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A Critical Study of Reality

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A Critical Study of Reality¹

Editor's Introduction.

The approaching centennial of Royce's *The World and the Individual* calls readers to discover how these Gifford Lectures stirred Royce's mind, penetrate better his actual intent in them, and interpret them more accurately. We now have Royce's maturest interpretation of Vol. I of these lectures in his *Metaphysics, 1915-1916* (SUNY Press, 1998). Since the text itself and these 1916 clarifications of it are available, the present publication of "A Critical Study of Reality" (ca.1897) and his Plans for the Gifford Lectures, let readers discern this Roycean work from a third perspective— that is, from his initial opening of them.

Royce's numerous revisions, footnotes, inserted qualifying phrases, and well-pointed Greek quotations reveal his intent to publish "A Critical Study of Reality." William E. Hocking held that many of Royce's unpublished papers should be published if students are to grasp Royce's mind accurately. J. Loewenberg, Royce's assistant, opposed publishing any of Royce's *nachlass* except a very few papers. Yet in his list of Royce's "Unpublished Papers," Loewenberg inscribed and underlined "PUBLISHABLE" next to "A Critical Study of Reality." I know of no other writings of Royce which Loewenberg so treated except the MSS for *Fugitive Essays* and *Lectures on Modern Idealism*. Besides scholars' needs and the centenary's call, then, the verdict of Loewenberg, united with Hocking's intent, supplies another reason for the present publication.

Royce described the here-published introductory chapter (of 152 MS pages) as an "attempt to give a preliminary outline of our under-

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taking and to define its method.” He carried out only this introduction (a prologue to Chap. I of Plan A) and a few pages of Chap. II of the present text (pp. 765 ff. below), guided by his far more detailed Plan B. Yet in the present work and Plans, he clearly foreshadowed much of what he eventually published as *The World and the Individual*. Why, then, did Royce cease drafting the present text, after reaching just a few pages beyond this introductory chapter? More fitting adaptation to a semi-popular university audience may have been a reason, but probably a stronger reason lay in what Royce experienced at a set of 1898 lectures. For that year Peirce’s Cambridge lectures were “quite epoch-marking for me . . . [and] started me on such new tracks,” as Royce acknowledged to William James (*Letters*, 422).

The content of this work reveals much about Royce. At a personal level, he fully experiences the problems of metaphysics and also keeps his Reflection dispassionate. He constructs an empirical metaphysics and proposes a “method of Reflection” which, by using experience and rational concepts, wins through to *insights*, in a way that anticipates his mature method of interpretive knowing. He intends to “consider what seems to be most essential about our current notions of the meaning of the adjective *real*”—thus presaging his eventual “Four Conceptions of Being.” With fairness he presents the nominalist position that individuals are the world’s only realities yet he opposes it effectively, as Peirce did. He shows himself an adroit logician in the seriation of his arguments, manifests a masterful grasp of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, and linguistically analyzes the metaphysical terms of common sense. While criticizing with Peirce all claims to unmediated “self-evident” principles, he offers with Aristotle an indirect defense of the “fundamental” Principle of Contradiction.

I have emended Royce’s text *minimally*. Retaining his punctuation in general, I have in conformity to modern usage inserted a few commas and placed the period before the closing marks of quotations. The rare square brackets [] indicate a seemingly needed term and the even rarer pointed brackets { } indicate a suggested reading for the few words illegible in the text.

Frank Oppenheim, Xavier University

*Two (2) Drafts of "Plan for Gifford Lectures"**

{General Plan A}

Part I. The Nature of Reality

- Chap. I. Types of Reality.
“ II. Reality and Unreality in Language.
“ III. The Existential Judgment in Logic.
“ IV. The Real as Independent, as Conceivable,
and as Immediate.
“ V. The Real and the Possible.
“ VI. The Four Antithetical Definitions of Reality.
“ VII. The Warfare of the Four Conceptions in History.
“ VIII. The Real as Transcendent and Rational:
—The One and the Many; The Individual
and the Universal; Substance and Accident;
Change and Permanence.
“ IX. The Real as Transcendent and Immediate:
—The Knowable and the Unknowable.
“ X. The Real as Immanent and Rational:
—The Possibility of Experience.

*. Published by Courtesy of the Harvard University Archives. Plans A and B are deposited as two 2-page MSS in the Harvard University Archives [Josiah] Royce Papers, Non-logicalia Box F, # 2. On pp. 728-29 of his “A Critical Study of Reality,” Royce pointed to Plan A, the first of these 2-page outlines. Had he completely followed out Plan A at the rate of his introductory chapter, he would have drafted a total MS of about 2,000 pages for his Gifford Lectures. In the present text’s “Chap. II. Types of the Real” (pp.765-70), which in Plan A is Chap.I, he closely followed his second, more detailed, but much more restricted, two-page MS outline (Plan B). He makes this especially clear in the “In Language” section of Plan B as carried out here (pp.765-70).

- Chap. XI. The Real as Immanent and Immediate:
—The Mystic and the Positivist.
- “ XII. Scepticism, and the Truth of the Immediate.
- “ XIII. The Fifth Conception of Reality.
- “ XIV. The Concept of Limit:
—Idea and Fulfillment; Fact and Worth;
Past and Whole; Finite and Absolute.
- “ XV. The Factors of Reality.
- “ XVI. Monism and Pluralism; World and Individual.
- “ XVII. Historical Retrospect.
- “ XVIII. Summary of Parts.

Part II. The Cosmological Problems: Nature and Mind

- Chap. XIX. The Social Consciousness and the Empirical Ego.
- “ XX. The Consciousness of Physical Reality.
- “ XXI. The Phenomenal Laws of Physical Reality:
—Space, Time, Causation, and the
Material Processes.
- “ XXII. The Cosmological Problems.
- “ XXIII. The Interior of Nature.
- “ XXIV. The Organization of the Finite World.
- “ XXV. The Process of Evolution.
- “ XXVI. Mind and Body. Freedom and Law.

Part III. God and the Moral World

- “ XXVII. The Conception of God.
- “ XXVIII. The Moral Order.
- “ XXIX. The Problem of Evil
- “ XXX. The Problem of Immortality
- “ XXXI. The Spirit of the {Faiths?}
- “ XXXII. Reality and Life.

[Detailed Plan B]
Concept of Being

I. *In Language:*—

- (1) Categories of expression of being in popular speech:—
 - a. By perfect tenses of verbs of process.
(Especially verbs of living, growth, begetting, etc.)
 - b. By verbs and adjectives implying a *coming to light* or *being at hand*.
 - c. By animistic expressions as such (?)
 - d. By stress laid on presence in time as against distance in time (or space).
 - e. By verbs of permanence (stand, etc.).
 - f. By expressions of stubbornness or of intensity of experience; (*hard fact*,—*thin* for unreal, &c).
 - g. By husk & kernel metaphors in general.
- (2) Preference of language for expressions for *unreality* (*sham*, *fraud*, *appearance*, *show*, &c.)
- (3) Negative & privative concepts & their relation to reality.

II. *In technical discussions.*

- (1) The real as the present (in time).
- (2) “ “ “ “ independent (i.e., indep. of thoughts or of {things?})
- (3) “ “ “ “ *true* (Platonic).
- (4) “ “ “ “ lasting.
- (5) “ “ “ “ worthy.
- (6) “ “ “ “ indescribably immediate.

III. *The logic of the Existential.*

- (1) Contrast of the *That* & the *What*.
- (2) Reality as no Logical Predicate.
- (3) The Relation of Ordinary Judgments to Existence.
No purely ideal or hypothetical judgments.
- (4) Unreality as thus a Logical Predicate. Logic of the class O.
- (5) Assertion of Reality as always *particular*.

- (6) The Real and the "None Other".
- (7) Individuality & Reality.
- (8) The Possibility of a Total Universe of Discourse.

Chap. I. Scope and Method of the Present Work

§.1. To Aristotle is due the conception of what he himself called "First Philosophy." The office of this branch of Philosophy, whose problem was not at all new, but whose technical sundering from other philosophical discussions Aristotle first clearly accomplished, was to discuss, in fundamental fashion, the Nature and the Fundamental Types of Reality. Owing to the position which the unfinished and fragmentary treatise upon this subject came to occupy in Aristotle's preserved works, a well-known later tradition called this branch of Philosophy by the name Metaphysics.

Whatever may be said of Aristotle's success in dealing with his problems, there can be no doubt that his general conception of the nature, the office, and the significance of his First Philosophy remains of permanent value for all time. Philosophy in general is an effort to come to a reasoned conviction concerning the most fundamental problems of life. No problem can be more fundamental than the question, What is Reality? To this question the present work is devoted. This book is therefore a critical discussion of "First Philosophy," in Aristotle's sense.

§.2. The question: What is Reality? has a two-fold significance. In one sense, it is a question about the meaning of a certain term, and about the most general implications which may prove to be involved in this meaning. In the second place, however, the question is one about the application or logical extension of the term Reality, and about the more special nature, and the classification, of the objects to which the adjective Real can property be applied. It is thus, in a metaphysical treatise, with the term Reality, very much as it might be in a legal or in an economical treatise with the terms Wealth and Property. The question: What is Wealth? might first mean: What general characters have to be possessed by any object in order that it shall deserve to be considered an example of Wealth? The same question might however also involve a classification, and then a more special discussion, of the various concrete objects to which, in the world as

it is, the conception of wealth can be rightly applied. Thus the special questions would arise:— Are air and sunlight part of the wealth of humanity? Are our mental powers cases of wealth?

Or, the question: What is Property? might be treated by considering in general what relation must exist between a possessor and a given real object in order that this object should be called the possessor's property. Or again, the same question, treated more in detail, and in the concrete, might lead to such special problems as:— Under a given system of laws, can one person be the property of another person? In an ideal social system, would land be private property? Furthermore:— Are dogs property? What property-rights has a landowner in flowing water that runs through his land? If fruit from my neighbor's trees falls on my land, is that fruit his property or mine? What is the special nature of an author's property in the products of his pen?

§.3. Just so, the question: What is Reality? first means: What is properly intended, or implied, when we call any object real? What is it, in general, to be real? From what do we distinguish the real? From the absolutely Unreal? Or from the merely Apparent? Is reality a character that can be possessed in only one degree by any object? Or can an object be partially real, and partially unreal, or can it be real in a greater or in a less degree, so that, of two real objects, one may be more or less real than another? Is reality, to use a scholastic word, an "univocal" term? Or is it inevitably "equivocal"? Or, again, is it what the scholastic terminology calls an "analogous" term, used in genuinely related, but not in absolutely identical senses, in case of its various applications? Such would be questions falling under the first meaning of the problem: What is Reality? They are all questions about the general intension of the term and the direct implications of such intension. Yet these are not all the problems that belong under this first meaning of our inquiry.

For in close relation to such most general questions would be the further, and extremely critical inquiry:— What is the relation between the Real and the Possible? Is there any sense in which there are "real possibilities"? If so, what is this sense? Was Aristotle right in defining what he called "possible being" as playing a part in the

constitution of the actual, for example, of the natural world? If he was right, what sort of reality has such a "mere possibility," so long as it is, in any way, still to be treated as if it were only possible? If, however, Aristotle was wrong and if a reality cannot at the same time be reducible to a "mere possibility," what validity have such expressions,—constantly used in various concrete sciences—such expressions as "tendency," "predisposition," "capacity," "power," "ability," "affinity," "hereditary character," "acquired character," "potential" (electric, magnetic, gravitative), "potential energy," and the like? For all these expressions, when closely scrutinized, are seen to involve, as they stand, a deliberate definition of some thing declared to be actual in terms of what is expressed as a mere possibility, and a corresponding tendency to declare that what is thus explicitly stated in terms of mere possibility is nevertheless somehow or other as actual as any object in the natural universe. If one means, in such cases, that a given object is simply real, why must one thus persistently express one's meaning in terms of mere possibility? But if, in these same instances, one is disposed to believe that certain ideas have a "merely possible" realization, why does one thus, in the concrete sciences, constantly translate such ideal truths back into the language of immediate fact, and assert that all these ideal truths express the nature of what is real? Plainly this whole relation between the terms Reality and Possibility needs to be made clearer.

The wide scope of the general questions about the meaning of the term Reality is thus already indicated, but is by no means yet exhausted. A further and ancient issue exists as to whether universal terms, such as *man* and *lion*, can directly stand for realities, or whether, on the other hand, all realities must be "individual." The solution of this question plainly involves the general meaning of the term Reality. This issue is often popularly regarded as one belonging only to mediaeval controversy, as at present superseded, and as even hopelessly antiquated. But such an assertion is simply an error. In our present views of nature, we constantly treat as realities many objects of thought such as Space, Time, and that remarkable and very modern conceptual construction now known as Energy. Whether or no

these objects are concretely individual objects, or are groups of individuated objects; whether or no, on the other hand, they have the taint of "abstract universality" about them, —all such questions, at least in case of the three concepts just mentioned, form a fair topic for inquiry. A given amount of energy, kinetic and potential, is contained, in "available" form, in a given configuration of a system of bodies. A change occurs in this system. The energy takes on new forms, gets expressed in new configurations of matter, and ere long, "dissipated," passes into forms which, to us, are "unavailable." Now at the end of this process, the natural world contains the "same amount" of energy as at the beginning. The energy has undergone "transformation," but remains "constant" in measurable quantity. Such is a familiar physical theory, the authoritative summary of a very wide range of empirical observations. We have here only to ask what conception of reality the theory seems to imply. According to such conceptions, does the energy, or do any ultimate portions of the energy amid all these "transformations," retain any "individual" identity, as the atoms are usually conceived to retain their individual identity through all their changing chemical combinations? This question, which, as a question about the meaning of certain deliberately formed and vastly significant human conceptions, is a perfectly fair one, —this question, whether answered or not, remains critical for our whole view of the relations of the universal and the individual in the world which we are now accustomed to conceive as physically real. Do we say: "Energy is not an individual, nor is it a collection of individual entities?" Do we proceed: "It is only the quantity of energy that remains constant through the transformation?" Do we add: "The same individual energy cannot be identified through the various transformations, although the same quantity can be, within the limits of the errors of observation, measured and so demonstrated?" Then in all this, we come into the presence of a very serious problem. For if we hereupon add the assertion that the physical energy thus defined is itself a reality (since it can not only be measured, but bought and sold, as it daily is, stored up and carried about in a watch or in a storage battery, employed to do the world's work), —then we seem to have committed

ourselves to the assertion that there is in the physical world a type of reality whose nature it is to have only universal, but no individual characters, to retain constancy of quantity, but to fail always of any recognizable individual identity. And then at least one form of reality exists which has not individuality, but rather universality of essential constitution. But, if so, the meaning of "real" must be adjusted accordingly. If, however, we reject this interpretation of the empirical law of the conservation of energy, as being fantastic or absurd, there seems at first to be no way open but to try to explain the law in question as a mere conceptual summary of the observed facts about the actual behavior of the supposedly real and individual beings called the particles of matter. While no one can doubt the right of anybody to undertake such an explanation of the law of the conservation of energy, there can also be no doubt that an effort so to interpret the facts about the constancy of energy has not yet been successfully and exhaustively carried out. Nor can one doubt that, in view of the transferability of constant quantities of energy from one material system to another, such an effort to reduce all physical reality to the reality of individual material particles, and of their individual properties, seems to be, at present, decidedly difficult. The general issue then remains, and it appears to be a fair question whether our modern physical conceptions do not involve at least a tendency to regard as realities objects which, upon examination, prove to be difficult to conceive as possessing any but universal characters.

A somewhat similar problem arises, although in a less impressive form, in case of all those physical theories which, in order to explain the transference of energy, or the physical properties of magnetic or other fields of force, make use of the conception of the ether. While the hypothetical ether, in so far as it is conceived to be a substantial entity, ought, one would say, to consist of individual parts, the various theories as to its constitution must perforce define rather its universal type of behavior, than the nature of its individuation, and such definitions leave unsolved the question, What is to be conceived as making one ultimate portion of ether different in nature from any other individual portion?

If we hereupon turn to the much more familiar and ancient problems as to the Space and Time themselves, in which all these physical

processes take place, the questions: Is space an individual being? Is time an individual? seem to be as puzzling as the closely related questions: Have space and time any genuine and ultimate reality at all? These questions will later engage, in one way or another, our attention, and need receive only this passing reference here. It is enough now to observe that the problem: In what sense are Space and Time real, and individuals? involves the question as to the nature and individuality of motion also. A related and profound problem as to the sense in which the laws of nature are realities,—these laws being obviously expressible only in universal terms,—shows us still another form of the same great issue.

That issue itself, as to the “reality of universals,” is thus by no means antiquated. It is as much a philosophical issue today, as it was in the time of Aristotle. Only unreflective carelessness can make light of it. Modern physical science is based upon principles, and makes use of theories, which involve the questions as to the reality of universals and of individuals, just as truly as the scholastic problems about the Trinity, the essences of things, and the angels, involved the same problem. A sufficient indication of the genuineness and present significance of this issue will appear to any reader who will undertake for a moment, not merely to presuppose and assert, with a light heart, that “Only individuals are real,” but to tell, with clearness and distinctness of definition, precisely what he just now means by an individual. Whether he be a biologist, defining the individual animal or plant, a psychologist, defining the individual Ego, a geometer, telling of what individual beings real space or real time is composed, or finally, a pure logician, stating in what sense every logical class of objects is conceived to be composed of individuals, he will soon find that, in this field of work, the readiness is *not* all, and that it is easier to boast when putting on the philosophical armor than when taking it off.

While, in the foregoing, a number of special instances of realities, or of supposed realities, have been used as illustrations, the problems thus so summarily stated have been, in their proper acceptations, problems about the general meaning, or the various distinguishable general meanings, of the term Reality, and of about the direct implications of such meaning or meanings. These problems so far as they

have been mentioned, have been in sum, these:—

(1) Problems as to whether the term Reality has properly any one meaning, as to whether it is properly used in various senses; as to whether one real object can be “more real,” or “less real” than another; and as to what terms (such as Unreality, or Appearance), are properly opposed to the term Reality.

(2) Problems as to the relations between the Real and the Possible.

(3) Problems as to whether Realities, as such, can be what are called Universals, or whether Universals, as such, can be real, and as to the nature and meaning of Individuality, in its relation to the Real.

Yet this enumeration is by no means to be viewed as exhaustive. We must leave to the fortunes of the argument the further definition of our issues.

§.4. If one supposes the foregoing most general questions and the immediately related inquiries satisfactorily answered, our Critical Study of the Nature of Reality would have received the first stage of its formulation; and would have accomplished the first division of its task. There would remain the discussion of its second group of problems. This discussion would proceed to consider the Extension of the term Reality, the principal classes of objects to which the term, taken in any or in all of its proper senses, can be applied, and the particular nature of each of these classes of objects, in so far as the general study of the meaning of the term Reality could throw any light upon such nature. The unity of the two divisions of the Theory of Reality would lie in the just indicated fact that, in the second division, the results of the most general inquiries of the first division would be applied. In other words, particular classes of objects which we can call real, would be studied, in the second division, *only* in so far as the results of the first division tended to throw significant light upon the problems here at issue.

All concrete sciences and bodies of doctrine deal with realities, or with apparent or with supposed realities, of some grade or character, inner or outer, natural or spiritual, spatial or temporal, transient or eternal. The more truly special of these inquiries have their separate scope. The general Study of Reality does not absorb or displace them; and

those amongst its own highly universal considerations which are, from its own point of view, more particular still, do not trespass upon the fields of those more narrowly special doctrines. While constantly borrowing both information and inspiration from the results and from the problems of those more concrete bodies of scientific and of controversial investigation, our Critical Study of Reality will retain, even in its own most specialized inquiries, the character of being a "First Philosophy," and not a so-called "special science." Therefore, in its second part, it will indeed apply the general definition of Reality to a study of particular classes of Real Beings; but in doing so it will not become, like physics or like history, an examination of the facts and laws of some department of the concrete world. It will not turn into a chemical, a political, or a mathematical research. For, as said, it will view particular classes of facts only in so far as the general definition of Reality naturally tends to throw light upon their nature, upon our reasons for believing in their existence, and upon our right to interpret their meaning.

How this can be the case, how a Study of Reality in the abstract, and of the general meaning or meanings of an extremely universal term, can throw light upon particular problems as to the nature of this or that group of objects, or as to our reasons for believing in them or for estimating their significance, only the progress of our discussion can show. It is enough to say here, by way of anticipation, what philosophers have very generally maintained, namely that the general meaning of the term Reality will prove to involve the thesis that the Real is, in some sense, an organic unity, so that in learning about what at first sight seems to be an abstract term, having a simply "common" meaning, you ere long discover that you have learned something about the intimate nature of a certain Whole, or System of beings, whose nature permits you, not to predict indeed the individual character or fortunes of George Washington, or of Tom Jones, or to expound the facts of physics or of chemistry, or to learn when the next earthquake will visit the site of London, but to define, with a significant reference to the central unity, many important features possessed by the members of certain noteworthy classes of real beings.

The main inquiries which will interest us in this second part of

our Study, may here be enumerated, not exhaustively, or in any finally determinate order, but for the sake of an anticipation of the interests to which we shall try to appeal.

In the foregoing mention of the problems which arise as to the general nature of Reality, we have used, as illustrations of such issues, questions suggested by space, by time, by physical conceptions, by mental realities (such as the nature of an individual Ego), and by the problem as to what sort of being mere powers, capacities, and the like, in any type of entities, may be supposed to possess. As such more special questions lead up to the general problem about the nature of reality, so in its turn, a solution of that problem, in its various fundamental forms, will pave the way for some sort of theory as to the kind, and perhaps as to the grade of reality, possessed by one type or another of the particular realities just mentioned. We shall therefore have to ask: What sort of reality is possessed by the material, and what by the mental world? Or, in other words: What is Mind? What is Matter? In dealing with the latter question, we shall consider: The problems as to the reality of Space and Time; the queries as to the existence and meaning of the laws of nature; and the issue as to what part the conception of mere potentialities,—“powers,” “capacities,” “forces,” and the like,—ought to play in the idea that we form of physical nature. In dealing with the former question, namely that as to Mind, the problems of the individual Ego, of the dependence and independence of this individual, of the nature of the “psycho-physical” relation, and of the freedom of the will, must all come under our notice. The total resulting complex of particular problems will make up a study of what may be called Philosophical Cosmology, or the Theory of Matter, of Mind, and of their Relations. But the order in which these problems of Nature and of Finite Spirit are to be treated, will depend upon considerations that cannot even be hinted at the present stage. We cannot say how we ought to take them up, or what clue we shall have to the labyrinth, until the work of our first part is accomplished. One more problem of Cosmology may here be named, namely that especially suggested by the modern doctrine of Evolution.

But the questions of Cosmology thus indicated are not the only

ones to which our attention must be devoted in our second part. There will remain another, and not less significant region of particular problems, namely those which centre about the Philosophy of Religion. To these problems will belong the questions as to the existence, the nature, and the personality of God, as to the meaning and destiny of the finite world, as to the immortality of the individual, as to the essential sort of reality which is to be attributed to the moral world, and as to the problem of good and of evil. Upon all these particular, and yet fundamental issues of human life, our Study of Reality must, if successful, throw some light.

To sum up, then, the second part of our Study of Reality will be subdivided into two main portions. Of these the first will consider the problems of Philosophical Cosmology, i.e., of Nature in general, and of Matter, Mind, and their related realities, in particular. The second portion will discuss the problems of the Philosophy of Religion.

§.5. As to the Method of our Critical Study of Reality, some preliminary statements must next be made. And here our first thesis runs thus:— The complete Theory of Reality, if properly developed, would be an Empirical Science, in the only consistent and universal sense of that term. This thesis must be emphasized at the very start, because of the manifold misunderstandings with which the whole subject of philosophical method has been beset. In two noteworthy forms have such misunderstandings been especially potent in the past. On the one side, there has existed the blunder of supposing that there could be any rational doctrine constructed independently of experience. On the other hand, there has been the equally fatal error of supposing that there could be any rational doctrine which is not, in some sense, an effort, even in using our experience, to transcend the special limitations of all *human* experience, as the latter is at present constituted. The first blunder has led to an effort to build up a constructive metaphysics by “pure thought,” and with “no empirical admixture.” The other error has led to an untenable limitation of the phrase “empirical science,” and to a failure to observe that every rational doctrine, without exception, has an aspect in respect of which it endeavors to transcend our present form of experience. As a fact,

the two aspects of every science are, first the empirical, and secondly the relatively transcendent, or (from man's narrower point of view) the metempirical aspect,— *the effort to view the connections and the wholeness of the facts of human experience as no man can ever empirically view them.* These two aspects are inseparable. Divorce them, and you have no reasonable attempt at science. Every science, then, is empirical, for it uses data of experience, and so far depends upon them. Every science is, in the human sense of the word, partly metempirical; for it is an effort to regard facts as men can never come, in any moment, empirically to behold them. Herein there is no essential difference, in principle, between the Theory of Reality, and the Theory of Electricity, or between either, and the daily researches of common sense. The true differences lie, in [the] case of each of these doctrines, in the subtlety, in the deliberateness, in the consciousness, with which the effort to use experience for the sake of transcending the very experience used, is made, is regulated, or is reflectively defended. Common sense transcends the given blindly; special science transcends the given systematically; philosophy transcends the given critically and reflectively. But all alike use the given, depend upon it, and are in so far empirical. And all alike transcend the humanly given, go beyond it, and are in so far relatively metempirical. This really obvious fact is so often neglected, misinterpreted, or misused, that a further word as to these two inseparable aspects of every rational inquiry is here, at the outset, in order.

As to the first of these two aspects, then, it has often and well been said, that only through experience do we learn the very existence of any Reality at all, inner or outer, momentary or eternal. In so far then, all thinking about Reality involves the element of experience, of immediacy, of life, of the given. Present me no facts, and I shall think of no world. Give me no data, and I shall believe in no metempirical truths. Endow me with no warmth of direct living, and I shall learn of no transcendent being.

Furthermore, when I judge, and know or believe my judgment to be true, one primary aspect of the situation is that I stand in presence of facts, and thoughtfully set, over against these data, their more or less

abstract but clearly intended counterpart, image, or ideal reconstruction. Thus, if I judge that, in the presented combination AB, B stands to the right of A, my judgment involves a mental imitation of the observed relation through a process which, in this case, can be as adequately expressed by the significant and direct imitations of the deaf-mute gesture language, as by the less direct, but none the less imitative process, involving a recall of ideas of relation—that process which is expressed in the ordinary word-language. The processes of scientific, and even of popular judgment, are indeed much modified by the conventions of traditional speech; but this primary aspect of the purpose of every judgment, viz., the aspect whereby the judgment intends to express such a combination of ideas as rightly imitates the structure of a given observed object,—this is an aspect which must never be utterly lost sight of in any enlightened search for truth. Thought, then, viewed in this aspect, undertakes imitatively to reconstruct the given.

But, as one may very properly point out, our thoughts are indeed very largely about what are, for us men, unobserved objects. This is true; and it constitutes both the other aspect of the thinking-process, and the very basis of the whole problem of Reality. But in so far as we judge concerning the unobserved object of thought, we still inevitably judge with the use of, and in part by means of, our observation of present data,— present sensory experience, or else memory-images, supposed to represent absent objects, or else still other present mental material (such as emotional data, and the like),—all of which have the element of immediacy, of direct experience about them. It is, in such cases, somewhat as when I judge about an absent man,—say some public man whom I have not seen,—by the use of a photograph of him, or by looking at a political cartoon in which, perhaps, he is grossly caricatured, or even by watching a burlesque actor pretending to present to me his bearing and his action. In so judging, I may fail to understand my man, because my representations of him are either lifeless or false. But none the less, so long as I mean to judge about the absent man, I am inevitably using the present portrayal of him, which pretends to be a likeness; and my thought about the object which I do not experience is still dependent upon an

interpretation of an experience that is present. So it is too with our most abstract judgments, concerning even the most remote objects, precisely in so far as these judgments involve a present clear sense of what we mean, and a sincerity of direct conviction. This sense and this sincerity imply, amongst other things, the immediate possession of facts of experience, whose characters we observe, and, in our passing judgments, imitatively portray, as best we can. It is true that there is all the while also implied an assurance that the data of the moment mean more than they present, stand for what is not here given, reveal the sense of what is now absent, are the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This assurance — itself, as present, a matter of experience—will concern us much hereafter. It is enough for the moment, first, to have shown that one primary relation of one who judges, to the object about which he judges, is a relation to an object given in experience, and observed as a datum; and that the judgment, in this primary aspect, is therefore, *ipso facto*, an empirical judgment. And secondly, in completing this first general remark on thinking, it suffices to have shown that even the most abstract and remote processes of what might be called secondary thinking, still, just in so far as they are accompanied by a momentary sense of sincere conviction, and by a clear insight into a meaning include and depend upon a current and living observation of the presented characters of a mental, but none the less genuinely empirical object, which, like a photograph, or an actor's play, is viewed as representing a possibly very remote object. This representative, but also presented, substitute for what is absent and unobserved, is itself portrayed in ideal form by means of the present imitative act of judgment; and however far beyond what is here presented our thought means to go, certain it is that except by and through the presented, we cannot reach what lies beyond. So that the most abstract thinking processes are not without their empirical aspect, and, in *this* sense, all thinking goes on upon an empirical basis. To suppose that this rule ever meets with exceptions, or that there is any such thing as a "pure thought," which gets results apart from observing data, is the first of the two errors of which I spoke above.

But the second traditional error about the relations of thought and experience is the obverse of this first error. It consists in supposing that there is ever any developed thinking process, in us men, which has not an intentional reference, even through the very data upon which it depends, to truth beyond these data. I have said that the primary nature of judgment involves an imitation of a presented object in terms of a more or less ideal reconstruction. But herewith I only the more emphasize the need of viewing the second aspect of the thinking process. For, even in the least reflective sort of thinking, what is the purpose of this process of thoughtful imitation? Is it not the idealizing, the relatively permanent knowing of its object? Does it not then involve, even in the most practical and homely sort of judgment, a reference to the future use of this insight, and so to coming facts which are not now data? A covert reference to the unobserved is thus latent in the very most elementary types of thinking. In developed thinking-processes, this reference becomes, as we have already seen, overt and explicit. The given is always used, but for the sake of interpreting what is not given. The presented is the basis, but the unobserved object contains, in part, the purpose and ideal of the thinker. The photograph or the cartoon is used, but the absent statesman is intended. And now, the only sense in which thought can ever significantly "transcend experience" is precisely the sense in which developed thought, in us men, is constantly, for good or for ill, with right or with wrong confidence, with true or with false outcome, transcending the given, namely the presented. And such transcending occurs whenever we speak of *any* object now unobserved. In this sense everybody, and surely every science, transcends experience, and thinks of the unseen. Herein then, philosophy does not stand apart from other truly empirical sciences.

What right we have to speak of such now unobserved objects, and of what sorts of objects, material or spiritual, physical or metaphysical, we have any right so to judge,—that is precisely one of the main problems of our Study of Reality itself. That, in thus transcending data at any time, we *may* go very far wrong, every failure in financial speculations, every blunder in natural science, every false rumor

that finds a place in the newspapers, is precisely as good an instance and warning as are the most transcendent of erroneous metaphysical phantasms, or the most disastrous of the delusions of religious fanatics. Philosophy, and in particular our First Philosophy, will use data for the sake of transcending data; and may then fall into error. But so may any enquiry. And in every such case of failure, what happens is in one sense the same. A man has in mind certain experienced data,—emotions, sense-presentations, memory-images, and similar material. In idea he sincerely portrays what he observes to be their characters and relations. So far he is within the range of direct experience, of the immediate and empirical as such. So far, clearness and truthfulness, sincere definiteness of confession and successful attainment of insight, go together, and in fact mean one and the same thing. But here one does not pause. One's thinking has another aspect. One means to portray what is not present, even by means of what *is* present. One views the photograph as standing for the statesman, and the experience of the moment as indicating what is not of the moment. But herewith one simply transcends what is here experienced and now one may indeed fall prey to error. Now one may indeed go either right or wrong. And hereupon the problems of method become pressing. Logic, deductive and inductive, promises to be of essential service; and careful reflection must go hand in hand with watchful description, with cautious hypothesis, with ever renewed verification. If one's method is bad, one may fail. If one's procedure is fortunate, one may win truth. But in both cases we do, in one great respect, essentially the same thing. And in so far, one is the fortune and the danger of physics and of metaphysics, of common sense and of speculation, in short, of all search for truth. Always we observe in order to reach what is beyond our observation. Like the triangulating surveyor amidst mountains, we employ the accessible as a basis for estimating that which, directly speaking, is inaccessible.

But to this argument, of course, one obvious and trite reply will at once be made,—a reply that I have already deliberately courted. "Yes," one will say, "our thinking always does inevitably transcend the moment, and so the immediate experience of just this one mo-

ment; but still, in the well-founded and unspeculative empirical sciences, our thinking never transcends, and never ought to transcend, what we ourselves, or normal and trustworthy other observers, either have actually experienced in the past, or may, in the course of the future verification of our hypotheses, come to experience, or at all events to test by experience. And in *this* sense, in this wider and more customary sense of the word *experience*, the truly empirical sciences never do transcend human experience taken as a recorded or controllable whole. But metaphysical inquiries, studies of what ultimate reality, and the soul, and God are, inevitably go beyond any fact that any man or that mankind taken as one whole has ever had presented, or is ever likely to be able to verify. And this is what we mean when we say that there are doctrines which transcend human experience, and doctrines that do not transcend human experience. And this is what we refer to when we say, as we do, that your plan of a Critical Study of Reality promises to transcend altogether the scope to which any empirical science is limited, and so to wander into the realm of baseless speculations, which can never be verified.”

To this objection I reply at once, in so far as, in our merely preliminary sketch, the matter concerns us at all. Hereafter, this whole ground will inevitably be reviewed with care; for hereabouts lies hidden the very central treasure of our whole First Philosophy. But, at the moment, I am only concerned with showing that the empirical sciences, commonly so called, do in their every thoughtful act, employ experience for the sake of transcending the very experience used, and do this in precisely the *same* sense as that in which, in its more fundamental researches, our Study of Reality will have to undertake the transcending of its own data.

For consider a little more closely. When I think, in studying an empirical science, that is, a science commonly so called, I have data before me; and I transcend them; for I think of what are now unobserved objects. Thus, for instance, I have to perform an experiment, and I remember what I observed when I performed previous experiments. In this connection, I expect former experiences to be repeated, in future, under sufficiently similar conditions. In brief, in all such cases, I use at least my own former experience, not now present. Here,

it is said, in my judgement, I transcend indeed the present moment's experience; but I do not yet transcend my own experience, viewed and taken as one accessible and empirical whole. So far then, whatever my dangers of error of memory, I am in the empirical realm. And on the other hand, as it is equally insisted by our supposed objector, I should not be in such an empirical realm if I were reasoning about God, or about the ultimate nature of Reality, or, in brief, about any metaphysical problem. Herein lies already a strong difference, it is therefore said, between metaphysical, and properly empirical research.

But is this so obvious? "If my memory serves me rightly," I say, "I formerly experienced this or this." And now, I add, "It is obviously, at least probable, that my memory does serve me rightly." But what makes me think it thus probable that my memory here serves me rightly? "Because," I naturally answer, "my normal memory has generally served me rightly in such cases." Yes, but how do I know this latter statement to be either true, or even probable? Surely, only by memory. I have here, then, my plain choice. Either I am now involved in an endless regress, and must use my memory of the previous goodness of my memory to prove the trustworthiness of a given case of memory, and my further memory of the trustworthiness of the dicta of a given sort of memory to prove the probable validity of the memory itself whereby the first memory was judged trustworthy;— or else, somewhere, I must come to the not yet demonstrated assertion: *There is a given sort of memory that is at least probably trustworthy*. Now this assertion, if made, will of course, like all assertions, involve, and in so far depend upon, present experience—the experience of what I mean by memory at the moment of my assertion. Equally, however, my assertion will mean to transcend the moment, and to refer to memory in general. The question is: *In so far* as my assertion about the general trustworthiness of a given sort of memory, means to transcend the moment in which it is made, upon *what* experience does it found this right to transcend the moment? Upon present experience? But the present experience is, by hypothesis, in and of this moment, and is not an experience of the supposed other moment. Upon past experience as past? But past experience, viewed merely as

past, is, by hypothesis, no longer existent for me as I now am. How can it then be directly used by me? I must then depend upon my memory of past experience? But herewith the infinite regress once more opens. For, after all, what I am trying to prove; by experience, is precisely the validity of a principle, namely of a certain type of memory, whereby I am to make accessible to myself my past experience.

In brief, the proposition: *A certain kind of memory is a trustworthy revelation of past experience*, is a proposition whose truth, or probability, can never be fully developed and verified in any momentary human experience, *either present or past*, or in any mere series of such moments. A present experience, in this man, can contain the confidence in human memory, not the direct and momentary verification of this confidence. The past experience to which, haply, the memory really refers, did not contain the then future memory of itself. In our human experience, in so far as it lives in moments of the length now characteristic of our sort of consciousness, the proposition that a given sort of memory of the actually past is trustworthy, is thus never to be actually verified, in any purely empirical way. The very beginning of any empirical study thus involves, at every step, propositions whose validity, from the point of view of myself as I now am, is incapable of any wholly empirical verification.

We heard, a moment ago, of "my experience viewed as one accessible and empirical whole." But, as a fact, for me, as I am, the assertion that my experience forms an accessible and empirical whole, or that any series of temporally sundered moments of my life can be viewed as forming such an accessible whole, is itself no purely empirical proposition. It is so far a presupposition, a "postulate," still unproved, still needing deeper reflection. No moment of my life experiences this wholeness. The parts of the series, taken singly, or in long trains, nowhere empirically present this wholeness. A series of moments of experience, sundered as present and past and future, is not, of itself, an experience of this whole series of moments, taken as a whole. If we can defend the proposition, that my experience forms in any sense an accessible whole, we must then do so, as we shall do hereafter, upon logical and reflective grounds not yet revealed. In

brief, the essential constitution of any human field of experience is itself not the object of any human experience, and propositions about that whole are, for us men, by no means purely empirical propositions. They have, *for us*, a distinctly transcendent and metempirical aspect, however a higher intelligence may view them.

But why dwell so long on the problem of memory, when a still more striking illustration of the proposition just made, awaits us so soon as we turn from the experience of any one man to that "consensus" of human experiences upon which the concrete empirical sciences are founded? It is said that these sciences confine themselves to the field of "human experience" taken in its relative wholeness, or in its interconnection. Now "human experience" here means the experience of various men. But what human experience anywhere finds directly presented to it the fact that there are various men at all, with various, but relatively sundered, fields of experience? What man finds, as a merely empirical fact, that there are in existence the minds of many men? Here, once more, is a presupposition, or so called "postulate," which needs deeper reflection. Who is there to whom the existence of mankind, as a collection of various individual minds, sundered, as to their fields of experience, from one another, is altogether a verifiable matter of direct experience? Is it God? But God belongs to metaphysics or to theology. Is it any one man? But every man is, by hypothesis, confined to his own field of experience. Is it all men, taken as a collection, who experience their own variety and their relative separation of experience? But thus one has, as in [the] case of memory, an infinite regress. For you must first find, somewhere in experience, your separate men, before you can use their collective experience as a directly presented empirical fact. The proposition, then, that there are *many men with many minds*, is not, for any human experience, a merely empirical proposition. Yet take away from us this proposition, and what becomes of that "consensus of the competent observers," upon which the concrete empirical sciences constantly depend? When we speak of this "consensus," then, we refer to an ideal type of higher, or relatively superhuman experience, which no man of us directly possesses.

There is then, for us men as we are, no "purely empirical" science

whatever, any more than there is any "pure thought." On the other hand, all science is empirical, in so far as it begins in data, and uses data, even in the very effort to transcend them. The question, In what sense and by what right can we ever transcend the data of our actual and essentially momentary human experience? is a question that is of direct concern to philosophy, but that is implied in every attempt at empirical science, however special. In brief, all our strivings towards science involve what, for us men, has a metempirical aspect, just because every science, if successful, would be a view of the facts of human experience in a light in which the present form of our consciousness forbids us directly to view them. Science is thus prediction or definition of the contents of a superhuman experience,—the attempt to pass, in idea, from our present to some higher type of conscious life. The ideal transition to such higher grades of experience involves what, for us, are, *ipso facto*, relatively metempirical considerations.

So much then, for the thesis that our Study of Reality must attempt to be, like any effort at a truly empirical science, at once dependent upon the data of present consciousness, and disposed to transcend them.

§.6. Our next statement as to this problem of method must be negative. It has been only too customary for those who recognize the relatively metempirical aspect inseparable from all human use of experience, to explain this aspect of our knowledge as follows: Human thinking, it is asserted, depends upon, and constantly employs, a certain collection of self-evident, primitive and irreducible First Principles. These give us an "immediate and indubitable" warrant for relatively metempirical assertions about Reality, and about its constitution. These supposed first principles have been variously called, "Fundamental Postulates," "Intuitions," "Innate Assurances," and the like. Their characters are, according to this theory, that they are "immediate" as to their certainty, determinate as to their meaning, unquestionable as to their validity, and irreducible to simpler principles, so that they are primitive possessions of our intellect. It is thus that they are said to authorize those various concrete acts of intelligence, wherein we transcend, at any time, the immediately present empirical data. The history of these "fundamental truths," "immediately evi-

dent first principles," "intuitions," and "ultimate postulates," forms a familiar, but an unhappy section of the annals of human thought.

Our negative thesis is: There are no determinate and immediate "intuitions" or fundamental and immediate "*a priori* judgments" either innate or acquired, which provide us with any *direct* means of knowing that a given manner of transcending the presented data of experience is certain to lead to truth. Or briefly: There is no *merely* immediate knowledge of any rational truth.

The proof of this thesis results from a reflection upon the meaning of any pretended "intuition" of the sort here presupposed. Of such "intuitions," some of the most familiar are such principles as that: "Our experience needs and implies an external cause, which determines this experience, and which is external thereto;" "The real world is subject to a law of universal causation;" "Space is a real and infinite whole." It does not here concern us to inquire whether these principles, or similar ones, are objectively true or not. That belongs later. What we here assert is that, whether true or false, no such principle is an *immediately* certain source of insight concerning what transcends presented experience.

The word Immediate needs, in this connection, a general explanation.

As used by Aristotle (*Anal. Post.*, I, 2.), the adjective ἀμεσος is employed to characterize the indemonstrable first principles upon which, as the philosopher there and elsewhere asserts, any proof must ultimately rest. The term *immediate* was thus indeed first explicitly applied to supposed knowledge of the sort that we are now calling in question, namely to a merely direct or indemonstrable knowledge of "first principles," although Aristotle's form of the theory of these first principles is not identical with forms later current. More recent philosophical usage, especially since Hegel, has tended to make our term somewhat ambiguous. Hence the need of some distinctions.

I shall distinguish three principal meanings of the word *immediate*. I shall take them up in my own order, reserving until the third place a meaning which somewhat generalizes Aristotle's original connotation of the term.

In the sense which I shall set first, the word *immediate*, applied

either to objects of knowledge, or to knowledge itself, refers to a certain *aspect* of present experience, in its contrast with facts not now observed. What this shade of color now is, or what this pain, I am said to know immediately, just in so far as I now see the color, or feel the pain. But what the pyramids of Egypt are, I do not know immediately, but only by means of pictures, descriptions, etc. And what I thus know (so far as I know it at all), only *by means of* given images, ideal representatives, and the like, is said to be known *mediately*. In this sense, knowledge is immediate in so far as its object is not reached by means of any intermediate idea, substitute, or representation, but stands, without such mediation, directly before and in consciousness. For the reasons indicated above, none of our rational human knowing is, in this sense, ever *purely* immediate; and, on the other hand, there is always an immediate aspect, element, constituent, in every such rational knowledge. For, whenever we rationally think, we refer in some way to the now unobserved world of fact. This is one respect only *mediately* known, viz., known through its present representation, image, or idea. On the other hand, whenever we know, there are data immediately present—sensory data, and the given contents of our ideas, images, etc., themselves. Except through the immediate, there is no mediation of the unobserved. And this must, for the moment suffice as to our first meaning of the word immediate.

In a second sense, knowledge is said to be immediate or mediate; and this is a sense which again applies both to the nature of our knowledge of the observed or presented contents, and to the nature of our knowledge of the unobserved. An object of knowledge, considered without express and reflective reference to its presence in this moment's experience, and without reference to its representative idea, may, at any time be viewed, in part, without regard to its relations to other objects. Such relations it indeed always has, and they can never be wholly ignored. But the object may be abstractly *taken as* to be viewed "in itself." Or again, it may be explicitly regarded as in relation to another object. In so far as an object can be viewed, and is viewed, "in itself," i.e., as far as possible without regard to its relations to other objects, the object is known in its *immediacy*, and the knowl-

edge of it is, in this second sense, *immediate*. Thus, my knowledge of my pen is relatively immediate, in so far as I ignore all facts except my presented or represented pen, and do not take account of the fact that it is mine, or that my hand grasps it, or that it contains ink. On the other hand, if I take account of these relations, I view my pen mediately, that is, I know it by means of, and in the light of, its relation to me, its position in my hand, its value as an ink-holder, and the rest. I view Peter or Paul with relative immediacy, when I regard him as *this man*. I view him rather in mediate fashion, when I consider him as a citizen, an official, an artisan, or in some such light. With relative immediacy the geometer views the line, when he considers it as a separable object, having one dimension. With explicit mediation he knows it when he views it as a boundary of a surface, and so defines it by means of its relation, to this surface.

In this sense, as in the former, no knowledge can be purely immediate. All contents are partly known by us as in relation. But as, in the former case, we can dwell upon the presented, and not upon the representative aspect of the contents of any moment, so, in the present case, we can note, or can relatively and partially ignore, the relationships in which given objects stand to one another.

Since the representative relation, whereby the presented immediacy is used as a means of knowing what is not immediately observed, is indeed a relation, and since this relation is ignored in so far as the presented contents are viewed in their immediately present character, our first meaning of the distinction between immediate and mediate knowledge can always be regarded as one form of the second meaning, so long as one views the representative relation merely as a relation. But in fact, since, for various reasons, the representative relation, the relation of an idea to its intended object, has unique characters, and is different from all other relations, in a way later to be considered, it is well not to confound our first and our second meanings of the terms mediate and immediate knowledge, for fear lest we ignore this uniqueness of the representative character. In brief then, the content *A* is immediately known, in the first sense, when it is viewed only as it is presented. It is, in the same sense,

mediately known, when it is an object not presented, but is viewed through its representative idea *a*. In the second sense, the object *A*, whether presented content or represented object, is immediately known in so far as it is regarded apart from its relations to other objects, *B* and *C*. It is mediately known, in so far as it is viewed through and by means of these its relations. And, in speaking of such relations, we expressly refer, in case of our second meaning, to relations other than the unique representative relation. In the second sense, presentations, which are objects or contents of a character that is, in the first sense immediate, may still be known either mediately or immediately. For the presented line, at the edge of the surface before me, is immediately observed, in the first sense, just so far as it is presented. But in the second sense of our terms, it may still be viewed even in its very empirical presence either mediately or immediately, since it may be regarded either as the edge of this surface, or, by abstraction, as in itself simply a line. Precisely so, an object that is, in the first sense, an object mediately known, that is known through a representative idea, as for instance Socrates is known to us all, may still be viewed with relative immediacy, as just *that man*, or with explicit mediation, as the son of Sophroniskus, or as the master of Plato.

In both of these important and intimately related senses, both the objects of knowledge, and our knowledge itself, are to be viewed as relatively mediate or immediate, but are always both at once, and are never wholly either. The distinctions in question are by metonymy applied both to the knowledge itself, and to its object.

So far, we may ask, Are there any of the so called "intuitions," such as the propositions before mentioned, which deserve to be regarded as expressive of knowledge that is purely immediate in either of these two senses? The answer is brief and easy. The name "intuitions" has been used by a sometime favorite, but singular misuse of the original sense of the word as a name for principles relating to the now unobserved, to the here unrepresented facts of the world. And surely, in this moment, I do not observe the universality of the principle of Causation, in its application to all the facts of the real Universe. Surely, in this moment, no realities external to this moment are, in our first sense

of the word *immediate*, immediately presented. Hence the “intuitions,” which relate to the unobserved, or mediately known objects, are themselves not matters of purely immediate knowledge in our first sense. Moreover, the “intuitions” are propositions about the relationships of the world, and about objects viewed as in these relationships. Hence they are not cases of purely immediate knowledge in our second sense. For the “intuitions” are means of judging about the relation, and frequently not about the merely representative relation, between observed and unobserved contents, and, as in case of Causation, their topics are often extremely complex systems or schemes, regarding the relational constitution of the whole world.

There remains the third sense, in which knowledge is sometimes said to be mediate or immediate. I hear a statement, and perhaps I hesitate. I require some further *means* to make me accept this statement. It does not yet appeal to me. I must wait until the proper mediation leads me to assent. Perhaps the statement is the assertion of a business man that “Times are improving,” or that the latest gold discoveries are “very promising.” But, on the other hand, perhaps I myself am an optimist, or have caught the gold fever of the moment. In that case, it may chance that, on hearing these aforesaid statements I accept them at once, or *immediately*, i.e., without waiting, without needing further means to convince me, without any mediating interval of doubt and investigation. In this sense, knowledge, or supposed knowledge, is said to be *immediate*, when no interval, no hesitation, no intervening process of slow acquisition of insight, takes place, between the moment when the proposition expressing the supposed knowledge is comprehended, and the moment when the assent of the hearer follows. On the other hand, mediate knowledge is such that its acquisition is preceded by processes through which conviction is acquired.

If conviction, in this sense, is mediately acquired, it may still be acquired through processes of a mainly psychological interest, or it may be acquired through explicitly logical processes of reasoning. In the first case, I am gradually “won over,” “persuaded,” “compelled to give in my assent.” I in time “acquire faith,” I am led to “surrender myself,” “to be converted,” to abandon my “stubbornness.” I

yield to persistent suggestion, as when an endlessly repeated advertisement gradually drives one who is at first an indifferent reader, to become a purchaser, and perhaps an advocate, of an advertised article. In contrast with such psychologically interesting processes of mediation, my immediate convictions are often got "at once," but in a fashion that is of no less concern for the psychologist. I "need no persuasion." I "feel sure," from the start. I know that it "must be so," as a youth, sometimes, on seeing a certain woman, "knows at once" that she is his fate, and that she is sure to love him in return for this his love at first sight. This immediate conviction irresistibly seizes upon him, (without any previous reasoning process or persuasive appeal), and it remains in him until "fancy dies in the cradle where it lies," or until the woman in question chances to take the trouble to express her mind, and to reject him. There is nothing which cannot, in this sense, become "immediately certain" to somebody. Mothers are often immediately certain of the excellence of their most unworthy children, fanatics of the wildest of their superstitions, gamblers of the success of their most hopeless ventures. Immediate assurances of this sort are familiar facts of human nature. And some of them are indeed very useful facts. We should ill live without some such immediate faith in something or other in life. Only the one thing you cannot found upon *this* sort of immediate assurance is a philosophy. For it chances that philosophy arises from a certain "wonder" which permits the philosopher to accept even the immediate only after he has attempted a careful mediation. That, to be sure, there are philosophical theories which deliberately propose a *return* to a certain sort of immediate assurance, of the present, as well as of our two former types, we shall hereafter see. But no philosophy can be based upon such assurances. For to return to faith or to feeling is not to presuppose the truth of faith or of feeling in advance of such deliberate and mediated return. Philosophy is essentially a reflection upon life, and so upon the faiths of life.

But where assurance is not reached "at once," it may be preceded by an explicitly logical process. And here, to be sure, appears a consideration which has been used, ever since Aristotle's discussion of the

present topic, to make plausible the assertion that, since there must be certain “bases of proof,” which cannot themselves be proved, in order that any logically mediating process should determine conviction, therefore all such logical mediation must presuppose a group of first principles, themselves “at once” or immediately certain, and, in the present instance, not certain because of any appeal to mere faith, or to mere feeling, but by virtue of the “constitution of the human reason.”

Here at length, after eliminating other senses in which knowledge might be said to be immediate, we reach the region where the traditional theory of immediate assurance, as the supposed rational basis of all reasoning, has always made its most serious stand. It is noteworthy that Aristotle himself made this stand most definitely in case of one principle only, namely the Principle of Contradiction. His well-known general statement of the necessity of some such indemonstrable first principles, runs (*Met.* IV, 4, p. 1006a):² “It is inexpertness not to know of what truths to seek a demonstration, and of what not to seek a demonstration. For that there should be a proof for absolutely everything, is impossible. For then one would proceed to infinity, and even then still reach no demonstration.” But the one instance of a first principle upon which Aristotle insists, is hereupon the aforesaid principle of contradiction. And the philosopher never made an attempt to furnish a list of all the first principles of use in the demonstrative sciences, or even in philosophy.³

Of the special case of the principle of contradiction, a principle highly important for the method of Philosophy, I shall speak in the next paragraph. For the present it will suffice to consider, in general, this demand that ἀμεσῶ should be discovered, and made the basis of all actual proof, in case of every science that uses demonstrations.

The history of the search for the immediately certain “first principles,” is, I said, an unhappy chapter in the annals of human thought. It is so, first, because there has been so wide a divergence as to what these first principles are. Divergence of opinion is itself a familiar, and by no means an unhealthy incident in philosophy, for reasons which I have discussed at length elsewhere.⁴ But in case of the supposed immediately evident first and fundamental principles, the divergence is distinctly un-

fortunate, because, by definition, they are to be principles concerning which, if once their terms are but understood, divergence is impossible. And the actual divergence as to the various principles proposed is too extensive to be explained upon the basis of a mere misunderstanding of their terms. Very customary, in the history of this controversy, is a certain well-known situation:— a given philosopher declares a particular principle to be axiomatic, to be fundamental, to be so evident that it cannot be demonstrated. Another thinker denies this axiomatic character of the proposed principle, and either, accepting its actual truth, proposes to demonstrate this truth, or, rejecting it, proposes to substitute for it some other immediately certain principle. The first thinker, or his disciple, responds to the attack, responds by frequently elaborate argument, and this undertakes to demonstrate that the originally proposed principle is indemonstrable, or to prove that it is so clear that it cannot be proved. To be sure, in the argument, the ground usually shifts, and the supposed axioms all get new ones substituted for them; but every such case is a scandal for the partisans of the purely immediate assurances.

Unhappy this history is in another sense. As John Stuart Mill well points out, the temptation to confound the “primal dictates of reason” with any form of authority that happens to be current, with any national prejudice, theological bias, or personal faith that chances to appeal to a given thinker, or group of thinkers, is humanly speaking irresistible. What the partisan of the “primal convictions” truly needs, is some criterion for distinguishing them from the mere faith of our former type of cases, where a man, from purely psychological motives, believes “at once.” Such a criterion, however, if given, would mediate the primal principles; one would have to apply it before believing them. This would ruin their immediacy. By the “constitution of the human reason,” one who does not take the trouble to look for such criteria usually means: “the way in which the people of my sect or of my clique are accustomed to think,” and the appeal to “intuition” is in general an effort to protect a proposed principle against troublesome criticism from unsympathetic strangers, who may be awed by the dignified pretensions of my sect, even though they do not belong to it, and do not immediately behold, as I do, its mysteries.

An "intuition" is thus a proposition not plain to the profane.

Whatever may be said of the history of the doctrine now in question; its general character is not hard to define, after the steps that we have now taken. I am to "believe at once" the ἀμεσα. Otherwise, it is said, the whole process of logical proof would be impossible, because, without unimmediated first principles, the series of syllogisms whereby I prove my actual convictions would have to be endless, and would even then be a chain hanging upon nothing. But this statement presupposes that rational truth is won, by us men, *either* through purely immediate insight, *or* by syllogistic proof. The exhaustiveness of this disjunction I deny. Rational truth may be won, as we shall later see, by a fitting combination of Experience and Reflection. And Reflection is identical neither with syllogistic proof nor with immediate insight. It is a mediate winning of a sense of the deeper meaning and truth of our assertions.

But, for the present, it is enough to point out that, however rational truth is actually to be acquired, there must be *some* third alternative, besides immediate assurance and syllogistic proof. For when one says: "Such and such a principle is true," and is asked why, and when he replies that it cannot be proved, but is "fundamental," being "immediately evident" and a "primal verity," the question can always arise: "How, for one thing, do you know that it is "primal," or "fundamental"?" For the assertion of the truth is not yet the assertion that this truth is fundamental. The immediate assurance itself, being merely the insight that "comes at once," is not yet the assurance that this assurance has no deeper basis. As a fact, the discussions, so prominent in the history of thought—the discussions about what the real axioms are, and about how to state them—are a constant indication of how hard it is to be sure that beneath our present assurances there are no grounds still deeper, upon which these assurances are based. In any case, however, the assertion *A is B*, is not logically the same as the assertion: "*That A is B, is indemonstrable,*" or, "*is an ἀμεσωνι.*" After I have found my fundamental assurance, I am supposed to see that the first of the above assertions is true; but the question how it is known to be a *fundamental* assurance, is still fair, and therefore may yet be

uncertain as to the second of the above propositions. Or if I am not uncertain as to this second matter, one can still ask me why I am not.

Furthermore, it is always fair to ask, in the same connection, How is the "immediately evident" character of your assertion, its unearned, its unspeakable certainty, distinguished from the characters common to those forms of mere faith by which we sometimes believe "at once," whatever our friends or our spiritual advisors, or our passing moods and passions, chance to suggest to us? What is the criterion of rational, as distinct from merely emotional immediacy of assurance, in our third and present sense of the word immediate? How and why is the "constitution of the reason" known to us as something more indubitably trustworthy than is the constitution of our superstitions, or than is the powerful persuasiveness of our moods?

Hereupon, as was said above, a Criterion of the valid sort of immediacy is required. Is this criterion to be made itself a matter of syllogistic proof? Then once more the infinite regress is upon us. Is the criterion to be itself an immediate or primary conviction? Then we have the incongruity that one primary conviction appears as mediating our assurance regarding the other primary convictions. We have the further incongruity, that a new kind of infinite regress appears to open itself before us. For our question will recur: How is the immediate assurance as to the truth of our criterion to be again distinguished from a mere faith? In brief, unless there is some escape from this immediacy, we are yet in our sins, and have not won the looked for finality.

Such considerations, abstractly stated, may appear hopelessly sceptical. They are not so, as will hereafter be shown. They are simply confessions of the inevitable spirit of thoroughgoing inquiry, which is the life of philosophy. But whoever finds these sayings hard must remember that in precisely this spirit every man criticizes such pretended "first principles" as, advanced by another man, and asserted to be fundamental, do not appeal to his own direct "sentiment of rationality." Unless such a process of criticism is justifiable, no man can well ask a hearing when he objects to any dogmatic system that oppresses humanity under the belief, and perhaps the quite sincere belief, that it is an appeal to the "constitution of reason." That sin-

cere assurances of this sort, appearing to be fundamental, have been discovered, after reflection, even by some of their own former followers, to be errors, and mischievous, cannot be doubted by one who accepts as true the history of thought. But if this is possible, no one can rest in mere immediacy of conviction, and still attain a truly philosophical spirit. So much then for the purely immediate certainty, and for the “fundamental convictions,” in general. Nothing of rational value can be immediately evident to us men.

§.7. Aristotle, however, laid especial stress, as has been said, upon one “fundamental principle” only, viz., the Principle of Contradiction. But here, at all events, as one may indeed very plausibly assert, we seem to have, both an indispensable principle of rational method, and a true ἀμεσον, a proposition forming the basis of proof, itself “immediately certain,” and an excellent representative of the “constitution of the human reason.” As a fact, there will be no doubt, in the end, that the principle of contradiction, at all events in its concrete applications, is an absolutely indispensable instrument for a rational method, and is to be of constant service in any study of Reality. But it is also true that, as Aristotle’s own lengthy discussion with Protagoreans, and the rest of the dialectical horde, in the third book of the *Metaphysics*, well shows, the principle of contradiction, far from being an instance in favor of the partisans of the “immediately certain” principles as the sole and sufficient basis of knowledge, is one of the best possible instances against their view. What one clearly sees only at the end of a long discussion is not a “purely immediate primary conviction.” In this connection, I shall assert three theses:—

1. Whatever Aristotle himself says, regarding the immediacy of the principle of contradiction, his own way of dealing with his Protagorean, and other opponents, in discussing the principle, is a sufficient indication of the fact that he himself does not really find it to be a purely immediate conviction, just as he does not find it to be directly demonstrable syllogistically. He actually mediates our deeper assurance of the principle, by means of a very exemplary third sort of attitude towards its truth. This is an attitude of Reflection, and involves an indirect proof of what is indeed indemonstrable directly.

2. As a fact, the principle of contradiction, while true and certain, is neither a purely immediate truth, nor a purely immediate certainty. For it is to be won only by Reflection upon what we do when we think.

3. As a fact, furthermore, the principle of contradiction becomes a basis for discovering truth not, in general, because it forms any useful premise in our syllogisms, for it is seldom a premise, and almost never practically a valuable premise. It is of use, in combination with experience, as a guiding principle of method. As such a principle, it counsels us: Before accepting an assertion, look for contradictions. In pursuing an inquiry, develop the contradictions latent in simpler thoughts, as a means of reaching, by the aid always of renewed appeals to experience, more synthetic views, that can solve the contradictions. In this form, i.e., both as a regulative and as a heuristic principle of method, our principle was concretely used by Socrates, and very largely by Plato, and has been centrally significant ever since, as, for example, in [the] case of Kant's Antinomies.

Let us take up our theses in their order.

1. In the third book of the metaphysics, Aristotle faces those who attempt to deny the principle of contradiction. His argument runs very much as follows:⁵— There must be some *most* certain first principle. This principle is: "That it is impossible at once to assert and to deny the same predicate of the same subject, viewed in the same respect." Verbal objections, he remarks, may be made to this formulation, but let them pass. One can ward them off by adding further qualifications to the foregoing, if necessary. The matter reduces itself to this, at last, that you cannot hold, at once, *that the same thing is and is not* (ἀδύνατον γὰρ ὀντισοῦν τὰυτόν ὑπολαμβάνειν εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι). Some think that Herakleitos said this, viz., that the same can be and not be. But it isn't necessary to hold all that one says. Yet there are indeed those who both *say* that the principle is not always true, and declare that they *hold* as much. And there are those who want to have the principle proved. But (as Aristotle hereupon explains, in the passage cited before), this last is an unfair demand. For one can't prove everything. But one can indeed, he continues, furnish an indirect refutation of the opponents of our prin-

ciple (ἔστι δ' ἀποδειξαι ἐλεγκτικῶς καὶ περὶ τούτου οὐκ ἀδύνατον), *if only the opponent himself asserts something*. If he asserts nothing, of course you can't refute him, any more than if he were a speechless "plant." A positive proof of the principle of contradiction would thus indeed involve a begging of the question; but if the opponent uses our own principle so soon as he speaks, he does the refuting for us, and *this* sort of Elenchus we can indeed offer in place of proof. One does not then, in such a case, demand that the opponent himself first expressly assert our principle, by affirming that something is, or is not. That would indeed be begging the question. But one demands that he should *signify* something definite, to himself and to another (τό σημαίνειν γέ τι καὶ αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλῳ). This he must do if he says anything. If he says nothing, (not even to himself), then he means nothing. But if he means and says anything, he has concretely admitted our principle in an individual case. For he is now definitely committed to a meaning, and so (as Aristotle here implies) he rejects the opposite of that meaning and thus, employing our principle, he admits the principle. Here (so the philosopher in effect continues) it is not we who prove the principle, but it is the opponent who proves it; for, while overthrowing all meaning, he still maintains his own meaning (ἀναίρων γὰρ λόγον ὑπομένει λόγον).

Upon this basis, Aristotle proceeds to a detailed discussion of these various forms and consequences of the denial of the principle of contradiction which seem to him, in view of the then current dialectical discussions, interesting. To us this part of the argument soon becomes tedious enough, except in view of the historical interest which attaches to some of the reported controversies. But the general method of Aristotle's treatment of this fundamental truth is thus already evident. We need follow him here no further.

Our present question, however, runs:— Is the principle of contradiction thus exhibited as a purely immediate dictum, founded directly in the constitution of the human intellect, and so absolutely indemonstrable? The answer is plain. Aristotle holds a certain explanation and illustration of the principle to be at least didactically necessary. He also thinks an Elenchus, addressed to its opponents, to be worthy of a state-

ment. This indicates, surely, a certain lack of immediacy about that truly philosophical insight into the principle which Aristotle desires his learners to obtain. This genuine insight into the meaning of the principle needs mediation. And how is this mediation, in default of direct proof, to be obtained? Answer: By indirect proof? A deeper comprehension of the meaning and truth of this first and most certain of the principles, is mediated through the very opponents of the principle. One sees better the sense and the verity of this very first of verities, *after* one has attempted to deny it, and has seen that, in denying, one affirms it. The case is instructive for philosophical method in general. If this sort of mediation of the supposably immediate is wholly superfluous, why does Aristotle indulge in it so lengthily? If it throws any deeper light on this primal truth, then that truth does not shine, with the fullest lustre by its own immediate light alone. Or is the sole purpose of Aristotle's Elenchus the effort to match the dialecticians of his time at their own game of useless disputation?

As a fact, his Elenchus is not merely disputatious. It is a simple, but excellent instance of the truly reflective process of mediation, which accepts nothing merely "at once." Our own process will hereafter depend upon imitating just the present device. When I reflect, I try to observe the meaning of an assertion. How can I better come to observe the meaning of a given assertion than by contrasting it with its own supposed denial? The observation of any contrast is a case of mediate knowledge in the second of the two senses of the foregoing paragraph. Moreover, since I have to wait for the opposing assertion,—I have to consider the antithesis,—before I can contrast the meaning of the assertion first in question with this opposing meaning, my fuller insight into the meaning, and, in this case, into the truth, of the original thesis, is not obtained "at once," but is gained by waiting for and weighing the antithesis. So that the knowledge which I get as to the thesis is thus mediate in the third of the senses of the foregoing paragraph. In the case before us, when I contrast thesis and antithesis, I see that the very attempt to assert the antithesis implies the thesis. This is an extremely significant insight. We shall hereafter consider several cases of a similar sort. They will

serve, in each new instance, to define the principle with which we are then dealing in a way which will never be immediate, but which will be indeed decisive of the most central issues of philosophy. The principle of contradiction, as Aristotle well declares, is proved by its opponent. So, as we shall hereafter see, are all the most fundamental truths of philosophy. This is not direct proof; but it is none the less proof. And since it depends upon an attentive comparison of thesis and antithesis, it is a reflective proof. And it is not a merely immediate insight. There are then fundamental truths, but they are not merely immediate.

Yet how important such reflective comparison of thesis and antithesis will prove in other cases, we shall have experience in the course of our Study of Reality. It is this importance which alone justifies the present preliminary discussion of this so drily dialectical an issue. And herewith enough as to the *first* of our three present theses, regarding the supposed immediacy of the principle of contradiction.

2. But to proceed to the *second* of our theses. Apart from the historical accidents of Aristotle's discussion, it easily becomes plain, upon reflection, that our assurance of the truth of any statement of the principle of contradiction depends, not upon a merely direct assurance, but upon a consideration of what we do when we think. And this consideration has its difficulties.

State the principle of contradiction in the abstract, and one finds difficulty in stating it at once universally and accurately. Apply it in the concrete, and this or that instance of its validity is readily and rationally clear. Clear, however, even these special instances themselves are, not with pure immediacy, but by virtue of our sense of the contrast between those two opposing meanings that, in any case of contradiction, clash. "This candidate will be elected President;" "this candidate will *not* be elected President." In any presidential year, referring to a particular candidate, the thesis and antithesis thus opposed appear as plain instances of contradiction. But even here we first grasp the opposed meanings, and then mediately see their contradiction, and at all events, it is in such concrete cases that we first meet with our principle; and to such cases we must return in mind

whenever we want to realize what contradiction is.

The assurance that only one of these two assertions can be true, and that one of them must be true is, in order not only of time, but of rational clearness, prior to any assertion of the general principle of contradiction. If we pass from such clearer instances of contradiction, to an effort to assert the general principle itself, how manifold are the considerations of which we have to take account! How carefully mediated must be our insight into what can be asserted in universal form, as to the principle of contradiction itself!

For, first, before we can even fully comprehend the principle, we have to make clear to ourselves the logically well-known distinction between contradictory statements, and statements otherwise opposed. To observe that two statements, *P* and *Q*, disagree, and cannot at once be true, is one thing. To observe that the opposition is such that one of the two must be true, or that *tertium non datur*, is, in a concrete case of contradiction, a decidedly mediate process. Yet the result of this mediation, if generally expressed as a separate principle, that of excluded middle, is an essential preliminary to a real comprehension of contradiction. This aspect of logical opposition renders the universal statement of our principle a matter for very careful reflection. The two statements: '*A is B*,' and '*A is not B*,' appear, at first sight, to be plainly contradictions, even in this most general form of the expression of their terms. But if *A* and *B* are the names of classes of objects, the well-known ambiguity arises which the logician has to meet by distinguishing universal propositions from others, by defining whether the negative particle belongs with the copula or with the logical predicate, and by various other reflections which no tyro in Logic finds "immediately" clear. And one's difficulties are thus only begun.

For there is the necessity, in any general statement about the nature of contradiction, for a discussion of the various possible "respects," in which which subject and predicate can be viewed. Only gradually rationalized experience can tell us what is here meant. The two propositions above, as to the presidential candidate, are contradictory only if used of the same candidate with reference both to a given candidacy and to an individual canvass. Cleveland, defeated for the presidency in 1888, was elected in 1892; and one would have had in his case, to

understand the two propositions with the same reference, quite unambiguously defined, in order to ensure their contradictory character. But what constitutes ambiguity? "We were not wrong," the defeated partisans of any year may say. "He is defeated this time, but he will be elected next time." Here is a trite enough consideration; yet Aristotle, in referring to the "qualifications needed to meet merely verbal objections," in the definition of the nature of contradiction in general, found it impracticable to express his immediately obvious principle in such wise as to exhaust these necessary mediations as to what constitutes ambiguity and sameness of reference. And who will easily undertake to exhaust them, in view of the constantly renewed considerations which lead us all to revise our reflections upon what is or is not "consistently possible" in a given class of objects.

The high degree of mediation which the definition of the truly contradictory involves, is in fact well indicated by the whole history of the efforts to make a metaphysical use of the principle of contradiction. "If contradictory statements cannot both be true, then things whose nature would involve a contradiction cannot be real." This is a frequent application of the principle of contradiction to the Theory of Reality. We ourselves shall find such application of central importance. But what is it that this assertion renders immediately obvious? "If I say that *A is B*, then I must not in the same respect assert that *A is not B*." Hereby I am to judge of the nature of *A*, which must be a nature "consistent with itself." But what does this imply about *A*? The "same" orange is sweet and round and orange-colored. Yet sweetness is not roundness, nor roundness color. One avoids the contradiction, of course, by distinguishing the "respect." "In so far forth as it is sweet, the orange is not colored." Yes, but is this the whole story? Does this explain the whole puzzle? For the orange is not merely a complex of separate qualities. As orange, as one, as the same, it is still qualified by these varieties and through their very diversity its oneness is still to be fully kept. They are its one very nature, at least as this nature, appearing to sense, gets interpreted by ordinary thinking. For this orange is not *first* an orange, one and simple, and *then* externally diversified by having the "respects" added

to its oneness. It is one *in* all this manifoldness. The real trouble lies then in saying how its oneness can be thus diversified, without being lost as oneness, or without being regarded as a mere collective oneness. For it is in so far the one orange as one, and in respect of its oneness, that it is at once round and not-round (namely sweet). Of course, here "must be," here "shall be," here "is" is no contradiction, if the one orange is real as it appears to be. But one fails to see yet just how the one and the many are identified.

The problem is old, and wearisome, to most, in its triteness and its subtlety. But it is a problem. It led long ago to the more dialectical forms of the Eleatic assertion of the absolute oneness of Being. It has led, in recent thought, to the Herbartian theory of the absolute simplicity of every individual Real, and of the absolute multiplicity of the complex of separate Reals that, for Herbart, in order to save the principle of contradiction, must compose the world. It has led to the Hegelian thesis of the universal presence of contradiction in the finite world. Who that knows the history of the metaphysical application of the principle of contradiction can doubt that the true meaning of this principle becomes essentially a matter of mediate and of extremely difficult reflection, just as soon as one attempts to give the principle any universal expression or application? So then it is the single case of contradiction, rather than the general principle that he's nearer to the "immediately evident" region, if there is one.

Shall one say: "The principle itself is a primal verity, and immediately certain; but what it means, and how accurately to state it, is a matter of doubt and of elaborate mediation?" Then one is reminded of that reported instance of "immediate evidence," which should be borne in mind, as an especially instructive one, by every partisan of the "pure" and unmediated forms of insight. There was once, it appears, according to the story in question, a learned man who constantly thought only in Latin and in Greek. But, as it chanced, this particular scholar used to have to consult the Latin and Greek dictionaries to discover what it was that he was thinking, and about what! His thoughts, of course, were "immediately evident" to him, but still, like the rest of us, he was fond of mediation.

If any further instances of this sort of difficulty are needed, let one consider a few other discussions of particular cases of the supposed *contradictio in adjecto*. What characters can be, without contradiction conjoined in the same object? It is not a contradiction for the same orange to be sweet and round, or for the same object of taste to be sweet and sour. Is it then a contradiction to conceive of the same object as, to our mere senses, both hot and cold? (Here recent psychological studies of sense-nerves suggest their own solution.) The sensations of heat and cold are independent qualities, not contradictions. Is there truly logical repugnance between calling the same part of a given surface, lighted in a certain way, both black and white? (Again psychological experiment tends to modify popular judgment.) If this be settled would there be any logical contradiction in *hot ice*? Or in an object that appeared to sense as at once round and square? (And does not what is still called one and the same object appear, in ordinary binocular vision, as of somewhat different shapes to our two eyes? What if our type of consciousness clearly distinguished (as it does not) the two fields of vision, while still referring them to one object? What if the two fields of vision were then such as to present varieties of shape identical with what now constitute round and square? Would the principle of contradiction then suffer?) Cannot the same object, without contradiction, be said to appear to our sight, or even to *be both* in motion and at rest at the same time? Here I need not enumerate the known cases. Where then lies the dividing line between physical and psychological repugnance, and logical contradiction, when we apply the latter to the definition of an object?⁶ It is not fair to say, as I hold, that *no* metaphysical application of the principle of the contradiction is possible, owing to such difficulties. It is true, however, as Sigwart points out, that Aristotle's form of the principle indicates how this assertion as to contradiction first comes home to us, not as a primal and universally applicable doctrine about objects, but as an observation upon what happens in particular instances of negation, —in the special cases where one thesis and one antithesis are employed, and are seen to be in conflict. In such cases I observe an inner clash between two meanings. I mediately observe

that while I could perhaps adhere to either of these meanings taken alone, I cannot mean them both together. Thus I learn what I do when I affirm and when I deny. I learn this, not immediately, but by a reflective contrast of the two. I generalize this logical experience as the principle of contradiction. And then, asked for my assurance as to the principle, I can only reply, as Aristotle does, that further, and decidedly mediate reflection assures me that if I denied the principle, my very denying would be a concrete case of using and so of affirming it.

Our second thesis is thus established, and we see that the truth and the certainty of the principle of contradiction are both very highly mediated results of the meaning of the process of judgment; and are obtained and are to be defended only by Reflection upon what we do when we think.

3. The third of our theses, as above stated, now needs here but little further illustration. We can refer, in place of extensive explanations, to the illustration which it will hereafter receive, throughout our coming discussion.

The principle of contradiction is seldom used as the explicit premise of any argument. Seldom is the syllogism formally presented: — “The proposition: *x isn't x*, or the other proposition: *It is at once true that x is y, and that x is not y*, — must be false. For this proposition is a contradictory assertion. And all contradictory assertions are false.” If such a syllogism is expressed, it helps us, in general, no whit. For if we are sure of the contradictory meaning of the propositions in question, we reject them as they stand, without waiting for the general principle of contradiction to come as major premise to help us out. If we are uncertain whether they really mean to assert and to deny, at once “the same of the same,” the general principle throws positively no light upon our perplexity. The traditional logic states the formal principle of contradiction, but then usually develops the rules of the syllogism without taking any noteworthy trouble to point out, explicitly, whether or how they follow as special propositions, from the general principle, taken alone, or in connection with its comrades, the principles of identity and of excluded middle. These principles are thus silent partners of most explicit reasoning processes. They are not, like the axioms of geometry, explicitly appealed to in

the course of our textbooks. They are guides all the surer for *not* being named. They escape mention, not as being too obvious to mention, but as being less obvious in the general formulation, than in the individual case. One recognizes the individual contradiction much more readily and accurately than one can formulate the general law as to contradictions. The formulations, as we have seen, are often fallible enough. But one who judges in earnest means, as Aristotle says, not to deny his own concrete assertion. Hence if he meets a denial, he pretty readily observes that he intends to reject it.

Herewith one is able in a measure already to forestall a certain sceptical puzzle which sometimes occurs in the course of an effort to consider the nature of Reality. "How can you know," asks a sceptic, "that thought so masters things that a contradiction universally cannot be true of the real world? What gives this 'grinding force,' (I quote a sceptical friend's expression), to the one subjective principle of contradiction? Suppose that things were contradictory, and that such was their way. Should we not have to give in to the brute facts? The inexperienced hen may seem to feel it a sort of contradiction that her ducklings should enjoy swimming. Do her subjective states help the case at all? And is not your principle of contradiction just such a subjective principle as the hen's instinct?"

The application of this view in our Study of Reality concerns us later. For the present we have only to print out that Aristotle's answer, only put into concreter form, and applied to the special case, is here our own answer; that his mediation of the principle contents us for the present purpose, so far as he too appeals to the special case; and that one need only reply to the sceptic thus: "Well, if you find or fancy Reality to be anywhere contradictory, we ask you simply to signify the fact, to express your opinion in the concrete, to say that *This is so*, that *a is b*, or what you will. Do you say nothing? Do you decline to 'signify'? Do you remain dumb even 'to yourself'? Very well then; you are, in Aristotle's perhaps unparliamentary, but expressive phrase, 'a plant'. We cannot answer you. But then you do not even assert that the world is contradictory. But do you say: *In reality a is b*, or: *This is so*, then you are committed. You yourself deny the opposite of what

you say. There is here no 'grinding' of reality, but only of you. You mean what you mean, and not the opposite of what you mean. And if you add *In reality a is b and a isn't b*, we shall simply ask you *which* of these two you do mean. We do not ask you first to admit the principle in general; but to say something in the concrete, something,—something definite. You will find, in such concrete case, not yet that your private thought moulds reality, but that you have thought nothing unless you have thought that only one of two concretely possible contradictories here expresses your definite meaning. The rest may indeed be left for the Philosophy of Reality to consider.

One does not then primarily assert 'the grinding force' of the subjective principle as applied to a real world. One only observes, and each time in a concrete case, that so long as one contradicts one's self one has said as yet nothing, and so has asserted nothing about Reality.

Yet although neither a purely immediate primal assurance, nor an explicit major premise in our syllogisms, the principle of contradiction is, in such concrete applications, a constant guide of philosophical method. Socrates already showed, in general, how this is the case. Latent contradictions pervade our natural thinking about the real world. The conscious purpose to hunt out these contradictions, remains one of the most serviceable of methodical resolves. Moreover, when such natural contradictions become overt, we generally recognize that, empirically viewed, both of the contradictions were at least plausible, and have a force which renders them, when separately considered, worthy of serious attention. The undertaking to "reconcile the contradictions," to bring them into a "higher synthesis," forms a process of investigation of which the Platonic Socrates, as well as Aristotle himself, has given frequent instances. As the principle of a great deal of modern dialectical thinking, of the type formulated by Fichte upon a Kantian basis, and extensively developed, with an extremely ingenious but often whimsical technique, by Hegel, this notion of proceeding by "Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis" has become noted, and, like all merely formal principles, has excited some natural, and, so far as some of its applications have been concerned, not unfounded prejudices.

All mere formalism is hateful. Philosophy can make no "synthe-

ses," can "reconcile" no "contradictions," except upon the basis of a constantly renewed study of the data of experience. It is life, after all, which is the great harmonizer. It is the content of the world which alone can suggest how the apparent, or the transient contradictions of less developed thinking are to be solved. But the fact remains that the contrast of clashing opinions gives us the best device, in many cases, for bringing to light what each of the opposing opinions means.

And so much, at present, for our third thesis as to the methodical value of the Principle of Contradiction.

§.8. There is, then, no purely immediate rational knowledge. This remains true, whichever one of the three meanings of §.6 we assign to the word *immediate*. Philosophy is not to be founded upon a collection of immediate primal dicta of reason. Nor yet can philosophy be a mere report of immediately observed data of experience. It is a reflective combination of empirical and immediate insight.

It remains to sum up, in more positive form, the principles of method which are to guide us in our Study of Reality. These principles have already been indicated. We have only to formulate them, apart from polemical considerations.

Every form of faith is, for a philosopher, a possible object of critical inquiry. On the other hand, insight has to be reached by degrees, and it is useless to begin our thinking, like Des Cartes, with a merely formal doubt of everything, for the sake of starting nowhere, and of creating all as we go. We must rather begin either with provisional hypotheses, or with traditional notions, and gradually approach our most central critical inquiries. Scepticism is like any other art. To be of service, it has to be methodically learned. In a purely abstract form we have indeed stated several sceptical considerations already. But their value will come home to us only after we have truly learned how to doubt concerning the nature of Reality. And rightly to doubt will {become},⁷ in the end, rightly to know.

In beginning our study, we shall first consider what seems to be most essential about our current notions of the meaning of the adjective *real*. These notions will relate to familiar, but puzzling, regions of human experience. We shall make, or, for the moment accept,

some provisional assertions as to the meaning in question, and then we shall set about our criticism in earnest.

Our two instruments, as now extensively pointed out, will be Experience and Reflection. The one will show us whether there are any given facts that appear to conform, at any stage of our inquiry, to the definitions, hypothesis, or theses then in question. The other will attempt to bring to constantly clearer light the meaning of any conceptions or assertions that we wish to explain, to oppose, or to maintain.

Of the process to be called Reflection, we have already given a preliminary notion. To reflect is to make the meaning of a conception or of an assertion, clearly conscious. One of the principal means of accomplishing this end is to contrast the meaning under consideration with its contradictory opposite, or any logically distinguishable portion of the meaning with the contradictory opposite of that particular portion. In case of assertions as to the nature of Reality, the history of philosophical controversy will generally suggest the theses and antitheses whose contrast will prove most instructive.

In our application of the foregoing plan, a given definition of Reality, or a given thesis as to the Real, is supposed, at any time, to be before us. We find it opposed in this or in this respect, or again, we find its partisans, despite their general agreement, developing this or this conflict of opinion as to one aspect or another of the theory in question. A mode of inquiry familiar to common sense would be hereupon the question: Which of these opponents is right, or does the truth lie "in the middle"? We shall seldom find this attitude as profitable, at the outset of any new line of our investigation, as the more distinctly reflective, and the more purely dispassionate inquiry: What light does this conflict throw, by virtue of the very contrasts of conception involved in it, upon the meaning of the theses and antitheses directly at issue? This reflective consideration will often render the attempt to solve a given problem, in the form in which it first appears, superfluous. We shall learn to revise both the meanings and the issue, and shall thus pass from relatively superficial to relatively deeper questions and theses.

Our effort will thus be to find, at length, propositions which, like the

principle of contradiction in Aristotle's discussion, appear to be so fundamental that the very attempt to deny them is seen to involve the affirmation of them. These propositions, like all that have a definite meaning, will concern at once, facts of relatively immediate experience, and ideas about what is only mediately represented in our present form of briefly momentary human experience. Our purpose will thus be, to discover, by thoroughgoing reflection, fundamental assertions, which, while highly "mediate," may serve to throw light upon the nature of Reality.

In so far as such assertions may be attained, they will properly appear, at the moment when they first result from this process of reflective comparison of meanings, highly formal. And much mischief is done by allowing such assertions to remain in their formalism. As they are first universally stated, they mean little. Unity, organic wholeness, teleological constitution; or, on the other hand, variety, separation of parts, a monadic constitution, an unpredictable multiplicity of individual facts:— such characters have been asserted, by this or by that philosophical theory, to belong to the world of Reality as viewed in its general structure.

Whatever decision our own theory makes as to such matters, it is well to remember that such decision is of little moment until it is again set to work to express the nature of the concrete facts of experience. As experience everywhere accompanies and gives life to our reflective process, so, in its turn too, the result of the reflective process must be interpreted empirically before one can reach a final insight into what it means. And it is in this way that the method of our first part will lead over to the often more tentative and hypothetical constructions of our second and third parts.

In this constant effort to determine by Reflection the true relations of what are, from the present human point of view, contrasted with each other as the observed and the unobserved regions of Reality, —will consist the method of our undertaking.

—In this introductory chapter we have attempted to give a preliminary outline of our undertaking, and to define its method. We are to study both the intension and the extension of the term Reality, i.e., both what the word Real means, and what is the constitution of

the principle regions of truth to which the word is to be applied. Our method has been explained, both as to its relation to experience, and as to its reflective character. We have seen that a philosophy cannot be founded either upon merely immediate empirical data, or upon "immediately certain" axioms, and that, in general, purely immediate knowledge is impossible. In the special case of the Principle of Contradiction, we have also illustrated the thesis that the most fundamental assertions are made clear by a process of Reflection, which, in the most fortunate case, may lead us to see how the very effort to contradict a given principle would imply the affirmation of the proposition to be denied. A principle that bears this test may be regarded not as immediate, but as fundamental. We are to seek for principles of this grade of significance. Then we are to try to apply them to interpret the empirical world.

Book. I. The Definition of Reality.

Chapter II. Types of the Real.

§.9. Language furnishes us with a rather confusingly wealthy, because ill-defined, vocabulary for naming types, forms, or grades of reality, and their opposites. If I desire to express the fact that a given man now belongs in the world of the real, —if, for instance, upon the return of a polar explorer, such as Nansen, I wish to express the satisfying news that he has survived the danger of his expedition, and to do so in terms of his continued being, I can say, if I like, that this man still *is*, *exists*, *is real*, has present *being*, *is extant*, *is actual*, *lives*, *endures*, *lasts*, *persists*, and is still a *fact*; and that *there is* such a person. To be sure not all of these words express our explorer's reality in equally universal or unmixed fashion. But they all equally include the assertion of this reality. To say that he *is*, makes use of a predicate I could also apply to a star, to a rainbow, or to a passing state of feeling. This predicate means to be highly abstract and simple. To say that he *lives*, refers, on the other hand, to the particular type or types of reality that only an animal, a plant, or a mind possesses. Yet the latter

predicate still includes the idea of existence in itself, as a part of its intension, and does not, like the adjectives *tall* or *short*, name a mere character belonging to my idea of a subject, viewed apart from my belief in its reality. A dead man, viewed merely as a corpse, no longer *exists* as a man. The corpse still *is*, but the man *is not*. To say that *this man is dead* is, as popular usage shows, equivalent to saying, *He is no more, He no longer exists* (so far at least as this mortal existence is concerned). To say, however, (if one proceeds to consider the idea of a future life): —*Man is immortal, and only seems to die, but lives beyond death*: this is recognizably the same as to say, *Man exists, or is, after what we call death*. So that while *to live* means much more than merely *to be*, —the latter being the more abstract term, and the former implying the sort of reality which we attribute to animals or to plants, or to minds, — *a living being* is still a kind of *being*, and the verb *to live* is used, in the expression *he lives*, so as to involve the assertion of existence.

In strong contrast to all such predicates are predicates that appear to apply to a given subject equally well both when that subject is defined in idea, or is viewed as a merely possible subject, and when the subject is conceived as real. “The magnanimous man,” says Aristotle, “is tall, and of deliberate gait.” This is an ideal description. It is supposed to hold true of the ideal; even if one finds, in reality, no magnanimous man. “All planets must move, approximately, in conic sections.” In so far as this proposition expresses a theoretical assertion about the laws of planetary movement under the influence of gravitation, it would continue to hold true if there were, in reality, no planets. After a man’s death, his photograph remains unchanged. So the ideas that tell us the nature of a given subject when that subject is real, apply as well, in idea, to that same subject, when it ceases to be real. We can describe the fictitious. If we could not do so, human science of the real would be at an end, for reasons which will hereafter appear. Perhaps for an absolute insight this would not remain the case. But for us ideal and real are very distinct.

The contrast between the two classes of predicates is well indicated by the familiar phraseology according to which predicates ei-

ther tell us *that* their subject is, or *what* their subject is. I can be said to know *that* a given subject is when I know very little about *what* it is; and the partisans of the so-called Unknowable have even declared themselves able to say that the Unknowable is, while knowing nothing whatever about what it is. On the other hand, I can know very well indeed *what* a subject is (for instance Hamlet, or a centaur, or the ancient Roman Empire), when I am perfectly sure that, in a given determinate sense of the verb *to be* (as for instance in the sense of present earthly and temporal being), there is no such subject in existence. In consequence, I can of course know decidedly well what a subject is while remaining wholly uncertain whether it is or is not.

It must be admitted, however, as has just been, in passing, remarked, that this latter distinction, so obvious in ordinary discussion, may well prove to be no ultimate distinction. It may stand merely for our human limitations of insight. A perfect thought might be, as they say, "ontological," so that in knowing what its objects were, it also knew that they were, and how. Whether this would prove to be the case, is one of our topics for later inquiry. Meanwhile, even as we are, the distinction already appears to be in one way only relative; for we are just now inquiring what is meant by Reality, or *What it is to be*; and so we are endeavoring even from the start, to discover (if we may use the technical, but very awkward phrase) the "*what* of the *that*." Yet the distinction between the predicates which tell *what* and those which tell *that*, however relative the contrast may prove, is extremely convenient, and shall be made from now on wherever it is required. So much then for predicates which express or imply the reality of their subject.

But for unreality we have a still wealthier vocabulary. This vocabulary not only is formed by merely adding the negative particle to the verbs before employed to express reality; but it is also possessed of its own special wealth of phraseology. When we wish to express the unreality of a subject, viewed merely with reference to time, we can qualify our simple negation in well-known ways. We can first say that the subject *is no more*. Or we can assert that it *is not yet*. Or we can declare that it *never exists*. These are expressions of particular form of temporal unreality. By another series of phrases we express

unreality as being equivalent to a merely ideal character, whereby the subject exists barely in our conception, and not out of our conception. Thus we can say that a given subject is *fictitious*, or is a *mere idea*, or that a given narrated event is *only a story*. We have, in the nouns *myth, fable, fancy*, in the phrase *product of imagination*, and in similar names, means for expressing this aspect of the unreality of supposed things and occurrences. Nor are all such words associated with a sense of disappointment or of disparagement. To speak of a conceived object as an *ideal*, often conveys the sense that there is no such object, but that the ideal is here better than any real object.

There is also a third set of words which are used to indicate that the unreality of certain subjects is contrasted with the reality as being a false suggestion, or deceptive counterpart of reality. Here the words used all imply disparagement. Such words are the terms: *appearance, show, seeming, error, sham, counterfeit, phantom*, and similar names. In several cases verbs directly correspond to these nouns, or are the source from which the former are derived. Hamlet uses such verbs, in his first speech to his mother: —“These, these but seem. For these are tokens that a man might feign. But I have that within which passeth show.”

As the last words of Hamlet remind us, familiar considerations lead us, at times, to associate the *outward* aspect of things with their “mere appearance,” and their *inward* aspect with their reality. “This is real, for I feel it within me,” Hamlet in effect says; and the phraseology is not uncommon in protestations of sincerity. Nor do we take this view only in our own cases. The “husk” and “kernel” metaphor is one often used of things in general. The other metaphor of the “clothing” of things, as their “mere appearance,” was made classic in Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*. The sense of both is that the “interior” of objects is often viewed as their real, their “exterior” as their seeming aspect.

The preference of language for appellatives of disparagement is well shown in the great wealth of nouns used to name unreality of the present type.⁸ The fiction which deceives us, the false idea which we take to be true, but then reject, needs a name as a warning. And the foregoing are only a few of our appellatives for the merely apparent.

In general, the whole vocabulary for unreality far surpasses that for reality, multiform as the former already is. A type of the present observation is given in the fact that only the present indicative of the verb *to be* is devoted to the direct assertion of reality, while all other moods and tenses involve some implication of unreality, relative or total. The attendant inconvenience that the present indicative of the verb *to be* has to be used for realities of all types and grades, has been of fatal consequence in the history of metaphysics. As we may hereafter see, we very much need, in metaphysics, at least three forms of the present indicative of the verb *to be*, in its usage as a word to express reality: one form for the temporally present and passing fact: e.g., *This instant of this day now is*; one for the temporally enduring, or actually more or less constant: e.g. *Paris is*, *The earth is*, or *The sun is*, or even, *Matter is*; and a third for that which we regard as not merely permanent in time, but either absolutely necessary, or eternal, or rationally immutable. Of this last type, at the present stage of our discussion, only hypothetical instances can be given, such as *God is*, or *The Universe is*, or *The Truth, or the Right, is*. For to all these subjects some metaphysical notions have attributed a being which cannot be reduced to permanence in time. I should demand then, from a complete language, three present tenses of the verb *to be*, a passing present tense, an enduring present tense, and an eternal present tense. The lack of three such ready forms of verbal expression is responsible for some of the most persistent of the stupidities from which metaphysical study has suffered.

Of the often unhappy confusion of the verb *to be* used as copula with the verb *to be* used to predicate reality of its subject, we shall have occasion to speak in the next chapter.

To sum up for the moment:— the vocabulary as to reality and unreality which language provides for the philosopher is redundant in wealth, though defective in definiteness; but yet it grows surprisingly poverty-stricken at one most critical point. However, our sketch of the distinctions recognized by language will help us at once, as we begin our preliminary survey of the field before us.⁹

NOTES

1. Written *ca.* 1897, and published by Courtesy of the Harvard University Archives.
2. [Correction of Royce's *Met.* III.]
3. See Zeller, *Philos. d. Griechen. 3te Aufl. II, 2te Abtln., p.239*; Windelband, *Griechische Philosophie*, p.147.
4. *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, Lecture I, *et passim*.
5. The passages here summarized are found [on] pp. 1005, sqq.
6. Cf. Sigwart, *Logik*, 2d. Ed., I, p. 193: "Nun zeigt sich daso das Princ. Contr. Recht wie ein Orakel uns rathlos lasst wenn wir fragen was denn von *A* nicht behauptet werden durfe."
7. [One illegible word in the MS.]
8. I personally owe this observation, in itself very plain, to a paper of Mr. W. R. Alger.
9. Here Royce's MS, "A Critical Study of Reality," breaks off and is left unfinished.