part,—to find this place not as a plant finds it, mechanically and unconsciously, but with consciousness both of his "specific capacity" and of his "specific environment;" and then, having defined this place, to live in it socially, to enlarge it, to organize his world, and so to grow, both inwardly and in outer relationships. Thus, then, "the moral end is wholly social," and this consideration guides us as much in judging the apparently "unpractical" activities of pure science and art as in judging the work of a social reformer. The "motive which actuates the man of science" is probably, even in the most

"unpractical" of investigations, "a *faith* in the social bearing of what he is doing." Laying thus at the basis the "social" and "organic" character of moral action, the author feels free to accept as subordinate formulations numerous less systematic maxims about life. "We wish the fullest life possible to ourselves and to others. And the fullest life means largely a complete and free development of capacities in knowledge and production" (p. 123). "The ordinary conception of social interests, of benevolence, needs a large overhauling. It is practically equivalent to doing something directly for others,—to one form or another of charity. But this is only negative morality. A true social interest is that which wills for others freedom from dependence on our *direct* help, which wills to them the self-directed power of exercising, in and by themselves, their own functions. Any will short of this is not social but selfish" (p. 125). "As society advances, social interest must consist more and more in free devotion to intelligence for its own sake" (*id.*). "The basis of moral strength is *limitation*, the resolve to be one's self only, and to be loyal to the actual powers and surroundings of that self" (p. 128). "The good man is 'organic'; he uses his attainments to discover new needs, and to assimilate new material. He lives from within outward, his character is compact, coherent; he has *integrity*" (p. 221). "Art has been made such an unreal Fetich—a sort of superfine and extraneous polish to be acquired only by specially cultivated people. In reality, living is itself the supreme art; it requires fineness of touch; skill and thoroughness of workmanship; susceptible response and delicate adjustment to a situation apart from reflective analysis; instinctive perception of the proper harmonies of act and act, of man and man" (pp. 120, 121).

If these maxims, and others of similar skill and impressiveness give this little book a continual charm, our author's *Lebensweisheit* does not exhaust itself in *mere* maxims. The philosophical basis of his system is, of course, by no means a novel one, as his frequently-acknowledged obligations, already mentioned in this review, easily remind us. But the doctrines of self-consciousness as the end in itself, of the universal as the organic whole of the individuals, and of morality as the realization of each self through the law of its social calling, have seldom been more briefly and ingeniously expounded than here. Hedonism our author condemns for its "abstractness." "Pleasure" is not an "activity," but an accompaniment thereof. It cannot, therefore, furnish an "organizing principle" of conduct, since such a principle must be based upon the nature of activity in its "wholeness." Pleasure is, also, psychologically speaking, not the "end of impulse" (p. 17),—*i.e.*, "the motive of action, in the sense of the end aimed at, is not pleasure." The author's arguments for this view are those of Green and Professor James. On this same basis, as well as in view of the special difficulties arising concerning the "sum of pleasures," our author condemns Utilitarianism and the Spencerian ethics, while pointing out, indeed, in the latter, several points of agreement with his own views. But equally "abstract," in its own fashion, is the Kantian "formal ethics," which our author criticises in large part after Caird. The positive view, which he himself holds, appears as a synthesis (in forms, on their subjective side, not far removed from Aristotle's well-known formula, referred to p. 31) of Kant's doctrine with the truth at the basis of hedonism. In the later portions of the book a considerable number of special ethical problems

—such as those of the “idea of obligation,” of “freedom,” and of the “virtues”—are discussed in turn,—always in the same tone of assurance, with the same suggestiveness, clearness, and condensation of language.

The present reviewer's strongest objection to the book, from a theoretical point of view, relates to the untroubled optimism of the author's mood in presence of all the harder problems of ethics. In the teacher of youth this optimism must be a most acceptable trait. The mature reader, who has followed the foregoing very imperfect sketch with any acquaintance with the literature of controversy, must, however, have wondered a little how so much could be made sure in so brief a space as our author's pages cover. The wonder remains in the present reviewer's mind also. Hegel himself said (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 15) “The divine life and the divine insight may indeed be called a play of love with itself,” and he added that there was little in such an idea “*wenn der Ernst, der Schmerz, die Geduld, und die Arbeit des Negativen darin fehlt.*” Now, in Professor Dewey's moral world, and in his vigorous account of it, there is indeed more than the mere “play of love with itself.” The divine life, whose human aspect he here depicts, while it develops each self in a social environment, while it apparently gives everybody a chance for fulfilment, and ordains the moral world so that: “In the realization of individuality there is found also the needed realization of some community of persons of which the individual is a member; and, conversely, the agent who duly satisfies the community in which he shares, by that same conduct satisfies himself” (*Dewey*, p. 131),—still has room in its cheerful world for much hard work. And yet, what I miss in Professor Dewey's universe is the still graver aspect that Hegel bids one look for, the *Geduld und Schmerz des Negativen*, those real pangs and the terrible negations of the actual moral world, whose theoretical correlates are the deeper problems of ethics, the antinomies of self and task, of inner and outer, of ideal and fact, which, as I must think our author, after all, rather too gayly ignores. Were the world what he depicts, where would be the true problem of evil?

The book then has precisely the office that vital and sinewy optimism always has. Herein lies also its limitation.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS. By Alfred Marshall, Professor of Political Economy in the University of Cambridge. Macmillan & Co., London and New York, 1890. Vol. I. Pp. xxviii., 754.

“Political economy, or economics, is a study of man's actions in the ordinary business of life; it inquires how he gets his income and how he uses it. Thus it is, on the one side, a study of wealth, and on the other, and more important side, a part of the study of man. For man's character has been moulded by his every-day work, and by the material resources which he thereby procures, more than by any other influence, unless it be that of his religious ideals. . . . Religious motives are more intense than economic; but their direct action seldom extends over so large a part of life. For the business by which a person earns his livelihood generally fills his thoughts during by far the greater part of those hours in which his mind is at its best; during them his character is being formed by the way in which he uses his faculties in his work, by the thoughts and the