THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW.

THE 'KNOWER' IN PSYCHOLOGY.¹

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Gentlemen: In the presidential address which I have the honor to read to-day before your Association, I have taken up a psychological problem which seems to me of importance both to psychology and to epistemology, and one which has not, I think, in the general advance of the science of psychology, been treated with the same clearness, or had applied to it the same scientific method, that has led to such good results elsewhere. I allude to the problem of the self or 'knower' as contrasted with those problems arising in the consideration of 'things known,' whether phenomena or 'external' things. I am not here directly concerned with the question of the so-called 'empirical' self, that psychical complex which has been analyzed and discussed much as one analyses and discusses any other mental content. It may, it is true, be difficult to enumerate the elements of which this is composed, but the attitude of the psychologist toward it is sufficiently definite, and the only mystery that the subject presents is the mystery of incomplete knowledge. In discussing it the psychologist at least means something. He applies the scientific method, aiming at and hoping for clear and exact results. The self with which I am concerned is the knower, that indefinite something to which attaches, not merely the mystery of incomplete knowledge, but also, as I cannot but believe, the mystery of misconception; it is that elusive

¹ President's address before the American Psychological Association, Boston Meeting, December 30, 1896.

entity so generally cherished by philosopher and psychologist, which hides itself in clouds and darkness, and whose incomprehensible attributes are accepted without protest by a faith which rests upon tradition and custom.

My statement that I am concerned with the self as knower and not directly with the empirical self commonly said to be 'known' needs a word of explanation, and this I may insert here, though I think my meaning will be made sufficiently clear during the course of my address. I am interested in the question of what *knowledge* means in psychology, and I discuss the self as the accepted subject of the act of knowing. Of course, any light which may be cast on the nature of knowledge will help to make clear what is meant by speaking of anything as 'known,' and will help us to a better comprehension of the 'empirical' self in so far as it is a something known. Moreover, since the self as knower and the self as known have been and are generally very loosely distinguished from one another and even declared identical, it will be impossible for me to confine myself strictly to the self as knower. I must take the self as I find it, vague, ambiguous, inconsistent, and must simply try to come to some conclusion about its 'knowing' function.

So much for my aim. I shall try to remain so far as possible on psychological ground in my discussion, although the matter is, as I have said, also of interest to the epistemologist. One approaches such a theme, in the presence of this critical audience, with a certain reverent hesitation, and would gladly pour out a libation, praying, as did Plotinus, for the gift of correct discernment.

In a paper which I read three years ago before this Association I tried to make clear the nature of the work done by the psychologist, and to set forth the assumptions upon which he must proceed and the method he must employ. I maintained that he must assume the existence of an external physical world, and the existence of certain copies or representatives of it intimately related to particular bodily organisms. These transcripts of the external world, as I expressed it in a later paper, supplemented by certain elements not supposed to have their prototypes without (feelings of pleasure and pain etc.,) are, for

the psychologist, minds. He must by applying the method of introspection, observation and experiment, strive to obtain a knowledge of such minds and reduce their phenomena to laws. He must conceive each mind or consciousness as shut up to its own representations of things and dependent upon messages conveyed to it from without. Ideas are to him, like images in a mirror, numerically distinct from the things which they represent and of which they give information. I further indicated that *knowledge* must, to the psychologist, be a mental state of some kind, a complex in consciousness, and it follows that it must be studied by the usual psychological method. I maintained, finally, that psychology as natural science should resolutely confine itself to mental phenomena, and eschew all such metaphysical entitles as 'substrata,' 'unit-beings,' or 'transcendental selves.' I added that whether one conceive of conscious states as 'parallel' to brain states, or conceive of them as belonging with these latter to the one series of causes, and determining physical movements, in either case one may study them from the natural science point of view. They are in any case phenomena which may be analyzed and described, and the relations of which to other phenomena may be determined by accepted scientific methods.¹

A mind is, therefore, to the psychologist, a little world in itself, cut off from others, and 'knowing' them only through their representatives in it. It is, moreover, a very complex world, and the phenomena it presents are by no means easy to analyze and classify. Some things in it seem to stand out clearly; some remain after our best efforts dim and vague. It is quite conceivable that some things supposed to live and move and have a real being in this world are mere chimæras, having no existence at all except in the imagination, where they lead a dubious existence rather as symbols of the unknown than

¹ In the earlier of the two papers alluded to I point out the inconsistency of the psychologist's position. To cut off minds from things, giving them mere copies or representatives, and then to use the method of observation and experiment, as though the observer were directly conscious of his own ideas and at the same time of his own and other men's bodies, is, of course, flatly self-contradictory. The psychologist has, however, the right to use a convenient fiction, and it need not bring him to grief as long as he remains upon psychological ground.

as concrete intelligible representations. It is not difficult, in the obscurity which still covers much of our mental life, to confound one thing with another, to create a phantom, or to seek diligently for the solution of a problem which need never have been raised.

Certain problems the psychologist may, as I have said, set aside at the outset. All metaphysical entities supposed to be beyond consciousness, and to 'underlie' phenomena, he may simply disregard. He is, to restate my former description of his task in perhaps a broader way, concerned with the contents of consciousness, mental phenomena and their interrelations, and whatever else (if there be anything else) sufficiently resembles mental phenomena to be found in a consciousness. He is also concerned with the relations of mental phenomena to the material world, a something which can be observed and experimented upon. His method is scientific and has already been applied with satisfactory results to some of the phenomena in consciousness. It should be, I think, his duty to strive to apply the same method to everything in this realm. If some things in consciousness need to be further studied from another point of view, and by another method, he may safely leave this task to another workman. Still, even if he remain on his own ground, and regard as the proper object of his studies the contents of consciousness and the physical conditions or accompaniments of this or that psychical fact, it is nevertheless possible that he may fall into some such difficulties or perplexities as are indicated in the preceding paragraph. One need not have a very broad acquaintance with psychological doctrines to see that the task of the psychologist is by no means an easy one, and that warring opinions concerning psychical phenomena may be held with great obstinacy and strong conviction.

Of course, when a writer does not accept and hold to the standpoint of the psychologist as I have defined it, there are still other errors into which he may fall. He may wander into the realm of the metaphysician and return with a self which is not the self of consciousness, the psychologist's self at all. He may confuse this with the psychologist's self, and keep talking about two things while he supposes himself to be discussing

only one. He may transport the self into a world in which reasonable explanations of things, couched in intelligible language, will be sought for in vain. He may make of 'knowledge' a something not in consciousness, and yet not out of consciousness; a thing inconsistent, inscrutable, and, I believe, unpsychological. That many writers have been, and that many are, guilty of these things '*et enormia alia*,' it needs little knowledge of the history of speculative thought to reveal. It is because I am compelled to refer to the works of such writers that I have promised only to *try* to keep upon psychological grounds.

But to come to the particular point which I wish to discuss to-day, the psychological problem of the knower and the known. The plain man, who has not gotten beyond the psychology of common life, has always distinguished in some vague way between himself as knower or doer and the objects which he knows or acts upon. The distinction has become crystallized in language and appears to have past current everywhere and at all times. And in the History of Philosophy we find drawn, with more or less clearness, almost from the beginning, the distinction between that which knows, the mind, soul or reason, and the thing known, which may be either an external thing or a psychical state. I do not propose to weary you with an exhaustive examination of the opinions of philosophers, ancient and modern, but a glance at some of them will, I think, prove helpful in the discussion of our problem.

It is difficult to select from such a cloud of witnesses, but I may mention, in passing, among the ancients, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans and the Sceptics, in all of whom the distinction is sufficiently emphasized. Thales doubtless distinguished in an unanalytic way between himself and the object of his knowledge, but in what little we know of his doctrine his ideas upon this subject do not come to the surface. Perhaps the problem of knowledge had not presented itself to him as a problem. With the growth of reflective thought it comes more and more into view, and the knower grows, I can hardly say more definite, but at least more definitely an object of discussion. This it is with Plato and Aristotle, whose distinction between reason and the lower psych-

ical functions has moreover a flavor of the modern distinction between the rational and the empirical self. In Plotinus the soul, or subject of knowledge, has definitely put on the incomprehensible aspect with which later speculation so constantly clothed it. It is not in space; or, rather, it is in space in an unintelligible and inconsistent way; it is all in the whole, and yet all in every part of the body. It is divided because it is in all parts of its body, and undivided because it is in its entirety in every part. With Augustine, who set his stamp so authoritatively upon the thinking of the centuries which succeeded his own, it behaves no better, being still all in the whole and all in every part of the body. It knows itself and what is not itself. Its properties are not related to it as material qualities are to material substance; they share in its substantiality, although it *has* them, and must not be regarded as *being* them. To make this confusion, if possible, worse, Cassiodorus maintains that the soul, which knows things spiritual and material, is, as a whole, in each of its own parts.

Into the tangles of the Scholastic Philosophy I shall not attempt to enter. Suffice it to say we find everywhere a knower and a known, and this knower, which knows both itself and what is not itself, and may even know itself more certainly than it knows external objects, remains throughout a mystery and a perplexity.

In the Modern Philosophy some of the subtleties of scholastic thought disappear, but, until we come to Hume, the problem remains, I think, much what it was before. With Bacon, Hobbes and Descartes the mind is still the knower, and an ill-defined and shadowy knower. With Descartes it knows itself better than it knows external things. Spinoza's position is an odd and very interesting one. The mind is the idea of the body, or that mode in the attribute thought, which corresponds to the body, a parallel mode in the attribute extension. The mind is composed of ideas, and may be called the knowledge of the body. But there is also such a thing as the idea or knowledge of the mind, and this is related to the mind just as the mind is related to the body. Spinoza finds it impossible, it is true, to keep the idea of the mind apart from the mind itself, since they are both

modes in the one attribute and thus melt into one. His doctrine is not consistent, but its purpose is clear. It appears to him that knowledge demands a knower and a known, and he cannot conceive the knower as playing the part of both. He therefore explains the mind's knowledge of itself by splitting it into a fictitious quality, which fades again into unity.¹ It is interesting to note that to Spinoza the mind is composed of ideas; it is not a something distinct from them and behind them. In Locke there appears again the ambiguous double self, the noumenal and the phenomenal. It is the latter which is directly perceived; the former remains 'an uncertain supposition of we know not what.' Berkeley, the Idealist, basing himself upon Locke's conclusions, classifies the objects of human knowledge as ideas of sense, ideas of memory and imagination, the passions and operations of the mind, and the self that perceives all these. Those who are familiar with the 'Principles' will remember that even Berkeley's clear and graceful sentences leave the reader's mind in a hopeless confusion regarding this last object and the nature of its relation to its own ideas.

In his general demolition of the noumenal and the tradition, Hume cast out everything except what we may now call the empirical self, the self as a complex of mental phenomena. He uses the word, to be sure, as it has since been used by others, to cover our whole mental life, and as equivalent to the word mind. He regards the mind as "but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." Spinoza had, as a psychologist, gone nearly as far, but his mediæval realistic metaphysic, and his desire to have in all cases a knower distinct from the thing known, obscured the force of his teachings. Hume himself, who has written on this as on all subjects with acuteness and admirable lucidity, occupies himself chiefly with destructive criticism, and furnishes no answers to the many objections and inquiries which naturally suggest themselves, and which did suggest themselves to his successors in philosophy. He has, however, done much in clearing the ground for a profit-

¹ See my volume, 'The Philosophy of Spinoza;' Note on the Mind and its Knowledge. 2d ed., N. Y. 1894, pp. 317-324.

able discussion of the question. His writings performed, moreover, the signal service of stimulating to a new course of thought Immanuel Kant, the Sage of Königsberg.

We owe it to Kant, that keen, systematic and inconsistent thinker, that the terms phenomenon and noumenon have become household words. This is no small gain. If a man loosely talks about the self as knowing or doing something, and we ask him whether he refers to the noumenal or to the phenomenal self, only to receive the answer that he does not know, we have now the right to refuse him respectful attention. He does not know what he means to say himself, and it is not likely that his words can profit others. Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, condemns the noumenon to outer darkness, and shuts up psychology to the world of experience, the phenomenal world. He is not, however, content with Hume's 'bundle' of perceptions, but distinguishes between the multiplicity of psychical elements forming the content of consciousness and a something—not a noumenon, but a something in consciousness—an activity, or whatever one may choose to call it, which makes possible the combination of this multiplicity into the unity of a single consciousness. On this depends the consciousness 'I think' which accompanies all my ideas. The empirical self, as a complex of psychical elements, is to be distinguished from this rational self. This doctrine has had and still has so deep an influence, that it is especially worthy of note in any historical study of the self as knower.

Let me now turn to the treatment of this problem by modern psychologists. The necessary limits of such a paper as this of course preclude anything like an exhaustive treatment of the subject, and I must content myself with an examination of the doctrines of but a few writers. I shall, however, try to select those which seem to me fairly representative of the thought of our time. We do not, I think, find among them much that is distinctly new, though we find, as might be expected, modifications of the views to which I have already referred.

Perhaps I should begin with the descendants of Kant (the line of descent runs through Hegel), a rather numerous and aggressive body, who take their psychology seriously, and are apt

to keep one eye on their metaphysics or theology while discussing psychological problems. As a protagonist of these I may take Professor T. H. Green. Mr. Green repudiated the Kantian noumenon and avowedly confined human knowledge to the field of experience, but he did not approve a Humian experience consisting of a bundle of percepts. He found it necessary to assume in experience a principle of synthetic unity; a principle not to be confounded with any of the elements making up the experience, nor subject to their conditions; a principle which, in some fashion, knits together the manifold of sense into an organic unity. "Thus," he writes,¹ "in order that successive feelings may be related objects of experience, even objects related in the way of succession, there must be in consciousness an agent which distinguishes itself from the feelings, uniting them in their severalty, making them equally present in their succession. And so far from this agent being reducible to, or derivable from a succession of feelings, it is the condition of there being such a succession; the condition of the existence of that relation between feelings, as also of those other relations which are not indeed relations between feelings, but which, if they are matter of experience, must have their being in consciousness. If there is such a thing as a connected experience of related objects, there must be operative in consciousness a unifying principle, which not only presents related objects to itself, but at once renders them objects and unites them in relation to each other by this act of presentation; and which is single throughout the experience."

According to this passage, the knowing or distinguishing agent is conscious and self-conscious, is in consciousness, makes a consciousness possible by uniting different elements, and is single throughout the experience. We find elsewhere that this principle is not *in* consciousness but *is* consciousness, and that everything that exists is in it; that it is intelligence; that it is a subject or agent which desires in all the desires of a man and thinks in all his thoughts. Notwithstanding that it is all this, it has, nevertheless, no existence except in the activity which constitutes related phenomena; and it is, in the words of

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 32.

the author¹ 'neither in time nor space, immaterial and immovable, eternally one with itself.'

The mere statement of the attributes of Mr. Green's spiritual principle would seem to be sufficient to condemn it. A faith robust enough to remove mountains might well shy at the task of believing that the single subject or agent which desires in all the desires of a man and thinks in all his thoughts, which is conscious and self-conscious, is still only an activity without existence except as it constitutes the objects of experience, and which, though it does not exist in time, is equally present to all stages of a change in conscious experience. Think of it! the activity which constituted my thought of yesterday did not exist yesterday, when my thought did; and the activity which constitutes my thought of to-day does not exist to-day, while my thought does! Both activities are one, for the activity which constitutes objects is 'eternally one with itself.' What can this mean? If the phrase is to be significant at all, must it not mean that the activity in question is 'always' the same activity? and does not 'always' mean 'at all times?' And what, in Heaven's name, is an 'immovable' activity? Moreover, is it fair to a genuine activity, however abnormal, to call it a principle or subject or agent?

But even supposing it possible for an activity to be all that Mr. Green asks it to be, even to be timelessly present at all times, how are we to conceive of such a thing uniting the elements of any possible experience? Shall we merely assume that it has a vague and inscrutable uniting virtue, as opium was once assumed to have a dormitive virtue? Mr. Green gives no hint of the method by which this activity obtains its result. He does not seek light on this point by a direct reference to experience, for he does not even obtain his activity by direct introspection; he obtains it as the result of a labored process which strives to demonstrate that it must be assumed or experience will be seen to be impossible.

I have read Mr. Green's book with a great deal of care, and have tried to read it sympathetically. Of course, those who sympathize with his doctrine will be inclined to think that, as

¹ § 54.

regards the latter point, I have met with indifferent success. I must confess that the book appears to me to be valuable to the psychologist chiefly as a warning. I have not found Mr. Green's utterances, in one sense of the word, incomprehensible. His doctrine is not fundamentally new. He has taken the Kantian unity of apperception, made of it an hypostatized activity, tried to keep it free of space and time relations, and used it as an explanation of the unity of experience, or as I should prefer to say, of consciousness. He has given us the same inconsistent *totum in toto* thing that we find in Plotinus and St. Augustine. He is, however, a Post-Kantian, and he has included this thing in 'experience.'

It would, of course, be unfair to judge of all Neo-Kantians or Neo-Hegelians on the basis of the utterances of even so prominent a member of the school as Mr. Green. Nevertheless, the way of thinking which characterizes the school seems to me much the same in all, and this is a way upon which, I believe, psychology as science should be careful not to enter. It has led our colleague, Professor Dewey, who can write so clearly when he forgets to what school he belongs, to express himself regarding the intuition of self as follows:¹ "We are concerned here especially with what is called self-consciousness, or the knowledge of the self as a universal permanent activity. We must, however, very carefully avoid supposing that self-consciousness is a new and particular kind of knowledge. The self which is the object of intuition is not an object existing ready made, and needing only to have consciousness turn to it, as towards other objects, to be known like them as a separate object. The recognition of self is only the perception of what is involved in every act of knowledge. The self which is known is, as we saw in our study of apperception and retention, the *whole* body of knowledge as returned to and organized into the mind knowing. The self which is known is, in short, the ideal side of that mode of intuition of which we just spoke;² it is their meaning in its unity. It is, also, a more complete stage of intuition, for, while in the final stage of intuition of

¹ *Psychology*, 3d ed. p. 242.

² *I. e.*, Intuition of the World or Nature.

nature we perceive it as a whole of interdependent relations, or as self-related, we have yet to recognize that we leave out of account the intelligence from which these relations proceed. In short, its true existence is in its relation to mind; and in self-consciousness we advance to the perception of mind."

The self as here described is a universal, permanent activity; it is only what is involved in every act of knowledge, and yet is the *whole* body of knowledge; as returned to and organized into the mind knowing—in other words, into the activity involved in every act of knowledge. Moreover, although it is the whole body of knowledge as thus organized and returned, it is the source of the relations obtaining between the objects making up the world of knowledge. Can any one form a clear notion of such a self? Professor Dewey gives the reader little assistance in making plain to himself how the whole body of knowledge can be returned to and organized into a universal, permanent activity; and he leaves unsolved the problem of how an organized whole consisting of things in relation can itself be the source of relations which make it what it is. Surely this is not sense or science. It is not in place in a modern work on psychology. Taken literally the phrases quoted do not convey any meaning; and taken loosely and figuratively they express, I think, quite as much error as truth. The error here is the error of Green; but the language of the extract is more distinctly the phraseology of a school, and further removed from the plain diction of common life and science. This is, I think, an aggravating circumstance.

Another of our colleagues, Professor Baldwin, has placed himself beside Green and Dewey, and, in so far, has abandoned the standpoint of scientific psychology. In his volume on *Feeling and Will*, he does not often, I think, stray far from the path of empirical psychology, though there is sometimes an indefiniteness of expression which leaves me rather in the dark as to his true meaning. The following, however, is unmistakable:¹ "We may well notice that neither the manifoldness nor the unity of feeling could be apprehended as such in the absence of a circumscribing consciousness which, through its own unity,

¹ N. Y., 1894, p. 79.

takes it to be what it is. Suppose we admit that at the beginnings of life the inner state is simply an undifferentiated continuity of sensation; what is it that *feels* or *knows* the subsequent differentiation of parts of this continuity? It cannot be the unity of the continuity itself, for that is now destroyed; it cannot be the differentiated sensations themselves, for there are many. It can only be a unitary subjectivity additional to the unity of the sensory content, *i. e.*, the form of synthetic activity which reduces the many to one in each and all of the stages of mental growth. The relations of ideas as units must be taken up into the unit idea of relation, to express what modern psychology means by apperception."

In the same category with the above we must put Professors Höfdding and Murray, and, I fear, also John Stuart Mill. Mill's chapter on the Psychological Theory of Matter as applied to Mind¹ regards consciousness as a 'string of feelings,' and holds it to be an ultimate and incomprehensible fact that a string of feelings can be conscious of itself as a string. In the appendix to the chapter, printed in the later editions of his work, he admits the existence of an inexplicable tie or law, which is a reality, and connects the feelings with each other. The Neo-Kantian will recognize in this the self for which he enters the lists, though he may disapprove of Mill's forms of expression. I am even tempted to include in the list our colleague, Professor James—at least Professor James in one of his moods, for, although he characterizes the phrase 'united by a spiritual principle' as absurd and empty, yet in the same paper he maintains² that "union in consciousness must be made by something, must be brought about; and to have perceived this truth is the great merit of the anti-associationist psychologists." As, however, he also maintains that if there were a 'soul' it might serve as an explanation of this union, possibly it would be as just to class him with those who hold to a noumenal self. Perhaps it would be best not to class him at all, as he appears so undecided as to what he wants. It is clear, however, that he wants *something* to do the knowing.

¹ Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy.

² 'The Knowing of Things together,' PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW, March, 1895.

I do not think that the substratum soul in its bald and uncompromising aspect, the Lockian 'I know not what,' the Kantian noumenon clearly recognized to be noumenal, plays an important part in the psychological thinking of our time. Still, it is possible to modify or dilute this entity and hold to it in a certain indefinite and inconsistent way. I think this is done by our colleague, Professor Ladd, whose valuable writings are justly attracting no small attention among our contemporaries.

I find in Professor Ladd's last two books many signs of a development in what I must consider the right direction. He is evidently gravitating, although with reluctance, toward psychology as science. His utterances may be collected under two heads according as they reveal the position in which he has heretofore been intrenched, or as they indicate the goal toward which he is moving. Let us glance at a few passages, beginning with some of those which fall under the former head.

We are told by Professor Ladd that the final aim of psychology is 'to understand the nature and development, in its relations to other beings, of that unique kind of being which we call the Soul or Mind.'¹ Our author complains that the larger number of those who cultivate psychology as an empirical science habitually regard consciousness, and the phenomena of consciousness, merely 'content-wise.' They overlook or deny the fact that all consciousness and every phenomenon of consciousness, makes the demand to be considered as a form of functioning, and not as mere differentiation of content. All psychic energy is self-activity; it appears in consciousness as the energizing, the conation, the striving, of the same being which comes to look upon itself as attracted to discriminate between this sensation and that, or compelled to feel some bodily pain, or solicited to consider some pleasant thought. Thus all psychic life manifests itself to the subject of that life as being, in one of its fundamental aspects, its own spontaneous activity.² Again: knowing is distinguished from mere imagining, remembering or thinking, in that it involves belief in reality; and psychological

¹ *Philosophy of Mind*, N. Y., 1895, p. 64.

² *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 85-88. *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, N. Y., 1895, p. 215.

analysis shows that knowledge is impossible without this rational, metaphysical belief, or metaphysical faith.¹ "The psychological analysis of any state of so-called knowledge," says Professor Ladd,² "of any of those psychoses properly described by the affirmation 'I know,' shows that all knowledge implicates reality, envisaged, inferred, believed in—we do not now stop to inquire into the manner of implication. Especially is this true of every act of so called *self*-knowledge; for the psychologist is simply ignoring what everybody means by the word, unless he understands the reality of the self-knowing and the self-known, the one self, to be involved as an immediate datum of experience."

From the above so much at least is clear: Professor Ladd believes in a unique kind of being called Soul or Mind, and regards all psychic life, every form of consciousness, as the energizing or striving of this being, holding, further, that all this is manifested to this being as its own spontaneous activity. Moreover this being knows itself, and knows itself as a reality. But whether this reality which knows itself and is the subject of all conscious states is itself in consciousness or not remains rather unclear. The statement that knowledge 'involves belief in reality' would certainly, if words are to be taken in their usual senses, indicate that the reality is not immediately given in experience; and the further statement that knowledge 'implicates reality, envisaged, inferred, believed in,' is vagueness itself, and gives little help in clearing up the matter. It is to be regretted that Professor Ladd did not stop at this point to inquire 'as to the manner of the implication,' for he has not made it clear anywhere else. The latter part of the last extract, which makes the reality of the self an immediate datum of experience, should, perhaps, settle the question; for where the reality of a thing is, there it seems reasonable to expect to find the thing also. Yet, on the other hand, it is maintained that to describe self-consciousness, as a *mere* state or *mere* activity of a definite kind, is imperfectly to describe it, and that 'self-knowledge, although it comes as the result of a development, implies a knowing being that knows itself, in an actual indubitable

¹ *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 100. *Psychology*, p. 513.

² *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 63; cf. *Psychology*, pp. 511-517.

experience, really to be.”¹ It appears, thus, that we are not to regard the self as either content of consciousness or activity; so that the empirics complained of above for overlooking the aspect of consciousness which makes it a ‘form of functioning’ would still be in the wrong even if they included this in their treatment of it. They would have accepted, it is true, every aspect and element of consciousness, but would have left out the real being, which knows itself in an act of metaphysical faith really to be. This speaks for something very like a noumenon; and one begins to feel decidedly that one must accept this as Professor Ladd’s doctrine when one remembers that in the same chapter with the sentence above quoted he denies knowledge of mere phenomena to be knowledge at all, and maintains that the word phenomenon has absolutely no meaning except as implying some particular being *of* which, and some being *to* which, the phenomenon is. Professor Ladd prefers, it is true, the expression ‘real existence’ to ‘noumenon,’ but that is a mere detail. I conclude, then, that our colleague holds to a noumenal self of some sort, which is responsible for the phenomena of consciousness; and yet, turning at this juncture to the end of the chapter, I am again thrown into confusion by the author’s summary of the discussion from which I have taken the above sentiments. I there² find that “the peculiar, the only intelligible and indubitable reality which belongs to Mind is its being for itself, by actual functioning of self-consciousness, of recognitive memory, and of thought. Its real being is just this ‘for-self-being’ (*Für-sich-seyn*). Every mind, by living processes, perpetually constitutes its own being, and knows itself as being real. To be self-conscious, to remember that we were self-conscious, and to think of the self as having, actually or possibly, been self-conscious—this is really to be, as minds are. And no other being is real mental being.” This extract, which the author presents as the sum of the whole matter, seems unequivocally to make of the self nothing more than an activity of consciousness, and, whatever that may be, a self-constitutive activity. It smacks strongly of Neo-Kantism.

¹ *Philos. of Mind*, p. 127.

² *Philos. of Mind*, p. 147; *cf. Psychol.* p. 638.

But what now becomes of that object known, which is not merely an object 'for the knowing process'?¹

Although it is difficult to gain from Professor Ladd's writings any clear idea of what the active subject of mental phenomena really is, one may at least guess from certain passages what he is anxious that it should not be. "This active agent," he remarks,² "actually here and now active and knowing itself as active, is indeed no transcendental being, up aloft in the heavens of metaphysics; but then neither is it submerged beneath the slime, or covered with the thin varnish, of purely empirical psychology." It holds, as it seems, a middle course, and combines the properties of a noumenon, a Neo-Kantian self-constitutive activity and an empirical psychosis.

The last mentioned aspect of Professor Ladd's self or agent, and the one which fixes the goal toward which, as it seems to me, he is moving, comes out very clearly in his work on Descriptive and Explanatory Psychology. We there find that knowledge or cognition is only studied by scientific psychology as a complex psychosis;³ that human mental life does not begin with knowledge; that it not only grows *in* knowledge, when knowledge is once attained, but it grows *into* knowledge only when certain conditions are fulfilled.⁴ The truth that all knowledge implies a development has not, we are told, been hitherto sufficiently emphasized by psychologists, for "at first and for a considerable but indefinite time after birth the child has no such development of any faculty as to make knowledge possible. To it there is no 'Thing' known; to it there is no self as an object of knowledge. This is, however, far from affirming that the child has no states of consciousness whatever—no sensations, no mental images, no feelings, no conation and motor consciousness. Even a considerable development of discriminating consciousness, as the inseparable accompaniment and indispensable condition of all mental development, may take place before the first act, or process, worthy to be called knowledge is reached."⁵ It is insisted

¹ *Philos. of Mind*, p. 100. *Psychol.* p. 513.

² *Philos. of Mind*, p. 106.

³ *Psychology*, N. Y., 1895, p. 508.

⁴ P. 509.

⁵ P. 510.

that "all objects of knowledge, psychologically considered, are alike to be regarded as states of consciousness; all states of consciousness are time processes in the on-flowing stream of consciousness. This is as true of the things perceived by the senses as it is of the self known in self-consciousness."¹ Again: "In the earlier stages of mental life no psychoses can be discovered which are worthy to be called a knowing of self."² The gradual development of the psychosis called a knowledge of self, Professor Ladd traces at length, and concludes thus: "Finally, it is by complex synthesis of judgments, based on manifold experiences converging to one conception—the resultant of many acts of memory, imagination, reasoning and naming—that the knowledge of the Self as a Unitary Being is attained." Only at this stage is self-consciousness in its highest sense possible; but in this stage "in one and the same act the mind makes itself the object of its self-knowledge, and believes in the real being of that which it creates as its own object."³

Surely all this is plain and unvarnished empirical psychology, with only a few traces of the old-fashioned rationalistic doctrine. It is psychology as science. But it is very hard to fit it to what has preceded. We find here that in the earlier stages of consciousness there is no self as known. It, of course, follows that during these stages there also exists no self as knowing, no agent, no reality; for is it not true that consciousness regarded as objectively discriminated, and consciousness regarded as discriminating activity, are only two sides of one and the same consciousness?⁴ and are not the self-knowing and the self-known the one self?⁵ and does not the existence of this one self depend upon its actual functioning as self-consciousness? "To be self-conscious, to remember that we were self-conscious, and to think of the self as having, actually or possibly, been self-conscious—this is really to be, as minds are."⁶ There are then sufficiently complex consciousnesses containing sensations,

¹ P. 519.

² P. 523.

³ Pp. 531, 532.

⁴ *Philos. of Mind*, p. 89; *Psychol.* p. 291.

⁵ *Philos. of Mind*, p. 63; cf. *Psychol.* p. 532.

⁶ *Philos. of Mind*, p. 147; cf. *Psychol.* p. 638.

images, feelings, motor impulses, and even a considerable development of discrimination, which are not the manifestation of any reality, or the states of any being. As yet there is no mind or self of which they may be the manifestation. Here are activities without any 'thing' that is active. Here are phenomena without any reality *of* which and *to* which they are the phenomena. We must then abandon the position that all psychic energy is the activity of the self, for the self must be begotten or beget itself before it can act; and we must also reconsider the statement that the word phenomena has no meaning except as implying some particular being *of* which, and some being *to* which, the phenomenon is.

The two elements in Professor Ladd's doctrine cannot, I think, by any possibility, be made to harmonize. It is war to the death; and I believe the careful reader of the earlier and later works of our colleague will see that the issue of the conflict is scarcely a matter of doubt. Professor Ladd's soul as 'envisaged reality' is gradually slipping away from him. I should not be surprised to see him in some later work apostrophizing it after the manner of Hadrian:

" Animula vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quae nunc abibis in loca?"

Let us hope that, when it does take its departure, it may find some abode with an atmosphere less rarified than the heaven of the transcendentalists, and let us also hope that it may escape a damp and unpleasant interment in so-called empirical 'slime.'

I have dwelt at length upon Professor Ladd's doctrine both because of our own interest in his work and because it has seemed to me profitable to show into what perplexities even a learned and really scholarly man is in danger of falling, when he wanders from the narrow way of scientific psychological method, and takes to what Diogenes Laertius calls a noble line in Philosophy, dealing with the incomprehensible. It remains for me to say a word concerning those whom I may call the successors of Hume. I think we will all admit that Hume wrote rather crudely concerning the self, and that his 'bundle' of perceptions is by no means able to take its place without

modification in a modern psychological treatise. I do not mean, therefore, in speaking of the successors of Hume, to indicate that those referred to write in the same crude fashion. I only mean to indicate that they have abandoned the traditional self of the History of Philosophy, and have not replaced it by an hypostatized unitary activity in consciousness or in 'experience,' but regard it as the whole task of the psychologist to study the 'content' of consciousness in a broad and reasonable sense of the word content. In this class I place Professor Wundt, as he appears in his later writings; ¹ Professor Külpe, who states and maintains more unequivocally than Wundt, Wundt's later psychological doctrine; ² Professor Ziehen, who almost succeeds in leaving out of his clear little book on Physiological Psychology, all non-psychological reference; and Professor Titchener, who holds that there is no psychological evidence of a mind which lies behind mental processes, and no psychological evidence of a mental 'activity' above or behind the stream of conscious processes.³ It is interesting to note that these men have approached psychology from the physiological and experimental side; and one is tempted to think that the novelty of their task and the conditions under which they have been compelled to approach it, have somewhat loosened for them the bonds of tradition, and have enabled them to place themselves more completely on the ground proper to psychology as science than it has been possible for a goodly number of their co-workers to do.⁴

It is unnecessary for me to say that I regard their position as the right one, though I should not like to be understood as ap-

¹ Grundzüge, Leipzig, 1893. *Human and Animal Psychology*. London, 1894.

² Grundriss, Leipzig, 1893.

³ *Outline of Psychol.*, N. Y., 1896; p. 341.

⁴ It is proper for me to state that none of these writers have appeared to me to fully appreciate the significance of their own position for the psychological doctrine of 'knowledge.' A commentator always treads upon uncertain ground, but I am inclined to believe that their scientific attitude in treating of the self has really been brought about by the causes to which I have alluded. They have wished to avoid metaphysics and hold to clear psychological concepts. This does not necessarily imply that they have seen the total value of these concepts either for Psychology or Epistemology. I suppose all the writers I have mentioned would give a goodly share of the credit for bringing before the public the doctrine I am discussing to Wundt, although he has not been the most happy in giving its expression.

proving all the details of their treatment of psychological problems. The study of the content of consciousness and of the relations of mental phenomena to the physical world seem to me the proper task of the psychologist as psychologist. And by the words 'content of consciousness,' I do not mean content in the Kantian sense, a something contrasted with 'form;' I mean all that is to be found in consciousness, including relations, changes and activities. But relations, changes and activities should be treated in a scientific and intelligible way. If I have a perception of three black dots on a white surface, so related to one another that lines joining them would form an equilateral triangle, surely the relations of the dots are as much a part of my perception as the color of the dots; and, if I see again on the following day three similar dots similarly related, I am surely not justified in declaring the relations perceived on the two occasions, to be identical in any sense in which the dots are not. If, further, I describe the formation of any psychosis in consciousness to-day as the manifestation of an activity, and the formation of a like psychosis in consciousness to-morrow, as also the manifestation of an activity, surely the two activities should be as carefully distinguished as the psychoses themselves, and each relegated to the particular time at which it manifested itself. The word 'activity' is not a word to conjure with; and when speech ceases to be intelligible, silence is golden. There is nothing in the view of the task of the psychologist which I am advocating, to make him overlook or slight any phenomenon or aspect of consciousness. He is not compelled to regard our mental life as composed of unrelated elements, or to look upon it as passive or mechanical. He need not betake himself to unusual or misleading expressions such as the 'self-compounding' or 'agglomeration' of ideas. He has the same right others have to take language as he finds it, and to do his best with it, striving only to be clear and exact and to avoid being misunderstood. He must recognize that when men say 'I think,' 'I believe,' 'I know,' 'I feel,' 'I will,' 'I remember,' 'I am self-conscious,' these words indicate the presence in consciousness of complex psychoses, which it is his duty to analyze to the best of his ability. His task is not an easy one; and even if he

follow loyally a good method, confining himself resolutely to the field that I have indicated, he may for a long time to come expect to find in it much that cannot be so brought into the light as to make him confident that he has completely analyzed and described it. Notwithstanding all this, he may take comfort in the thought that his method is the true one. Even if the goal be far distant, it is something to be on the right road.

I have no doubt that many will object that this simply abandons the psychological problem of the knower and his knowledge, and does not solve it. They will insist: How can there, after all, be a consciousness, unless something unifies it? can one psychosis know another? or 'a string of feelings' know itself as a string? Where in all this is the knowing? I answer, the psychological problem is indeed abandoned, for it is only through a misconception that such a psychological problem exists at all. How the traditional knowing self came into being and became a perennial stone of stumbling to the speculative mind, it is not, I think, difficult to conjecture; and a brief exposition of what I believe to be the genesis of this self will be the best justification of my statement that the problem has no right to demand a solution.

It is generally accepted among psychologists that, at an early stage of the mind's development, the chief constituent of the notion of the self, and perhaps the only one that stands out with sufficient clearness to occupy the attention, is the idea of the body. When the child says 'I see,' 'I hear,' 'I feel,' he is not thinking of the self of the philosophers, but is recognizing the fact that, given his body in such and such a relation to other objects, he has certain experiences. His body stands over against other objects and is distinguished from them. It sees with its eyes, hears with its ears, feels with its hands. It not only sees, hears, and feels other objects, but also sees, hears and feels itself. It perceives not merely that it is acted upon, but also that it acts upon other things, bringing about changes in them. It is the constant factor in experience, while the objects with which it occupies itself succeed one another in a more or less rapid succession. Moreover, it is an interesting object, with which are bound up in a peculiar manner the pains and

pleasures of the individual. No wonder it becomes the centre of the little world in which it has its being, a world concrete, unreflective, external, if I may be permitted to use this relative word when the correlative can not as yet be regarded as having made its way into the light of clear consciousness—at least a world objective and material in the sense that what comes later to be recognized as objective and material almost wholly constitutes it. And from the crude materialism of the infant mind to the crude animism of the savage the step is but a short one. That duplicate of the body, which in dreams walks abroad, sees and is seen, and acts as the body acts, has simply taken the place of the body as knower and doer, and its knowing and doing obtain their significance in the same experience. The thought of the child is duplicated in the new world opened up by the beginnings of reflection.

Now, I believe that the student of the History of Philosophy who is able to read between the lines can see in the highly abstract and inconsistent '*totum in toto*' soul of Scholasticism, and in the 'transcendental unity of apperception' of Kant, a something that has grown by a process of refinement from these rude beginnings. These nebulous entities do not make their appearance upon the stage unheralded. We find early in the history of thought a material soul which knows things by contact with the effluxes thrown off from material objects. It is an object among other objects, as is the body, and the nature of its knowing is clearly analogous to that of the body's. We have, later, a soul in part fettered to the body, and, as it were, semi-material. We have, finally, a soul abstract and unmeaning, a shade, a survival from a more concrete and unreflective past. It is worthy of note that with this development the soul and its method of knowing become more and more unintelligible. How the soul as noumenon or as super-temporal activity can know anything or do anything, no man can pretend to understand. The reason is not far to seek. In the successive transmutations through which it has passed, almost all reference to the primary experience out of which the notion of a soul or self as knower and doer took its rise has been lost. Were such reference completely lost, it would go hard with the hypostatized abstrac-

tions of the Noumenalist and the Neo-Kantian. As it is, they hold their own because men really do find in their experience something which seems to speak for them in a certain vague and inarticulate way. They can form no conception of the method by which a noumenon or a Neo-Kantian self-activity can account for their experiences, but they prefer these to nothing at all; for must there not be a knower? do *they* not really *know*? Their position is one quite easy to understand. It is not exclusively to the childhood of the individual or of the race that we need go to find the body an important element in the self-idea. The developed man has much the same experience as the child, and instinctively interprets it in the same way, although reflection has furnished him with the means of correcting this instinctive interpretation. Even the psychologist who writes clearly and systematically concerning the empirical self, which he recognizes as nothing more than a complex in consciousness, may retain as a troublesome and inexplicable entity a second self, the knowing self contrasted with the self known—identical with it, and yet distinguished from it; the same, and yet not the same. Here he may revel, as those who have preceded him have reveled, in self-contradictions and unintelligible discourse. He may apply to the self the unhappy title of 'subject-object' and endeavor to separate a thing from itself, positing a relation between the two, when there are not two but one to be related. It requires but a moment of unprejudiced reflection, it seems to me, to see that all this is absurd and unmeaning. The only question of real interest is: How have men come to speak in this way? The answer I have indicated above. When one whose chief idea of the self is the body¹ speaks of perceiving himself among other objects, he has reference to an experience which he and others constantly have; and he has used a certain expression to call attention to that experience. His thought may not be clear and analytic. His statement, if the words be taken quite literally, is meaningless. Still, he means something by it, and it is the duty of the psy-

¹ Of course, I have no intention of taking here any position regarding the body as a material, external thing. Any one who pleases may substitute for the word such expressions as 'experience of the body,' 'relatively permanent organic feelings,' etc.

chologist to show him what he means. It is not his duty to turn an inconsistency of expression into an inconsistency of thought, and find in his words what, in their proper interpretation, they do not contain. Our Noumenalist, or our Neo-Kantian, thus bases himself upon an experience, even though he misinterprets it. He draws from experience the impulse to carry over into a region in which it has no right to exist the notion of a bodily self. He refines it, he purifies it of all that is earthly and concrete, starves it to a shadow of its former self, and yet expects of it its former tale of bricks—knowing and doing.

This I cannot but regard as delusion; as a misinterpretation of our common experience. This path let the psychologist avoid. To him knowledge is a psychosis to be analyzed; so is self-knowledge. The unity of consciousness he may accept as he finds it, striving to make clear to himself what he means by 'unity' in general, and by the unity of consciousness in particular. To attempt to explain the ultimate nature of consciousness by the assumption of hypothetical entities not to be found in consciousness, or by ascribing inconceivable virtues to hypostatized activities, seems to me an unprofitable task.¹

My address is already longer than I intended to make it, and yet I feel with regret that I have not been able to speak on some of the points upon which I have touched, as clearly and fully as I could have wished. Nevertheless, I must beg your indulgence in allowing me to mention very briefly one point more. Psychologists are men, and may be assumed to share the hopes and fears common to men of their degree of intelligence. It is quite possible that some among us have already mentally characterized my position by applying to it the damnatory phrase

¹ In spite of the fact that I heartily dislike seeing a discussion encumbered with foot-notes, I must add one more. I have said at the outset that I would try to confine myself to psychological ground. I have, hence, raised none of the epistemological questions which are suggested by the one question I have been discussing. I have not criticized from the standpoint of epistemology the psychological standpoint, nor asked how one may *know* that there is an external world. I have not asked what it means for two men to know the same thing, or how one consciousness can be known to be outside of another. I have simply discussed the general problem of knowledge and of the knower in psychology, and I have stated the problem in its simplest form. Until some satisfactory solution is given to the problem as thus stated, it seems to me to be futile to attempt the solution of more intricate problems of the same nature.

‘psychology without a soul,’ and have felt that what I have said militates against the existence of the soul after death. My discussion has, however, left this question just where it was before. It was pointed out by Mill long ago, that if it is possible for a ‘string of feelings’ to have a continued existence in this life, there can be no *a priori* objection to its having such an existence in another. Even so I would say, if a consciousness can here develop during a period of years, and retain that identity which it is the duty of the psychologist to analyze and describe, there is nothing in a man’s repudiation of noumena or supertemporal activities to prevent him from believing that his conscious life may continue indefinitely. My reference to this matter may be a little out of place, for we are here to-day as psychologists, and have before us a definite and limited field of labor. Still, it is hard for men to approach scientific questions without asking what is their bearing upon theological or religious convictions. Perhaps it is right that such questionings should arise. I have added this paragraph in the hope that what I have said may not meet with a prejudice arising out of a mere misunderstanding, and be condemned through the application of a question-begging phrase.