MIND

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

I.—HEGELIANISM AND ITS CRITICS.

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PROFESSOR JONES has a bitter quarrel with the critics of Hegelianism, and those whom it pleases him to call Epistemologists. He has poured out the vials of his wrath in two articles in MIND, and as it would appear from these that I am the wickedest of the wicked Epistemologists, it seems fitting that I should make some reply. To speak more seriously, I am sincerely obliged to him for the searching criticism to which he has submitted my articles in the *Philosophical Review*, and the opportunity he thus affords me of restating my positions with further explanations. It was with a view to elicit such criticism that this tentative form of publication was adopted. For what appeared in the *Philosophical Review* formed part, I may explain, of a third course of Balfour Lectures, dealing with the Theory of Knowledge, and delivered in the spring of 1891. As I did not feel that the treatment of the subject was complete, or even in all points free from difficulty, I adopted this method of publication with a view to benefit by such criticism as might be offered, and in order to think out the whole question more fully. Since then my own reflexion has convinced me that some of the expressions used require explanation and modification, and I need not say that my sense of this need has been quickened by the image of my supposed theory in Prof. Jones's glass. If such misconceptions are possible, I

am ready to admit that the fault must lie, to some extent at least, in the ambiguous nature of the phraseology used ; for I should not dream of charging Prof. Jones with wilful perversion, nor, on the other hand, can I admit that an argument, which, in the sense in which it was intended, is to me manifestly true, and which has commanded the assent of many whose judgment I value, is a superfluity, and a tissue of fallacies. But though I do not accuse Prof. Jones of knowingly perverting my meaning, I cannot acquit him of frequently interpreting that meaning according to his preconceived notion of what that meaning must be. This is very manifest in his persistent identification of my position with ' Subjective Idealism ' and ' Sensationalism '. The finer shades of philosophic theory are notably absent from the average Hegelian mind, and just as the Hegelian arrogates to himself (most unjustifiably) the exclusive title to the name Idealism, so any one who deviates from the beaten track of his own formulæ is at once branded as a Sensationalist in disguise. Prof. Jones's articles betray this bias, and I think that if he had interpreted certain of my statements less in view of this simple antithesis, and more in accordance with the whole context of my articles,¹ which explains and qualifies them, he might have found that the problem I was investigating was a real one, not to be closed by a dilemma. But he found in my articles the Sensationalist whom he went out to see, and he belabours him with a will.

Prof. Jones's second article, in which he unfolds his dilemma and seeks " to cut the very root " of Epistemology, seems to me the really important part of his contention. It is, indeed, a very close and searching piece of argumentation. But before proceeding to deal with it, I must touch upon certain points in the first article, which is more general in character, and is in the main a defence of Hegelianism against recent critics. These critics are apparently identified as Lotzians and Neo-Lotzians, and to judge from the quotations and allusions, I am here also in the forefront of the offenders. The article concludes with a revised version of the Hegelian theory, in which it is satisfactory to note that some of the criticisms have gone home. But I venture to think that in its anxiety to repudiate the charge of sub-

¹ In this connexion I regret that Prof. Jones had not before him the concluding paragraphs of the lectures as spoken. I think he could not fail to have gathered from them a truer view of the nature and purpose of my argument. They appear in the January number of the *Philosophical Review*.

stantiating knowledge and putting it in place of reality, Prof. Jones's theory arrives at the remarkable result of denying knowledge altogether. I will endeavour to explain my meaning presently.

But at the very outset it may be well, in view of a masterful statement of Prof. Jones, that I establish my right to criticise. "The duty to criticise," says Prof. Jones, "must be based on a right to criticise, and that right can only be derived from some consecutive and ultimately constructive theory of existence." I desire to protest most strongly against this convenient but wholly unwarrantable assumption. We do not all carry theories of existence in our pockets, but surely it is open to every one to point out the inadequacies or the contradictions of any given theory that is submitted for his acceptance. I would answer Prof. Jones in the fine words of Mill in a somewhat similar reference: "If I am asked what system of philosophy I substituted for that which, as a philosophy, I had abandoned, I answer, No system; only a conviction that the true system was something much more complex and many-sided than I had previously had any idea" (*Autobiography*, p. 161). These words express, moreover, precisely the attitude of many critics of Hegelianism. Hegelianism, I venture to say, is often stated by its English representatives so vaguely that any thinker, not a materialist or a pure sceptic, could acquiesce in the general position. But definitely to embrace a philosophical theory, implies satisfaction with the line of argument by which the result is reached; it implies acceptance of the argument as a demonstration, and a belief founded upon insight that the theory accounts for and includes all the facts. Now many critics hold that, as a theory, Hegelianism runs far in advance of insight, and that there are awkward facts in the universe to which it cannot be said to do justice. It is surely open to critics in these circumstances to call for reconsideration, for a wider and more elastic theory. Some of them are content to believe where they cannot prove; but if pressed by Hegelian dogmatism, they are equally entitled to take up the purely critical attitude of a suspension of judgment. As Kant says: "When delusive proofs are presented to us, it is our duty to meet them with the *non liquet* of a matured judgment".

The first general remark I would make on Prof. Jones's criticism of his critics concerns the extremely ingenious, but really extraordinary, nature of the defence set up. It consists of neither more nor less than attributing to these critics the very positions which they have consistently and emphatically

censured in Hegelianism. Having readily shown the absurdity of these positions (much as the critics themselves do), Prof. Jones holds up the critics to ridicule for the views thus fathered upon them, and so prepares the way for the triumphant entry of his own New Hegelianism, amended so as to meet the real objections of the critics. Even an Epistemologist will turn when such treatment is meted out to him. And I honestly cannot describe otherwise than I have just done, Prof. Jones's statements about 'the world of ideas,' a belief in the substantial existence of which he strangely insists on attributing to 'the critics of Idealism'. I speak, of course, only for myself, but it passes my comprehension on what Prof. Jones can have founded this strange theory of his opponents' position. I can only conjecture from certain allusions that it is derived from the chapter in Lotze's *Logic* (book iii. chap. ii.) on 'The World of Ideas'. But if so, the perversion of Lotze's statement is more than I find easy to explain. The very object of the chapter is to contrast the timeless identity of significance which belongs to a concept, and the eternal validity which belongs to a truth, with the existence which belongs to things, or the occurrence which we predicate of events. "Reality of existence is enjoyed by ideas," says Lotze, "only in the moment in which they become, in the character of objects or creations of an act of presentation now actually occurring, members of this changing world of being and becoming; but, on the other hand, we all feel certain in the moment in which we think any truth that we have not created it for the first time but merely recognised it." This contrast between validity and existence is fundamental to Lotze's philosophical position, and forms the basis from which he criticises the popular hypostatizing of the laws of nature as real entities, and the more subtle hypostatizing of abstract thought in some forms of the Hegelian philosophy. If there is one position, therefore, which is more foreign to Lotze's mind than another, it is the conception of a world of ideas as 'existential realities'.

As regards my own position that could hardly be in doubt. What I have most strongly attacked in the Hegelian philosophy, both in the concluding lecture of *Scottish Philosophy* and throughout *Hegelianism and Personality*, is just its tendency to hypostatise thoughts or categories and thus to put knowledge in the place of reality, or "to construct the world out of mere universals"—"to deduce existence from pure or abstract thought". I have traced this tendency in Hegel himself; that forms the substance of my chapter on 'Logic

as Metaphysic,' which impeaches Hegel's identification of the two. I have shown its continuation, naked and not ashamed, in his followers of the Left: I have repeatedly laid my finger upon traces of the same tendency in his English exponents. Everywhere I have insisted that to speak of the existence of thoughts without a thinker is a meaningless phrase. "Thought exists," I say, to quote a single passage, "only in the thought of a thinker. . . . To thought *per se*, we can attribute neither existence nor causal activity; and this being so, it can have no place in metaphysics as a theory of Being." And again, in the more recent articles in the *Philosophical Review* in the context of one of the passages which Prof. Jones employs for his own purposes, occurs the sentence: "Knowledge [knowing] is an activity, an activo-passive experience of the subject".

More than this it was hardly possible to do in the way of stating an opinion clearly and emphatically. Yet Prof. Jones turns upon the critics of idealism and declares to them with much emphasis, presumably as a piece of novel information, that "what exists is a series of mental operations, activities of reality, as manifested in the subject who thinks and in the conditions within and without him which make his thinking possible. There are thinkers and things thought about; but there are no third entities. The mental processes performed by individuals do not leave behind them any products which can be regarded as having the apparent independence and real existence of things." There is a certain satisfaction in seeing one's own views expressed almost in one's own language, but there is also a feeling of topsyturvydom in seeing them elaborately proved as a refutation of one's own contentions.

Passing from this ingenious but curious method of controversy, I should like, in connexion with my own criticisms of Hegel, to make a tolerably obvious remark. All philosophical criticism concerns itself with the implications or legitimate consequences of a statement rather than with the meaning which the statement presumably bore to the thinker who gave it currency. This is why philosophical polemic bandies about so freely the charge of 'absurdity'. In reading an opponent's account of any position, the wonder of the reader is how any man out of Bedlam could be got to propound such transparent impossibilities; whereas presumably the author of the theory attacked was just as sane as his critic, never dreamt of denying the patent facts adduced against him, and had a

reasonable and tenable meaning in the theory he propounded, if we are content to take it in the sense and in the connexion he intended. His affirmations and denials require in that case to be interpreted not absolutely, but in relation to the theories of which his own is the outgrowth, or the critical opponent. The positions which he emphasises are supplemented and supported in his own mind by a mass of presuppositions which he holds in common with his opponents, and which he passes over in silence, because it does not occur to him that any one would dream of calling them in question. But ideas, as Hegel says, have hands and feet: once launched upon the world they soon go alone. What was qualified in the mind of the original thinker by a multitude of unspoken considerations, comes to be taken by his less intelligent followers in its bare unqualified literalness as an absolute verity. And the critic who is writing in the interests of what he considers truth, and is not merely tracing the historic evolution of opinion, is bound to take the formula in the same way, in order to develop the consequences which will follow from it, if so interpreted, and thus to demonstrate its inadequacy. Only so can he prepare the way for a more adequate and carefully guarded formula. I fancy we shall all be agreed that this is a fair account of what actually happens, and this, I should like to say, is the sense in which my criticisms of Hegel and Green are to be understood, when I say, *e.g.*, that Green's "Eternal Consciousness or Spiritual Principle is no more than a *focus imaginarius* into which the multiplex relations which constitute the intelligible world return". So again, when I say of Hegel that he reduces the world to pure thought or abstract categories, clothed with a dynamic or creative power—that "his language would justify us in believing that the categories actually take flesh and blood and walk into the air,"—I am not to be understood as saying either that Hegel was a fool and that he excogitated transparent absurdities, or that the Hegelians were so inexorable in their logic and so airily unsubstantial in their needs as literally to put Hegel's twenty volumes in place of "all the mighty world of eye and ear," not to speak of the world in which we dine and sup. But whatever his meaning, I have contended that the form he gave to it was misleading, that if his words are to be taken with any exactitude, our deductions from them would necessarily be of the description indicated. We can escape from such conclusions only in one of two ways. We may either evade the natural interpretation of the awkward passages and take the whole position in

a highly vague and indefinite sense,¹ or we may, as Prof. Jones now does, come forward with a modified form of expression and insist that that is the true rendering of Hegel's meaning. A certain meed of gratitude would seem in the latter case to be due to the critics who have been the 'occasional cause' of the rectification.

But Prof. Jones, as I understand him, denies that the tendency complained of exists in the Hegelian statements; he denies that Hegelians have ever tended to the confusions indicated, and accordingly the well-meant warnings of the critics can only seem to him impertinences. Early in his paper he does indeed say that he "would be loath to assert that Idealists have at no time given colour to the charge that they have confused the distinction between knowledge and reality in one or other of its various aspects" (p. 294). But some pages further on he declares that the interpretation of God and man and the world as *thoughts* is as foreign to Idealism as their interpretation into rings of smoke (p. 303), and apparently (p. 305) treats "the preposterous mistake of taking knowledge of reality for reality itself" as a charge which has no justification, save in the disordered imagination of the critics themselves. It is simply a perversion of Hegel's meaning and of the meaning of his idealistic followers (p. 306). "No 'Hegelian,' 'Neo-Hegelian' or 'Neo-Kantian' would hold that his ideas are the things which they represent" (p. 293). I do not quite see how Prof. Jones's first admission is to be reconciled with the brave words in the latter part of the article, nor do I see how this emphatic disavowal can be reconciled with such statements as the following from Mr. Haldane and Mr. Ritchie, who are as accredited representatives of Hegelian thought and tendencies as Prof. Jones himself. "Knowledge," says Mr. Haldane (*MIND*, vol. iii. p. 576), "is the ultimate reality, embracing existence within itself. The individual is a moment in its dialectical development." "What is any individual thing," asks Mr. Ritchie (*Philosophical Review*, i. 278), "except a meeting-point of universal attributes? Qualities are all universals." And again (p. 270), "a thing really is—that way of thinking about it which fits it into its place in an intelligible system of the universe". Now as the critical analyst of the article remarked at the time in *MIND* (vol. i. p. 439, N.S.) what Mr. Ritchie really proves (and what he doubtless intended to say) was that a thing really is, not any particular way of thinking

¹ Hegel seems, for example, to say on one occasion that his own elaborate phraseology means no more than the ancient position that *Nous* rules the world.

about it, but "what it must be thought of *as being*" in order to fit it into its place in an intelligible system of the universe. But in Mr. Ritchie's own statement, we have precisely exemplified the tendency to confuse knowing and being, to maintain their 'identity,' as the phrase is, in place of their necessary relation. The same tendency is seen in Mr. Ritchie's question: "What is any individual thing except a meeting-point of universal attributes? Qualities," he adds, "are all universals." Yes, and every universal is, as such, an abstract, while all existence is individual and concrete. The abstracts, if exhaustively enunciated, are a correct description of the thing, but they do not *make* the thing by 'meeting' in a point. "Even an atom," I once ventured to say, "is more than a category." "What is an atom," Mr. Ritchie replies, "except a category—a conception by help of which we may find it convenient to make the world intelligible to ourselves?" (MIND, vol. xiii. p. 257). Certainly the atom may be spoken of as a category, just as every word we use is a universal, but is the world itself, then (supposing it to consist of atoms), no more than a set of categories or conceptions? I do not suppose Mr. Ritchie would make such an assertion, but he comes dangerously near saying so in the very next sentence. "If the reality of things consists in their being composed of atoms, then it follows that their reality consists in their being thought." Taken in connexion with the sentences already quoted, this seems to mean that their reality consists in the conceptions by which we think them. And this is precisely the insidious tendency which I have criticised in the English followers of Hegel and Green. These extracts appear to me to show that Prof. Jones was better advised in his original admission than in his subsequent disclaimers. I might also recall to him the palmy days of the seventies, when Green's influence swept the universities. "Relations," as I well remember, was then the password of all the more ardent spirits, and we triumphantly explained the universe to ourselves as a complex of relations, unified in an eternal consciousness. To the last Green denied any reality to sensation. A historical review might also have reminded Prof. Jones that the reduction of life to logic actually took place in some of the boldest of the Left Wing thinkers, calling from Dr. Hutchison Stirling the not wholly unnecessary protest that "neither Gods nor men are in very truth logical categories," and drawing from him the admission that even Hegel himself in his *Logic* "lays a misleading stress on the abstract universal". Dr. Stirling's whole note on "Pantheism and Paganism" in the *Schwegler*

is instructive in connexion with the hypostatisation of 'thought' or 'the idea' or 'knowledge'; and what he says of the master I may be allowed to say with some truth of the followers.

A further historical review, even if conducted on the principle of dialectic triplicity, might have suggested that there must be something defective or one-sided in the exclusive stress laid by the Hegelian Idealism upon thought. "*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*": that is sound Hegelian doctrine. How then, if Hegel is flawless, are we to explain the emphatic protest made by Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, not to speak of Herbart, Weisse, Lotze and others, against this reduction of existence to essence—against the substitution of the formal universal of knowledge for the concrete individual of fact? No doubt many of these fall back into the opposite extreme of asserting a reality unrelated to thought, a reality which, therefore, becomes ultimately an unknowable. But their opposite one-sidedness does not invalidate the soundness of their protest against the inadequacy of the Hegelian theory; and the very existence of these thinkers, differing widely among themselves in most points, but agreeing in what may be called their Realism, should be sufficient proof of the need for a revision of the Hegelian theory and a more careful statement of the philosophical position. But if the original theory has been proved, by the incontestable evidence of history, to suffer from the taint or bias which has been indicated, and if the same bias constantly tends to re-invade the statement of it even at the present day, it would surely be much better, after due acknowledgment to "the critics," to try to embody in a reconstructed theory what is true in their contention than to insist on identifying 'Idealism' with Hegelianism, and to reiterate the stale charge of failure to understand what Hegel really meant. A mode of controversy which assumes that all truth is to be found in Hegel, and that there is nothing but error in the world without, must necessarily be barren of result. It savours, besides, too strongly of the procedure of an infallible Church to commend itself to the modern mind.

But the most interesting point in the article is that Prof. Jones himself is careful to speak of reality rather than of Thought with a capital T to which we have been so long accustomed. Even Green's Eternal Consciousness figures less prominently. Idealism, we are told, is "a theory which represents the universe as a thinking activity" (p. 294); and again, the task of Idealism is "to investigate the nature of

a single real principle and to trace its activity both in outer facts and in thinking individuals" (p. 303). To Hegel, "the Universe was not a system of thought, but a thinking reality" (p. 301). "To evolve things out of ideas is a manifestly hopeless endeavour. Out of thoughts can come nothing but thoughts. If Hegel and his followers, old and new, have attempted this task they are convicted, in my opinion, of manifest absurdity" (p. 302). Most true, I say, but what then of the celebrated transition from Logic to Nature—the "Sich-entschliessen" of the Idea to pass out of itself and masquerade in 'materiature'? Once more, in Prof. Jones's version, "Hegel starts from the conception of a reality which is all-inclusive, manifesting itself both in the knowing subject and in the known object". . . . "Hegel thought to take his stand *behind* these alternatives on the reality, the All, which manifests itself in both of them" (p. 304). And a little further on we find Reality elevated in due form to the dignity of a capital letter. In this way, Prof. Jones traverses in the course of his article the whole distance that separates Green's abstract self, or principle of unity in relation, from Mr. Bradley's revised version of the Absolute in his *Appearance and Reality*. Ten years of reflexion and discussion are represented in the change which Prof. Jones makes *sub silentio* without acknowledgment to the critics, insisting, indeed, rather unhandsomely that it is no change at all.

But it seems to me that in his zeal to escape from the suspicion of asserting a self-existent system of thoughts—a world of ideas—he has fallen into a strange extreme, converting his Hegelianism into a kind of Materialism which leaves no room for knowledge or thought at all. I am far from supposing that this is *meant*, but it would be the immediate consequence of what is *said*. Ideas, he tells us, are not between us and reality; they are "the working of reality" in us (p. 305); they are "definite facts or special elements of the real world of objects" (p. 295). "There are no ideas except those which occur serially. Each of these ideas is a transient psychological phenomenon" (p. 300). "Each of them exists as long as it is being produced and no longer. They are evanescent products of an intelligent activity, which vanish when the process that brings them forth stops" (p. 296). "Logic would no longer seem to be an analysis of the relations of ideas to one another, but an exposition of intellectual processes. It would not be a theory of abstract conceptions but an ontological inquiry, just as the physical sciences are" (p. 301).

Now, that we cannot escape from reality and that ideas are themselves the working of reality in us, is most obvious. To avoid any misunderstanding on the point, I had myself explicitly indicated the wider and all-inclusive meaning of reality, in which the knowing activity is itself a part or function of reality. Prof. Jones quotes the passage in his second article. But ideas in this respect, as mere fact-sequences, cease to be considered as *cognitive* at all. We work, as in science, with the category of cause and effect, investigating the causes which have produced these facts, and the further fact-combinations to which they in turn give rise. This is the province of psychology. And in the department of psycho-physics (which some would regard as a distinct science) psychology cannot avoid carrying its causal explanations into the external world. But to say that a mental process is the result of certain physical processes is very different from saying that the mind knows certain real facts. In the one case, we move altogether in a world of causally interacting facts: the psychological events and the physical and neural events form one world of objects in which we endeavour to establish connexion according to law. In the other case, we have to do with the unique relation of knower and known, a relation which Prof. Jones would probably be the first to insist is far from being explained by its category of cause and effect, but whose nature none the less requires to be investigated, although it turns out to be a unique and ultimate relation. Psychology *assumes* the cognitive reference of ideas, but it does not investigate it. This latter investigation is what I mean by the epistemological, as distinguished from the psychological manner of dealing with ideas. Prof. Jones admits the validity of the distinction. "The distinction between ideas as mere occurrences in consciousness and ideas as having objective reference," he says, "seems to me quite valid. Mr. Bradley has succeeded in putting this matter beyond reasonable dispute" (p. 297). Now surely if there are these two aspects of ideas (inseparable but quite distinct) it must be legitimate to distinguish between psychology, which regards them altogether in the one light, and a science (the name of which, as Logic, Epistemology, or Theory of Knowledge, is of minor importance), which regards them altogether in the light of their objective reference or meaning.

It is certainly by "a process of abstraction" that we limit our point of view in either case, but the possibility of any science rests, as Prof. Jones knows (and as he tells us, if

I mistake not), on the possibility of abstraction. No doubt the process of abstraction "becomes vicious if taken as ultimate," but who, I ask, proposes to take it so? Prof. Jones thinks it necessary to tell us that ideas "are not divisible into two parts, one of which perishes, while the other has permanent existence". And he adds, with all the emphasis of italics : "The objective reference is an essential characteristic of *every* idea as a phenomenon of consciousness and inseparable from it". This is a fresh example of Prof. Jones's favourite method of producing, as an incontrovertible argument against his opponent, the very truths upon which the latter had laid stress. Psychology and epistemology are contrasted, I say, "in their mode of dealing with the *same* subject-matter" (*Philosophical Review*; i. 130). Again, ideas "are *all* subjective functions or psychical events. But they may also be considered 'as images of which one represents one thing and another a different'" (p. 132). Prof. Jones's pleasantry, therefore, about mental states falling "into two fragments, one of which is seized by psychology and the other by epistemology" (p. 462), falls itself somewhat heavily to the ground. And again when Prof. Jones informs me that ideas, regarded as knowledge, as meanings, are not "existential realities," but rather "consist of hypostatized abstractions," I am forced to reply : Exactly ; that is the very point which Mr. Bradley drives home in numberless passages of his *Logic* ; that is not only my own position but, as it happens, it is a position on which I laid stress in view of certain vagaries of Hegelian statement. Ideas treated as meanings are all universals and all universals are abstractions. But the power of framing these abstractions, of using the content of consciousness in this symbolic fashion, is just the ultimate meaning of knowledge. If we are to talk of existence, most certainly the idea only exists as often as it is realised in some consciousness. That is what I have strenuously contended for, as already explained, against those of Prof. Jones's own household. To be quite strict, the same idea (in this sense) never exists twice : there is only a second like it. "There are no ideas except those which occur serially." They perish with the process of knowing, and they can never be called into existence again. But why repeat Prof. Jones's repetition of Mr. Bradley's conclusions about which we are all agreed? It is more to the point to remark that it can serve no good purpose to throw together in this way the side of content and the side of existence (so Mr. Bradley very well distinguishes them in *Appearance and Reality*). It would be far better, as I have suggested, to use the word

'idea' exclusively with reference to the content or meaning, and to select some other phrase, such as conscious state or psychical complex, for the Heraclitean flux of mental events. We should then have no difficulties about identity and similarity, for an idea is the same (for logic or epistemology) when its content is the same, and that content is a timeless abstraction. In some ways it is less misleading to speak of ideas as timeless than to speak of them as serial and transient. For if to exist is to be a particular thing or a particular event in time, then ideas as meanings do not exist at all.

If, therefore, we insist, as Prof. Jones does in the latter part of his article, on taking ideas merely on the side of their existence, and regarding them merely as time-processes in the real, we eliminate their cognitive aspect altogether, or at least in consistency we should. Psychology takes its place "with Botany or Physics or any other special science that deals, under its own appropriate hypothesis, with definite facts or elements of the real world of objects" (p. 295). "The attitude of 'Hegelians and Neo-Hegelians' towards thought is that of science towards natural processes. Their explanation of thinking is as ontological as the physicist's explanation of gravitation. . . . They are as frank in their ontological intentions, as little troubled with epistemology and the sphere of ideas, as if they were Materialists" (p. 302). They have in truth gone back to the materialistic or purely objective treatment of phenomena, which abstracts altogether from the fact of knowledge. Thinking, we may say, is an activity of the real which takes place in this or the other "finite centre" (in Mr. Bradley's phrase), but the mere fact that an activity or process takes place in any centre, subject or medium, is far from implying that the process or the subject of the process has a knowledge of other processes or media, or even of itself. A set of occurrences, dependent upon other occurrences, but by no means cognitive of them or of itself—this, it seems to me, is all we can legitimately reach by this 'frank,' 'physical,' 'ontological' way of dealing with thought or thinking. A psychology of a sort *might* be possible; a logic, never. For logic has nothing to do with the occurrence of ideas—the laws of their causation, recurrence and fusion; it has to do with relations of content, with the (timeless) relations of idea-meanings to one another. To say that there is no science of the relations of ideas to one another in this sense seems to me to be either unintelligible or a wilful perversion of language. Hegel's Logic is an eminent example of such a science, and though Prof. Jones

insists that it is to be taken as "a science not of the connexions of ideas but of the operation of mind," Hegel himself repeatedly describes it as moving in a realm of abstractions—as a kingdom of shades, a timeless, dialectical evolution of conceptions. In other words, he would not have scrupled for a moment to describe it as a science of the connexions of ideas, and he would have been as much at a loss as I am to see what was gained by Prof. Jones's distinction.

As far as I can gather, what Prof. Jones has really at heart and what underlies much of his vehement assertion and denunciation in the latter part of the article is simply that knowledge is doubly related to reality or experience: (1) it is a product of reality (in the widest sense of that term), and not an *a priori*, and Melchisedek birth from nowhere in particular, and (2), this being so, it is presumably applicable to reality, or descriptive of reality, and not a systematic falsification of reality. These are positions which I believe to be necessary and which I have nowhere impugned. But the fact that knowledge is thus "essentially related" to reality, need not blind us to the distinction or duality, even apparent opposition, which is implied in all relation, and which the history of speculation shows, pre-eminently attaches to the relation between knowing and being. It is clear enough that this relation, however essential, does not mean "*identity* of knowing and being," unless we use words so vaguely as to make them unmeaning. It is clear also that the relation of thought to reality does not for a moment preclude the possibility of a disinterested investigation of the contents of thought as such. If Logic is not such "an analysis of the relations of ideas to one another," there is to my thinking no need for distinct terms at all: the same name will do for everything in turn. And I will not deny that "Hegelian" thought sometimes shows a tendency towards this consummation.

These seem to me the chief points of interest in Prof. Jones's first paper, and I think I have shown in the foregoing remarks (1) The ingenious injustice of Prof. Jones's method of replying to the critics of Hegelianism; (2) The substantial validity of my own criticisms, as shown among other things by Prof. Jones's change of front; and (3) The dangerous overstatement into which Prof. Jones has been betrayed by his new-born zeal for reality and by his desire to outdo the critics on their own ground. It now remains to deal with his second paper, and here, as I recognise his criticisms to have more foundation in fact, my method of

reply will be less polemical, and the result, I hope, more fruitful.

II.

The substance of the second article consists of a cleverly constructed dilemma, evolved by Prof. Jones from a statement of mine that "subjective states are plainly our datum". In the light of Prof. Jones's misinterpretation, I am constrained to confess that the phrase may not have been well-chosen, but, in the first place, it has no such prominence in my exposition as it seems to acquire from Prof. Jones's repetition of it; and, in the second place, the whole of my argument, more particularly in the second of the four articles, may be taken as a refutation of the objectionable sense in which Prof. Jones chooses to understand it. Prof. Jones, in fact, has fastened upon a phrase (more or less unfortunate perhaps) which lent itself to his preconceived opinion of what my position must be, rather than kept in view the drift of the discussion as a whole.

The meaning which Prof. Jones puts on my assertion is, that I propose to make a start with subjective states known as such, devoid of objective reference, and from these, as a datum or indubitable foothold, to pass, by some process of inference, from an internal world of ideas to an external world of facts or realities.

He begins by emphasising my general position that knowledge is to be distinguished from existence, or, as I expressed it in one connexion, that the real and the ideal spheres never interpenetrate. This enables him to evolve the following dilemma: We start *either* with the idea of our subjective states, that is to say, with the mere knowledge of them, *or* we start with the subjective states as real, that is, known as real. In the first case, Prof. Jones supposes the Epistemologist to start outside of reality altogether—to start with a 'world of ideas' and to essay a leap from this non-existent 'ideal sphere,' in the hope of alighting in the real sphere of thinkers and things. And he rightly brands this as an impossibility, speaking of "the endless and hopeless puzzle of getting out of thoughts by means of thoughts". If we start with the idea of our subjective states, we are still strictly shut up within the circle of our ideas and cannot in any wise break through to reality. The knowledge of subjective states serves us no better in this respect than the knowledge of any other part of the universe. We are as far as ever, therefore, from the solution of "the hopeless puzzle"

in which Epistemology professes to find its problem. In the second case, it must be held that the knowledge of our subjective states furnishes a case in which the real and the ideal coincide: we do know reality at that one point. But if so, then we have already broken through the charmed circle of ideas; we are *in* reality from the outset, and the Epistemological problem of the relation of knowledge to reality has disappeared. Reality is one and continuous, and our only inquiry can be about "the relation of one reality to another".

The dilemma, however, falls to the ground with the misinterpretation of my meaning on which it is based. If Prof. Jones had read my second article with any care, he could not have failed to see that the whole of that article was a refutation of the subjective idealism which he attributes to me. I do not see how the disavowal could well have been stated more strongly. "We do not begin by studying the contents of our own mind and afterwards proceed by inference to realities beyond. We are never restricted to our own ideas, as ideas; from the first dawn of knowledge we treat the subjective excitation as the symbol or revealer to us of a real world" (p. 507). I quote with approval Mr. Spencer's dictum: "I see no alternative but to affirm that the thing primarily known, is not that a sensation has been experienced, but that there exists an outer object" (p. 507). "We cannot even imagine," I say again, "a consciousness without the objective reference" (p. 509). In truth, I cannot but think that Prof. Jones, in his strictures on my imaginary views, has fallen a victim to "the psychologist's fallacy" which is commented upon in the context of the passages just quoted. He confuses, that is to say, the attitude of the reflective critic of knowledge with the unreflective attitude of the plain man in knowing anything. Both these attitudes, taken apart, are intelligible and consistent, but the result of confusing the two is the hybrid and impossible position assigned by Prof. Jones to "the Epistemologist" of his fancy. The plain man simply knows: his knowledge reveals realities to him—his own reality and the reality of other persons and things—and he is entirely occupied with the nature of these objects and their mode of behaviour to one another. He has never doubted the real or objective reference in knowledge. In fact, he has never thought of knowledge as a subjective process at all; least of all has he ever thought of his own conscious states as a first-known reality from which he passes in the second place to extra-conscious existences. But now comes the reflective thinker

(call him simply the philosopher, if Epistemologist is a term so hard to digest) and raises the question of the rationale of all this. How is such an experience, such knowledge, possible? What are the conditions of the possibility of the fact of knowledge as it appears to exist? In putting this question, the Epistemologist by no means aims at taking up a position outside of reality altogether, in a sphere of mere ideas, from which he seeks in vain to escape, alighting by a flying leap out of the Nowhere upon the solid world of fact. Nor does he balance himself upon a single isolated fact and seek to throw a bridge from it to other facts. Knowledge and reality are both his data, or, if you like, knowledge of reality is the fact he investigates—the apparent knowledge of ourselves and other things which we all possess. Reality or experience as a whole is his datum or problem; he starts in this sense from the world as it appears to common-sense. The *apparent* facts, I say, are his datum, but they are also his problem; for he has to ask whether, as common-sense states them, they are not mere appearances, and how they must be interpreted and restated if they are to be really possible. Now, I do not think that Prof. Jones will deny that a fundamental aspect of the appearance with which critical reflexion has to start, is that all knowledge, so far as we know anything about it, takes place in individuals, or, as Mr. Bradley says, in finite centres. And science, if not common-sense, assumes that it is the result of, or somehow depends upon, a series of events taking place in a particular individual. The question, therefore, assumes the form—How is it possible for that which, in one aspect, is a particular process of events in a particular individual, to yield a true knowledge of a system of reality stretching on all hands beyond the moment of time occupied by the mental process itself as a bit of existent fact?

And in this sense it seems to me that subjective states, meaning by that simply states of the individual, may be intelligibly said to be a datum or foothold from which we start. Subjective states known as such are on precisely the same footing as other objects, and cannot, therefore, be said to constitute in any special sense a point of departure. On this I am at one with Prof. Jones. But these same states, as they originally occurred, do undeniably constitute the *milieu*, the element, the fact-basis of knowledge. The individual surely stands related to his own experience in a way in which he is related to no other facts in the universe. He *is* that experience or process: these states are his existence, and though he may know the whole universe by their means,

these particular states surely do not constitute the existence of the known universe as they constitute the existence of the individual who knows that universe. We immediately experience or *live* no more of the universe than what (in Mr. Bradley's language) burns in this one focus. This is our one point of contact with reality, or, to put it otherwise, we exist and know at all just because reality lives in us in this series of experiences, focuses itself in the continuously moving point of life which constitutes our self-existence.

This truth seems to me so obvious that I hardly know how to argue it,¹ and though I admit (or rather contend all through my articles) that it has been the parent of a whole brood of errors in the shape of subjectivistic and relativistic theories of knowledge, that is no reason why we should refuse to recognise the fact. We cannot refute a theory with more than a polemical *succès d'estime*, unless we do justice to the element of truth which it expresses in a mistaken form. And subjectivism and relativism, we may take it for granted, would not be so persistently put forward and so widely accepted, if they did not embody some aspect of the facts. The sensationalist limitation of consciousness to a series of individual states and the Hegelian expansion of consciousness to include all reality are, I think, both true in what they mean to assert, but both misleading and inexact in statement. It seems to me one of the functions of epistemology to investigate the precise sense of such statements and to disentangle the truth and falsity they contain. The subjectivistic theory, I need hardly say, appears to me to embody a comparatively insignificant aspect of the truth, and to be far more radically misleading in the inferences drawn from it. It was against this class of theories far more than against Hegelianism, if Prof. Jones will believe it, that the course of my argument was directed. It was necessary to this argument to admit in the fullest sense that states of the individual, in the sense explained, constitute the inevitable starting-point in our knowledge of the universe—the basis on which the whole is reared. But this inevitable

¹ As Prof. Jones quotes Mr. Bosanquet with respect against the critics of idealism, he may perhaps find his statement of the truth more persuasive, or at least less open to suspicion. "The real for every individual is—an extension and determination of his present perception, which perception is to him not indeed reality as such but his point of contact with reality as such" (*Logic*, vol. i. p. 8). "Reality is given for me in present sensuous perception and in the immediate feeling of my own sentient existence that goes with it. The real world, as a definite organised system, is *for me* an extension of this present sensation and self-feeling by means of judgment" (*Logic*, vol. i. p. 77).

admission was immediately deprived of its power for mischief by an explanation of the precise sense in which it must be understood.

I began by pointing out that all through modern philosophy, the philosophers had been setting the subjectivity of knowledge as a process in the individual against its objectivity as a true account of the nature of things. It was then shown that if knowledge was to exist at all, the subjectivity of the knowing process was inevitable: in the nature of the case no other alternative was conceivable. Unless, in order to know a table, it was necessary actually to be that table, a distinction must be recognised between my subjective experiences in knowing and the object revealed to me by them. But this distinction in existence (or ontologically, *pace* Prof. Jones¹) constitutes the very need for knowledge in the case of an individual limited, *quâd* existent, to his own centre—to the locus, as it were, assigned him in the process of the universal life—and limited also, as regards his own existence, to the present moment of time. Many thinkers, however, for want of distinguishing clearly between the necessary self-transcendence in knowledge and the impossible self-transcendence in existence, have denied to the individual a knowledge of anything more than his own states.

All through my articles what I endeavour to press upon such thinkers is just the self-transcendence involved in knowledge as such. It must be pronounced absurd, I argue, to treat the essential nature of knowledge as an argument against its validity. In the last resort the subjectivistic theories, if we take them literally, must be held to deny the

¹ It is in this connexion that the sentences about a chasm occur, which Prof. Jones finds so enigmatical, the chasm being asserted in one sentence to exist and in another not to be absolute. Chasm is perhaps a "violent metaphor," but the sense is tolerably obvious. "Ontologically or as a matter of existence they [i.e., the knower and the object of his knowledge] remain distinct—the one here and the other there—and nothing avails to bridge the chasm." In other words, knowledge is not an entity reaching out from me to the thing, or coming from the thing to me, and uniting us (welding us into one), so far as our respective existences are concerned. In knowledge I am not ontologically mingled or identified with the things I know. The chasm here refers only to this distinctness of individuals within the one reality. For I go on to explain that "both subject and object are members of one world. This may be taken as the ultimate and unavoidable presupposition" and so "the chasm is not an absolute one," as it would be if the knower and the object known belonged to two different universes—the knower being either conceived as outside reality altogether, or the things known being conceived as essentially unrelated to intelligence and therefore as remaining to the end essentially unknowable.

fact of cognition altogether. I have remarked in my fourth article upon their substitution of the ambiguous term "experience" for the plainer term "knowledge". A being restricted to its experience, simply as its own experience, would be destitute of the cognitive function altogether. The enumeration of successive states, simply as such, would constitute the universe of such a being, if *per impossibile*, the subjective idealists could be taken at their word, and a world constructed accordingly. The main purpose of my whole argument was thus to vindicate the validity of knowledge against such thinkers by laying bare the confusion on which their impeachment of knowledge rests—the confusion, namely, between the particular facts or processes in the individual consciousness on which knowledge rests, and that knowledge itself *quâ* knowledge and in its essence objective or self-transcendent. I am far from thinking that I have in this way proved by knowledge the validity of knowledge; I am familiar with the time-honoured jest about learning to swim without venturing into the water. But it is possible, by an analysis of the ultimate essence of cognition, to show by a species of *reductio ad absurdum* the ineptitude of current, and to some extent plausible, attempts to deprive our knowledge of objective truth. After such attacks are repulsed, it remains for us to accept knowledge as we have found it on analysis to be; and to accept it as an ultimate fact not further explicable—a unique, and, in one sense, all-embracing fact.

It only remains for me to say that I designedly limited my argument to what seemed to me the simpler case of a knowledge by one being of another. I am inclined to think now, in view of the interpretation which has been put upon the argument, that this may have been unwise. But in any case I expressly stated in the opening sentences that "knowledge is marked by exactly the same characteristics, even in what is called self-knowledge, the reflective knowledge of one's own states; in which the act of knowledge and the object known might seem to fall together"; and what the discussion which follows actually establishes is the distinction to be drawn *in every case* between the process of facts on which knowledge depends (which in one aspect is the knowledge, though the expression is unfortunate), and knowledge properly so called. And the distinction, once established and fully grasped, is easily applied to the facts of self-knowledge. For my own existence, as past and future, as more than the immediate "this-now," is evidently only representatively or ideally present to consciousness. It is an

ideal construction on the basis of the "this-now," just as much as the existence of any other being in what we usually call the external world. What is present *in* consciousness, what alone exists in the sense of immediate experience, is only the this-now of a present state. In this sense I think we shall all be agreed that the self, as known, is, in Mr. Bradley's phrase, a secondary formation. But we must be even more exact. For it may be said that, though the existence of myself as past or future is an ideal construction, yet at any rate in the experience which constitutes my present self, the ideal and the real coincide; here, at least, there is an identity of knowing and being. We know the present state directly it may be said, and that is the one sure fact we begin with, "hopping on to others and assuring them through it," as Prof. Jones puts it. Such a statement, however, is not adequate to the complexity of the facts. For it is evident, to begin with, that it is only the psychologist who, in his reflective self-knowledge, can be said to know mental states at all. The ordinary man *has* mental states, and knows objects by means of them, but he does not make his own states his object. If, therefore, we are to use knowledge in a strict sense, our knowledge of our own states is exactly on the same footing as our knowledge of anything else. Let there be no mistake here. Wherever knowledge exists, it is in a sense direct; that is, I know the reality and not some substitute for the reality intervening between me and it. When I reflect on my own states and when I perceive a tree, my attitude to the object of my knowledge is in both cases the same: I simply know it. But, on the other hand, the mental state which goes to constitute the act of knowing (in which the act of knowing consists) is no more to be identified with the object known in the one case than in the other. All introspection, it has been said, is retrospection, or, as Prof. James puts it, it is a *post-mortem* examination. When I know a state, that state has already ceased to exist as a living pulse of thought and feeling. I recognise it as having been mine, but it is different from the psychologically-minded self, intent upon its examination. It is impossible to get rid of the subtle aspect of difference which knowledge introduces. What we know is always an *object*, something held as it were at a distance from us, opposite to us: the object of knowledge is always somehow different from the subject that knows. And in the apparently immediate self-knowledge which we are considering this plainly holds.

Yet this account of knowledge is still defective at one

point. For knowing, as Prof. Jones insists, is an activity of a subject, and as such is not a colourless or impersonal function—as it were a series of happenings *in vacuo*. Every cognitive act is suffused by feeling (pleasure or pain, interest or the reverse), and in virtue of this suffusion it is felt by me as mine, by you as yours. In knowing any object, therefore, whether a thing in the external world or a state of his own mind, the knowing subject possesses, in this element of feeling, an immediate assurance of existence there and then. When formulated, this assurance takes the personal form, certainty of his own existence, but the formulation does not take place, of course, till a later stage, when the individual in question becomes psychologist and philosopher. The certainty, however, which the formulated proposition possesses depends entirely upon the original feeling of existence—the sense of living, as we might call it—which accompanies every mental state. I feel the activity, the experience, at the moment, and in virtue of this immediate accompanying feeling I afterwards acknowledge it as mine.

It appears to me that the relation of knowledge to reality cannot be adequately considered without some reference to this immediately felt presence of reality in each knowing subject. That relation requires to be considered from two points of view. They are both included in the following statement of Mr. Bosanquet in the beginning of his *Logic*—a statement which, so far as I can see, I should have no difficulty in accepting. “The truth . . . may be considered, in relation to the human intelligence, as the content of a single persistent and all-embracing judgment, by which every individual intelligence affirms the ideas that form its knowledge to be true of the world which is brought home to it as real by sense-perception.” From the one point of view knowledge is a system of predicates; and the truth about reality—the *truest* account of reality, if the expression is permissible—is to be found at the furthest remove from pure immediacy, in the most complete and satisfactory synthesis which philosophy has to offer. Moreover, we cannot overstep our knowledge to compare it with any reality beyond; the only possible test of the truth of our knowledge is its internal coherence, the fact that it works out, and that there are no refractory facts or aspects of experience which refuse to be worked into a system. But, on the other hand, the truth is true of reality: and that there should be any reality at all, of which it could be true, depends on the immediate assurance—the self-feeling, as Mr. Bosanquet elsewhere calls it—which accompanies our experience. This is not at

the outset self-feeling in the sense of being the feeling of a self in opposition to a not-self: that would be to introduce later distinctions into a primitive datum. It is the mere feeling of existence which is afterwards formulated as the assurance of *my own* existence—an assurance which cannot be separated from the presence of some object, and which is progressively intensified as the object is further defined. A philosophy which tries to escape from the acknowledgment of existence as somehow immediately given, seems to me to be constantly in danger of putting a system of predicates (which as predicates are necessarily abstract) in place of the subject to which they refer. Unless we are immediately rooted in fact somewhere, our whole system is in the air; there would be no world to explain, no subject to attach our predicates to.

There remains the question as to the distinction between epistemology and metaphysics, or the possibility of epistemology as a distinct branch of inquiry. Prof. Jones praises Hegel because "he has no epistemology and he needs none" (p. 306), and in his second article he concludes: "Epistemology as an inquiry into the validity of knowledge in general is an impossible science" (p. 467). But in another place he says: "I do not deny the possibility of a theory of knowledge in every sense. I deny *this* theory of knowledge because of the abstraction which is vital to it and at the same time fatal to it" (p. 459), and his own ideal appears in what he says at the conclusion of the paragraph about pressing home the hypothesis and categories of epistemology and identifying it with metaphysics. So in the first article he says that to philosophers of the true sort "their Ontology must be a Logic" (p. 303); "Logic would be itself an Ontology or Metaphysics as Hegel conceived it" (p. 301).

The first set of statements depends largely on his own misapprehension of the attitude assumed in the inquiry—the notion, in fact, that epistemology proposes to take up a stand outside of reality altogether. This point, I think, has been made sufficiently plain. We are really much more at one here than might be supposed, for I say Amen to every word of the lecture which Prof. Jones proceeds to read upon the impossibility "by knowing to pronounce upon the validity of knowledge as a whole".¹ So that, if epistemology is

¹ If it were not to digress too far into a merely personal matter, I might refer him to *Hegelianism and Personality*, pp. 90-1, which is almost verbatim in accord with his own strictures. "Thought," I say, "cannot ultimately criticise its own validity. To do so would require a second species of thought to sit in judgment upon our first or actual thought,

to be taken as a demonstration of the validity of knowledge in general, I fully admit that a science of epistemology in that sense is impossible. I would even go the length of saying that in an ideal state of philosophy the epistemological prolegomena in which I have indulged might be superfluous. An absolute system of metaphysics solves such questions by implication for all who accept it. And if one were philosophising simply as a private luxury and saw one's way to such a system, why, one would simply give a synthetic statement of the system and be done. This is to a large extent Hegel's attitude, for which Prof. Jones commends him, and undoubtedly it was the attitude with which metaphysical speculation began. The early philosophers attack the facts without more ado, unhindered by any scruples as to the capacity of knowledge to grasp them and give a true account of them. But in course of time this "frank," dogmatic procedure became "sicklied o'er," as Prof. Jones knows, with the pale cast of doubt. Scepticism, relativism—subjectivism in all varieties—became rampant, and they are rampant at the present day. Perhaps there never was a time when so many philosophers were confused about the possibility of real knowledge, through misconceptions as to the very nature of knowledge. They make impossible demands of knowledge, virtually saying that we cannot know a thing without being the thing—and because these demands are not met, they impeach the validity of knowledge in general. I thought, and I still think, that an attempt to drag this fundamental confusion to light was likely to be of service to some. The object of such discussion is the refutation of error, and its result is to throw us back on the validity of knowledge as an inevitable assumption. But I do not think that the discussion can be called otiose, because it brings us back to our starting-point; for the making explicit of assumptions is the main business of philosophy. Whether you treat such a discussion as a preliminary to your metaphysical system or as an appendix to it, is of little moment; the question discussed is at least "manifestly preliminary" to the subjective idealist or the relativist at whose conversion you aim. If you insist on including it as a part of metaphysics, the whole dispute becomes a question of naming. For my own part, I think that it would probably

and a third thought to test the validity of the verdict thus obtained, and so on *ad infinitum*—a species of never-ending appeal as wearisome as fruitless. The trustworthiness or objective validity of one thought is, and must be, an assumption." A few lines lower down I speak of "an impossible criticism *ab extra* of thought as such".

be better to use the term ontology rather than metaphysics as an antithesis to epistemology, for the traditional associations of metaphysics are too comprehensive to admit of its being used in any more restricted sense. And even as between epistemology and ontology I should not like to maintain too sharp a distinction between the two branches of inquiry, for ontological considerations may undoubtedly be appealed to in the epistemological investigation. I have myself referred to the assumption that the universe is in some sense one, as constituting the real possibility of knowledge, on the part of one individual, of any other beings at all. But the fact remains that the two inquiries possess a general character of their own which constitutes a sufficient distinction in practice. Prof. Jones's second article is itself a contribution to the already vast literature of Epistemology as distinguished from systematic Metaphysics.