VIII.—WHY PLURALISM?

A SYMPOSIUM BY J. H. MUIRHEAD, F. C. S. SCHILLER, AND
A. E. TAYLOR.

1.—By J. H. MUIRHEAD.

THIS is not Pragmatism again. All pragmatists are not pluralists; witness Mr. H. G. Wells, the latest and most brilliant recruit (may I say?) to philosophy as well as to Pragmatism.* Nor are all pluralists pragmatists, witness Mr. Pigou† and the new school of Realism to which he belongs. Any argument against pluralism must therefore be double edged. It must be directed against those who protest against Speculative Idealism, or as I should prefer to call it, Spiritual Realism, in the interest of the integrity of the Object as well as against those who do so in the interest of the integrity of the Subject. Yet, while our subject is not Pragmatism, neither is it, so far as I am concerned, pluralism in general, but pluralism as advocated in the recent literature of Pragmatism. Not only because of the constitution of this symposium, but because it is the oxygen which pragmatist writers have supplied that has revived pluralism as a popular creed, it seems desirable to confine the discussion within these limits.

I wish to begin by noting that in the situation as thus defined there is an element of paradox which has not, I think, received sufficient attention. The present may be said to be a Monistic age. In whatever direction we look, the inspiration comes from the idea of an underlying unity in things, a "presence" in nature, a general will in society of men, an onward, organising movement in history, a single energy underlying the multiform forces of nature. In all these fields Monism seems

* *First and Last Things*, especially p. 47.

† *The Problem of Theism*.

to be known by its works. Yet we have the oddity of those who have made themselves the champions of the dynamics of motive protesting against it in favour of a new form of Pluralism.

Before going on to examine the position here indicated, it will be well to sift out from the different senses in which Monism and with it its opposite Pluralism may be used. Professor James mentions no less than eight in his chapter on "The One and the Many,"* in order to define the sense in which he is prepared to advocate it. They are really reducible to two.†

1. Pluralism may mean the denial of that form of Monism for which the name of Spinoza stands, the doctrine that there is only one substance and the substantial existence of ourselves and of concrete things in space and time is a mere appearance. Logically expressed, there is only one subject; all things else (ourselves included), are only its modes or attributes. It is this form of Monism that Hegel is supposed to have disposed of by insisting on the idea of subject, and not substance, as the clue to our universe. But as recent developments of Hegelian doctrine have seemed to indicate a reversion towards Spinozism, it is necessary to re-affirm the reality of the many in the sense, at any rate, of the validity of our immediate consciousness of our own individuality and to support it from the side of logic by insisting on the place of the subject and the reality of the moment of difference in the judgment.

There are, of course, difficulties in all this which those who, like Green, have stood for it are accused of shirking, but in intention rationalists are no less pluralist in this sense than their critics.

Nor has Pragmatism any advantage in the admission of the form of pluralism which surmises the existence of intermediate

* *Pragmatism*, Lecture IV.

† This part of my paper was rewritten after reading Professor Taylor's which follows.

spirits between the human and the Absolute or Supreme. So far from being closed to this admission, idealism has always left an open door for it. The difference between its hierarchy and that with which it has recently* been unfavourably compared is that, truer to experience, it takes its analogy from the higher forms of mind, of whose spirituality it has actual knowledge, the mind of a church, a nation, the community of mankind, not from agglomerates of matter of whose independent consciousness it has no evidence.

2. Pluralism may mean the assertion of the existence of unique individual things not only irresolvable into the one substance as its modes or attributes, but impervious to one another in such a way that while they exist together in the same universe, each, so far as the other is concerned, is a closed universe in itself. The other makes no difference to it; they happen together; their relations to each other are only extrinsic. In a strict sense they are independent of each other as things in space might be conceived of as being if they could be supposed to exercise no influence on one another, or to be in no sense determined in their nature by this property of influencing other things; or, as points in space might be conceived of if again they were supposed to have a being undetermined by their relation to other points. This, which as opposed to "relative" might be called "absolute" pluralism, is that to which we must now understand Pragmatism in its most authoritative exponent to be committed. Readers of some of its earlier literature have found themselves puzzled by a certain hesitancy. "Of course," we have been told, "the world is one."† Space and time at least are one.‡ Such independence as there is may be only semi-independence after all.§ Idealism in contrast to Pragmatism is accused of ignoring

* *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1909.

† *Pragmatism*, p. 131.

‡ *Will to Believe*, p. 270.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

the "noiseless step of continuity."* On the other hand, the "noiseless step" is everywhere checked. "Between different qualities jolts remain; each, so far as the other is concerned, is an absolutely separate and contingent being."† But whatever doubt there may have been has been set aside by Professor James's most recent exposition of *A Pluralistic Universe*, in which he makes it clear that it is this absolute pluralism of which he desires to assert not only the possibility but the probability upon his principles. "Radical empiricism" seems to him to force on us the assertion of a substantive core of impermeable individuality in things, and the denial of the doctrine of which Mr. Bradley is the most distinguished exponent, that the conception of relations which are merely extrinsic and make no difference to the terms related is self-contradictory. Though I believe that Mr. Bradley's argument, when properly understood, is conclusive on this point, I do not desire to seek to re-establish it here. Those who deny it have Plato and the other prophets to witness to the mutual implication of things that are other, the relativity and *with it* the reality of negation,‡ and are not likely to be convinced by any restatement of their arguments which I might here attempt. What I desire to show is that pluralism, in the sense to which leading pragmatists have committed themselves, is inconsistent with pragmatist principles themselves, and if true would involve the sacrifice just of those interests, regard for which is the first and prevailing note of their movement.

(1) Starting from the side of knowledge Pragmatism as I understand it, has no intention of denying the possibility of knowledge and the real difference between truth and falsity. It emphasises indeed the "personal" element in all forms of truth seeking. The truth is relative to the particular "intention" of the seeker. But by this it is not meant, as

* *Ibid.*, p. 289.

† *Ibid.*, p. 291.

‡ This logically enough Professor James denies.

pragmatists have frequently protested, that man is the measure in any Protagorean sense. There is the objective world which may be said to have set the problem and, at any rate, conditions the answer. What is not noticed, is that in order to have valid knowledge in any field of human intention, we must proceed in the assumption that this world is single. The test of truth is the degree of fittingness of the candidate for acceptance into the *system* of truth already developed, or, looking from the other side, the degree of hospitality it exercises towards the *whole* of existing truth. Here there is no question of "real possibilities" or "contingencies" outside of the line of these requirements. From the point of view of knowledge, if we are to have knowledge at all, such contingencies, such discords, must be treated of as negatives, either error or as yet unsystematised elements,—projections from the common world of truth whose continuity with the enclosing crust is still unverified but must be regarded as verifiable under certain circumstances. If this statement lays too much stress on abstract adaptation or "coherence" instead of direction and guidance, it is not intended to controvert the more concrete or pragmatical statement. I only wish for the moment to consider the logical side of the problem, and for the passive harmony *with* all truth I have spoken of I am prepared to substitute the active standard of guiding us *into* all truth.

(2) Can we transfer all this to moral truth? We not only may, but, I think, on pragmatic principles we must. Morality knows no more than logic of two co-ordinate worlds of order and chaos. Its ideal, no less than that of logic, is systematisation, unification; its test is the power of entertaining and being entertained. No one has stated this better than Professor William James. The philosopher, he tells us—(and clearly he regards it as to the philosopher's credit)—knows "that he must vote always for the richer universe, for the good which seems most organisable, most fit to enter into complex combinations, most apt to be member of a more inclusive whole."* He adds, indeed,

* *Will to Believe*, p. 210.

that in actual working all must be tentative, but this reservation is a common possession of all modern statements. The essential point is the recognition that what Pragmatism requires in order to vindicate an inspiring "working" theory of duty is not a belief in a wholly indeterminate world, which may be made to set one way or another according to the energy of man's desire and choice, but a world of systematised activity standing to the unsystematised in the relation of affirmative to negative.

(3) May we advance from these partial and relative unities, the truth of which is vouched for not only by their working but by their being the source of all work, to the assertion on the same ground of the unity of the whole? Here Professor James, as is well known, has recently made an interesting admission. The hypothesis of an "absolute" unity is no longer set aside as a barren dogma but has a place, if a limited one, assigned to it as the basis of the "holiday-taking attitude" of mind which we call religion. But having admitted so much, it is clearly impossible to stop here. Granting the appropriateness of the definition, religion cannot in philosophy, any more than life, be taken as a mere isolated part, a sabbatical moment of possible value in itself but without relation to other parts. It is just in relation to the other parts that the sense of the ultimate validity of their ideals, truth, beauty, goodness—(as in relation to the work of the week Sunday's renewal of faith)—is of value. It is, of course, a venture to go beyond the unity of each to the unity of all, but it is a venture of precisely the same kind as the others, and while involving, could, I believe, be shown to be involved in them. To assign pragmatic value to the one is to assign it also to the others.

It is for these reasons that I cannot believe that Pragmatism can suffer itself to come to anchor in Pluralism and Alogism. It has temporarily been driven there by stress of weather. When the sky clears, the "call of the homeland" will be too strong for it. Of this clearing, I believe there are already signs in the attempt to reinterpret classical Idealism in a sense which, while

remaining true to the rational Monism which is the pole-star of the modern world, leaves ample scope for spiritual adventure. I wish to conclude this paper by indicating in a condensed form what, in my view, the lines of this reinterpretation must be.

Idealists, or by whatever name the "centre" of the present philosophical host chooses to be called, are presumably agreed in accepting the formula "from substance to subject." Fidelity to this and all that it implies must, I believe, be the key-note of all their work.

(1) The universal or infinite realises itself in finite particular minds and wills, not as accidents or imperfections of it, but as the essential form in which it lives and moves. (2) On their side, to be subjects in the true sense these must be conceived of as possessing a life which is truly their own, the expression of their own nature as self-determinant. In saying subject we say self, in saying self we say free creator. (3) No conception of the infinite can therefore be true which does not leave room for movement, process, free creation. Oldness, sameness, permanence of principle and direction, these must be, otherwise there is *nothing*; but newness of embodiment, existence, realisation also, otherwise nothing *is*.

Now it is just to these implications in the idea of Subject that some of the prominent recent expositions of Idealism seem to me to have failed to do justice. They have failed particularly when they have left the idea of "determination" unpurged of the suggestion of time succession. The very word lends itself to this mistake. Idealists have gone beyond others in asserting that the subject is timeless. This involves that its activity cannot be truly conceived of as included in an antecedent, as an effect in a cause or one term of an equation in the other. As the activity of a subject or spirit it is essentially a new birth. It is this failure that has led to the present revolt against a "block universe." But the difficulty is not to be met by running to the opposite extreme in the assertion of a loose and ramshackle one. This is merely

another way of perpetuating the mistake of allowing the notion of determination by an *other* or a preceding to continue to dominate us in a region where we have in reality passed from it to the notion of determination by self or by self-acknowledged ideals. The correction from the side of the monist consists in a more whole-hearted acceptance of the conception of determination by an ideal as the conception that unites the apparently contradicting "moments" determinate and indeterminate,—necessity and freedom,—in the life of mind ; from the side of the pluralist in the recognition of the valuelessness of a freedom which does not mean submission to a self-chosen, though not self-created, law.

The solution here suggested is more likely, I believe, to meet with opposition from the side of rationalism than of Pragmatism. It involves, it will be said, the reality of time, the dependence of the Infinite on the finite, and therewith a departure from the whole line of Hegelian thought. I will best commend it by saying a word in conclusion on each of these points :—

(1) It does, I believe, involve the reality of time in the sense that it involves the reality of existence. Our starting point in "subject" involves that realisation in time, in other words actual existence (*ἐνέργεια*), is a necessary moment in reality. Without it the eternal is not complete or, if eternity means completeness, is not truly eternal, reality is not truly real. Our mistake lies in abstraction of the one from the other, which, as always, ends in confusion of the one with the other. We begin by rashly abstracting eternity from time and end by thinking of it, contradictorily, as unending time :

"One long day that hours no more offend."

Truth lies in giving each its place. Not only does eternity assert the conception of the hour but the hour asserts the conception of eternity,—with what adequacy is another question. This view has of course to run the gauntlet of such

arguments as that which Dr. McTaggart has recently developed with so much brilliancy in *Mind* (vol. xvii). I cannot here enter upon this. But I wish to take this opportunity of protesting against the assumption on which such arguments commonly proceed, that to set forth the contrary elements which are united in particular forms of thought and being is *so far* to undermine their reality. Instead of referring us beyond them for the solution of the so-called contradictions I wish to suggest that these forms are themselves the solution. It is as though we were to urge the difficulties that the architect has had to surmount—the opposite qualities he has had to combine in building a house—as a reason for pulling down the house he has built; or as though you were to deny that the kettle was any good because it brought fire and water together. This is like quarrelling with our bread and butter. What leads to contradiction in the destructive sense is not the attempt to unite opposites in the category itself; that has already been done! but the attempt to use the category as the solution of the problem of existence at a different level, to use one's house for a public meeting, one's tea kettle for a chemical retort.

Applying this to time, it is no argument against its reality that the contrary determinations of past, present, and future are united in it. Time is there to unite them: its reality just consists in holding the whole three in solution. From this point of view it would be no evasion of the criticism to say that they are not contradictory because they belong to the event at different *times*. The idea of an "event" is just such a union. What leads to contradiction, to the assertion that things both are and are not at the same time, is to arrest our thought of a thing at the time level and treat things as merely successive (*post hoc ergo propter hoc*).

(2) The second of the above objections takes its point, I suppose, from the contradiction to religious consciousness which seems to be involved. This I cannot help thinking is

a mistake. Religious consciousness asserts, no doubt, that God is necessary to the soul: from Him as its inspiration, to Him as its ideal are all things. But it asserts with equal emphasis that the soul is necessary to God. To declare itself an unnecessary creation is surely on the part of the individual soul unnecessary impiety. God lives in the soul as it in Him. He also might say, from it as His offspring, to it as the object of His outgoing love are all things.

(3) With regard to Hegel, like Homer he doubtless nods. The passage,* quoted in this same connection by Mr. Boyce Gibson,† may very well be an instance of the use of "illusion" where we should use "appearance." Yet in the same section Hegel provides the correction in assigning an "actualising force" to this illusion and making it a "necessary dynamic element of truth." Consistently with this we have the conclusion stated in the succeeding section on the Will. "Good, the final end of the world, has being only while it constantly produces itself. And the world of spirit and the world of nature continue to have this distinction, that the latter moves only in a recurring cycle while the former certainly also makes progress." It is a question in the last resort, as already stated, of the depth which we assign to the moment of otherness in the life of the Whole. I think, therefore, that Professor Bosanquet has gone to the root of the matter in his article on "Contradiction and Reality,"‡ in insisting that the mistake is not Hegel's but ours, and consists in taking negation in a half-hearted way. I do not wish to implicate Dr. Bosanquet in my conclusion, but I take this to mean, for the subject of this paper, that we must give up the idea of the Infinite as endowed with a static perfection which the finite will merely reproduces, and definitely recognise the

* *Logic*, § 212.

† *Mind*, N.S., vol. xvii.

‡ *Mind*, N.S., vol. xv.

forward effort of the finite as an essential element in Its self-expression.

2.—By F. C. S. SCHILLER.

NOTHING in the course of my chequered philosophic career has ever surprised me more than the title of Professor Muirhead's paper. For when I first suggested Pluralism as a suitable subject for a "symposium," I thought that the feelings of orthodox philosophers would be most adequately expressed by formulating the question *Why is Pluralism absurd?*, and I esteemed it a chivalrous concession to the under dogs when Professor Muirhead announced that he would discuss our failings under the gentler title *Is Pluralism tenable?*. Hence his actual title made me rub my eyes. How had a doctrine which practically all metaphysicians of repute, from Parmenides to Bradley, had joined in abusing as inconceivable fatuity, suddenly leaped into a position of such predominance that the question was no longer whether a good word could be said for Pluralism but rather whether a good reason could be alleged against it? What had become of all the subtleties with which the dominant sect of metaphysicians only a few years ago were wont to overwhelm the wretched pluralists? Had all their refutations been so worthless that it was now better to pass them over in discreet silence? Could it really be that a few incidental and informal protests of a handful of pragmatists, even though they were reinforced (on other grounds) by a few revivers of metaphysical realism, had availed to dam the monistic flood that had run so irresistibly throughout the ages? Or could it be that monistic writers had grown tardily conscious of the enormous difficulties their creed had embodied from the first, and suddenly sensitive to the moral and intellectual objections that had always been urged against it in vain? Why was the tone of the discussion suddenly elevated above the level at which it stood when in England (as still in

Germany) to own to Pluralism was to confess oneself a philosophic pariah?

However, it seems ungracious to cavil at gift horses, and injudicious to exhaust one's time in wonder at so felicitous a transformation, and so I will content myself with welcoming the novel tone of Professor Muirhead's paper. It seems to me as amiable as Professor Muirhead himself, and a harbinger of politer and more tolerant methods of discussion. Indeed I cannot but deplore that the duty of assuming a critical attitude towards it should have devolved upon me. Perhaps, however, I may be permitted to begin by noting certain important points of agreement I have with him.

(1) I quite agree that strictly the question has nothing to do with Pragmatism. Pragmatism is a concern of logical method, Pluralism one of metaphysical speculation; and the use of a method does not entail the adoption of a metaphysic. No one is bound to speculate; for there are safe investments even in philosophy. But I also note that Professor Muirhead's practice does not wholly accord with his professions; he does not in point of fact abstain from basing arguments on Pragmatism. And herein also I agree with him; Pragmatism is too much in the air not to get into the cups of modern symposiasts. Nor are his arguments all *ad hominem*; there is a real connexion between Pragmatism and Monism as he conceives them, though something will presently have to be said as to the quality of the Pragmatism. However, I will willingly admit that any pragmatist may try to work with a monistic metaphysic. I will even regret that Professor James should sometimes write as though the logical sins of Absolutism entailed the utter condemnation of every metaphysical belief in the unity of the universe. But I will finally point out that the plurality which Humanism shows to be inherent in the conception of any actual truth does put a serious *prima facie* obstacle in the way of all monistic metaphysics.

(2) I will agree further that *in some sense* the monistic tendency in philosophy is justified. More precisely, I will admit that a certain unity is a *methodological* postulate in all subjects of inquiry. The real question is whether this warrants the assertion of Monism in *every* sense. However, I will not deny even this outright, but rejoice the heart of every true monist by frankly admitting that conceivably some sort of Monism may turn out to be ultimately true ; that, *e.g.*, the One may have madly dissociated itself into a discordant Many. I will confess further that I am not at present prepared to propound an absolutely cogent proof of metaphysical Pluralism. Lastly, I will, as a token of my candour and caution, beg my monistic critics to pardon some dogmatic indiscretions of my metaphysical youth, in the shape of some over confident and over positive affirmations of Pluralism in Chapter 11 of *Riddles of the Sphinx*,* and to note rather some praiseworthy efforts to suggest monistic possibilities in *Studies in Humanism*, Essay XI.

It should now be clear that I am not prepared to play the utter pluralist on the strength of a dogmatic metaphysic. In the present state of our knowledge no scientific decision seems possible of the question whether the "universe" is ultimately many or ultimately mad ; while philosophic speculation may easily find more profitable themes. It follows that a very large part of Professor Muirhead's paper does not touch me. In the sense he gives to Pluralism, it may even be doubted whether I am entitled to call myself a pluralist at all.

This, however, brings me to the end of my tether, to the point beyond which I can make no further concessions to Monism. Why this is so may possibly appear if I try to state quite simply how I conceive my pluralism. It is a *criticism*, and not a *dogmatism*. It is merely a negation of Monism, merely a protest against its logical defects. It merely means that I have not so far come across any Monism which did not

* P. 403.

seem to rest on fatally unsound arguments, and to give a wholly inadequate interpretation of the facts of life. From this critical position all the persuasiveness of Professor Muirhead's arguments, which present as good a case for Monism as any I know, have failed to move me. My reply, therefore, will be largely a restatement of objections which have already often been made by myself and others, and further justification of this procedure will be found in the fact that monistic arguments also recur, and in the hope that renewed efforts may at length extract from the tender and responsive mood which has now come over Monism, answers to objections it has hitherto ignored.

But as it is manifestly impossible within the limits of this paper to examine all the defects of Monism, I will confine myself to those which appear to be exemplified in Professor Muirhead's chief arguments.

(1) Like all monists, Professor Muirhead appears to me to misinterpret the philosophic craving for unity and the unifying function of Science. It is, indeed, clearly true that for reasons of methodological convenience we shall always aim at the greatest amount of unification, and shall therefore postulate unifying principles wherever we can, and be biassed in their favour. But does it follow that this desire of ours, this direction of our scientific energies, carries with it, as such, a guarantee of its own satisfaction? Surely not. And if it be maintained that faith in the rationality of the universe requires us to assert this, I fear I shall be tempted to retort that this sort of rationalism is a naive humanism which my critical sobriety declines to sanction.

I must question further whether this postulate, whatever its logical status, can in any case be made to yield a proof of Monism. In the present state of our knowledge and its problems there does not seem to be any scientific or human purpose (apart from the interest of monistic philosophy we are contesting) for the sake of which we either really desire, or are validly enabled, to treat the world as truly one. The sciences

are plural ; they make a plurality of assumptions ; they deal with a plurality of objects ; they serve a plurality of purposes. Even where our thought systematises and unifies, it only does so in order to classify and control a multifarious flux of events. The unity of an abstract conception, therefore, seems nothing but a device for facilitating a multiplicity of concrete applications. Thus, as Professor James insists, there is no standpoint from which the world appears as really one. Of all this Monism appears to have no inkling, although it should perceive it to be implied in its admission that its One cannot retain its abstract purity but must realise and dissolve itself into a Many.

(2) But even if it were a profitable postulate of philosophic method to treat the world as one, it would not follow that our experience actually submitted to this treatment, and that therefore the world could truly be called one. The alleged postulate would still need verification. Of this requirement, also, monists seem to be unconscious. Their gay assumption is that if they want the world to be one, why, then, hey presto, it is one ! The "underlying unity of things," to which the whole perplexing plurality of experiences is nominally referred, is conjured into being by the mere magic of human desire. To the severity of pragmatic logic this "rational axiom" of metaphysic is nothing but an unsupported postulate.

(3) If we ask how it is proved that there *is* such an underlying unity of the universe, the monistic faith sinks into sheer verbalism and the morasses of the ontological argument. It retorts: "Is not the world a 'world' ? Would not *two* worlds, related by however slender a thread, inevitably form part of *one* universe, and is not all being, therefore, necessarily *one* ?" And so it suspends the word "*universe*" above the pluralist's head to terrify him into surrender.

But it thereby merely shows that it has not understood our question. Not even Damocles would have been terrified by the word "sword" on a placard, and the question is whether the word "universe" is more than such a placard. Even if it

betokened a real sword that successfully descended, it would presumably cleave Damocles in *two*, and so refute its own monistic function. But what we really questioned was the identity of our "world" and "the universe." What we wanted to know was whether the conception of universe *applied* to our experience. Has the former real validity? Does the latter form a real whole, and if so in what sense? And if in any sense it can be said that the world is one, and the universe is one, do we know this *a priori* or learn it from experience?

Moreover, even if it seemed probable that the world was one in one sense, *e.g.*, in space (though, of course, dream-spaces are not in the same space with the space of waking life, nor the latter with those of the geometries, even though a thread of subjective connexion runs through them all), can it properly be inferred that it is one also in all the other senses which it may please any one to smuggle into the meaning of "universe"?*

These are questions of fact and not of the interpretation of concepts, and to seek to answer them by the latter is an irrelevance.

To all these questions Monism has only one stereotyped reply. The concrete world of experience must have all the abstract perfections the monist's heart desires, because his conception of universe must be applicable to it. Why must it? Because reality is so delicately responsive to our lightest wish? Is not all this, as I have shown,† merely a form of the ontological argument which proceeds from a bare thought to the reality of a corresponding object, and that in a peculiarly indefensible form? Is there any reason to think the world truly one, in any inward way, merely because some one chooses to apply the word "universe" to it? The whole procedure seems to me a typical example of the uncritical humanism

* Cf. *Studies in Humanism*, pp. 292, 295, 333.

† *Studies in Humanism*, pp. 251-3.

which confuses desire with fact; and it is the duty of philosophic humanism to restrain this instinct, even when it masquerades in the trappings of "Pure Reason."

(4) Whatever the value of the notion of universe, it is promptly plunged in self-contradiction when Monism proceeds to add that its universe is also infinite. For an infinite whole seems nonsense, even if the meaning of infinite is watered down to mean only greater than anything we can imagine. For in proving the world "infinite," *e.g.*, in space, the word had originally to be taken in another sense. But this physical infinity really means that all motion is relative, that no physical quantities admit of fixed determination, and that no predications can be known to be true of the world as a whole.*

(5) But even waiving all this and granting that the world may be assumed to be in some sense capable of unity, why, pray, should its unity be conceived as something "underlying" and already realised? Why make it a presupposition of the world-process rather than its goal, an Absolute instead of an Ultimate, as James excellently proposes?† The question is an old one. It has never been answered, and becomes the more pressing, if (as by Professor Muirhead, but, I cannot help thinking, in defiance of the best monistic metaphysics‡ and of logical consistency) the world's time-process is admitted to be real. For in this case unity as an ultimate ideal seems to satisfy all legitimate aspirations, and it seems gratuitous to reduce the actual process to a farce by assuming that all it brings has already "somehow" pre-existed eternally.§

(6) It appears to be necessary to point out once more|| that the common argument against Pluralism which is based on the

* Cf. *Riddles of the Sphinx*, pp. 246-58, 341-46; *Humanism*, p. 214 n.; *Studies in Humanism*, p. 449 n.

† *Pragmatism*, p. 159; cf. *Riddles of the Sphinx*, pp. 357-8.

‡ *E.g.*, Spinoza, Hegel, Bradley, McTaggart.

§ Cf. *Studies in Humanism*, p. 450.

|| Cf. *Humanism*, p. 65-8.

use of the word independence is utterly untenable. For in order that the word may be used to convict Pluralism of absurdity, so absurdly extreme a sense must be imposed on it that it renders inconceivable any sort of communion or intercourse, and therefore all knowable coexistence, between the "independent" things. In this extreme sense to declare two things independent means to render them unknowable and inaccessible to each other, and to assert in the same breath a knowledge of the unknowable! But this is merely to render the word useless and inapplicable, and to compel such pluralists as have been incautious enough to use it to find another phrase for what they really meant. It is also to make nonsense of the view that truths and realities can be independent of man. Yet it is this same view which the masses of our rationalists and realists are most anxious to maintain. And as they are also for the most part anxious to be monists, they have to choose between their pet objections to Pluralism and to Humanism.* It does not greatly matter to me which they jettison, because I know too well that neither has Pluralism ever affirmed nor has Humanism ever denied "independence" in the senses these objections imply.

(7) There is, lastly, one important statement of Professor Muirhead's which must definitely be traversed. He declares that "no rationalist denies uniqueness." This is at best a half-truth. The rationalist does not usually deny the fact, but he denies its intelligibility and value. All rationalists from Plato downwards† have persistently denied that "the particular way in which a thing is related to another" is intelligible in its full concreteness. Nor have they ever fully realised that the whole contents of science and life are composed of such "particulars," which it is the menial function

* *Studies in Humanism*, p. 98; and "The Rationalistic Conception of Truth," in these *Proceedings*, p. 85.

† *Theætetus*, 209.

of their pampered universals to manipulate for human ends. Whenever, therefore, it has been attempted to *apply* their fine-drawn systems of conceptual abstractions, they have refused to work. They have one and all confessed to finding in the concrete individual an ineradicable taint of "appearance," "non-being," "contingency," "irrationality," etc., which their methods could neither master nor account for. But what was this but to confess individuality unintelligible as such? And is not the very placidity with which, after this invariable fiasco, rationalisms have retired into the impalpable recesses of their suprasensible phantom-worlds, in order to contemplate eternal relations in their static and sterile purity, the best proof that they have never grasped the facts that if a scheme is unworkable it is untrue, if inapplicable, unmeaning, and that our whole business is precisely to find ways of recognising, valuing, and handling the individualities that compose the real? Its incapacity to perceive this problem has always seemed to me to convict Rationalism of a profounder irrationality than any any irrationalism has ever ventured to allege.

These then are, very concisely, and I fear brusquely, some of my reasons for disputing the self-evidence and rationality of Monism. Until some answer to them is forthcoming, it hardly seems necessary to be very apologetic about "Pluralism."

3.—By A. E. TAYLOR.

THE question before us is not, of course, a new one, nor has it really anything to do with the passing warfare between the Rationalist and the Irrationalist. Rationalism, if it means anything which has ever been seriously believed in by philosophers, is the name for a method, not for a dogma, and acceptance of the method commits us to no particular dogma as to the degree of unity to be found in the world. And we have only to look at the history of thought to see that Irrationalism

has been found consistent with theories as unlike one another as the Monism of Schopenhauer, and the radical Pluralism of Professor James. In fact, I may remind you that the great Pluralistic thinkers, Plato, Leibniz, Herbart, have all been pronounced Rationalists, whereas typical Monists, like Spinoza, can easily be shown to have reached their result by sacrificing logic to imagination and emotion. That no "cheap and easy Monism can stand before an inquiry into logic" is even more obvious to-day than it was when Mr. Bradley wrote the words. The question which awaits our verdict is, to my mind, whether a "cheap and easy" Pluralism can stand before an inquiry into life.

Before I go further I must guard against misunderstanding by a preliminary definition of terms. The name Monism is currently used indifferently to describe either of two very different doctrines, and it sometimes happens that the same person employs the word in both senses in the course of the same argument. In the strict sense it means the theory that there is only one real subject of all predication, the Absolute, Reality, the Universe, God; but the name is also often given to anything which asserts that real subjects of predication, whatever their number, are all of the same kind. In what follows Monism will be understood throughout in the strict sense, as meaning the doctrine that all assertions are ultimately predications about one and the same real individual or subject of predicates, and that this ultimate subject of all predication is the *only* genuine individual existent. By Pluralism I shall consequently understand the antithetical doctrine that there is more than one real individual, or unit, or subject of predicates, and further that the various real individuals are strictly independent of one another, not merely in the sense that none of them is a predicate of another, but in the sense that they are connected solely by "extrinsic" relations, relations not "grounded" in the nature of the terms between which they subsist. I shall then try to show that neither strict Monism

nor rigid Pluralism can be the last word of a rational interpretation of life.

First as to Monism. It should be clear that no form of Monism, whether "cheap and easy" or otherwise, is compatible with a serious belief in the validity of logic or of the pure mathematical sciences. Logic itself presupposes a plurality of terms as its subject-matter, and any adequate logic presupposes also that there are other relations between its terms than that of connection in the way of subject and predicate. Were there only one term, logic would be reducible to a single proposition, the Law of Identity. And matters would not be mended by the view that though there is only one subject of predication, there is a multitude of predicates of it. On this view, the simplest logical operations or propositions would still be impossible, as we can see at once, as soon as we get rid of the mistaken assumption that the connection of predicate, or "wandering adjective," with subject, or substantive, is the only type of connection of which logic takes account. The falsity of this assumption is patent, even if by logic we mean nothing more than the traditional doctrine of the syllogism, since not one of the relations between propositions themselves of which that doctrine treats, such as the relation of a proposition to its contradictory, converse, or contrapositive, is a connection in the way of subject and predicate. And I need hardly add that the same thing is equally true of the commonly recognised mathematical sciences, quite independently of the question whether they can all be reduced to symbolic logic or not. They all deal with types of relation between a plurality of units, or groups of units. With the discovery of the construction of the continuum out of elements, the last possibility of making Arithmetic and Geometry even look compatible with Spinozistic Monism has vanished.

I take it, then, as axiomatic for any serious interpretation of the world that there is a plurality of real units or subjects of predication, in fact, in the proper sense of the word, a

plurality of substances. By substance, I mean what is called in the tract on the *Categories* *πρώτη οὐσία*, that which can neither be predicated of nor "inhere in" anything else, that which can never figure in a significant predication as predicate, but only as subject. To speak with logical precision, a substance is always the only member of a class of one. Everything is a substance which is a uniquely individual existent, and has a true proper name. And here, to meet a possible criticism, I would remark in passing that the only reason why such things as the points of a space, or the real numbers are not substances, is that they are not, properly speaking, existents. If they existed, they would have to be substances.

The reason why no individual can be a predicate is clear; it can never be *defined* by a synthesis of universals, but can only be uniquely determined by its unique contact with the stream of immediate experience. It is always a "this," a "here," a "now," and even in calling it so we do not *define* its individuality. It is *this* "this," *this* "here," *this* "now."

It cannot, then, be a true account of anything which is a real individual to call it a *predicate* of Reality, or of the Absolute, or of God. A predicate is always a general meaning, and precisely what we mean by calling a thing individual is that it is not a mere general meaning or "meeting-point of universals." No matter how many universals you suppose to "meet" at your "point," the result still remains as merely universal as each of its components. It is still the *class*, not the unique member of the class which you have constructed or defined. The individuality of the individual has slipped through your hands in your attempt to exhaust, and so define it, by a complication of predicates. If, then, there is any individuality short of that of the Universe, whatever the relation between other individuals and the individual which is the all-in-all may be, there is one thing it cannot be; it cannot be connection in the way of predicate with subject.

Now that there are real individuals, or substances, which are *not* the Universe, or Absolute, seems patent from our direct experience of ourselves as thinking, feeling, and willing. The unique individuality of the self as a centre of immediate experience is a datum which as philosophers we are called upon to explain, if we can, but are equally called upon not to explain away. The matter might be put in the following light. A predicate, taken in extension, is always a class. Every proposition which refers a predicate to a subject may be replaced by an equivalent proposition affirming the inclusion of the subject in a class. I do not at present say that the connection of predicate with subject is *identical* with the relation of inclusion in a class, but I do say that there is a one-to-one relation between the two. If then a given man, let us call him John Smith, is a predicate, or "mode" of the Absolute, the Absolute must be a "John-Smithish" thing. John Smith will be a class of which the Absolute is a member. But the difficulty is that John Smith is not a class at all. There is, indeed, a class of which John Smith is the only member, and which careless logic may confound with John Smith, viz., the class of "beings identical with John Smith." But to say that the Absolute is a member of *this* class amounts to saying that the Absolute is numerically identical with John Smith. John Smith is the Absolute, and the Absolute is John Smith. The monist, to be sure, does not mean to say this when he tells us that John Smith is an "adjective" to which the Absolute is the missing substantive, but, by his confusion between the individual and the class of which it is the only member, he has bound himself to assert this on pain of asserting nothing at all.

I say, then, that in our unique immediate experience of ourselves we are directly aware of having a character for which I can find no other available name than that of substance. On the other side, it is just the impossibility of getting down, in our physical science, to anything that does not seem to reveal

itself as a determination of something else which, as Leibniz saw, forces us to regard the physical order as our imperfect apprehension of a system of individuals which are not physical, and can only be conceived as one in kind with that unique reality which I know, as I know nothing else, by *being* it. In the same way, the plurality of such substances is directly established by our immediate experience of social relation with other selves as an inseparable constituent of our own selfhood. Nor must it be objected that the precise "contents" of the self are hard to fix, and seem to fluctuate, or that puzzling questions might be asked about alternating and multiple personality. The right answer to the first of these objections was long ago given by Leibniz when he said that the uniqueness of a centre of direct experience in no way excludes internal variety, and as to the second, whatever may be the right way of regarding the relation between alternating personalities, there is one theory which seems to be manifestly opposed to the facts. The alternating or secondary self is, at least, never experienced as a predicate of the principal personality.

Our result so far, then, is that the Pluralistic position is justified in two most important respects, (1) there is certainly a plurality of real individuals or substances in the Universe, none of which is a predicate of anything else; (2) the *only* substances of which we have direct "knowledge of acquaintances" are selves, or centres of experience. We know the self, as we know nothing else, by being it. Whatever the real units of that which we call the "physical order" may be, we can only think of them by the analogy of our direct experience in ourselves of what it is like to be a substance.

It is another question whether a pure Pluralism could be a satisfactory resting-place for the metaphysician. Let us remind ourselves once more of the logical implications of an unqualified Pluralism. What is real is to be a multitude of strictly independent units. Not merely is no one of these

elements to be a predicate, or phase, of any other, but it is to be a final inexplicability that they bear to one another the various relations which they do bear. They "happen" to be so related, and that is the end of the matter. There is to be no discernible connection between the character of the individuals themselves, and the types of relation subsisting between them. These relations are to be altogether "extrinsic" to the related individuals, are to have no "ground" either in the character of those individuals or in that of the whole, if it can be called a whole, composed of them. The so-called whole is, in fact, not a real whole at all, but a mere *totum aggregationis*, like a heap of sand, or like the space and time of pure Mathematics. There is therefore no such thing as "the Universe," since the phrase "the Universe," as the definite article indicates, is the name not of a class, envisaged as a collection, but of an individual. To borrow the language of Scholasticism, the Universe is to be not *unum in se*, but merely *unum quoad nos*, one, only in the sense that we sometimes find it convenient to pretend that it is so. Pure Pluralism would, in fact, seem to be what Spinozism has been falsely called, the explanation of the Universe by a geometrical metaphor. In geometry we deal with spaces which are simply many-dimensional continua with points for their units, and our conclusions are determined solely by initial postulates as to the interrelation between these elements. Of the element, or point, itself we do not claim to know anything; anything which satisfies the groups of relations postulated is a "point" for our purposes. In fact, the "points" have no character of their own at all; they merely "stand in" or "support" relations to one another. Thus, so far as I can see, the natural way for the radical Pluralist to conceive of that which others call the Universe, is to think of it quite literally as an aggregate of point-substances. But if we are right in saying that the one substance which is intimately known to us is not a point but a centre of direct experience, we have at once to ask whether this fact makes no

difference to the tenability of the pure Pluralistic view. We get, in fact, three questions: (1) Can selves be thought of as supporters of merely "extrinsic" relations? (2) Does not the recognition of the self as the typical substance involve as its complement the further thought of the Universe as a real individual? (3) If it does, what kind of connection is presupposed between the selves in the Universe?

I must answer the second of these three questions in my own way first. To dispense with the notion of a Universe which is *unum in se* would not merely be to recognise the significance of other aspects of life than pure thought, it would be to abandon the task of serious thinking altogether. Only if things do really constitute a single whole are we justified in treating them in our thought as if they were such a whole. And that they do form a systematic whole is, as I must still believe, an assumption latent in every step which we take towards rethinking the content of direct experience in such a way as to free it from internal contradiction and to complete its gaps. But for the conviction that the object of experience is an articulated whole, there could be no reason why the most incoherent and poverty-stricken experience should not be taken as it stands without correction or revision, nor yet why the experience of one individual should require completion by that of another. The thoroughgoing systematic interconnection of all substances in a single real unity seems thus to me to be presupposed as a logical implication of all attempts at intercommunication and social co-operation, a position which I need the less labour to defend since it has been made so familiar to us all by the philosophy of the generation immediately anterior to our own. Where that philosophy has gone astray is, I believe, simply in conceiving this interrelation as a connection of predicates through their common subject. If we would avoid the *impasse* into which that conception leads us, our task is to discover a mode of relation between the whole and its elements, such that the parts or elements are no less

individually real than the whole, nor the whole than the parts. The individual element must not be degraded into a predicate of the whole, nor the whole into a mere collection of the parts. Such a type of relation, I maintain, we actually find at the very foundation of our own social life, the very life from which our knowledge of what it is to be a substance is drawn. The self, as directly experienced, is a teleological unity. It is by the underlying unity of aim and purpose that the multiplicity of the phases, or moments, or attitudes which make up the life of the self constitute one unique and indivisible self. And it is also precisely in virtue of a similar unity of aim and purpose that the individuals who stand in social relations to one another form no mere collection or aggregate, but a community. The community is one, as the person is one, in the end through the unity of its purposes, in virtue of its possession of a common "good." And similarly I can only conceive the unity of the whole Universe along the same lines as one of purposive structure, as a unity of interest. As Plato long ago taught us, it is the good which holds the components of the Universe together; the one is the same thing as the good. And I would urge that such a conception of things as forming a teleological unity, as related ultimately through the good, provides an answer to our problem in formal logic. Whatever relations may be regarded as purely "extrinsic," we may at least say that wherever you have relations between centres of experience connected by community of purpose, you are not dealing with a purely "extrinsic" relation, but with one which is grounded in the character of its terms, and hence no social relation of co-operation or antagonism can possibly be a merely "extrinsic" one. My interests and my character are ultimately and intimately one. The relations of one point of a space to another may fairly be said to be all "extrinsic"; it "makes no difference," as the common phrase is, to a point A that it happens to be to the right or left of a second point B of the same straight line. But if A and B are selves, and the

relation between them is that A takes the interest of a friend or an enemy in B, this relation makes a very real difference to the character of one or both, or, more accurately, they make themselves very different by sustaining the relation. In loving or hating B, A becomes perhaps a better, perhaps a worse, in any case a very different man from what he would have been apart from his love or hate for B. And we might fairly be led on to ask whether the mere fact that all the relations of an assumed A to other assumed subjects are "extrinsic" does not of itself prove that none of these subjects are real existents; whether the "externality" of all relations between points does not *show* that extension is phenomenal.

These remarks may perhaps be suggestive of the famous Leibnizian Monadism, according to which every relation between two substances must be in the end "grounded upon" the nature of the related substances, so that from adequate insight into the full character of any one substance the whole system of the Universe could be completely reconstructed. I should not like, however, to follow Leibniz on this point, as, in fact, one cannot do unless one is prepared with him to regard the connection of subject with predicate as the only type of connection which is logically ultimate. Indeed, Leibniz's theory seems incompatible with his own insistence on the plurality of substances, since, if worked out, it would lead to the very Spinozistic Monism which he is determined to avoid. It seems clear to me that no degree of knowledge of my character as a social unit could be sufficient for the deduction of the whole complex of aims and purposes which makes up the social life of all humanity. There are human beings whose purposive life is so far from being interwoven with my own, that, so long as you consider only *my* nature and *their* nature, the only relation you could assert is the merely extrinsic one of *togetherness* conveyed in the statement that they *and* I are both members of the human race. In other words, while to a mind possessed of complete insight into the teleological structure of

the universe, no relation between its members would be merely "extrinsic," since all would be related through the universal good, from the standpoint of even an omniscient knowledge contemplating only separate members of the Universe, many relations between them would still appear "extrinsic" to *their* nature. The individual substance must no more be conceived of, after the fashion of Leibniz, as itself a miniature Universe than the individual man as being literally a society on a reduced scale. We must not understand the substantiality of the self to mean that even omniscience could see in the character of the self alone the complete explanation of the succession of its states or acts. We might, in fact, draw a distinction here between individual substances of higher and lower orders. By comparison with the individual self, the well-organised social community is more completely determined throughout the phases of its activity by its own nature, its own characteristic "social spirit," and less at the mercy of influences from without. It is more of a self-contained purposive whole. But ultimately there could be no individual whose acts could be purely the expression of its own internal purposive character, except one which had no foreign environment at all.

This reflection brings me to a further point of the highest importance. If the Universe is to be really one, and one in virtue of the fact that it is the expression of a single coherent purposive scheme, if there is to be a real common good, it seems to me essential that the common good or end should be a good or end to a real individual who apprehends it in its full character, and gives expression to it by the exercise of a supreme volition. I cannot, at least, conceive of a real unity of aim and purpose, except as the aim and purpose of an individual agent. A purpose which is not the purpose of some one seems indeed an unintelligible notion. Hence it would seem to follow that the conception of the Universe as one in virtue of the purpose it expresses involves belief in the existence of God as the supreme intelligence and will. God,

as thus conceived, would, of course, not be identical with the Universe or Absolute. The Universe, or the Absolute, if we prefer the name, would contain not only God but all the centres of experience, of which I am one, and which, as we have seen, must not be conceived of as predicates, or adjectives, or "appearances" of God. But God, at the same time, would be the actual embodiment of the unity of plan or purpose in virtue of which the Absolute whole is a whole; without God, so to say, the system would fall apart into a chaos. So again,—and here room is found for recognising the postulates of ethical and religious experience,—nothing would take place in the Universe apart from the knowledge or without the will of God, and yet my knowledge of a thing would be really mine and not God's,—and my will, for example, to do evil, would be my will and not God's will, and the conduct in which it finds its expression, therefore, imputable only to me and not to God. The famous Platonic formula, "Responsibility rests with the chooser: God is clear thereof," would be the last word on the imaginary problem about the compatibility of divine omniscience with human accountability. I need hardly labour these points, since the ethical bearings of a serious admission of God into our philosophic construction are in the main obvious. But there are two considerations upon which I cannot be altogether silent. The first is that, as was clearly recognised by Plato, the conception of God as the actual individual in whose will the central purposive unity of existence is embodied excludes the view that the relation of God to other members of the whole can be rightly represented as one of creation *ex nihilo*. To be in earnest with the thought of God as Creator inevitably means to fall back into the illogicalities of the "one substance" philosophies. If we are really to stand by the view that no individual is a phase or predicate of any other, and at the same time to find a place in the scheme of things for the "being than whom none can be better," the general function of that being must be that of a Providence, and not of a Maker, a point,

again, which is well brought out by Plato. What God must be there for, in a reasonable philosophical interpretation of the world of experience, is not to make your personality or mine, or to do our thinking and acting for us, but so to order and overrule the course of cosmic process that, in spite of the ignorances and weaknesses of individuals, it does, in the end, result in the realisation of the Good, that the purpose of which the whole is the expression does not really fail of achievement. And hence, as it seems to me, while the metaphors from which the dogma of creation *ex nihilo* has arisen are the chief source of all the alleged philosophical difficulties of Theism, the equally old and familiar metaphor by which God is represented as the father of lesser individuals is philosophically a happy one. For while it implies positively that the connection between God and ourselves is ultimately one of community of aim and purpose, like the connection between the various members of a family and its head, the "head of the House," negatively it seems also to imply that God is not the source of the individuality of lesser individuals, their "Creator," since we do not think of a father as making his child's personality out of pre-existing constituents, or out of nothing at all. An immediate practical consequence of the view here recommended, on which I need not now dwell, would be the rehabilitation of the specific forms in which the sense of community of aim and interest with a God who, though the supreme individuality in the Universe does not absorb all the others, exhibits itself in the religious life. We should no longer be called upon, for instance, to pronounce a belief in the value and real efficacy of prayer, or in the existence of the "grace of God" as a factor in history which cannot be explained away into a mere combination of fortunate external circumstances, illusory. But, as I say, I do not wish to dwell here on consequences of this kind.

My second point is that the view which I am now advocating not merely admits, but demands, the conviction,

impossible on any theory of Monism, that, in spite of Spinoza's insistence to the contrary, "will" and "understanding" must be one in kind in God and in ourselves. Any attempt to equivocate on this fundamental point means, when thought out, the surrender of our main position that all real process is genuinely teleological. Room is, of course, still left for difference of degree between mental life in man and in God. Thus, whereas many things which happen astonish us, an intelligence which, in "knowing its own mind," comprehended the purpose of all that happens could never be taken by surprise; and, again, our will is frequently thwarted by obstacles which we do not know how to circumvent, but nothing could thwart a will which is the subjective side of the purpose in virtue of which the Universe is one. This is not, of course, to say that the wills of men, in so far as they will what is other than the good, are not genuinely in opposition against the will of God, but merely that the opposition is not one which can baffle the realisation of that will. There is nothing in the conception of the cosmic process as the realisation of a will to Good which is adequately embodied in God and in God only to conflict with the conviction that God hates the sinful will as really as I hate my worst enemy. One might even venture to illustrate this point by reference to those well-known cases of multiple personality in which the so-called completest personality is aware of the character of one of the partial selves but dislikes and despises it. For here the acts and volitions of the secondary self seem to be directly known to the complete self, without the intervention of any perceptive symbolism, and are yet not recognised as its own acts and volitions but as those of an inferior and hostile personality. I do not want to make too much of these unusual types of experience, but they do seem to suggest a possibility of understanding how God may be directly and immediately aware of my sinful emotions and volitions, and even how, as the theologians put it these emotions and volitions could

not exist at all apart from the *concursus ordinarius* of God, and yet may be experienced by God as being my volitions, etc., and not His own, and as something hateful to Him. I trust, at any rate, that the suggestions here thrown out may do something to meet the criticisms which have been urged against an earlier attempt of my own to deal with the general problems of religion by Dr. Rashdall, criticisms with which I should now, in a large measure, agree.

Speaking more generally, I should like to say that I am inclined to believe that hearty acceptance of the view that existence is throughout teleological must ultimately lead to the reclamation for philosophy of the domain of theology which Kant has only too long led us to abandon as valueless. For the whole drift of our preceding argumentation has gone to show that so far from being confined to "phenomena," the whole of our real knowledge of the constitution of the Universe is based upon a direct knowledge "of acquaintance" of substances which are not phenomenal, but, in the only intelligible sense of the phrase, "things-in-themselves," and therefore, in the Kantian sense, "transcendent."

To sum up, then, with reference to the original antithesis between Monism and Pluralism. Such an interpretation of life as seems to me to be logically forced upon us if we mean to do justice to our own experience of ourselves is clearly not Monistic, since the plurality of substances, and the distinction between the Whole or Absolute and God, are essential to it. It is not Pluralism, since it regards the complete purposive unity of all the individuals within a single system which is itself an individual of a "higher order" as no less real than the existence of the individual elements themselves. The supreme individual, God, is not a being placed in an unknown environment and in conflict with a hostile independent reality. It is not Monadism (though it approaches more nearly to Monadism than to any of the views which I have mentioned), because it denies the very basis of Monadism, the doctrine of the complete

self-containedness of every individual, and has not, therefore, after the fashion of Leibniz, to introduce God into a radically atheistic metaphysic by an intellectual piece of jugglery. It cannot, again, be properly called "Personal" Idealism, since it makes no demand that the teleological unity of the individual substance shall necessarily involve reflective consciousness or "noetic synthesis" as its basis. It is thus free to treat, *e.g.*, the facts of animal life, without the bias involved in any declaration that the Universe is a "system of persons." In the main, so far as I can see, it is more nearly in harmony with the fundamental principles of Platonism than with those of any later interpretation of the world. I should make haste to add that I find no fundamental difference between my own view and the "spiritualistic" doctrine of Professor Ward's first *Gifford Lectures*, except that Professor Ward seems, in places at any rate, to coquet with the monistic view that, after all, God is not only the supreme but the only spiritual individual.

4.—REPLY TO DR. SCHILLER.

By J. H. MUIRHEAD.

THE Secretary has prescribed a symposium or exchange of arguments, but the papers scarcely fall into line with his direction. Dr. Schiller has accepted the invitation and taken his seat with me at the table, where we have each played our tune. But Professor Taylor seems to have preferred to stand outside the window and give his own rendering of the music. I admit it is a powerful one, and for my own part I should be well content to sit still and listen. But we are here for interchange, and the point, which as opener, I desired to raise was, I venture to think, a stage further in and nearer to present day controversy than those on which Professor Taylor enlarges. With his general definition and criticism of Monism and Pluralism I am in full agreement.

The question I wished to raise is whether the general position of those who have succeeded in gaining the ear of the philosophic world for a brilliant attempt to rehabilitate pluralism is not inconsistent with that enterprise. Do not pragmatists overshoot the mark in allying themselves with pluralism ? To this I desire to recall the argument.

My position (to restate it in a word) is that Monism in the older sense, on which Professor Taylor insists as the only proper one, has been impossible since Hegel transferred the centre of gravity from "substance" to "subject" from abstract being to self consciousness and personality. In this sense we are all "personal idealists." But if personal idealism is to be got to "work," we cannot stop there. All practical and theoretic activity rests on the conviction that in and through the separate (I avoid "independent") subjects, there operates a principle of unity best conceived of as one of purpose in harmony with which they find, and thus alone can find their individual fulfilment. So far as this is so, Pragmatism or Pragmatic Idealism and Pluralism are inconsistent with each other. With this contention Dr. Schiller, as I understand him, is willing to go a certain way and separates himself from some of Professor James's extremer statements. His criticism is directed to two points: the nature of the evidence for the unity of our world (this is the point he presses in (1), (2), (3) of his seven heads), and, secondly, the extent to which we are justified in asserting this unity (the burden of (4), (5), and (7)). In reference to the first, he argues that idealists have here fallen into the error of which they commonly accuse the pragmatist, of taking a desire for the guarantee of its own fulfilment. As to the second, he urges, as I understand him, that unity can at best be only a goal, an "ultimate," not an "absolute," an outlying rather than an underlying unity. To claim more for it means the reduction of the world's time process to a farce, and with this the denial of individuality. My assertion of the reality of time is, he holds, in defiance of the best monistic

metaphysic, while with my admission of individuality and uniqueness there enters an element of contingency and irrationality in things which my methods "can neither master nor account for." I shall make the best use of my time by applying myself directly, and, I fear, far too shortly for lucidity, to these two points.

1. My answer to the first must again be an appeal to principles to which the pluralist who is also a pragmatist seems to be committed. A mere desire is, of course, no guarantee of the reality of the object desired. If wishes were horses, subjective idealists would ride with the best. But this is not what is asserted either by objective idealism or, as I understand it, by Pragmatism. What they both mean is that if it can be shown that a postulate or hypothesis is necessary in the interest of life as a whole, we have all the evidence that is either necessary or available for its validity. What we are constrained by all that as men we value to accept—that is true. Such a postulate, I have claimed, is the unity of our world. It is guaranteed not by our desire for it (I am not sure that we can be said to "desire" it at all, certainly not at all times) but by its works: the order it introduces into our world, the radical distinctions between true and false, good and bad, that it and it alone justifies. Professor Taylor has put this in a convincing form in the middle of p. 208, on which I cannot improve. In this sense I believe it to be required by any form of idealism, whether "personal" or "absolute."

2. The second criticism raises much more difficult points, going to the root of all modern metaphysics:—

(a) Granted unity of a sort, why, I am asked, should it be more than a relative or "ultimate" one? Following Dr. Schiller's lead of utmost conciliation, I admit that the unity cannot be realised in our finite consciousness, theoretic or practical, except as the result of a time process and just for this reason also (seeing that time has its own reality) in the universe itself. We must be One as It is one, but It cannot be fully on

until we are. But, what I wish to ask (and here I claim an admission in turn) is, what can this "ultimate" unity be or what can be the guarantee of it unless it be something more than a mere future? Take any of the greater purposes of life (and it is with these that we are here concerned), *e.g.*, the unity of society, is it possible to conceive of it as a mere ultimate, a mere "*sollen*"? Are we not forced to conceive of it as already actualised in part and therefore potentially as a whole? What social progress means is on the one hand difference, individuality (of this presently), but on the other hand unity, and this I contend is not a mere aspiration after a future good, but the extension of a principle already present in an imperfectly developed form. It is a goal, an "ultimate" if you will, but it can only be a goal because it is something more; it can only be an ultimate because it is an underlying end. Applying this analogy to the universe at large, we have to admit that its unity is an ultimate one in the sense that it has not yet attained neither is already perfect (the idea of a static perfection is left behind with that of substance), but we have to insist at the same time that it is more, seeing that in the idea of purpose, potentiality must have a real place assigned to it side by side with actuality. While, therefore, I would supplement Professor Taylor's Platonism, with which otherwise I would desire to associate myself, by a clearer recognition of the reality of the actual, I would supplement Dr. Schiller's by a fuller admission of the reality of the potential. It is interesting, and itself a proof of the instability of the situation, that Pragmatism here seeks to mark its difference with ordinary idealism by denying the reality of ends.

(b) Individuality I have admitted is a crucial test of a philosophy. But individuality I am told is just that which is unintelligible, contingent, irrational, lying outside any conceivable unity.

A complete answer to this objection would involve an analysis of the ideas of intelligibility and individuality, for

which this is manifestly not the place. I must content myself with a distinction, which I think is obscured in Dr. Schiller's objection, and a conclusion which must, I fear, have the appearance of dogmatism. There are two distinct senses in which we may speak of intelligibility and its opposite. That, we may say, is intelligible the nature of which is reducible to or expressible in a series of predicates. In this sense I hold with Professor Taylor that no subject is intelligible. Subject is just that whose nature cannot be exhausted by its predicates, and since modern idealism in all its forms is committed to subject, it is committed, so far, to an element of unintelligibility. But intelligibility may also, and more rightly, be used in the sense of subordination to law and reason, its opposite being imperviousness to them—"contingency, irrationality." It is this sense that is vital to Dr. Schiller's contention, yet intelligibility in this sense is not only not incompatible with individuality, it may even be claimed that the fuller the individuality (the nearer we come to subject in the full sense of the term) the more intelligible does it become. I am not here raising the question of the freedom of the will. What I am insisting on is not that a man always acts according to some determinate or determinable principle, but that when he does so, *i.e.*, when he acts freely as a subject with his own ideas for his motive, he is not cutting himself loose from all law and acting irrationally and unintelligibly, but he is acting, and acting for the first time in a manner that he really understands. This being so, it is a mistake to look for individuality in any merely negative power either of escaping the meshes of logical predication or of acting independently of the universe instead of in this power of self-comprehension which enables a subject in the act of asserting itself to assert also the nature of the universe. This, again, is a claim which the pragmatist should be the first to accept, for it places individuality at the end, not at the beginning, of moral development, and makes it an ultimate instead of an absolute or underlying feature of our world.

5.—REPLY BY F. C. S. SCHILLER.

By aiming at too much conciseness I have, I fear, failed to make my main points clear. I did not make clear how very humble were my aims. I have attempted little but a discussion of the meaning which philosophers attach to the word "Monism." For this is where my own perplexities have always begun. "Monism" has always seemed to me to mean so many and such incongruous things. All my arguments therefore were intended to elicit in *which of these senses* Monism was an imperative of thought. Professor Muirhead appeared to be willing to enlighten me. He quoted Professor James as recognising eight different senses of "unity"; he might have quoted sundry lexicographers of philosophy who distinguish ten or a dozen. What I wanted, and hoped, therefore, to find out was how many of these Professor Muirhead wanted me to acknowledge and himself to use. I also wanted to know what "independent" was to mean (and now whether the term "separate," which he prefers in his reply, is restricted to spatial distinctness, and if not, what else it connotes).

To none of these questions have I received answers which remove my perplexities. I am still at a loss to understand how the substitution of the *category* of "subject" for that of "substance" brings us any nearer to understanding concrete individuals, seeing that it was the latter that Hegel denounced for their "contingency," and that unapplied categories are all alike abstract. I am still at a loss to understand how a principle of cosmic unity can be equipped with a purpose, seeing that in the conception of purpose there lurks an essential dualism. For a "purpose" seems to imply a distinction of "means" and "ends," and this in its turn an intelligence which has to *choose* its "means" and cannot make everything indifferently minister to its purposes. But such an intelligence must clearly be *limited*. How then can any Absolute, any One, have a purpose, or admit of teleological

contemplation? I can understand how the world as a whole can be *purposive*, *i.e.*, how all its constituents can have purposes, but not how the whole itself can *have a purpose*, or how *to be a whole* can be validly identified with *having a purpose*.

I have also failed to make clear why I objected to Professor Muirhead's attempt to establish his Monism on pragmatic grounds. It was not, assuredly, because I grudged him the use of an indispensable method which in their actual thinking all men use. My point was that his argument involved what I find to be the usual rationalistic confusion as to the valid way of using it. Fortunately his reply has made it much easier to show this. He seems to be still sufficiently under the malign spell of rationalistic logic not to distinguish between claim and validity, postulation and verification by experience. He first tells us that if a postulate can be shown to be "necessary in the interest of life as a whole, we have all the evidence that is either necessary or available for its validity." He then asserts that his monistic postulate is guaranteed by its works, by "the order it introduces into our world, the radical distinctions between true and false, good and bad, that it, and it alone, justifies."

Now the first of these propositions goes far beyond Humanism in claiming validity for non-intellectual factors in belief. It allows *mere* postulation, unconfirmed by verification, to establish a truth. The second does indeed ostensibly acknowledge the necessity of confirmation ("working"), but apparently regards the mere introduction of an ideal "distinction" as an adequate guarantee of its concrete working when applied. To a humanist critic, however, a philosophy based on such assumptions must seem fatally insecure. They never seem to rise above the region of truth-claim, and they really seem to deserve all the hard things that rationalists have said about postulates. And they leave untouched the vital question whether the monistic ideal can actually be applied to our experience, and whether when so applied it actually works.

For is it not useless and nugatory merely to conceive the world ideally as a single order, if you cannot show how *in the concrete* it is ordered? * Again, how can a purely *monistic* principle lead to a justification of the radical dualisms between good and evil, true and false? Is not every recognition of a "problem of Evil" and a "problem of Error" a clear confession that a really monistic interpretation of our present experience cannot be carried through by human thought?

Of Professor Muirhead's reply to my "second criticism" I frankly do not understand the first part [2(a)]. It not only attributes to the One the conception of purpose which we have seen to be unthinkable and inadmissible, but it seems to argue (once more) that, because something is desired and purposed, it is therefore bound to come to pass. For what else can it mean to say that what is "already actualised in part" is *therefore* actualised "potentially as a whole." But is the realisation of every potentiality an ineluctable necessity? Cannot a purpose be defeated? And if it cannot, would it not be something radically different from any purpose we are able to conceive?

When, however, we come to the problem of individuality, I fear that a certain failure to understand must be predicated of Professor Muirhead. He regards it as *my* contention that individuality is unintelligible. Nothing could be further from my thoughts. I have always found individuality ever so much more intelligible than any of the metaphysical theories that attempted to explain it, or to explain it away. In alluding to the problem I was only quoting from the greatest and best authorities on his side. It is the logic of Rationalism, of Plato, of Hegel, of Bradley, that inevitably leads to the conclusion that individuality is unintelligible as such. The cogency of this inference cannot be denied, but it is permissible to dissent from its moral. The great lesson which it teaches need *not* be that

* *To some extent*, of course, the sciences have done this, but then the sciences still leave us with a pluralism.

the Phenomenal is tainted with illusion, or that though (in general) the Real is Rational, yet some of it isn't and can't be mentioned, or that thought defeats its own purpose, or that in the very end (to which it is perhaps better for philosophers not to persevere), philosophy is engulfed in scepticism, or that even the cleanest and most orderly metaphysics must keep a dust-bin somewhere on their premises for the reception of the rubbish which is variously labelled "contingence" or "appearance" or "not-being." It is possible (and to me more attractive) to prefer as an alternative the inference that there must be something very profoundly wrong about the "logic" which compels reason thus to stultify itself. And the discovery of what precisely this something is, what is the source of error in this treatment of individuality by universals, I regard as one of the chief contributions which Humanism makes to Logic.

Concerning Professor Taylor's paper I need not say much, because I agree with it almost entirely. But I think it must be a very rare event in the history of philosophy that an author who has won so much distinction as Professor Taylor has by his writings on one side of a controversy should have the courage and frankness to avow so explicitly his conversion to the other. I refer particularly to his repudiation of the Absolute as a necessity of thought, and to his theistic rejection of the attempt to equate God with the Absolute, with his consequent acceptance of a finite deity that really have a purpose and a terminable world-process that can really have a meaning and an end. I welcome, therefore, Professor Taylor's action not only in itself, but also as a noble example to others.

Nevertheless, I did note some slight flaws in his statement. It might, *e.g.*, mislead to call Professor James a "radical pluralist" (p. 202), and then to define "radical pluralism" in a way that would certainly not be applicable to him (pp. 206-7), without noting that the term was used in two senses. For Professor Taylor's "radical" or "pure" Pluralist appears

to be a creature of an idealising imagination which has soared far beyond the views of any actual thinker. As regards Professor James, I would demur further to his classification as an irrationalist. A philosopher is not a disbeliever in reason because he rejects an erroneous account of reason, and though Professor James has not (like me) devoted all his spare time for the past ten years to demonstrating the irrationalities of what is called Rationalism, I do not think that he conceives the real functions of reason otherwise than I do. On the other hand, I am glad to note that the pluralistic sides of Plato and Leibniz receive recognition at Professor Taylor's hands.* For historic justice has long demanded such a revision of monistic misrepresentations.†

* Cf. *Studies in Humanism*, p. 459.

† I notice that in finally revising his article for the press Professor Muirhead has extensively re-written it. Not only has he added a good deal on which I should have been glad to comment, but he has withdrawn so much that many of my arguments, notably the strictures numbered (3), (6), and (7), have become inapplicable to the present form of his paper and contain quotations from what is no longer to be found therein. The result is doubtless a great improvement in the paper, but may puzzle the reader, unless he is warned that what was actually discussed was something materially different.