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PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

THE PRESENT SITUATION IN PHILOSOPHY¹

AMERICAN students of philosophy should take a lively interest in the inaugural lecture of Professor Kemp Smith at the University of Edinburgh. After sojourning some thirteen years or more in the United States, during which time he was professor of his subject at Princeton University, our friend and colleague was elected to succeed Professor Pringle-Pattison, and on assuming the responsibilities of his chair, chose, as the theme of his inaugural address, "The Present Situation in Philosophy." It is one of the most interesting and one of the most perplexing topics. Any sympathetic analysis of it just now should help to bring about that more generous appreciation of human problems which ought to go along with a more generously social orientation, and a better understanding of history. This most recent examination is very sympathetic and admirably candid; it ought to be widely read and thoroughly discussed.

Such a discussion should, the present reviewer believes, begin with a new orientation. We do not quarrel with Dante or with Saint Francis, and we should not do so with Plotinus or with Hegel. Great imaginative traditions are a human possession that most Americans little appreciate, cut off, as they are, from the world of art in which those traditions have found perhaps their most appropriate expression. The idealizing imagination has been wrought into a system by a succession of noble thinkers. The substance of that system is no less of the imagination, its real concern is no less serious because we call it metaphysics and dispute, often quite provincially, about details of evidence and dialectic. Idealists frequently insist, and they have every right to do so, upon the continuity of their doctrine with the greater past. Theirs is after all a vision, which a lover of Chartres and of Assisi ought to recog-

¹ An inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Edinburgh on the sixteenth of October, 1919, by Norman Kemp Smith, Professor of logic and metaphysics. Edinburgh: James Thin, 54 South Bridge. 1919. Pp. 31. Reprinted in full in the *Philosophical Review* for Jan. 1920 (Vol. XXIX, pp. 1-26).

nize. The lecture gives, however, the old orientation. Let me summarize as briefly as I can the description it presents.

I

The history of philosophy shows three current attitudes, skepticism, naturalism, and idealism. The nineteenth century, from 1820 to 1890, influenced by Comte and by Darwin and his followers, was a period of skepticism, called at one time agnosticism. Impressed more and more by the progress of natural science, and particularly by the new information supplied by anthropology, this negative attitude gave way to a more affirmative one, based on positive science, suspicious of the animistic tradition, and cultivating an enthusiasm for social reform and progress. This is naturalism. But naturalists leave their own position logically incomplete, and they give no just account of "spiritual values." Naturalism when logically completed by epistemology and made adequate to the more intimate aspects of experience becomes idealism, in which the animistic tradition is renewed and given an interpretation diametrically opposed to that given by naturalism. The present-day issue in philosophy is between naturalism and idealism; in the discussion, naturalism has the advantage on matters of detail where science is in a position to supply relevant information, but idealism finds its opportunity and justification in comprehending life's best achievements and results. This, then, is the present situation: skepticism grown positive through a greater amount of information, and merged in naturalism; naturalism, preoccupied with the conditions and antecedents of living, impressive because of the achievements of science, but still too negative and self-restricted; idealism, speaking for the most significant values of life, and supplementing naturalism's catalogue of the given with a vision of the desired and the confidently believed.

Professor Kemp Smith has phrased a number of things so happily that I shall be justified in quoting his own words. "Skepticism must hold a high and worthy place in every history of philosophy by whomsoever written. It has been one of the main agencies of human advance. It is the enemy of fanaticism and false sentiment in every form. The mind to which it is utterly uncongenial can have no capacity for philosophy, and is little likely to have discrimination in regard to truth." But though valuable "as a regulating balance wheel," skepticism "can supply no engine power. When through the miscarriage of positive efforts at reconstruction error arises, or when beliefs and institutions, justified in their day and generation, outlive their usefulness and abuses accumulate, the skeptic is indeed in his element. But when his

destructive work is completed and the ground is cleared, he is left without occupation. He is a *specialist* in the subject of error, and when the community's stock of error gives out, he is faced by the specter of unemployment, condemned to idleness until a new crop has been grown."

Circumstances gave, however, a new lease to skepticism, and although seeming at first to support an agnostic philosophy they have in the end led away from it.

"At the period I refer to, say roughly from about 1820 onwards, the Romantic movement, passing from literature into scholarship and history, awakened a new interest in human life as lived under conditions different from our own, whether in the Far East, in classical or in primitive times, and so originated the historical study of civilization in all its manifold forms. This historical method obtained an added prestige from Darwin's application of it in the biological sciences; but it had already borne good fruit prior to the publication of the *Origin of Species*, and very soon thereafter was able to systematize its main results through the creation of the new science of anthropology.

"Now anthropology made possible for the first time an understanding of the beginnings in which human thinking takes its rise. It has shown that primitive thinking, among savage peoples in all parts of the earth, invariably bases itself upon a distinction between soul and body, and that it employs this distinction to account for all those phenomena which most attract its attention, especially the facts of disease and death. Animism, as is called—that is to say, the animistic distinction between a body and a soul supposed to be capable of leaving it in sleep and of surviving it in death—is the cradle of all human thought. It has made possible the first beginnings of religion, and has thereby yielded the necessary sanctions for the moral and social values embodied in custom and in tribal institutions.

"The conclusions to which the study of primitive thought thus led were mainly two-fold—that animism is false as a theory, and yet profoundly beneficial as an influence. It is false because the data upon which the distinction between soul and body is based have been wrongly interpreted. The asserted facts are either themselves fictitious, or, owing to primitive man's ignorance of the forces at work within and without him, have been misunderstood. Thus human thought is cradled not in ignorance, but in positive error and delusion. Its primitive beliefs rest upon foundations which, from a logical point of view, are grotesquely incapable of supporting the superstructure. These beliefs may be reestablished on other grounds, but certainly not on the evidence which originally led to their adoption."

But that, as the lecture points out, is only one side of the picture. Man did make progress. Animism, which was not arbitrarily invented but was a natural feature of primitive experience became socially institutionalized and religion became a social instrument. "The communities in which religion appears and takes root acquire all the advantages of unified action, and are therefore favored by the processes of natural selection. These services, however, [the naturalists say] are only temporary. Though they have proved indispensable in the earlier stage of man's development, they can not hope to maintain themselves under the altered conditions of a civilization that is scientifically organized."

Thus mythology has been justified over and over again by its social utility, an observation in harmony with the more crudely pragmatic interpretation of science. In so far, however, as the attitude of agnosticism persists, it is because the traditional distinction between reality and appearance is retained. If it can be retained, "then more must be made of it, and justification must be given for our preferential treatment of it. But in that case the agnosticism is undermined and the way is open for idealistic teaching. This is the line taken by those who employ it in support of religion. If, on the other hand—and this has been the more usual tendency of the school—the distinction between appearance and reality be allowed to be as relative and empirical as any other, agnosticism at once reveals its true affiliations. Agnosticism, in its usual and most influential forms, has really been naturalism in disguise."

Science has received a skeptical justification not unlike that granted to religion. "Even science, it was contended, is not a form of theoretical insight; it is merely a means to power. Science, rightly understood, never seeks to explain, but only to simplify. By scrupulously careful observation we verify the ultimate coexistences and sequences among our sensations, and under the guidance of elaborate hypotheses, which have a merely subjective value in directing inquiry, we define the coexistences and sequences in exact quantitative terms. Acquaintance with these relations, when thus precisely defined, enables us to predict the future, to construct machines, and so progressively to gain control over our physical environment; but they yield no insight, it is maintained, into the independently real. What is alone truly characteristic of science is not the obtaining of insight, but the acquisition of power. Thought is an instrument developed through natural processes for the practical purpose of adaptation. Its criteria and values are exclusively determined by the instinctive equipment of the species in its adjustment to environment. They have no independent validity

of any kind. The human mind, the argument proceeds, is limited to appearances; to attain knowledge in the absolute sense, that is to say through distinguishing between the true and the false, is impossible. There is a mechanism, or economy of human thought; but logic, so-called, is a science with pretensions as excessive and quite as unfounded as those of theology. The distinction between the true and the false claims to be an absolute one; and how can man, a merely natural existence, expect to have dealings with the absolute in any form?" What the history of philosophy reveals is not "a progressive discovery of truth, but a gradual emancipation from error," and agnosticism is for the naturalist "itself a compromise between science and animism." "The dualism between the phenomenal and the real, upon which agnosticism bases itself, is the last survival of those many dualisms which owe their origin to the primitive distinction between soul and body. With the total elimination of all dualistic distinctions, agnosticism likewise vanishes and we are then for the first time left with a thorough-going and completely consistent creed—the creed which is progressively strengthened by every advance in science, namely, naturalism."

But that is the negative side of naturalism. On its constructive side, "what distinguishes naturalism is its more sympathetic attitude towards animistic beliefs on their practical side. For as I have already suggested, naturalism has ceased to be exclusively interested in physical and cosmological problems. As a *philosophy*, it now rests its main hopes on the medical, psychological, and social sciences; and from the recent developments of these sciences it has, like idealism, learned many lessons, especially as regards the prominent part played in practical life by instinct and the emotions. It recognizes that in virtue of our instinctive equipment we have profound idealizing tendencies, and that one of our fundamental needs is that of devoting our energies to some end more enduring and wider than our own personal well-being. And it also recognizes—what is so abundantly evident in the light of history—that until a social movement takes on an emotional character, and indeed becomes a religious crusade that can regard itself as directed against the powers of darkness, it can never be genuinely popular and secure the adhesion of the masses of men. Accordingly naturalism has in recent times more and more expounded itself in the form of an enthusiastic, humanitarian, and indeed utopian creed, with an ethics emotionally charged by the harsher impulses of hatred and indignation as well as by the softer sentiments of love and pity." Naturalism has begun to formulate its own theory of ethics and to invade that domain of "spiritual interests" over which idealism

watches so carefully. It "has all the more seriously to be reckoned with that it is no longer exclusively intellectualistic in its interests and outlook, but endeavors to organize a type of civilization and of religion in harmony with itself, and can provide a programme that may guide us in the supreme and ultimate choices of our practical life."

And now I reach a passage that, frankly, I do not understand. Naturalism shows, Professor Kemp Smith tells us, in its most recent expositions, "an eagerness to come into line with the idealistic view that the logical criteria have absolute validity, that knowledge is really knowledge, that is to say a form of genuine insight, revealing to us the independent real." Does the writer have in mind American neo-realism, and its loyalty to the logic of Mr. Bertrand Russell? Some things in Mr. Russell's writings are not altogether clear, but on one point he is quite unambiguous, and that is that logical inferences, as such, have and can have no existential implications. However, neo-realism has two features which might lead the lecturer to identify it as naturalism; it was inspired by science and its polemic was chiefly against idealism. Or does he refer to remnants of subjectivism that are to be found in Professor Karl Pearson's *Grammar of Science*? In any case, whether they be pragmatists or not, naturalists do not admit that a logical demonstration is a merely temperamental series of convictions. The validity they claim for logic is, however, only a logical validity, that is, formal consistency, a technique of putting two and two together, and which remains a technique. But however that may be, this claim of "validity" for logical distinctions is, we are told, a claim that both naturalists and idealists agree in making, and here, with the resources of epistemology, the transition to idealism is made. "For why, it may be asked, should the conclusion that science is really science, revealing to us the independently real, be regarded by idealism as so vitally important, especially when what science teaches seems to place so many obstacles in the way of an idealistic philosophy, and seems indeed, if anything, to favor naturalism?"

"To these questions there is a two-fold reply. In the first place the supreme concern of idealism is to show that the æsthetic and spiritual values have a more than merely human significance; and there is apparently not the least hope of so doing if the values that hold in the intellectual domain can not be substantiated as possessing objective validity. If you will pardon the seeming truism, it is the very purpose of knowledge to know. If knowledge is itself a deception, and its conclusions are merely practical devices for temporary adaptation, forcing belief independently of demonstration,

there can be no hope of vindicating for the other values in life any superhuman significance. The genuineness of scientific knowledge must therefore be regarded as one of the main supporting pillars of an idealistic philosophy. Idealism can not afford to be obscurantist; it may legitimately in certain circumstances be skeptical as to whether or not a theory has been scientifically established; but should it attack science it will be undermining its own foundations.

"But there is also a second reason why idealism welcomes, as no small advance towards eventual agreement, the recognition by naturalism of the absolute validity of the logical criteria. If, as idealism maintains, intellectual and spiritual values stand on the same plane of objectivity, and therefore justify parity of treatment, half the battle is won when the human mind, its natural history notwithstanding, is allowed to be capable of transcending not only its subjective but even its planetary limitations. That the human mind should possess the power of comprehending its own natural origins, and of ranging in what we call thought over the entire material universe, of which, as an animal existence, it is so minor and transitory a product, is, in the view of idealism, a fact of such central and supreme significance, that agreement in regard to it, must, in consistency, bring other important consequences in its train. And this, indeed, is why the problem of knowledge—somewhat to the bewilderment of the outsider in philosophy—has always bulked so prominently in idealist systems. The *specific* results of the natural sciences, taken by themselves and so far as they go, may support naturalism no less than idealism, and perhaps on the whole can be regarded as favoring naturalism—I should myself be willing to make this admission—yet *the fact that science exists at all*, that the human mind has proved capable of acquiring it, *when taken with the other achievements of the human spirit*, in the arts, in the moral, social, and religious life, outweighs in philosophical significance, and sets in a very different perspective, the conclusions reached exclusively through study of man's physical conditions."

And idealism sees in animism not merely a trail of error more and more in contradiction with what we know. It asks to what extent have animistic beliefs stood the test of later experience? "And judging them by this criterion, idealism is prepared to maintain that, so far are the dualisms in which animism has issued from being the main source of error in philosophy, on the contrary only through repetition of the distinctions to which they direct our attention can human life be rightly understood. Primitive man's distinction between the body and its ghostly duplicate is simply the first crude formulation of that later distinction between the physical and the psychical which in one form or another we are bound

to accept as fundamental." "Animism is indeed the cradle of human thought; and what most surprises upon study of it is not the extent and perversity of its false beliefs, but, allowing for its necessary limitations and defects, the extraordinarily sound appreciation which it displays for those distinctions which reach deepest and best stand the test of more developed experience."

As for the questions at issue between naturalism and idealism, "they are opposed on one fundamental conviction. According to naturalism, parts of the universe are more complex and are more completely unified than is the universe as a whole. Certain parts, too, possess higher qualities, such as life and consciousness, which are not to be found in the wider reality that includes them. That is to say, when we sample reality, parts are found to be superior to the whole. The Universe is, as it were, merely the stage, and is not itself a center of interest; what alone signify are the episodes that happen in this or that part of it.

"Idealism, on the other hand, is committed to the assertion that the Universe is at once richer and more highly unified than any of its parts. And as man is the most complex existence known to us, it is upon the clues supplied by our superficially human experience that idealism bases its ultimate conclusions. For though man can, indeed, be studied only in his natural setting, for an understanding of his nature and destiny idealism refers us to that wider reality which is depicted in poetry and the arts, and worshiped in religion, and which, though not yet scientifically known, can be philosophically discerned as conferring upon human life its standards and values.

"This main cleavage of opinion determines all the other differences between naturalism and idealism. Naturalism finds in matter, or at least in the non-conscious, the groundwork of reality; idealism finds in spiritual values the key to ultimate problems. Naturalism has to treat human values as merely relative; idealism interprets them as disclosing a richer and more comprehensive universe than can yet be defined in scientific terms."

And in conclusion the opposition is thus restated. "In the view of a naturalistic philosophy, man is a being whose capacities, even in their highest activities, are intelligible only as exercised *exclusively in subordination* to the specific requirements of his *terrestrial* environment. For the student of the humanities, on the other hand, man is adapted, indeed, to his environment, but measures himself against standards for which it can not account. He is not a piece of nature's mechanism, but himself a microcosm, prefiguring in his art, in his moral codes and social institutions, and in religion, the wider reality to which as a finite being he can have no

more direct method of approach. His true self-knowledge is made possible by values and standards that constitute his humanity in distinction from the animals; and it is by their absoluteness that they deliver him from the limitations of strictly animal existence."

II

I have tried in the above passages to give the writer's point of view and to illustrate the quality of his thought. One must remember the occasion and its amenities, the deference toward a distinguished predecessor. "It is well," the writer says, "when succeeding generations are bound together by respect and reverence." And, "The teacher of philosophy stands to his students in a relation of greater delicacy than does the teacher of any other subject in the University curriculum." Professor Pringle-Pattison always demanded, we are told by his successor, that every problem should be faced in all its difficulties, and we do not need Professor Kemp Smith's assurance to know that he aims to follow his predecessor's example in this respect. And since very crucial questions are suggested by various passages of the lecture I will ask them as simply as I can.

(A) No doubt skepticism or agnosticism was an anticipation of naturalism, but the advance from the negative to the more affirmative position was brought about by a great increase in scientific information. Scientific information, ever more abundant, does not as yet favor the idealistic interpretation, and does not seem likely to do so. The passage from naturalism to idealism is accomplished not so much with the help of science as in spite of it. It is accomplished by dialectic. Now what title has dialectic to vouch for a transition to something that is more than dialectical? The propositions of idealism, indicated on page 22 of the lecture, are not experiments merely in formal logic, they are surely statements of an existential sort. But one of the decisive achievements of contemporary philosophy is the recognition that logic is not an existential science. If that is so, assurances about existence must come from another source.

For I suppose we may assume that idealism will not appeal to the tender-minded pragmatism with which James scattered so many seeds of confusion; hopes and preferences will not be offered as evidences about the nature of the world. If then existential propositions are to be drawn neither from logic alone, nor from the heart, whence are they to be derived? Unless we admit authority or revelation no source seems to remain except the source that we constantly use, natural observation, with the help, if need be, of whatever technical aids we possess, and of inference tested by continued

observation and experiment. This, however, gives us the data and the method of naturalism, and the evidence thus gained is, as Professor Kemp Smith so candidly admits, not favorable to idealism.

And that, I suppose, is why idealism follows another and a more difficult path, that of a dialectical argument which begins with the presuppositions of epistemology. Those presuppositions may, of course, be correct; idealism may be right, but we have to consider here the evidence in the case and the methods we are at liberty to use. It is easy here to misunderstand and misrepresent. But the premise of the idealist's dialectic, if I understand, depends upon a certain conception of knowledge which is valued for that very subjectivism which naturalism is commended for repudiating. Knowledge to be knowledge must give us the independently real and the really independent. "Naturalism, that is to say, can not explain the fact of knowledge and the employment of logical criteria, save by allowing to the mind the power of transcending its subjective limitations and of apprehending from subjectively conditioned data, by means of subjective processes, an objective meaning" (p. 27). It may of course be so; but this way of conceiving the situation is less characteristic of philosophy to-day than it used to be. The fact that the point of view exists has its historical explanation, and the impression is abroad that this epistemological point of view is retained in the interest of epistemology.

(B) Idealism insists that science be accepted as revealing to us "the independently real" (p. 18). Should idealism attack science it will undermine its own foundations (p. 19). This is because "the supreme concern of idealism is to show that the æsthetic and spiritual values have a more than merely human significance; and there is not the least hope of so doing if the values that hold in the intellectual domain can not be substantiated as possessing objective validity" (p. 18). "If knowledge is itself a deception, and its conclusions are merely practical devices for temporary adaptation, forcing belief independently of demonstration, there can be no hope of vindicating for the other values in life any superhuman significance" (p. 18). For "it is the very purpose of knowledge to know." That is certainly candid enough, and it sounds like the doctrine that conclusions are justified by their desirable results. But could science help idealism in its supreme concern without the resources of epistemology? Perhaps the idealist would disclaim responsibility for what he claims to find implicit in the physiology of perception, something for which science is responsible. Here is, of course, an opportunity for discussion without end for those who like that kind of discussion. The problem envisaged was never solved, except in the one way that such a problem can be solved,

which is to show that the conditions of the problem itself make the solution that is looked for unobtainable. And this is, though it sounds paradoxical, a logical solution. For the question is, what is the dialectical sum of the conditions assumed? And a candid inspection may show that there is no sum, or, what comes to the same thing, that the sum is indefinitely ambiguous. It is as though one were to ask whether the square root of a quantity were itself a plus or a minus quantity. By what right then does any one assure us that we are cut off from "reality" by a screen of sense-impressions? Of course we may be; so much is admitted. The "physiological argument," once used so confidently, argued nothing, however, except its own inconclusiveness, and of course all its data are naturalistic data. Is it not a little as though some one were to complain of being deaf because he could not hear the music of the spheres, and of being blind because the Beautiful and the Good appear in such a fragmentary way? And after all, suppose the realist to be right, and as Professor Kemp Smith excellently puts it "the distinctions between appearance and reality be allowed to be as relative and empirical as any other" (p. 15), and that the world, in spite of metaphysics, is the sort of thing it appears to be—how would that situation differ, so far as any one can see, from what the normal experience of every one now presents? And if it would not differ at all, what evidence is there that the world is not as it appears? There is, to be sure, no proof that it is so, neither is there any proof that it is not. And it is of the essence of the problem, as formulated by both idealists and agnostics, that it can not be solved except in the manner above indicated. If then we retain the problem by retaining its presuppositions, we seem to return to the agnostic position.

And one other consideration: if we claim that men's nobler sentiments and works gives us a cue to "reality," by what right do we select thus optimistically? Take this sentence for example: "For though man can, indeed, be studied only in his natural setting, for an understanding of his nature and destiny idealism refers us to that wider reality which is depicted in poetry and the arts, and worshiped in religion . . ." (p. 22). If reality is all of a piece, or if the course of events be divinely guided, we have no right to choose one fact rather than another to serve as a clue. The adventure of Germany with its dire consequences is, for aught we can tell, as revealing as anything else. We should remember the wisdom of Parmenides when he cautioned Socrates against the pragmatism of the heart.

But with regard to the last quotation above, the naturalist may agree, in a sense, but it would not be, I think, the sense of idealism.

For that domain to which we are referred by poetry and the arts is a very important part of man's empirical world, improved by his industry for his purposes, enriched for himself and for his children, and enlarged in his imagination for bettering his natural present and future.

(C) And as to science as something that man has achieved in spite of his "animal nature." Is not the impression justified that the term "animal nature" is used too loosely or too rigidly? Whatever nature is concerned has all the capacity that stands revealed. But let me quote, for its excellent precision, the following passage: "*Yet the fact that science exists at all, that the human mind has proved capable of acquiring it, when taken with the other achievements of the human spirit, in the arts, in the moral, social and religious life, outweighs in philosophical significance, and sets in a very different perspective, the conclusions reached exclusively through study of man's physical conditions*" (p. 19). Again the naturalist must agree, but he will not, in doing so, agree with the idealist to the latter's satisfaction. And the comment here may be somewhat like the preceding one.

When we stand amazed at the distance man has come since the first stone age, we should feel tempted to follow the story of his progress. Surely no story is more interesting. Man has achieved his science and his arts laboriously and bit by bit. The progress he has made seems, to be sure, extraordinary when we imagine a modern architect or engineer beside a savage, but it may be because of our ignorance now that it seems so. Moreover, it seems, according to the idealists, to incline us to error. And if one could follow that progress bit by bit, and step by step, every advance would, we may presume, be quite intelligible under the circumstances,—not in terms of physics and mechanics but in terms of human knowledge and imagination. The natives of Australia are quite as real as any one else, and some day the natural conditions of our planet may condition a miserable existence for mankind, without much in the way of art or spiritual values, conditions brought about perhaps, by man's stupidity and improvidence. Who can tell?

(D) And for understanding the history of philosophy few aids are more important than the story of man's earlier conditions. Animism says Professor Kemp Smith, "is indeed the cradle of human thought." I should prefer to call it the cradle of metaphysics, but be that as it may, it has provided a tradition that continues in an attenuated form down to the present time. For I suppose no one will claim that it has to-day the vigor and social importance that are testified to by the gothic cathedrals, the ancient temples and the religious practises of primitive people. That

animism has provided the subjects and much of the inspiration of glorious art I should be the first to insist. Man's "spiritual" concerns were phrased for so long in that vocabulary, its terms early acquired such a power to stir the emotions, that it is not surprising that the philosophy which takes for its especial theme man's "spiritual" life has usually been animistic. For after all, we need not always use the speech of a laboratory. We can say many things in a language of the imagination. Metaphors, if well chosen, are understood.

The relation of idealism to animism is, as the lecture points out, very intimate and cordial. And it provides, I think, the real basis of the opposition between idealism and naturalism; for the opposition becomes determined and self-conscious on the side of naturalism in proportion as the latter formulates its theory of ethics. The opposition is not between an interest in the lower and a concern for the higher, but between two different ways of championing the higher. The whole issue becomes clearer if we contrast naturalism with what seems to be the essence of idealism when existentially presented, namely, supernaturalism. Now this, as a metaphysical tradition, more or less incorporated in institutions, is obviously a survival or a development, whichever you please, from very primitive culture. "These beliefs may be," we are told, "reestablished on other grounds, but certainly not on the evidence which originally led to their adoption" (p. 12). And I will interpret this as meaning "scientifically" reestablished. But on what grounds could they be, as we understand science to-day, thus reestablished? Not, I suppose by authority or tradition, nor by a tender-minded pragmatism, nor by dialectic, if formal arguments, as such, are seen to bring no reports about existence. Is it then, by virtue of man's normal powers of observation and the natural science he has so superbly wrought that animism shall be reestablished? This is, however, the only way in which existential hypotheses can be substantiated, but it is the way of naturalism, and one is not likely by taking it, to arrive at supernaturalism. Idealists remind us, properly enough, of how incomplete our knowledge is—so incomplete that though what science we have favors naturalism, we are, after all, so ignorant that no one need be discouraged. But why may not this uncertainty cheer the naturalist also?

(E) "If man is the most highly organized form of existence known to us, and therefore the most contingently conditioned, and therefore also, as naturalism is constrained to argue, the most provincial, how comes it that he can pass judgments that have universal validity?" (p. 28).

One good definition of inference is the application of a rule to

particular instances. We do of course pass judgments that claim universal validity; they are either descriptions of natural regularities observed and remembered, or rules of procedure. In the former case the form of universality is a convenient simplification which ignores deliberately or unconsciously the possibility that more knowledge would modify our description, ignores, that is, for purposes of economy, the ignorance that idealists frequently remind us of; in the latter case, in which alone the form of universality is philosophically justified, we come back to the consideration that strict as opposed to provisional universality is a dialectical property, technical in character and importance. This does not mean that the laws of physics are illusions; it means only that physics is a very technical science, and that the formulations of its laws are technical formulations. I am, unfortunately, not acquainted with any good analysis of this point, and my statement of it is consequently very far from satisfactory. But, for purposes of analysis, we can distinguish between subject matter and technique, between data and method, between, though here the distinction is itself perhaps only technical, the type of science that gives us the subject matter or enlarges it (and I mean an existential subject matter such as biology), and the type of science that gives us technique, such as logic and mathematics. We can distinguish, experimentally at least, between the existential sciences that enlarge a subject matter of observation, and the non-existential sciences that provide us with technique to be used in the former, and to be played with, very seriously of course, by making the principles of technique their own subject matter.

Now how could there be such a thing as technique or method, or any distinction between a right and a wrong way of procedure, if nature did not show a high degree of regularity in the relation of what we call physical causes to physical effects. How could an architect proceed with any confidence, or a surgeon handle a case "scientifically;" how could that advance of science, which encourages the idealist to question the conclusions it favors, ever take place if nature did not behave on one occasion as she has been seen to behave on another? How could anybody, idealist or naturalist, befriend art, science, and man's spirit with any wisdom if he could not find out how to go about it? The practise of intelligence requires at least so much physical regularity, that general rules can be applied to particular cases. That the rule will work this time as it has in the past is a methodological assumption, never a meta-physical discovery in advance of the fact. And what is true for the practise of intelligence is no less true for the practise of virtue. "How comes it that he can pass judgments that have universal

validity?" It would seem that he can do so because physical nature obliges him to if he would prosper under the conditions which are offered him. And the judgments which are strictly universal in the logical sense are technical and not existential judgments. There is no mystery until we attempt to urge conclusions that go beyond the evidence, and which the evidence thus far available does not even suggest, but which a tradition which took its rise in primitive culture sufficiently explains.

(F) According to Professor Kemp Smith the idealist bases his claim to serious consideration on the fact that his particular concern is to cultivate and help others to cultivate those higher regions of experience in which human nature finds its ripe fruition. What are these best fruits of life as the idealist understands them? I may not be wrong in suggesting art, poetry, society, personality, science perhaps. Now how is art produced and strengthened? How is it stimulated and helped? By teaching a vision of "Reality"? Perhaps. The best art, has, however, been always the art that was most honest and knew most intimately the world it lived in. And who are the ones that really help society? All sorts of people help society and in all sorts of ways, and teachers of idealism share in the work; but I suspect it is not so much their doctrine as the personal quality, influence and example of the men that count. It will not do to confine poetry, but on the whole it is safe to say that the poet needs to know not metaphysics but life. Heaven and the animistic earth were long his universe of discourse. They can seldom be so now, since life is not described that way. Surely science and its technical applications in the arts do not need the supernatural. Personality is a subtle thing but it is to be sought in what breeds character, *im Strom der Welt*.

Does idealism's place in the world depend upon an obligation to prove that "the aesthetic and spiritual values have a more than merely human significance" (p. 18)? But why say that what is human is "merely human," or that it can not be safely and richly human unless it be shown to be superhuman also? Here is perhaps the crucial question.

Every reader of philosophy will recognize the approach to the City of God whither the road in the lecture leads. It is his citizenship in that *polis* that confers on man, idealism holds, his intrinsic excellence. The idealist feels that somehow our highest values are compromised and threatened to turn into amiable illusions if they are altogether natural and human. Loyalty to them demands, therefore, that he vindicate their "superhuman significance."

Idealism is, indeed, loyal to those highest things, whose reality in some fashion no thoughtful friend of man can wish to question.

And we need not deny, surely, man's right to aspire to something that one might call "the City of God." But the language with which to praise spiritual values is one thing, while the ideas with which to foster them are another. Results not yet achieved but ardently desired, ideals which the world exemplifies in but slight and sorry fashion but to which men and women may devote their lives, visions of perfection that man might, conceivably, with enough good-will and sacrifice and patient science, realize approximately in his physical dwelling place, these things are in and of the imagination, and an imaginative language full of associations conveys best our response to them of loyalty and communicates the emotions they evoke. Such language is gratifying and artistic, but is it scientific? When, however, something is to be done, we have to fall back upon the resources of cause and effect that nature provides us with. Art and science, friendship, personality and love can be really fostered only by improving the conditions they depend upon. These conditions are not merely material in the grosser sense—they include culture and education as well as shelter, clothing and food. As an example one may cite the "social psychology" which friends of the spiritual values are trying to secure. If they succeed they present the friends of morality and art with the kind of knowledge that the world sadly needs. If any one is happier and better for believing that values are superhuman, he is surely welcome to his faith, but whenever he seeks to really promote a cause in the world, he must adapt his method to what the empirical facts happen to be. This is, perhaps, a pity, but it is a situation that the naturalist has learned to accept.

I have not asked my questions as simply and as briefly as I intended to, but perhaps I can ask them now.

(A) Must we not recognize that logic is a purely formal and technical science, and therefore not adapted to decide existential problems? And if so, must we not admit that such problems have to be decided by the evidence of empirical observation?

(B) Must we not give up that conception of knowledge which assumes for it a more than empirical certainty, and formulate a new conception obtained by describing familiar cases of knowledge grounded on evidence, such as biology, chemistry, history? Must we not, in a word, begin to use an empirical epistemology. In America, as Professor Kemp Smith is well aware, an important beginning has been made.

(C) Are we not deceiving ourselves when we dwell upon man's "animal nature," with the result that human progress and civilization becomes inexplicable on natural grounds? Is that idea a remnant, perhaps, of Kantian austerity?

(D) In view of the relation which the nature of logic and the

importance of empirical evidence bear to the whole discussion, must we not accept the naturalistic account of the animistic tradition? This does not mean that we scoff at the gods of Greece, or at the art of the Middle Ages, or at the logic of Hegel. It does not mean that we regret the animistic tradition in history. It means only that we recognize a tradition where there is one, and, on a question of fact (not to be confused with a question of value), we make our decision on the basis of the evidence we have. The naturalist does not regard these decisions as necessarily final, finality being a dialectical virtue.

(E) Is it not clear that what makes successful inference possible in the extra-academic life is the regularity of nature and of organized human affairs? One whose experience did not teach him to infer would not survive long in the physical world that we know. And is not logic thus accounted for without mystery, and man's incorrigible habit of generalization, as well as his admirable skill in passing universal judgments?

(F) And finally, what reason is there except an attachment to what is imaginative and poetic, for supposing that spiritual values are in any wise lacking in human worth if they are "merely human"?

III

I began by saying that in this discussion it might be well to seek a new orientation, and the lecture itself by its classification of philosophical attitudes as skepticism, naturalism and idealism suggests what this might be. Instead of this historical classification suppose we speak of criticism, knowledge and purpose. What Professor Kemp Smith says of skepticism is just and sufficient, and will answer as an appreciation of the function of criticism. The civilization that man has built up is partly a function of his social experience and traditions, but it is largely a function of his slowly acquired science. In any case, if ideals are to be translated into purposes, success depends not only on the necessary goodwill, but on the necessary knowledge. The discontinuity between science and human interests is entirely accidental, owing largely to the inevitable specialization in any world where much progress has been made. People differ, of course, in temperament and capacity, and academic likes and dislikes get translated sometimes into theoretic harmonies and discords. But if the idealist is beginning to find, as he surely ought to, in the naturalist as loyal a servant as himself of higher things, and if the naturalist can understand the symbolism of the supernaturalist, a new beginning has been made. Ideals are helpless without the knowledge that science alone can offer, and science undevoted to ideals is a technical or an academic specialization. The

just conception of naturalism is therefore far more generous than the one idealists seem to entertain. Naturalism completed and thought out does not turn into animistic idealism, but it does develop into an empirical idealism in which the word idealism recovers its popular meaning and signifies a whole-souled response to humanity's needs and opportunities.

Such an empirical idealism is, it seems to the reviewer, what philosophy is on the way to becoming, and this should give us the orientation that many students of it must long have wished for. Old ideas, as expressive of an honest moral faith, and held as precious by so many men and women of fine culture, are not to be treated as merely speculative error; but they must be re-identified as genuinely imaginative. The field of expression we need to recognize is the one called poetry, and to identify idealism as poetry is by no means to reject its essential faith and its analysis of what is called in the lecture "the intimate aspect of experience." Idealism's faith in art and poetry as a serious and important expression of the human spirit is referred to in the lecture, and this faith is natural to those who are at home in a similar atmosphere and who are interested, ultimately, not in facts but in values, if the antithesis may be allowed. If idealism is esteemed for its implications, so is poetry valued for the sensitive wisdom which men and women that know those "intimate aspects of experience" have so often used it to reveal. The identity is an identity of function. Supernaturalism can not be any longer justified as knowledge, but it may be justified as poetry if used with enlightened sincerity. For as the lecturer justly says (p.19), "idealism can not afford to be obscurantist."

This transition from supernaturalism to "ethically idealistic" naturalism, from animistic "idealism" to empirical idealism, is I believe, going on in philosophy at the present time.

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ROUSSEAU AND CONSCIENCE

MY volume *Rousseau and Romanticism* evidently strikes Professor Schinz as a violent diatribe rather than as a sober critique. Curiously enough his review¹ affects me in very much the same way. He seems to me to make an almost bewildering variety of misleading statements either about my point of view or that of Rousseau—varied by an occasional misstatement. As an example of the latter one may take his assertion that I abuse Rousseau and the Rousseauists "because they express regret at not

¹ See this JOURNAL, Vol. XVII., No. 1, January 1, 1920.