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PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

I.—PRAGMATISM V. ABSOLUTISM (I.).

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THE main part of this paper was written before the actual controversy between the champions of Pragmatism and Absolutism in the pages of MIND and other philosophical periodicals had begun. This explains why it contains very little reference to the arguments advanced on either side in recent articles. But, perhaps, I may add a new note to the discussion, by entering the lists not as a partisan but as an impartial spectator, who brings the rival theories together for comparison, and is willing to give either a chance by searching for its merits first, and not till then for its faults.

What seems to me to give to the conflict between Pragmatism and Absolutism its real importance and significance is, that it is but a phase in that wider conflict between *Intellectualism* and *Voluntarism*, the roots of which can be traced back to the reaction against the Hegelian Philosophy in Germany in the years of 1840-80. In England the reaction is but just beginning. Hegelian influence in one form or another has set its mark indelibly on the best of English thought in the last forty years. Now we have much of the same outcry against Intellectualism and the 'barrenness' of the Absolute with which Germany was familiar in the sixties. We have the same claim that salvation lies but in the recognition of the *volitional* side of experience, and we have, perhaps, something of the same tendency to intellectual anarchy, which invariably accompanies any attempt to make the mere will supreme. However, English Voluntarism differs in several important points from its German forerunners. It is less metaphysical than the romantic Voluntarism of Schopen-

hauer, and less markedly ethical than the ethical Voluntarism of men like Sigwart and Paulsen. Its main character and interest are *epistemological*, and its main key to the solution of epistemological problems is the conviction that the practical and the theoretical consciousness cannot be cut asunder, but that our whole consciousness is *one* in character and *one* in method, *purposive* in all its manifestations, and guided by interests and ends both in the selection and in the subsequent handling of its materials. Two quotations will reveal the fundamental difference in spirit and temper between Intellectualism and Voluntarism more clearly than I could expound it. Here is Mr. Bradley's own testimony as to the point of view from which he approaches philosophical problems: 'the actual starting-point and basis of this work,' he says in the Appendix to *Appearance and Reality*, 'is an assumption about truth and reality. I have assumed that the object of Metaphysics is to find a general view which will *satisfy the intellect*, and I have assumed that whatever succeeds in doing this is real and true, and that whatever fails is neither.' The Voluntarist, on the other hand, is not content with a *theory* about reality, however satisfactory to the intellect, but looks for a satisfaction of the other demands of our nature, ethical, religious, æsthetic as well. And he looks for it not in theoretical reflexion but in a '*harmony*' of life towards which reflexion is but a means and in which intellectual satisfaction is but an element. 'Experience is life,' as Prof. James Ward puts it, and, having borrowed this phrase from him, I cannot do better than illustrate the voluntaristic point of view by a passage from *Naturalism and Agnosticism*:¹ 'Experience can *not* without mutilation be resolved into three departments, one cognitive or theoretical, one emotional, and one practical. . . . It is true that what we take and what we find we must take and find as it is given. But, on the other hand, it is also true that we do not take—or at least do not take up—what is uninteresting; nor do we find, unless we seek, nor seek unless we desire. The cognitive aspect of experience, in a word, is far more one of experiment, as its very etymology suggests, than one of mere disinterested observation. The philosopher may

¹ Vol. ii, part iv., lecture xv., p. 188; cf. also p. 181: 'The objects of experience are not primarily objects of knowledge, but objects of conation, i.e., of appetite and aversion'; p. 189, 'thinking is doing, and like all doing has a motive and has an end'; p. 235, 'however much for purposes of exposition we may abstract, we cannot separate intellection from volition'. To Prof. Ward as to the Pragmatist scientific laws and conceptions are 'teleological instruments'.

look on at the buyers and sellers in the market-place, but the real experience is their trafficking, not the notes of this detached bystander. Regarding experience in this wise, as life, self-conservation, self-realisation, and taking cognition as its central feature, we must conclude, that it is not that "content" of objects, which the subject cannot alter, that gives them their place in its experience, but their worth, positive or negative, their goodness or badness as ends or means to 'life.' This passage, parallels to which from writers more strictly Pragmatist than Prof. Ward I shall have occasion to bring forward in the course of my paper, shows clearly some of the most characteristic features of the new movement of thought. We have the insistence on the one hand on the unity, on the other on the purposiveness of mental life; we have the revolt against the merely theoretical attitude, a hatred of abstract reflexion which will not submit its results to the test of concrete experience; we have an impatience of truth, conceived as a purely intellectual possession, which is like 'a thing apart,' and the holding or not holding of which seems to make no difference in our lives. It is this which inspires the common objections to the detached intellectual atmosphere of Mr. Bradley's Absolutism, which, by declaring the Absolute to be perfect, seems to make the existence of imperfection but an illusion, an accident of our limited, one-sided point of view, and thus to deprive of all real value and significance the very things which are of the highest importance to us, *viz.*, the increase of knowledge and the doing of good, the removal of error and the defeat of evil. And, for this very reason, such a conception in the eyes of the voluntarist cannot even be 'satisfactory to the intellect,' the function of which is to guide and illumine our life. And life is not mere inward reflexion. Rather it is the translation of thought into action, the embodiment of truth in conduct—whether we make use of our scientific knowledge in the narrow sense of practice, or live up to our ethical and religious ideals. In fact, all truths are in the end but convictions, and convictions are principles on which one is ready to act. Or, in other words, they are truths which are not just so much intellectual ballast, but have become part of our personality, and, therefore, cannot fail to influence the expression of that personality in action and life. If Truth thus stands in the service of Life, can we refuse to recognise the importance for cognition of non-intellectual factors, feeling, volition, interest? Must we not be ready to consider the cognitive value not only of scientific conceptions but of moral, religious, æsthetic conceptions as

well? For are not Science, Morality, Religion, Art, so many different ways of seeking an 'harmonious' and 'satisfactory' life; attempts so to view the world theoretically, and so to modify it practically, that man may live therein the best life he has it in him to live?

There is, indeed, a curious passage, in which Mr. Bradley seems to admit all these contentions of his critics. We read: 'I admit, or rather I would assert, that a result, if it fails to satisfy our whole nature, comes short of perfection. And I could not rest tranquilly in a truth if I were compelled to regard it as hateful. While unable, that is, to deny it, I should, rightly or wrongly, insist that the inquiry was not yet closed, and that the result was but partial. And if Metaphysics is to stand, it must, I think, take account of all sides of our being.'¹ Here then Mr. Bradley appears to admit, in so many words, that intellectual satisfaction is not the highest achievement, and that, though the intellectual problem may have been solved, other considerations have to be taken into account.

But hardly has he said so much, when he recollects that he is a metaphysician, whose business is to think with terrible consistency: 'That alone is really valid for the intellect, which in a calm moment the mere intellect is incapable of doubting. It is only that which for thought is compulsory and irresistible—only that which thought must assert in attempting to deny it—which is a valid foundation for metaphysical truth.'² And again: 'the task of the metaphysician is to inquire into ultimate truth, and he cannot be called on to consider anything else, however important it may be.'³ In fact, as we were told in the Introduction,⁴ the metaphysician attempts a 'pure development' of thought guided by its own distinctive principles. He will have nothing to say to thought 'entangled with other functions of our being'.

Thus we have a striking alternation in Mr. Bradley's points of view. His Intellectualism always claims to be absolute and to criticise all other sides of our nature, and then again it is reduced to its proper place as one side amongst others with no better rights than they. When Mr. Bradley takes up the point of view of the Absolute and reflects that it must do justice to all sides of our nature, the intellect sinks to the level of the others. But when he thinks *about* the Absolute, the *intellect* suddenly appears as the only road to reality, in spite of the fact that all our other

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 148.

² *Ibid.*, p. 151. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

functions bring us in touch with reality and 'qualify' it. And even though Mr. Bradley proposes to 'satisfy' the intellect, it cannot be said that he doles out satisfaction with a generous hand. For the result of his reflexions is, that not a single intellectual concept, not a single attempt to give an account of the nature of Reality, is intellectually satisfactory. And as a consolation Mr. Bradley has nothing to offer but the 'assumption' that the Absolute is self-consistent, and that all contradictions must, therefore, be reconciled in it 'somehow'.

However, if Mr. Bradley's Absolutism is thus beset with difficulties peculiarly its own, it may be as well to point out by anticipation, that Pragmatism, at any rate in its present state of development, is by no means free from difficulties at least equally serious. The main problem for it—and it is one on which a clearer and more thorough-going statement by a leading Pragmatist is urgently needed—is the relation of Psychology to Logic.¹ Not Pragmatists only, but Voluntarists of all shades, whilst they agree in their protest against the traditional treatment of Logic as a Science of 'pure' thought, do not, by any means, make it very clear what they would put in its place. It is not enough to cry out against the bloodless abstraction of pure thought which is nowhere met with in experience, or to demand that Logic should deal with the concrete processes of thought as they occur in individual minds indissolubly mixed up with feelings and emotions, desires and volitions. This is so far but a programme of work, but of performance we have as yet but scanty fragments. Above all, as far as I am aware, there has been no thorough and satisfactory attempt to grapple with the central problem of the relation of thought as studied by Logic to thought as studied by Psychology. There is, in the first place, the most important question, whether the Psychologist is enabled, both by his stand-point and by his methods, to deal with logical and epistemological problems at all. Psychology, one is naturally inclined to think—and it cannot be said that psychologists have done anything to dispel the illusion—is as little capable of laying down the law about the 'true' and the 'real,' as it is capable of determining our standards of right and wrong. Granted that it can show the ruling part played in our lives by the

¹ This demand has to some extent been met, since the above was written, by the publication of Prof. Dewey's *Studies in Logical Theory*, though Prof. Dewey does not, as far as I know, describe himself as a Pragmatist. But Pragmatists seem inclined to claim him as one of their number.

desire for knowledge and truth, is it therefore able to decide what must be the character of a mental content, if it is to satisfy that desire? And, even assuming that the solution of this problem lay within the sphere of Psychology, we should, in the second place, require some more or less authoritative statement about the concrete processes of thought with which we are dealing. It is by no means clear that Psychologists, at present, agree sufficiently in their theories, to speak on this question with a single and a steady voice. On the contrary, the variety of opinions as to the proper analysis and classification of all except the very simplest mental processes is embarrassingly great, as any student of Psychology knows. And even, if we assume this difficulty to have been overcome, there is the further obstacle, that Psychology does not as a rule give its deliverances in a form which makes them available for the solution of epistemological problems. Prof. Stumpf's saying, quoted with approval by Prof. Ward,¹ that 'that cannot be true in epistemology which is false in psychology,' may, rightly interpreted, be true; but it is surely significant that Prof. Ward himself is driven to complain of the 'covert dualism that renders our psychological terminology unsuited to epistemological discussions'.² Prof. Ward has here laid his finger on the weak spot. Psychology is, or hopes to be, a Science, and like other Sciences it rests on assumptions which it is neither its business nor its interest to criticise. But, if it is the task of epistemology to examine the conditions of the origin and the validity of knowledge, *including the Sciences*, it is very far from clear, that its best hope of success lies in placing itself on the basis of one particular science. In fact, that looks rather like a circle, involving, as it does, the acceptance of the very assumptions we had set out to criticise. In short, granted that Psychology has shown the essentially purposive nature of our thought, and granted that 'true' and 'real' are terms of value, which have meaning only to a thought guided by purposes, interests, ends, it does not follow that Psychology can help us towards that regulation and systematisation of our values which we desire.

After this preliminary statement of the problems which we must expect to face, I will proceed to a detailed examination of Mr. Bradley's Absolutism. And, since I have maintained that the main interest of Pragmatism is *epistemological* and centres round the questions how and why we come to accept this or that fact or theory as real and true,

¹ *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii., p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

I will begin with a discussion of Mr. Bradley's attitude towards theory of knowledge.

Mr. Bradley has *no* theory of knowledge in the ordinary sense. The very problem: what can we know? or: how can we know anything at all? is stigmatised by him as self-contradictory. To doubt our ability to know reality is to claim dogmatic knowledge of the character of reality. For all valid doubt must rest on a positive basis: 'To say that reality is such that our knowledge cannot reach it, is to claim to know reality . . . for, if we had no idea of a beyond, we should assuredly not know how to talk about failure or success'.¹ And similarly he urges self-contradiction against the further doubt: Granted that genuine knowledge is to be had, how are we to recognise it, when it comes? Any one, he replies, who accepts any statement as true or rejects it as false, obviously applies a criterion. And since this criterion is always non-contradiction, we arrive at the result: 'Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion'.²

From the position here taken up by Mr. Bradley several important consequences follow:—

(1) The denial of the epistemological problem directly involves the identity of Being and Thought.³ The only ground from which the problem: Can Thought grasp the nature of Reality? is seen to lose its meaning is the 'qualification'—to use Mr. Bradley's own phrase—of Reality by *every* thought. The term 'qualification' is used by Mr. Bradley to express, that the identity of Thought and Reality is *far* from being total and complete. All that it means for the present is, that every Thought bears *some* relation to Reality. None is quite insignificant.⁴ To think is to judge, and to judge is to predicate an idea (= a thought-content) of reality, for reality is the subject of every judgment. But if every thought qualifies reality, do they all qualify it equally? Are all judgments equally true? By no means, replies Mr. Bradley. None indeed is wholly untrue, but all are only more or less true. And we discover that by applying the criterion of reality itself. For reality, as we have seen, has a positive nature of its own, *viz.*, to be non-contradictory, or, in a positive phrase, self-consistent. Thought therefore will qualify it

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 518: 'If there were any reality quite beyond our knowledge, we could in no sense be aware of it; and if we were quite ignorant of it, we could hardly suggest, that our ignorance conceals it. And thus, in the end, what we know and what is real must be co-extensive.'

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

fully, only so far as it is non-contradictory. Here, then, we have the reason why the ontological criterion of self-consistency is at the same time the logical criterion of non-contradiction. If reality is non-contradictory, and if all thought, in the end, qualifies reality, the criteria in both cases must be identical.

(2) And it is to be observed that Mr. Bradley values non-contradiction primarily and supremely as a criterion of reality. It has only a subordinate and secondary use as a criterion of truth. The burden of his criticism of Time, Space, Relation, etc., always is: self-contradictory—therefore not real. Indeed he applies the criterion to truth itself: Truth is self-contradictory, for it has an unwholesome hankering after 'suicide'. It aims at complete identity of thought and reality, but with the attainment of this identity thought will have become the same as reality, and Truth, *as such*, will have disappeared. Truth, in fact, lives only by never being fully itself, for by becoming itself, it will at once have passed into something higher and more than itself. 'Truth is the predication of such content, as, when predicated is harmonious,'¹ but such harmony is never fully attained, for the predicate never fully agrees with the subject. 'If Thought were successful, it would have a predicate consistent in itself and agreeing entirely with the subject.'² Thought thus only exists, because the gap between predicate and subject refuses ever fully to be bridged. So long as the gap remains, it testifies to the failure of thought, and yet its removal would mean that thought, as thought, passes away. It is 'merged' in reality. Thus truth is truth only because it is never fully true. The verdict must indeed be: self-contradictory—therefore not real.

(3) The criterion of non-contradiction, it will be noticed, is used by Mr. Bradley in a very restricted sense. The contradictory for him is that which is *inconsistent with itself*, not that which is inconsistent with something else. I draw attention to this point, because agreement of thought with its object is the most common criterion in theory of knowledge. Mr. Bradley does indeed, as in the passage quoted above, speak of the predicate as 'agreeing with its subject,' but, as the subject of a judgment is reality, and as the character of reality is to be self-consistent, the predicate requires no more than inner self-consistency to be real. But what, on this view, becomes of the essential nature of thought, which has always been regarded as bound up with the *Dualism* of

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 165.

² *Ibid.*

subject and object? If self-consistency is the only standard, what of thought's reference to an object *other* than thought? Is there nothing beyond thought? Is thought the thing itself? Or is it rather, as has commonly been held, *of* and *about* the thing? Does it not follow from Mr. Bradley's own theory, that reality must be *other* than thought, seeing that reality is self-consistent, but thought, even at its best, is not? To all these questions Mr. Bradley replies: Thought *is* of something other than itself, and it *does* involve a Dualism. But he has his own way of explaining this Other and this Dualism: ¹ In everything real we can distinguish two aspects, existence and content, a 'that' and a 'what'. We can distinguish these aspects, but we cannot separate them without destroying the real. As soon as we take a content in abstraction from existence, we lose, in a manner, touch with reality, but we get instead an '*idea*,' the instrument of thought. 'An idea is any part of the content of a fact, so far as that works out of immediate unity with its existence.'² Here, then, we have the *Dualism*, without which thought cannot work: "Thought in its actual processes and results cannot transcend the Dualism of the 'that' and the 'what'."³ The function of judgment expresses its constant effort to overcome the Dualism and to restore existence to the thought-content, by predicating it of a subject, in which—whatever character it may possess in itself—the aspect of existence is, for the purposes of the judgment, the only one that counts. In this subject we thus obviously have something that is *not* thought, and yet is closely related to thought; it is beyond thought, but not out of the reach of thought like some unknowable thing in itself. We know already that the subject is, for Mr. Bradley, reality, and we shall see, that he defines it as 'sentient experience,' and that it includes Feeling, Volition, Sensation, etc., no less than Thought. To understand this reality is the ever un-solved problem of thought. For thought is in its essence *relational*, and can, therefore, never deal adequately with the immediacy of feeling, or exhaust the content of the given, which is ever passing beyond itself and revealing its dependence on something other than itself. It is this failure of thought to perform its task fully, which finds expression in its sense of something *Other* and Beyond: 'the reality that is presented is taken up by thought in a form not adequate to its nature, and beyond which its nature must appear as an Other'.⁴ This Other thought is for ever striving to master,

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, ch. xv.

² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

but if mastery were ever completely attained, thought, *as thought*, would no longer exist. It would have become one with reality and passed into a higher and more immediate kind of experience, in which yet none of the results of its work are lost. Let us put this tragic dilemma of thought more clearly: Reality, as given in immediate feeling, is inconsistent with itself. On the one hand it possesses the immediacy and self-subsistence, which are the marks of true Reality, but, on the other, its content belies these features by being confused in itself and pointing beyond itself for explanation. It comes to us as one, when really it is many; it pretends to be harmonious, when really it is full of diversity. The very fact that the given is in continual change bears witness to its inner instability. It aims at becoming fully self-subsistent, fully individual, and it can only do so by a movement of expansion, a taking in of outside features, until the process finds its end in an all-inclusive whole. This is what Thought tries to achieve, but in setting to work on the given, it separates content and existence, and thus destroys the character of immediacy. And the elements into which it analyses the content seem to fall apart and to resist henceforth any attempt to rejoin them, whilst yet maintaining their distinction. In the given they were undistinguished and experienced together. Thought distinguished them, but their 'togetherness' is gone. It is replaced by a relation, which seems external to the terms, and yet cannot be so. And the terms themselves seem arbitrary creations, which on closer inspection break up into relations from within. Thought can hold all these distinctions together but not experience them as *one*. What it ever aims at is an experience, which should possess immediacy and yet preserve the results of analysis without their relational form. 'Thought can form the idea of an apprehension, something like feeling in directness, which contains all the character sought by its relational efforts.'¹ And it 'understands that, to reach its goal, it must get beyond relations'. This higher experience Mr. Bradley boldly identifies with the Absolute: 'In our Absolute thought can find its Other without inconsistency. The entire reality will be merely the object thought out, but thought out in such a way that mere thinking is absorbed. This same reality will be Feeling satisfied completely. In its direct experience we get restored with interest every feature lost by the disruption of our primitive felt whole. . . .'²

Here, then, we have reached the Absolute; here we pass.

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 181.

² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

from theory of knowledge into Metaphysics. Or, rather, we have been talking Metaphysics all along. For if knowledge presents a problem to Mr. Bradley at all, it is *not* the traditional one: How can thought apprehend reality at all? but rather: Why does thought *not* apprehend reality fully? The ordinary epistemologist's difficulty is, so to define thought's Other, that thought is able to deal with it. Mr. Bradley's difficulty is rather, to differentiate the Other sufficiently from thought.¹ Now for any theory of knowledge a Dualism of some sort is essential, whether we call it Subject and Object, or Ego and Non-Ego, or Consciousness-as-such and Thing-in-itself. Except by means of such a Dualism no coherent account of knowledge can be given. The Dualism, therefore, is for Epistemology *ultimate*. But this is just what it cannot be for Mr. Bradley's Metaphysics. For every Dualism is self-contradictory—and the ultimate reality must be self-consistent. Hence Mr. Bradley is but admirably logical, when he maintains, that because of the Dualism, which they imply, knowledge and thought are 'appearance' and not reality. Their real nature, as elements in the Absolute, must be something different from the Dualism which Epistemology ascribes to them. And here I wish to emphasise one point. The transcendence of this Dualism in the Absolute in such a way that the differences of thought are retained and yet overcome in a higher immediacy of experience, is not anything we are familiar with in *our* experience. It is, therefore, nothing more and nothing less than an *ideal*. And, though Mr. Bradley's picturesque phraseology veils the fact, it is yet manifest, that he can only succeed in representing this ideal as the ultimate reality by the familiar Scholastic Expedient of identifying the *ens perfectissimum* with the *ens realissimum*.² Such an identifica-

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 176.

² Mr. Bradley criticises the ontological argument in chap. xiv. and again in chap. xxiv. of *Appearance and Reality*. Its principle, according to him, is perfectly sound. Since content and existence are inseparable in reality, it is in general legitimate to argue from the presence of an idea to the reality of that idea. What is illegitimate is only to argue, that the idea must be real *as such*, i.e., with all the limitations and inconsistencies which beset our ideas, but which are resolved and reconciled in the Absolute. Now the idea of Reality as self-consistent is from the nature of the case not one that is self-contradictory—hence a self-consistent reality really exists. This is Mr. Bradley's ontological proof of the existence of the Absolute. It reveals clearly his metaphysical and non-epistemological point of view. It is only because the self-consistency of Reality is assumed to start with, that Mr. Bradley can afterwards venture to criticise even the highest efforts of thought as self-contradictory appearances. Otherwise he would have found it an awkward question

tion cannot be more than a Postulate, and if Mr. Bradley were to defend it as such, I should be far from attacking it. My point here is rather, that by *not* treating it as such Mr. Bradley involves himself in serious difficulties, when he has to explain the positive relation of our concrete experience to the Absolute Experience. That our experience, being self-contradictory, is not real, we have seen. The question now is, is its relation to reality purely of this negative kind? Has it no place in the totality of the Absolute Experience at all?

The answer to this problem Mr. Bradley gives in his famous doctrine of 'Degrees of Truth and Reality'. Mr. Bradley's method of exposition, his treatment of 'Appearance' first, and of 'Reality' afterwards, has led to some misapprehension as to the place and necessity of this doctrine in his system. Hence one often hears it condemned as mere 'hedging,' as taking back with one hand what he had given away with the other. And yet the argument, which culminates in the doctrine of 'Degrees of Reality,' is a perfectly simple and logical deduction from Mr. Bradley's premisses. Here it is in a nutshell: Mr. Bradley's conception of Reality rests on two assumptions: (1) The *formal* principle, that reality is non-contradictory; (2) The *material* principle, that reality is sentient experience.¹ He tests experience in the light of his formal principle and finds it inadequate. It is beset with contradiction and so far not real. But, on the other hand, as experience it must be real. For Reality has no other content, no other matter, than experience. In short, our experience, *quâ* self-contradictory is unreal, and *quâ* experience, real. In other words, it is appearance and not reality, but appearance possessing a certain Degree of Reality. The doctrine of Degrees of Reality thus reconciles what would otherwise be a plain contradiction. And all that it remains for Mr. Bradley to do is to lay down the principles on which we can determine, what Degree of Reality any given appearance possesses.

to answer: how our thought, if it is so deeply infected with inconsistency, as he finds it to be, could ever conceive a consistent reality? Does not Mr. Bradley himself admit that 'the idea of the Absolute, as an idea, is inconsistent with itself' (*l. c.*, p. 897)? Would Mr. Bradley perhaps have tried to escape from this difficulty by adopting the principle of Descartes' first proof of the existence of God: finite man could never have conceived the idea of the Infinite being—hence the Infinite itself gave to man the idea of itself—hence the Infinite Being exists?

¹ 'Sentient experience, in short, is reality, and what is not this is not real' (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 144).

So far all is plain sailing. It is in the detailed working out of the doctrine that fatal difficulties reveal themselves. I shall try to show in the sequel, that Mr. Bradley is unable (as indeed he himself admits) to fix positively the place of any appearance in the scale of Reality, and that this inability points to a fundamental flaw in his philosophy, which in the end is fatal to it. For the present, however, I am more concerned to justify and defend the doctrine of Degrees, and to show, that Mr. Bradley arrives at it not by illegitimate 'hedging,' but is driven to it by the irresistible logic of his own thought. Let me put this more fully: An appearance is for Mr. Bradley a partial, one-sided, inconsistent aspect of reality. Strictly speaking, every presentation, every phenomenon, every 'fact' in the widest sense of the term, is an appearance, but no less every theory about facts, scientific or philosophical, ethical or theological. Appearances, in short, are *co-extensive with experience*, if we take that word in the widest sense as including every kind of psychical existence, feelings, volitions, immediate apprehensions and anything that thought has made out of the directly given by ideal constructions. Indeed it is with these latter appearances that Mr. Bradley is mainly concerned, for it is they which claim to give an account of reality as it is in itself. He tries them by his standard of reality: non-contradiction or self-consistency, and finds them all wanting, a scientific conception like causality no less than an ethical conception like personality or a religious conception like God. There is not one, which can pretend to be real. So far the result is purely negative, and its logical outcome threatens to be systematic Scepticism. But Mr. Bradley is fully aware that a negative assertion is valid only when it rests on a positive basis. You can only condemn an appearance as *not* real, if you have 'absolute' knowledge of the real. A source of such knowledge Mr. Bradley claims to possess in his conception of Reality as self-consistent. Can any positive content be developed out of this so far purely *formal* criterion? In the first place the formal character itself admits of further determination: Reality must be *one* and not many. For if there were many reals they would have to be absolutely independent of each other, but their independence would be irreconcilable with their plurality. Plurality always implies some sort of co-existence, co-existence implies relation, and relation destroys independence. Result: there is only *one* Reality, and that must be an individual systematic whole. And in the second place, what *content* does this whole possess? Since all experience has been shown to be unreal and ap-

pearance, is not reality reduced to an empty schema? By no means, replies Mr. Bradley, for the same criterion which condemns the appearances at the same time secures them as material for reality! For no reality could be self-consistent which did not *include* the appearances. For supposing it did not, then it would stand over against the appearances as a thing-in-itself, and as such it must either stand in some relation to the appearances or it must not. If it is related, then its individuality and self-consistency are gone at once, for since relations are only possible within a wider whole, both reality and the appearances would belong to some wider whole, and that whole would be the ultimate reality. On the other hand, if reality stands in *no* relation to the appearances, then the latter are not accounted for. And yet they must be dealt with, for 'nothing is actually removed from existence by being labelled "appearance"'.¹ 'Appearances exist . . . and whatever exists must belong to reality.'² And therefore we must correct the former unqualified statement that all appearances are 'unreal'. They are unreal as compared with the total reality, for no single partial aspect and no sum of such partial aspects could possibly take the place of the total reality. The attempt so to treat it, *i.e.*, the attempt, to regard any partial aspect as real in the sense in which only the whole can be real at once involves us in contradiction. But on the other hand all appearances are to some extent real, for 'the Absolute appears in its phenomena and is real nowhere outside them'. The two statements are for Mr. Bradley not contradictory, they are complementary aspects of the same truth.

It is instructive to compare the popular distinction of appearance and reality with Mr. Bradley's philosophical one. When in ordinary language we contrast 'what appears' with 'what really is,' the appearance is as little removed from existence as any of Mr. Bradley's 'appearances'—but it is fully *explained* by the reality, whereas Mr. Bradley's appearances are not. When in ordinary experience one group of facts conflicts with another, we try to remove the contradiction by taking the one group as appearance and the other as reality, *i.e.*, by viewing the group which in itself would have suggested a different principle of explanation as being a manifestation of the principle of the other group. A few simple examples will make this clear. The hypocrite seems our friend, but really is our enemy. Here we have two groups of facts: those which point to friendship, and those which point to

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

enmity. We cannot reconcile the latter with the assumption of friendship, but we can understand that friendly acts may be used as a means of hostility—hence the hypocrite's hostility is real, and his friendship appearance. Similarly in the case of the earth and the sun: the apparent motion of the sun round the earth can be explained also on the supposition that the earth really moves round the sun, and as this theory further explains facts which were inexplicable on the geocentric theory, the heliocentric movement is real. The contrast of appearance and reality is thus in ordinary language the solution of a problem—for Mr. Bradley it is the very problem itself. For ultimate reality, or the Absolute, is inaccessible to us. We can think of it as non-contradictory, but we cannot realise it in detail. Living in the world of appearances, we have no positive knowledge of the way in which the appearances are 'transmuted' and 'merged' in the experience of the Absolute. All we can do is to determine whether all appearances fall equally short of reality, or whether, *as compared with each other*,¹ one is more or less real than another.

However, even this task is not fully discharged by Mr. Bradley. He gives us no complete scale of all appearances arranged according to the degree of their metaphysical value. For he claims to be merely expounding a general principle, not writing a system of Metaphysics. However, he indicates, at least, the general principles on which the valuation of appearances and their ultimate transmutation in Reality must take place.

Reality, as we have seen, is an all-inclusive, individual whole. Now individuality possesses two characteristic marks: (i.) all-inclusiveness, (ii.) internal harmony. As Mr. Bradley's pupil, Prof. A. E. Taylor, puts it: 'The more a thing includes of existence and the more harmoniously it includes it, the more individual it is'.² It follows, that the more comprehensiveness and wealth of content an appearance possesses, or the more thoroughly it is internally

¹ The standard of comparison is indeed the self-consistency of Reality, but all the same we cannot strictly say, that all appearances are compared with reality, for in that case we should know, *how far* the highest appearance is as yet removed from reality. But as we do not enjoy the experience of the Absolute, and do not know how each appearance is transcended in it, we cannot positively say, how near any particular appearance approximates to reality. *Hence we really get degrees of appearances rather than degrees of reality.* We can call one appearance higher than another, but we cannot fix its exact place in relation to reality; the 'degrees' are relative, not absolute.

² *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 110.

systematised, the more real it deserves to be called. And at the same time these two criteria suggest, how an appearance must be turned into full reality, *viz.*, by *supplementation*, which corrects its want of content, and by *rearrangement*, which cures its inner confusion. We may judge an appearance either positively by the individuality it has got or negatively by that which it lacks. Our two standards by no means necessarily coincide; an appearance possessing a high degree of inner harmony may at the same time be poor in content, and again another full of concrete content may be but imperfectly systematised. Hence the criteria of comprehensiveness and systematisation often give different results as applied to the same appearance, and an appearance which stands high as tested by one, may stand low in the light of the other. Events, for instance, must be judged no less by their fulness of content than by the length of time and width of space which they occupy. Abstract laws possess little content, but cover a large extent of reality; some concrete fact on the other hand, though rich in content, suffers from want of systematisation.¹ And again, we must take the *effectiveness* of appearances into account, their sphere of influence, as *e.g.*, the range of applicability of a scientific conception. Again, neither the wealth of content nor the inner systematisation of an appearance may be fully exhibited, if we look only to its manifestation in Space and Time. In fact it is only the 'meaner realities' which are capable of being verified as sensible facts. Neither the inner unity nor the comprehensiveness of the higher appearances, such as *e.g.*, a social organism, are visible to the eye. Such considerations give an example of the way in which all appearances, from a mere feeling of pleasure and pain to an abstract law, from a single narrow sensation to the concept of Self or the idea of God, must be and can be judged by the criterion of individuality.²

There remains only one great problem to discuss before we can regard the account of Mr. Bradley's *Metaphysics* as complete. The sole *raison d'être* of the whole theory of 'Degrees' is to explain, *how* the appearances may be contained in the Reality and yet not be fully real. It is an attempt to preserve to the appearances their half real, half unreal character—an attempt forced upon Mr. Bradley by his doctrine, that a self-consistent reality, if it is to be self-consistent, must *include* the appearances and yet cannot be its appearances.

¹ Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, p. 370.

² For further details see chap. xxiv. of *Appearance and Reality*.

About this doctrine we must ask a crucial question. Is there no appearance which is *in principle* opposed to the conception of the Absolute put forward by Mr. Bradley? Is there no appearance which refuses flatly to be viewed as an appearance of just this Absolute? Will Error, for instance, and Evil, and Time, and Space, and many more, allow themselves to be transmuted into harmony and system? Is there any positive evidence which makes it likely? The need of such positive evidence is obviously the greater in view of our admitted ignorance of the concrete way in which particular appearances are *actually* transmuted in the Absolute. It seems then quite possible, that there are appearances which will never admit of such a transmutation.

Mr. Bradley faces the difficulty boldly, and his way out of it is as ingenious as his case is weak. Positive evidence he has little, and that mostly questionable. I shall deal with it later. Nor does he really rest his case on it.¹ His real position stated in all its nakedness is simply this: There is *no proof* of any appearance being irreconcilable with the Absolute; the conception of the Absolute demands that all shall be reconcilable, hence—all must be reconciled. Absence of negative evidence plus a positive postulate issues in actuality: 'what *may* be, if it also *must* be, assuredly is'.²

I have called Mr. Bradley's case weak, and yet the basis of his argument is quite sound: 'A general doctrine is not destroyed by what we fail to understand. It is destroyed only by that which we actually do understand, and can show to be inconsistent and discrepant with the theory adopted.'³ In other words, only true negative instances, *i.e.*, instances which, *fully understood*, are seen to involve a principle directly opposed to our theory, can upset that theory. Its mere failure to explain any particular fact is no argument against it, for this fact, better understood, might reveal itself as an instance of the theory. Apparently then, all Mr. Bradley has to do is to show, that Error, Evil, etc., are not negative instances, and it follows at once from the self-consistency of the Absolute, that nothing but our ignorance prevents us from seeing that they are positive instances *for* the Absolute.

But this is the flaw in the argument: A theory which is not damaged by its apparent inapplicability to a particular

¹ What I call Mr. Bradley's positive evidence is really no more than an attempt to show that there is *no* negative evidence. Indeed, since our ignorance of the concrete details of the Absolute forbids us to say that any way of transmutation, which we can imagine, is the one actually used, Mr. Bradley could not possibly do more than that.

² *Appearance and Reality*, p. 199.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

instance, must have first justified itself and established its validity by its applicability to the *majority* of instances. In Science we certainly do not abandon a theory which explains all old facts, because a particular new fact refuses to fall in with it, *unless* further observation and analysis prove that the new fact involves a new principle. But what does the Absolute explain? Or where has it established its validity? The whole range of experience is nothing but appearance. Error and evil and other appearances are not isolated instances of failure, which do not weigh in the scale by the side of the appearances which the Absolute does explain. Why, Truth and goodness, nay, the very idea of the Absolute itself, are nothing but appearances.¹ The best that we can say of all of them is that they are 'somehow' 'preserved but transmuted' in the Absolute. But there is not one appearance in the case of which this convenient 'somehow' can be filled with a definite meaning. If it could, one would gladly accept all the rest on trust and hope for further insight. As it is, only our want of insight prevents us from construing many appearances as negative instances. Human ignorance is indeed the fundamental fact, the corner-stone of Mr. Bradley's argument. It is just because we do not know why appearances should *not* ultimately be consistent that we can demand that consistency. It is just because experience is admittedly incomplete that we can postulate its completion in a particular direction. Of course, a valid postulate, since it takes us into the region of possibilities, must, like all possibilities, be based on some feature in the actual. Actual experience presents characters both of inconsistency and consistency, and it is by laying stress on the latter aspect, on the movement of thought towards consistency and on the valuation of experience according to the degree of its consistency, that we can find reality 'foreshadowed' even now. But for Mr. Bradley the self-consistency of the Absolute is not a postulate but a *fact*, a piece of positive knowledge, and yet, since he maintains that all our thought and knowledge, even at their best, are still appearance, this knowledge of the Absolute seems infected with a similar weakness. If all is appearance, how can he get at Reality? And yet he could only show all to be appearance by first making an assumption about Reality! Nor can Mr. Bradley escape from this dilemma by insisting on the double character of an appearance as partly real, partly unreal. For,

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 397. Mr. Bradley hedges by adding 'as idea'—but we have nothing else. What are 'self-consistency' and the other attributes of the Absolute if not 'ideas'?

apart from the question of transmutation, which more or less alters the character of the appearance, we can even in its present state only decide what is real if we have previously decided the nature of Reality. It follows that the standard by which we judge appearances cannot itself be an appearance, and that thought in this one particular, at any rate, must reach *beyond its character as appearance* and come into touch with reality as it is in itself. But can Mr. Bradley with a good conscience admit that? The whole difficulty arises from the fact that the Absolute being higher than all appearances cannot properly be described from the point of view of an appearance. Thought moves in relations: the Absolute is beyond relations. Hence any attempt to describe it in relational terms is bound to lead to contradictions. We must deny in the same breath what we affirm. The Absolute 'is' and 'has' and 'includes' and 'transmutes' and 'submerges' and 'does' a thousand other things which all imply *relation*, and yet it is beyond and above all relations. Its very character of self-consistency implies relation, and yet is used to describe its supra-relational nature. It is therefore not strictly 'related' to any of its appearances. The very distinction between appearances and reality is strictly speaking illegitimate, and yet but for it where would be Mr. Bradley's philosophy? From the point of view of the Absolute we cannot speak of 'appearances'. For appearances have there ceased to exist, at any rate *as appearances*. Yet, on the other hand, it is hard to see how an appearance, whilst remaining an appearance, can know itself to be more than a mere appearance, can know itself, that is, to be an appearance of a reality defined as Mr. Bradley does define it. An appearance is partly real, partly unreal, to the philosopher who studies it in the light of his conception of reality, but, if the philosopher by the force of his own reasoning is compelled to declare himself an 'appearance,' has he not thereby renounced his right to make the distinction between appearance and reality on which his whole argument rests? The difficulty is similar to that which besets certain epistemological theories, and to which Avenarius has given the name of 'introjection'. Having first argued that, because a given object is outside a given individual's body, the individual can only know it by means of 'inner states' or 'subjective affections' which represent the object; and having then identified *myself* with that individual, I suddenly find myself confined to my 'inner' states and unable to get back to the 'outer' objects, on which my whole theory depended. So here. If we first

make a distinction between appearance and reality and then range ourselves among the appearances, we cannot get back to reality. The whole force of Mr. Bradley's argument rests on our ability to take up at will either the point of view of the Absolute or that of a 'mere' appearance, but when we hear that all our experience, all our thought, is appearance, the point of view of the Absolute seems to become impossible for us. And yet, but for this point of view, we could not have recognised the appearances as appearances. What escape is there from this circle?

And when we turn to the positive evidence which Mr. Bradley adduces to show that there is nothing in appearances like Evil and Error to forbid their taking a place in the Absolute, we only seem involved in new difficulties. I will take first the case of *Pain*. It is clear that pain exists, and it is equally clear that 'as such' it cannot exist in the Absolute. 'Hence . . . the question is, whether its nature can be transmuted? Can its painfulness disappear in a higher unity? If so, it will exist but will have ceased to be pain when considered on the whole.'¹ The phrase 'considered on the whole' is curious. One would have thought it was a matter not of consideration but of *feeling*. And what does the vague 'on the whole' mean? In explanation Mr. Bradley appeals to our actual experience of the 'neutralisation of pain'. Psychology knows of cases in which small pains are 'wholly swallowed up in a larger composite pleasure. And the assertion that, in all these cases, they have been *destroyed* and not *merged*, would most certainly be baseless. To suppose that my condition is never pleasant on the whole, while I still have an *actual* local pain, is directly opposed to fact. In a composite state the pain doubtless will detract from the pleasure, but still we may have a resultant which is pleasurable *wholly*. Such a balance is all that we want in the case of absolute perfection.'² And presently the argument is summed up: 'We have found, so far, that there is a possibility of *pain ceasing, as such*, to exist in the Absolute'.³

I have quoted at some length to show to what straits Mr. Bradley is reduced in trying to defend his theory at all costs. Observe, above all, the astounding vagueness and looseness of his terms. How can a pain be 'actual' and yet cease to exist 'as such'? How can it be 'merged' and yet continue to be *felt* as pain? For that is the point. Does the pain continue to be *felt* or not? If not, we have no longer any

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 198.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

right to speak of it as pain, though the physical conditions which gave rise to it may continue. It is mere shirking of the difficulty to talk about 'merging' and 'neutralisation'. Does the warmth of the rest of my body 'neutralise' cold feet? Or is such a mixed state in spite of its balance of warmth a 'perfect' or ideal state? Mr. Bradley is too good a Psychologist not to know that pain and pleasure do not neutralise each other as + and - do in Mathematics. A 'neutral' or 'indifferent' state is not one in which pain and pleasure are so equally mixed that we do not feel either. Nor do we in a state which is on the whole pleasurable toned, but with a slight admixture of pain, feel only the balance of pleasure which remains after deducting the pain. Such a deduction is a psychological absurdity. Hence, so long as the pain continues to be felt, it has not ceased as *such*, however pleasurable our state may be 'on the whole,' and when it has ceased to be felt, it has gone altogether, and our state is 'wholly' pleasurable. Mr. Bradley's use of 'wholly,' on the other hand, looks like a deliberate attempt to mislead, for, apparently used only as a synonym for 'on the whole,' it suggests in the context its more natural meaning of 'completely,' as if any mixed state could be 'completely' pleasurable in the sense of the balance of pleasure over pain *alone* being felt.

Or, again, take the case of *Error*. To go fully into Mr. Bradley's doctrine of error would take us too far and would mostly not be to the point here. Hence I will only dwell on its main aspects, because it is at the same time a beautiful test-case for illustrating by anticipation the different point of view and method of Pragmatism in dealing with such problems. Such a concrete comparison will be more instructive than pages of exposition. The point which strikes one most is Mr. Bradley's curiously *impersonal* way of treating error. The usual view of error is, that it is an opinion or statement in conflict with facts. It is the *opinion* which—though, perhaps, in itself consistent—is false and erroneous. The facts are true and real. Hence the usual criterion of Error is disagreement with facts. For Mr. Bradley, however, error as a form of 'appearance' must be condemned by its *inner inconsistency*, and such a self-contradiction in its inner content can only be secured, if the content includes not only the false opinion, but the facts, with which the opinion disagrees, *as well*. We then have reality qualified on the one hand by certain facts and on the other by an opinion not in accordance with those facts, and this *total* qualification obviously contains inner self-discrepancy and is therefore

appearance. The conflict of opinion and fact is a crude instance of error. In the end, since Reality has a self-consistent character, *every* partial aspect of it is, to some extent, erroneous, for the result of qualifying the whole reality by merely this aspect involves an obvious inconsistency.¹ From this point of view Mr. Bradley is able to declare *all* appearances as more or less infected with error, and, since even truth is an appearance, it follows that the absolute opposition of truth and error is smoothed down into the relative one of true and false appearance: 'There will be no truth which is entirely true, just as there will be no error which is totally false. With all alike, if taken strictly, it will be a question of amount and will be a matter of more or less.'²

Apart from thus bridging the gap between truth and error, Mr. Bradley's theory of error also enables him to deal with opinions of the erroneous nature of which we are ourselves *unaware*. The usual view is: 'Error is truth until it is found out to be error'. That such a view is impossible on Mr. Bradley's principles is clear. For whether we are aware of the wrongness of a statement or not—it qualifies reality no less than the object with which it deals and thus introduces internal inconsistency.

And lastly, this view of error opposes no difficulties to its correction in the Absolute. The self-discrepant content is as an element in a wider whole, so rearranged and modified as to become harmonious: 'Instead of one subject distracted, we get a larger subject with distinctions, and so the tension is removed'.³

It will be clear by now, why I described Mr. Bradley's treatment of error as 'impersonal'. He treats error *metaphysically*, as an apparent discrepancy in the real. He does not treat error *epistemologically*, as if he were answering the questions: What is error for *us*? And how can *we* remove it or find it out? The erroneous opinion is taken out of its personal context, and stripped of its personal significance—merely its place in the real is considered. Hence Mr. Bradley argues, that disagreement with fact is an insufficient criterion (i.) because in many cases it does not work at all, *i.e.*, the disagreement is never experienced by us, and yet the error, though uncorrected for us, does not survive, as such, in the Absolute; (ii.) because the facts themselves are for him but appearances infected with contradiction, and agreement with them could not, therefore, secure complete truth.

¹ Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, p. 189: 'Error is the qualification of a reality in such a way that in the result it has an inconsistent content'.

² *Ibid.*, p. 862.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

As against this doctrine Pragmatism takes in almost every detail the opposite point of view, the epistemological, personal point of view. With the reconciliation of undiscovered errors in the Absolute it is not concerned. An error which is not known to be an error does not exist for it, as error, at all. Until a statement is discovered to be false, it passes either as true, or as provisionally true (assumption, hypothesis, postulate), or as indifferent, *i.e.*, as a case in which we deliberately remain in suspense and refuse to commit ourselves. And the only problem it raises about error is: How do we find out whether a statement or opinion is erroneous? And the answer is: By acting as if it were true and trying whether it collides with other facts or features of our experience. However this is merely the rough kernel of the answer, which must be hewn into shape. It is an answer, as it were, only for extreme cases. It applies only to that fringe of knowledge where truth is still in the making. The Pragmatist, like any other mortal, will, as a rule, reject a statement as false which is inconsistent with a large body of accepted facts and theories, which long trial and experience have shown to be true and confirmed by the practical test of success. Thus, if some one were to affirm that powder is not an explosive, no Pragmatist will refute him by the practical test of blowing himself up. In such cases the Pragmatist will apply the criterion of contradiction like any one else: the statement is inconsistent with accepted truth—hence it is false. If he is 'practical' in such a case, it is only in saving himself trouble by appealing to past experience. But it is different in cases where a fact is not inconsistent with anything that was known already and is yet found upon further experience to have been false; or where a fact is in conflict with past knowledge and will not yield even to further study and insight, so that the error is seen to lie on the side of what had been accepted up to then as truth. In either case, the Pragmatist urges, that the criterion and the procedure are *practical*. Thus if a new fact conflicts with an accepted theory, we first try every means to bring the fact under the theory, and only if that shows itself to be impracticable do we modify our theory so as to include the new without ceasing to explain the old. In other cases, where an error does not reveal itself through its conflict with other knowledge, we only discover it by the consequences of its application, *i.e.*, by the results we obtain, when we act on the assumption that it is true. Thus, to take Mr. Bradley's instance: ¹ William has been hung, but I erroneously suppose

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 190.

it was John. Unless I am accidentally corrected, I shall only discover my error, if I act, as if John had been hung and William were alive, *e.g.*, if I write a letter of sympathy to John's family and expect William to pay his debts on the morrow. The results of my action will teach me to my cost that I was in error. This is a crude instance, and there are undoubtedly numberless cases in which we accept correction, though the truth or error of a statement or opinion cannot apparently make the least practical difference to us. What does it concern the ordinary man, whether he holds a true or a false theory of radio-activity or knows rightly the number of satellites of the planet Jupiter? But to the physicist or astronomer truth in these matters is of the greatest 'practical' importance, if their theories, experiments, calculations are to agree with each other and with their observations. For on the consistency of a scientific body of facts and theories largely depends its practical value, just as the consistency itself has been secured by practical tests: by applying the knowledge gained and accepting or rejecting it according to the results of its working. An incoherent collection of contradictory observations and guesses is not practically applicable at all. Hence it would be false in speaking of the practical value of knowledge to take too narrow a point of view. It would be sheer absurdity to ask of any remote and out-of-the-way bit of knowledge: What is its practical value? What does it help you to do? By such a method the greater part of our knowledge could be shown to have no 'practical' value at all, however wide a sense we give to the word. But granted that knowledge as a whole possesses practical value, in the sense that it is man's greatest interest to get to know the world in which he has to live as thoroughly as possible, then we need not raise the question of the practical importance of this or that detail, but can legitimately argue that its position is secured through its being an element in a wider whole.

Thus Pragmatism finds the guarantee of the truth even of accepted knowledge not so much in its consistency as in its continual confirmation and verification by being applied to the solution of actual problems. And similarly a new theory which presents itself for our acceptance can establish its claim to be regarded as true only by its success in working. Its failure stamps it as error. For Mr. Bradley the problem of error is: How is its existence compatible with the perfection of the Absolute? for the Pragmatist: By what method and what marks do we discover it? The Pragmatist is concerned with the elimination of error in

the progress of human knowledge, for Mr. Bradley it is a question of no importance whether *we* correct our errors or not, so long as he can show that they *must* be corrected in the Absolute. Hence the reproach against the Absolute that it 'explains nothing' and is no help to us in our problems.¹ And even if we do not press this objection here, a grave difficulty does undoubtedly arise for Mr. Bradley out of his neglect of our human attitude towards error. For it may be asked: What significance for the Absolute has the fact that in the progress of knowledge errors *do* get eliminated and disappear altogether? Science hardly troubles to remember erroneous theories at all, philosophy remembers them for the truth they contained and as danger-signals where they were false, and thousands of ordinary, every-day errors once corrected literally disappear altogether. And yet they have existed, they have been facts, they have 'qualified reality'. Mr. Bradley deals with error only as if it were a *permanent fixture*, indissoluble for us, though solved in the Absolute. Indeed its indissolubility contributes to the harmony of the Absolute: 'the one-sided emphasis of error, its isolation as positive and indissoluble in a wider connexion—this again will contribute, we know not how, to the harmony of the Absolute'.² Similarly, I suppose, Mr. Bradley would say, that the gradual correction of errors in the progress of knowledge 'contributes, we know not how, to the harmony of the Absolute'. But such an argument is unsatisfactory. Though it is possible to say that an error, even after its correction by us, still continues to qualify reality in its corrected form, the *fact* of its correction, which also qualifies reality, remains to be dealt with. We should naturally be inclined to describe the removal of error as an increase in perfection, but since the Absolute is perfect, any increase of perfection on the part of one of its appearances cannot, we are told, make any difference to the whole. For the appearance, we must remember, is a partial aspect of the whole, and a more perfect appearance is, therefore, a wider and completer aspect of the whole, but that obviously does not affect the perfection of the whole. And it is not the correction of error alone which thus loses all significance from the point of view of the Absolute. By parity of reason-

¹ Mr. Bradley deals with the question how *we* correct our errors in a footnote! (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 548). What he says there is excellent, but it leaves untouched the question which I am going on to raise, what significance the fact that *we* correct errors has for the Absolute, where they are all corrected anyhow.

² *Appearance and Reality*, p. 195.

ing any form of progress, all moral struggle, all realisation of ideals, in short, all that makes life valuable to us, all that to us is of the greatest practical importance, is from the point of view of the Absolute of no account. And if any one, unwilling to accept these consequences of Absolutism, were to recall to Mr. Bradley the passage quoted above about the need of 'satisfying our whole nature,' he would find himself at once rebuked as follows: 'Philosophy, I agree, has to justify the various sides of our life; but this is impossible, I would urge, if any side is made absolute. Our attitudes in life give place ceaselessly the one to the other, and life is satisfied if each in its own field is allowed supremacy. Now to deny the progress of the Universe surely leaves morality where it was. A man has his self or his world, about to make an advance (he may hope) through his personal effort, or in any case (he knows well) to be made the best of. The universe is, so far, worse through his failure; it is better, so far, through his success. And if, not content with this, he demands to alter the universe at large, he should at least invoke neither reason nor religion nor morality. . . . Faith in the progress or persistence of those who inhabit our planet has nothing to do with metaphysics.'¹ No one can deny that this passage is perfectly consistent with the rest of Mr. Bradley's metaphysical teaching, but at the same time it illustrates how complete is the opposition (on which I dwelt above) between the view-point of appearance and that of reality, and how little the one is organically connected with the other, since Mr. Bradley's Absolutism fails: to give a real meaning to those very aspects of our life which to us are fullest of meaning and value.

But to return to the problem of progress, we may look at it from another point of view, *viz.*, so far as it involves a process, a change, in a word: Time. And thus we are launched on the consideration of that appearance, which of all appearances is the most troublesome to a timeless Absolute. For time in one form or another, as succession, change, development, decay, progress, etc., forms a fundamental character of all *our* experience, and it is just this character, which is most incompatible, as such, with the Absolute. Most of the inconsistencies for the sake of which various conceptions had to be condemned as appearances, rested ultimately on the connexion of those conceptions with time. This is obvious in the case of the dynamic conceptions, like causality, which deal directly with processes, but it is no-

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 501.

less true of the static conceptions like thing-quality, by means of which we try to isolate in the stream of experience certain complexes as more or less fixed, and to create islands of permanence in the ocean of change.¹

Since the problem is so fundamental, it may be worth while, in this case, to consider its treatment by other modern Absolutists besides Mr. Bradley. Mr. Bradley deals with Time in his usual way. He first shows it to be inconsistent and therefore not real, and then tries to show that it contains nothing incompatible with its existence as 'somehow' transmuted in the Absolute. But he flatly declines to consider the problems, (1) why there should be an appearance of the character of time at all;² (2) what its character is as transmuted in the Absolute. His position, if unsatisfying to our desire for knowledge, has, at any rate, the merit of being consistent. Since the 'habits of the Absolute'³ are beyond our ken—as no one could urge more strongly than Mr. Bradley himself—both problems are manifestly insoluble. But since the raising of unanswerable puzzles will never content the human mind, we find other Absolutists attempting to answer both.

Prof. Royce⁴ tries to show us how to conceive the *timelessness* of the Absolute. The attempt is interesting because it is based on an undoubted feature of the temporal human consciousness, *viz.*, the 'time-span'. A sequence, he argues, may be 'present' to us in two ways: (i.) as a whole, *totum simul*; (ii.) it may come before us bit by bit. A tune, for instance, is experienced tone by tone, and each tone comes to us as a member of the whole tune, and yet at the end in the total impression the whole tune may be said to be present as a whole, and so far in a timeless manner. This apprehension of the members of a *successive* series in *one* moment of consciousness, *i.e.*, the so-called 'specious present,' depends on the length of the human time-span. Some series are too long, others too short for our time-span; some we cannot grasp as a whole, in others the succession escapes us altogether. But there is no difficulty in conceiving of a consciousness free from the

¹ Cf. also Prof. Taylor's remark: 'In the *temporal* character of all finite experience we may perhaps discern the ultimate grounds of Morality' (*Elements of Met.*, p. 283).

² Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, p. 511: 'why there are appearances, and why appearances of such various kinds, are questions not to be answered'.

³ The phrase is Mr. Schiller's.

⁴ *E.g.*, in his lecture on 'Immortality'.

limitations of the human time-span, a consciousness to which all time, past, present and future, including even the minutest details of its content, should be present *at once*, in *one* specious present, in an 'eternal now'. Thus the human time-span is the *type* of the timeless experience of the Absolute.

Is the analogy really tenable? To answer this question we must briefly dip into the Psychology of the matter. The time-span is closely connected with the phenomena of *attention*, and especially with what is known as the 'oscillation' of attention. We find it impossible even with the greatest effort of conscious attention to fix our minds unwaveringly on a given object. Any one can observe this by trying to fix an object on the table steadily for some time and noticing the tendency of his eyes to be drawn off and to wander right and left. And it is the same when we try to concentrate our minds on a given thought. One moment the thought is very vivid, in the next the mind has wandered off to different matters, and one can distinctly observe the thought returning to one's consciousness, as one catches oneself on having gone off the point. The time-span, then, may be defined as the stretch of concentrated attention between two oscillations. Now, even in such a stretch of clear attention, it depends very much on the number and nature of the impressions, and the momentary interest, what one notices. If their number is overwhelming or none are sufficiently differentiated from the rest, they fuse into one vague total impression, in which nothing is clearly distinguished. Or if the attention *selects* certain features, then the rest forms a confused background to the objects in the focus of attention.

Without elaborating this further, we can see that in these characteristics the time-span cannot serve as a type of the timeless experience. For we hear, that no details are to be dropped—and this proviso at once excludes all confusion, all hazy total impressions. But if every detail stands out clearly and distinctly, it seems to follow, that all things great and small, important and unimportant, essential and subordinate, are reduced to a level, in which no outstanding features, no prominent complexes can be distinguished, just because all things would be equally distinct. In other words, the multiplicity of content of the timeless experience would not be organised, it would lack structure and system. There would be nothing in it corresponding to the *selective* power of human attention. Hence we should have to introduce a principle into the timeless experience, which, whilst preserving distinction and clearness, yet differentiates its content

according to its metaphysical value. The problem is not solved by merely reducing succession to simultaneity: we further require to understand that simultaneity of details as the expression of a single coherent system.

Moreover the reduction of succession to simultaneity, if fully thought out, is seen to be full of difficulties. To the completeness of any series apprehended *totum simul*, and yet without dropping details, it is, as we have seen, essential that each member should survive as a distinct element in the whole. We can imagine a tune spread out in this way, tone following tone. But apply this idea to any process of growth or development, and observe the result. Does the embryo, the baby, the boy survive in the timeless experience as a distinct element side by side with the man, the dotard and the corpse? Surely the idea is absurd!

And there is a last point. In the case of the tune the difficulty is not really solved by thinking succession away and placing the notes, as it were, side by side. For the effectiveness of the tune just depends on the *successive* experience of single tones, on the gradual accumulation of the total impression.¹ The 'specious-present' theory makes no allowance for the fact that a tune (and, for that matter, any series forming a whole) is not merely a collection of atomic elements, but that each new member is enriched, as it enters, by the total effect of all preceding ones. The mistake arises entirely from the fact that the simultaneity to which succession is supposed to be reduced, really involves a *spatial* metaphor. The successive stages are thought of as *side by side*, instead of as one after the other. But, if we are serious about this, what is the result? Play all tones of a tune together and you produce simply a noise. Imagine all stages of development side by side in the same human being and you produce simply a monster.

In fact, there seems to be a serious psychological confusion between the absence of change in our attitude of attention during the time-span, and the supposed absence of change or succession in the object attended to. *Unchanging attention is not the same as experience of the unchanging.* We do experience succession even within the same stretch of unwavering attention, hence we cannot get rid of process and change by simply expanding the time-span to an all-inclusive, eternal Now. No strict simultaneity, which does not derive its sole intelligibility from an illegitimate spatial metaphor, can be

¹ Cf. here Prof. Stout's *Manual of Psychology*, bk. I., chap. ii., on the Acquisition of Meaning.

reached by these means. To take again the instance of the tune: though we may during a time-span still experience the first tone (just dying away) as the last one enters, we shall never succeed in experiencing the last *already* as the first one enters. The last experience will always come *later* than the first, and hence we cannot get rid of succession by extending the time-span ever so much. In my judgment, therefore, the analogy of the time-span fails to make the timelessness of the Absolute intelligible.¹

Prof. A. E. Taylor has made an attempt to solve the second of our two problems, *viz.*, *why* there should be an appearance of the character of Time at all. That he realises the unsatisfactoriness of Mr. Bradley's position is shown by the following quotation: ² 'We have finally to ask, Of what are they' the appearance? It is not enough to say "of ultimate Reality" or "of the Absolute". *Ultimately* this is, no doubt, true of Space and Time, as it is of everything else, but we desire further to know, if they are not *proximately* the appearance of some special features of the inner physical 'life of the lesser individuals which compose the Absolute. We naturally look for some third term, in the nature of finite individuality, to mediate between the structureless, abstract generality of space and time relation, and the perfect individual structure of the spaceless and timeless Absolute Individual.'

He then proceeds to show how he regards Space and Time as the inevitable results of the limitations of finite experience to 'a unique *here* and *now* of immediate feeling'.³ It is only because we can only take in a very small bit of the world in any one moment of experience, that we arrange the rest in Space and Time, *i.e.*, contrast 'there's with the 'here,' and 'before's and 'after's with the 'now' of present experience. Except for the limitations of our range of conscious experience, such a contrast would have no meaning. Hence in the experience of the Absolute which embraces all, there can be no opposition of here and there, now and then, and therefore neither Space nor Time. Both Space and Time are thus the external and phenomenal manifestation of underlying *logical* relations and *logical* development. 'The spatial grouping,' for instance, 'of intelligent purposive beings is phenomenal

¹ Mr. Bradley himself shows that perception of succession is itself always successive (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 51).

² *Elements of Met.*, p. 260.

³ *Viz.*, Time and Space.

⁴ What does Prof. Taylor mean by 'inner physical'? It seems a strange combination. Perhaps a slip for 'psychical'.

⁵ *Elements of Met.*, p. 261.

of their inner *logical* affinity of interest and purpose.' ¹ And similarly: 'the position of a particular purposive act in the temporal series of acts which I call the history of my own life, is the outward indication of the *logical* place filled by this particular act in the connected scheme of interests which form my life on its inner side'. ²

It will be remembered from the preceding discussion of Mr. Bradley's Absolute and its appearances, that *all* appearances are essential to Reality, since Reality exists nowhere except in its appearances. ³ Mr. Bradley only uses this principle to infer that we cannot neglect or refuse to attribute to the Absolute any appearance, however incompatible with the nature of the Absolute it appears to be, without leaving out a necessary aspect and making Reality incomplete. But really the principle ought to imply much more than that: *viz.*, that it is essential to the nature of the Absolute to manifest itself in just these appearances and no others. In other words, we ought to be able to *explain* the appearances by means of the Absolute; it ought to be a principle showing why there are appearances at all, and what each contributes to the wealth of meaning of the Absolute. Mr. Bradley's Absolute with its purely formal characteristics of self-consistency, unity, and system, is much too abstract to supply such a principle; hence Mr. Bradley wisely declines to 'deduce' the appearances. Neither does Prof. Taylor connect Time and Space directly with the Absolute, though he admits, that 'ultimately' they are manifestations of the Absolute. He explains them 'proximately' as inseparable from finite individuality, but that leaves on our hands the problem, why the Absolute manifests itself in a multiplicity of finite individuals. And until this problem is solved, the full reason why Time and Space are essential manifestations of the Absolute has not yet been given.

Moreover, does Prof. Taylor's explanation of Time and Space as the phenomenal aspect of inner logical relations really justify the inference to a timeless Absolute? The truth in Prof. Taylor's view is, that undoubtedly a *purely* temporal or spatial experience would give us very little knowledge about the world and would truly be an 'outside' view of things. We undoubtedly try to find a deeper meaning in temporal processes and spatial relations, but the fuller understanding of things, at which we thus arrive, contains nothing to make our experience less temporal or spatial. Logical

¹ *Elements of Met.*, p. 281.

² *Ibid.*, p. 282.

³ *Of. e.g., Appearance and Reality*, p. 487.

relations certainly are timeless. When I say A follows from B I do not give the word 'follows' a temporal sense, and for Logic, which investigates the conditions under which a thought is true or valid, the fact that all thought is a process in time, is certainly accidental and negligible. But that does not warrant the inference, that there must be an experience of this purely logical character, for which Time and Space are 'transmuted,' or 'swallowed up,' or 'rearranged,' so as to have completely lost their temporal and spatial character. What intelligible meaning can be given to such phrases? The fact is, that Time and Space cannot be ruled out of experience, and that yet in their present character they cannot be reconciled with a timeless and spaceless Absolute, hence the incompatibility is hidden beneath unintelligible metaphors. If the purely temporal aspect of things is external and abstract, the purely *logical* one, if less external, is certainly no less abstract. The fullest possible understanding, as far as I can see, would not transcend the temporal character of experience in the sense of doing away with it. We 'see through it,' in a sense, and grasp the deeper meaning which manifests itself *in*—and I should almost like to add '*by means of*'—it. But there is nothing to show that we can have the meaning without the process, though we can abstract the meaning from the process and consider it by itself. Rather one might argue that the process is essential to the expression of the meaning. The Absolute may be timeless, but Prof. Taylor's arguments do not go to show it.

I have discussed the Absolutist treatment of Time at such length, that there is no need to add much to what I have already said about Mr. Bradley's handling of the subject. As usual Mr. Bradley excels in destructive criticism but fails in the positive building up. His discussion of the difficulties involved in the conception of Time is very instructive, but he makes no positive contribution to their solution. He is much more ready to discover inconsistencies than to remove them. He has to show that Time involves no principle opposed to its transmutation in the Absolute, and he dwells for this purpose on the relativity of change to something permanent; on the difficult problem of the reality of the past and the future in view of the fact that the reality of the present alone is guaranteed by its content of living experience, and that Science in formulating its laws treats 'facts from various dates as all possessing the same value';¹ and lastly on the timeless nature of truth: we

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 208.

accept what is true once for true always, and our 'universals' are taken out of their temporal context. Thus Mr. Bradley endeavours to prove that in various ways we try to get beyond time at a timeless Reality, and that 'succession as such, can be treated as something *without rights and as mere appearance*'.¹

This is, no doubt, one side of the matter. But is it the whole? Do we desire the timeless for its own sake, *i.e.*, just because in it we have at last got rid of time, or do we not rather desire it that we may the better understand the Time-process? It is hardly true, as Mr. Bradley says, that 'for Science reality tries to be timeless'.² For Science only abstracts from time, it only formulates its conceptions and laws apart from their particular temporal setting in any given case, that it may be the better able to understand and control the succession of phenomena in time.³ So far from regarding its abstract, universal, timeless conceptions as *more real* than the concrete, particular world in time, it maintains rather the opposite; 'Die Wirklichkeit ist jedesmal nur einzig,'⁴ says Prof. Ostwald, and it is just the unachieved ideal of Science to grasp fully and to exhaust the unique individuality of events in the Time-series, to be able to predict down to the minutest detail what consequences will follow *in time* from the condition of things given in the present. Science is no longer content with classification and generalisation involving, as they do, the neglect of small differences in the particulars of observation. It has learned from the theory of evolution, that these very differences, apparently so unimportant, may grow into—if they do not yet actually constitute—'specific' differences, of which any attempt at classification must take account. It cannot be denied that, since the rise of the evolutionary sciences, the ideals of Science and of History have approached more closely to each other. But, if so, it cannot be said that Science has no concern with the past or the future. Time is real to it as it is to the husbandman who puts seed into the ground in the expectation of a harvest in the future, or in fact, to any one who makes arrangements in the present from which he hopes to benefit in time to come. This may be what Mr. Bradley would call an 'illegitimate appeal to

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 208. The Italics are my own.

² *Ibid.*, p. 208.

³ Cf. the construction by Science of an *objective* time over against all subjective times of individual experiences. This does not look as if Reality were timeless for Science!

⁴ *Vorlesungen über Naturphilosophie*, p. 140.

practice,' but surely mere theory in abstraction from practice is as little likely to give us truth about reality as mere living without reflexion. Most of the dialectical difficulties raised about Time suggest the attitude of a man who standing on a bridge looks down on the water rushing through underneath and says: 'I cannot understand how it is that I see water here at all. For the water which is coming is not yet here, and that which has gone is no longer here.' And if he fines down his 'here' sufficiently, the imagined difficulty becomes obviously insoluble.¹ Similarly the Time-process is insoluble to all who stand on the bridge of timeless conceptions. In short, since our life and experience are 'in time' and seem inseparable from time, time cannot be 'without rights'. We abstract from the time-process, we form timeless conceptions and laws and treat truth as true at all times, because the content of our experience at any one time, i.e., the merely 'given,' is incomplete and fragmentary, and we bring to bear on it in the shape of timeless truths the contents of past experience, and thus, by addition and interpretation and inference, we invest the given with a wealth of meaning, which, as such, it does not possess. But the temporal character of our experience is in no wise changed by our ability thus to expand the content of the present with memories of the past and anticipations of the future. And, even if it were, it would yet remain true that Mr. Bradley's solution of the problems of time by assuming its 'thorough,'² but to us unintelligible, transmutation in the Absolute, in which its special temporal nature is 'lost,' leaves us as wise as we were before. It amounts to saying to us: In practice you may be as inconsistent as you find it convenient to be, provided you believe in the reconciliation of all contradictions in the Absolute. Of the fact, that it is one of our 'practical' concerns to remove inconsistencies here and now, once they have been pointed out to us, Mr. Bradley takes no notice.

The case is not much better with other appearances, the compatibility of which with the Absolute Mr. Bradley tries to exhibit. The precariousness of his arguments can be discovered at once by trying to give a definite meaning to the numberless 'on the wholes and 'somehows and 'as such's,

¹ Mr. Bradley as usual courageously accepts the result. Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, p. 312, where he invites the reader to define 'a body moving at a certain rate . . . without predicating of the present what is either past or future'. The reader will find a parallel to the argument in the text in Prof. Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii, p. 244, where he defends the 'reality' of activity against Mr. Bradley.

² *Appearance and Reality*, p. 210.

which give an appearance of intelligibility to his paradoxes. It is much the same with the metaphors of 'transmutation' and 'submersion,' which Mr. Bradley uses to express, that all things must 'survive' in the Absolute, but cannot do so in the distinctive character which they possess for us. They are appearances for us, but the Absolute is 'the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally'.¹ Thus on the one hand all appearances belong to reality, and on the other they do not *as such* belong to reality, i.e., in the distinctive character in which we know them. Mr. Bradley quite recognises this: 'it is only by a licence that the subject-systems . . . can be made qualities of Reality. It is always under correction and on sufferance, that we term the universe either beautiful or moral or true.'² And still greater is the licence in the case of ugliness and evil and error, which are only 'subordinate aspects' of beauty and goodness and truth. But from this it follows surely that we can predicate appearances of the Absolute only from the point of view of the appearances, whereas from the point of view of the Absolute there are no appearances at all, for the 'Absolute is perfect in all its detail!'³ Or put differently: Error and Truth, Evil and Goodness, and all other appearances have a meaning for us only in the sphere of appearances. As transmuted in the Absolute and stripped of their 'distinctive character' in whatever degree, they have no longer any intelligible meaning for us. I, at any rate, fail to understand what can be meant by a pain which has ceased to exist *as pain* and yet continues to bear the name pain, or by an error which is said to qualify the Absolute and yet in so doing is changed into something which cannot on any condition be called error.⁴ It is the old trouble: we cannot consistently describe an Absolute which is beyond any and all its appearances in terms which

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 488. ² *Ibid.*, p. 489. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

⁴ Cf. the passage (p. 886) in which Mr. Bradley says of error, that 'when it is turned into truth, its particular nature will have vanished, and its actual self be destroyed'. Or the passage about pleasure (p. 534): 'Pleasure may conceivably be so supplemented, and modified by addition, that it does not remain precisely that which we call pleasure. Its pleasantness certainly could not be lost but it might be blended *post recognition*, with other aspects of the Whole. The Absolute, then, perhaps, strictly does not feel pleasure.' To me it is unintelligible what sort of a thing a pleasantness is which is not felt or which is changed *post recognition* from what we call pleasure. Mr. Bradley seems to be overdrawing his account with human ignorance. There must be something wrong with a theory defensible only by such desperate expedients.

are valid only on the level of appearances. Any attempt to do so only drags the Absolute down into the region of appearance, from which it can only be rescued by desperate metaphors. The Absolute must stand in some relation to the appearances, and yet no concrete content can be given to this relation. Hence there is a continual tendency for it to break up and for its terms to fall apart. As soon as we press for a definite statement, the Absolute and its appearances seem utterly and irreconcilably to separate. It is only by accepting hazy phrases, or by assuming alternately opposite points of view, that we can shut our eyes to the fact that Mr. Bradley has not succeeded in establishing a real reconciliation. It is only by his imperious fiat that the world of Appearances hangs together with the world of Reality.

To criticise Mr. Bradley is dangerous work, for he is ever ready to turn on his critics with a charge of 'misunderstanding,' and we all know the polished, though not always polite, manner of his rebukes. However, since this is not a matter in which faith must eke out the failure of insight on the principle: if it is true, you gain, if it is false, you do not lose—I can only record and to the best of my power justify my inability to understand the compatibility of the two points of view on which Mr. Bradley's philosophy is built up, and which he regards as harmonious. I will once more briefly state my objections, and I will take for my text the passage: "All is appearance, and no appearance, or any combination of these, is the same as reality. This is half the truth and by itself a dangerous error. We must turn at once to correct it by adding its counterpart and supplement. The Absolute is its appearances, it really is all and every one of them. That is the other half-truth . . . and we know the sense and meaning in which these half-truths come together into one. The Absolute is each appearance, and is all, but is not any one as such. And it is not all equally, but one appearance is more real than another. In short the doctrine of degrees of reality and truth is the fundamental answer to our problem."¹ Here we have on the one hand appearances, none of which is, as such, real, and on the other hand the Absolute, which is complete reality, and yet is made up of no other material than just those appearances. And the miracle of a perfect Absolute, all the contents of which, taken by themselves, are imperfect, is to be made acceptable by the doctrine, that these

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 487.

contents are neither wholly unreal nor wholly real, but differ according as they embody more or less of reality. Perhaps the most defensible way of putting it, would be: Given a self-consistent, all-inclusive, thoroughly harmonious Reality, then every limited abstract aspect of it (or point of view of regarding it) is an appearance. The more of the whole such an aspect embraces either in extent or in internal systematisation, the more real it is, and the point of view of the Absolute embraces the whole both in width and in depth in one single comprehensive aspect.¹ This, I take it, is the central idea of Mr. Bradley's philosophy—but, however intelligible it is in the abstract, it involves us at once in difficulties in its application to concrete experience. For since even our highest experience is still appearance, the scale of degrees breaks off abruptly and does not directly connect with the Absolute. And this gap is fatal, for it destroys all organic connexion between the experience of the Absolute and our experience. The scale of degrees fails to bridge the gap, for it still remains on the side of the appearances and does not reach reality. The knowledge that some appearances are more real than others helps us in no way to understand, how all appearances, of whatever degree of reality, are raised to full reality in the Absolute. And so long as we are deprived of this insight, the appearances and the Absolute will always tend to form two separate worlds, of which we can say they are one, but which we cannot see to be one. The finite and the infinite points of view will always remain opposed. We must always feel, that from the point of view of the Absolute we cannot strictly say that it has either Thought, or Goodness, or Truth, or Error, or Time, or Space, for any such predication would imply at once a falling back into the one-sided, abstract points of view appropriate only to the world of appearances. Finite aspects exist only for finite beings with finite experience. They have no place, as finite, in the experience of the Absolute, but, as there transmuted, they have no meaning or value for finite beings. It is the old problem which Mr. Bradley set out to solve, which is again on our hands: the reconciliation of diversity with unity. If we call the differences 'appearances' or 'one-sided aspects' of one reality, then the problem faces us: Do these aspects exist for the Absolute or for a finite observer, who never grasps

¹ Cf. p. 525: 'the total universe, present imperfectly in the finite experience, would, if completed, be merely the completion of this experience'.

the whole? If for the Absolute, then we know that at any rate they cannot exist *as aspects*, but are merged in the rich content of a supra-relational experience. And this is a solution which we cannot understand. If for us as finite beings, then we must remember that being finite we are ourselves but appearances and elements *in* the Absolute (else it would not be all-inclusive), and then the existence of finite points of view becomes from the point of view of the Absolute simply inexplicable. And thus we have no solution at all.

No one, I think, however much he may disagree with Mr. Bradley and however unable he may be to accept his conclusions, can lay down *Appearance and Reality* without a sincere feeling of admiration for the combined energy and subtlety of his thought. But with his admiration there will, perhaps, mingle a feeling of regret, that instead of beginning with an assumption about Reality and testing our knowledge in the light of it, Mr. Bradley did not begin at the other end and study the process of knowledge itself, so as to discover, how and under what conditions and for what reasons we come to regard this or that view of the world as 'real' and 'true'. No doubt the predication of these terms implies an ideal, a standard, which is our guidance and our justification. But a clear conception of this standard is only gained by reflexion on many past applications of it in a form far more fragmentary and obscure. And even so we may not at once arrive at a final conception. And, if there is still room for improvement, we can only effect it, by renewed application of the standard and renewed reflexion on the results of such application. Just as our moral ideal becomes clearer to us in the very process of its realisation in moral practice, so it may be that the meaning of reality and truth reveals itself to us more fully in the very growth and accumulation of experience. At any rate, a conception of reality thus arrived at is likely to bear a closer and more *positive* relation to all those sides of our experience which Mr. Bradley condemns as appearances. It would certainly have saved him from his extreme Intellectualism, and it might have made him appreciate more highly the part played by our 'other' functions, besides the intellect, in the making of our knowledge of Reality.

It will be the object of the second half of this paper to consider the attempt which Pragmatism has made to approach the problem from this side.

(To be continued.)