

It is impossible, within the limits of a review, to do justice to all the argument, always vigorous and often subtle, which this book contains. But this matters the less since these essays (and it is the fate, one is sure, their authors would desire for them) will certainly form the starting-point for much discussion.

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Wirklichkeitslehre: Ein Metaphysischer Versuch. VON HANS DRIESCH. Leipzig: Verlag von Emmanuel Reinicke, 1917.

THIS work, it is said in the Foreword, is metaphysical in the strictest sense. It is not a Theory of Knowledge, substituted for a metaphysic. "It claims to be metaphysic as science, to treat of the real scientifically. It does this in full consciousness of the inadequacy of human reason to the task. Our knowledge is everywhere fragmentary, and above all is it so here. But the fragment is better than nothing, and that fragmentary knowledge of the real is possible, it is the aim of this work to show."

This statement gives the general standpoint, especially distinguishing the theory from all those for which logic furnishes the key to the nature of reality. Agnostic it might be called on the ultimate questions, *e.g.*, Monism or Dualism, yet claiming a value for probable propositions, where demonstration is impossible; in some respects confessing to irrationalism, yet through the conception of the real as primarily "Wissen," guarding against a Bergsonian form of irrationalism, in spite of some affinity with Bergson. We find at the end that in regard to the "higher stages" of the doctrine of reality there are no certain conclusions. The object was, however, "to prepare the way for these as questions that have meaning and justification," to show that they "must emerge at the end of a theory of the real," *e.g.*, the problem whether the dualism of experience is ultimate, the problem of a timeless becoming. The point of view is qualified by the peculiar outlook of the writer in which he supposes himself to be somewhat isolated amongst contemporary thinkers.

At the close of the Foreword he refers to the character of his work as "erdenflüchtigen," and as strange to an age which inclines to identify the moral with the merely social, the "inner-worldly" in the sense of spatio-temporal conditions with the real, and explains his standpoint as involving the position that the kingdom of man in the deepest sense is "not of this world".

"In our time philosophy should seriously bethink herself, that the earthly is only a small part of her domain. And this not merely on theoretic grounds—for the much-be-lauded "Inner-worldliness" has led to that deification of the state, the terrible results of which our generation has experienced." The book was entered upon in 1905, but not published till 1917. From the author's doctrine of order it derives the method of approach to

metaphysics, though only, he observes, as regards the most general principles of order. It is not dependent on any special logical method. His doctrine of the starting-point of philosophy is at least, however, of great importance for the succeeding stages. This is the basis—"I experience and have knowledge of something"—or simply, "Ich habe etwas," the consciousness of this original "I" being raised above the distinctions of unity and multiplicity, and of time. It is thus not to be likened to the Cartesian first act of thought. This is what Prof. Driesch describes as his solipsism of method—not of theory—carrying with it a sharp distinction between immediate objects which belong to the original fact, and mediate objects which the *I* is driven to postulate, on account, in the first instance, of the fact of becoming in the field of consciousness. The full significance of this method is brought out in the little book, *Wissen und denken* (1919). For the metaphysician it means fundamentally that there is no object except in relation to consciousness, materialism in any form being thus rejected. The sciences may work independently in their own sphere, but, for philosophy, chemistry must always be "*my chemistry*". Further since this "methodic solipsism" is a solipsism of knowledge it is bound up both with the conception of knowledge as the original and type of all relations, and with the culminating speculation concerning the whole as "thinking upon itself and desiring to complete its thought, and working at this task through me and those like me, in actual temporal existence". And when adjusted to the philosophy of history which develops from the author's theory of life in the individual and the whole of which it is member, the doctrine of knowledge leads to the position that in the evolution of man and society the only sure direction of advance is in the line of advancing knowledge. It would seem (though this is not explicitly stated) that we are to see in the growth of knowledge the expression through the process of experience of the reality whose nature can only be conceived under the category of knowledge. Why this expression is so imperfect, is a question the answer to which is given, if at all, in the considerations which lead to provisional dualism. Prof. Driesch thus attempts to reconcile the extreme opposition between systems which make consciousness as thought their starting-point and those which start from the experience of becoming, or whilst ascribing in some sense reality to the process he endeavours to avoid the results of a consistent philosophy of change. The peculiar form he gives to this combination is determined by that biological philosophy for which he is probably best known in this country through his Gifford lectures, 1907-8. To understand his theory of reality we have then to bear in mind his "Philosophy of the Organism". The passage to this philosophy from logic takes place, on the one hand, because in the organic world there is best expressed that ideal of ordered unity, wholeness, which is the aim of logic. In the organic being we have the completed unity which it is the function of thought to seek. The goal

of thought would be to see the universe itself as such a whole. The relation of logic to metaphysics is, however, not so simple as is suggested by monistic systems of metaphysics. It is only possible here to refer very briefly to the stages through which we pass from the first act of consciousness to the positing of objects which are not merely "als ob" independent, which have more than the assumption of independence made for the worlds of nature and the soul—the first order of mediate objects. The further objects are beyond the contents of thought as "für mich," they have also an independence "an sich". In the first instance this is only a wish or an ideal of logic which wills to rise above itself, in the double Hegelian sense of "aufheben," and in the end the metaphysical undertaking remains a wish. In the strict sense there cannot be a refutation of idealism, and Kant does not really prove the existence of an "An sich". The spirit of Driesch's metaphysic is indicated in his question—Granted the impossibility of a dogmatic metaphysic, why would not Kant admit as legitimate a speculative metaphysic? There is, however, he holds, a quality peculiar to metaphysical propositions, *viz.* a certain "Tönung," which distinguishes them from all logical propositions, and in this there is the hint of a special metaphysical faculty. In the notion of "Tönung," Driesch admits that he makes a concession to ontologism. For in this peculiar quality lies the significance of "wirklich," as something which is more than related to the *I*, and with it goes the distinction between the real and the apparent. In spite of the emphasis he lays on this quality, Driesch does not treat it as the chief criterion of truth (or truth that "makes itself manifest"). The criteria of metaphysical truth, "wahrheit," include those of logical validity, "richtigkeit," and more. Not only the principles of economy and non-contradiction are required, but also the test that reality must be such as both to account for experience and to be more than experience, and this is much harder to apply, and less certain.¹ Our conception of reality, it appears, must be adequate to making possible the system of knowledge, but it has also to give meaning to experiences which are beyond the sphere of logic—as we find at the higher stage of metaphysics. Illustration of Driesch's method of applying the principle that the conditioning must not be poorer than the conditioned in its degree of manifoldness may be found in his treatment of the spatial relation. He concludes that "near" has the same significance for reality that it has for nature; geometry is not merely subjective but sign of a definite structure of relations in the real. But even in the sphere of nature apart from personal subjective experience there is a kind of becoming which is not experienced in spatial relations—*viz.*, the spaceless becoming of that which Driesch describes as "entelechy," in his philosophy of the organism, and which, as he considers himself to have scientifically proved, must be regarded as a factor of nature. The

¹ See *Wissen und Denken*, vii., 4 and 5.

Spinozistic doctrine that every quality of substance in the sphere of its unfolded being—*natura naturata*—has a spatial aspect, is on this as well as on other grounds rejected. In the connexions of organic nature, only the effects of becoming, and not the preceding stages, are marked by the relation of contiguity. The becoming of a whole presents itself only in an uncertain and fragmentary way in the spatial system. Again the metaphysical significance of becoming must be such that to earlier and later, as conditions of nature and the soul, correspond distinctions in the real; *γένεσις* is more than "schein". Becoming is taken as more fundamental than time. It is ultimately on the ground of this law of method, the maintenance in reality of the degrees of the manifold in becoming, that we can affirm "Ganzheit" of reality; i.e., that kind of wholeness which is an actual element of the structure of the real experienced by us under the form of temporal becoming. In the principle of "ganzheit" the demand of logic for an ordered system has its metaphysical justification. It is in the development of this conception that Prof. Driesch brings out the full results of his biological philosophy, and taking the clue of the spaceless stages of becoming in the individual, makes an exceedingly interesting attempt at an interpretation of the history of life and human history by a free use of the idea of an "entelechy" guiding the evolution of larger wholes. He fails however to trace any unmistakeable signs of a real evolution corresponding to that of the growth of the individual to the goal of maturity, either in the development of the species, or history, whether of the animal race or of humanity as a whole. On the one hand there is no discernible goal in phylogeny, and the immense variety of species together with their arrested development remains a mystery. On the other hand, there is in the sphere of human history, in the first place, no sufficient ground for taking races or nations as intermediate wholes: the main lines of advance have been common at least to great groups of peoples. He does not admit a ground of real distinction in the contribution of the national *ἦθος* to culture. This is part of his hostility to Hegelianism. A history of the essential line of evolution we have in the sciences, philosophy, art, could be written without any reference to political or national conditions, though in this line we ought to see the true source of all history. For what is gained here cannot be lost, so long as there is memory preserving the past in the present. In the second place neither can the evolution of the super-personal be traced in the history of humanity as a whole. So-called historic laws concern the results of fortuitous cumulation of conditions, not connected in an evolutionary way. Yet there are many impressive signs of "wholeness" even in the inanimate world. Only the spell which Darwinism exercised over the latter half of the nineteenth century blinded us, in Driesch's view, to the truth of that concept of the harmony of nature with the conditions of life which Darwinism itself does not destroy. In the organic world there are the facts at least of reproduction and inheritance. But

though the totality of life might be conceived as a self-evolving whole, yet, inasmuch as there is no temporal goal for such an evolution, its ultimate nature would have to be sought in the sphere of the spiritual. Turning to human history Driesch finds a striking harmony between social need and individual vocation, and between functions mutually related, as those of teacher and taught, and also in what Hegel calls the "List der Vernunft," over-riding individual purposes for common ends.

If some of these speculations appear fantastic, we are on firmer ground in his interpretation of the moral consciousness in its two expressions, duty with its attendant phenomenon of remorse to which great significance is attached, and sympathy indicating individual membership of a whole. Any consistent monadism is then disproved, it is argued, by history. As earlier noticed, however, the only undeniably evolutionary line is the growth of knowledge, and all steps of "progress" in ethics, art, politics, etc., result from this. In general, then, although no scientific proof of a real evolution in history as a whole can be given, it is concluded that this conception is the ideal of a scientific history. The evolutionary conceptions are regarded both as logically required by the facts, and as justified in the sphere of individual biology. The category of the super-personal, however, can only be applied to the whole of history, if we allow the conception of a non-spatial process, fragmentary phenomena or by-products of which are experienced in their spatial expression. The total human process would then be at the most only a part of history as evolution, with no earthly τέλος. At the least the total fact of human existence on earth might signify only a single stage in the evolution of the unknowable. Since all that is non-evolutionary in this sense, is regarded by Driesch as in the most essential respect "Zufall," with its special forms of error and evil, the treatment of the problem of "Zufall" is obviously of the first importance. In its simplest interpretation "Zufall" seems very near to Aristotle's *τύχη*; it is all that is not intelligible in relation to the whole teleologically conceived, it is "nicht-ganzheit". It is, moreover, in the end referred for its source to the material, *ὑλη*. Very characteristic of Driesch's standpoint is the combination of the criticism of knowledge, for which—since knowledge is the original relation—the question is, why the whole is not truly reflected in the mind of every individual knower, with the criticism of practice, for which evil and pain are more formidable obstacles to monism than error, since they are not only "nicht-ganzheit" but "gegen-ganzheit". The analysis of error suggests that the knower, with his foreknowledge of order, and the known are parts of a single whole, whilst the nature of wholeness is obscured. Why is knowledge only pure in the case of the pure or categorical concepts of order, the original signs—this, such, different, etc., and the Kantian categories which, as follows from Driesch's ¹ solipsistic starting-point, are not primordial,

¹ Cf. *Wissen und Denken*, v., 5.

but must be postulated if nature is not to be chaotic? If knowledge is the original relation, why is it clouded in the case of empirical universals?

The suggested solution is that this occurs because the acquisition of knowledge is bound up with materiality, the sense-organs, the nervous system. In the application of this explanation to the case of memory, Driesch, as he observes, agrees for the most part with Bergson. The universality of the relation of knowledge discloses itself, however, in the mind's consciousness of this limitation. We are then brought up against the ultimate problem—What must be the nature of reality to account for this experience shot through with dualism—as “nicht-ganzheit,” error and evil? Either there must be a corresponding dualism in the real, or wholeness in reality—together with a fundamental incapacity of the “I” to comprehend the whole. The latter alternative might seem to be favoured by Driesch's statement of the one proposition that is metaphysically certain, *viz.*, “Reality is such as to make possible knowing individuals, who, in spite of all the chance and error of their experience, posit and give value to the conception of the world-order”. But neither thus would dualism appear to be avoided. The strongest argument for a rejection of Spinozistic, and of other forms of, monism, Driesch finds in the fact that certain manifestations of chance, *viz.* disease and evil, are not only negatively lacking in organic character, but positively hostile to it. In this metaphysical distinction between error and evil, he is again opposed to Hegelianism. Dualism, then, is the last word of a completed experience, metaphysically interpreted, a dualism which recognises not only the combination of “Ganzheit” and “Zufall” but the fundamental unintelligibility of “here” and “now”. This opposition must be carried over into the original relations, as an opposition of the same character. There is, however, what Driesch calls a higher stage of metaphysics at which the problem is considered from a somewhat new standpoint. It is this part of the work which is perhaps most independent of tradition as well as most speculative, and in which the method may appear most vulnerable to criticism. It is here that answers are suggested to questions which the general method recognises as unanswerable.

Prof. Driesch's contention in regard to metaphysical propositions on the whole, that they may have legitimacy and value although not more than probability can be ascribed to them, appears just, if the metaphysical impulse does, as he argues, proceed from the necessities of thought—an argument which would be more convincing if not hampered by his solipsistic starting-point. The further position of the higher metaphysic, that the questions to which not even a probable, but only a speculative, answer can be given, are still within the province of metaphysic, seems also valid, if philosophy is concerned not only with man's nature as a logical being, but with the effect upon his consciousness of the totality of his experience. It is in this light that we may understand Driesch's

treatment of the facts of suffering and death, his paradox that the knowledge of death opens the door to the highest metaphysic. The argument rests on the position that all higher suffering, especially philosophic suffering, suffering for knowledge, although subjective feeling, yet most clearly refers to conditions which are bound up with the original conceptions of relation, whole and not-whole, and that suffering pervades all experience, only disappearing in pure logical-mathematical, and perhaps in æsthetic, contemplation. There is an immediate connexion between the feeling of pain and the original relation of knowledge. Suffering, then, is fundamentally real for experience, increasing in proportion to knowledge. In any estimate of Driesch's treatment of suffering as an original fact, we must bear in mind the positions, that consciousness is primordial, the relation of knowledge original, and this relation always attended with suffering, the source of which asserts itself as the non-wholeness of things, their anti-organic character. Suffering it would seem logically involves reconciliation—at least this would be a logical consummation. The speculation then reasonably follows—that death restores that wholeness for which all experience groans and travails in pain. Further the special form of vitalism which Driesch adopts, together with his theory of consciousness or "Wissen" as reality and the principle of the conservation in the real of the degree of the manifold of experience, permit, in his view, the thought that the beginning and end of life may mean a transition from and to a state of being beyond becoming. But this is only speculation. We do not know whether matter may not be the principle of individuation. It is, however, in the sphere of knowledge and its promotion that we are to recognise the only really progressive acts of the individual, his only experience of the non-earthly. "Knowledge alone is the light in the darkness" of human history. In this and the exercise of charity it would seem some reality is given to life. All other so-called ends are either vain, or are at best means, *e.g.* social justice, material betterment.

The idea of the whole as thinking upon itself and thinking through individual minds is in some form almost as old as philosophy, but Prof. Driesch's method of arriving at it and the practical outlook he associates with it have great freshness and individuality. Through knowledge alone do we approach reality. The extreme application of this view in the depreciation of the practical life as only a hindrance to the advance of knowledge, in which Driesch departs from the greatest of his predecessors in the exaltation of the theoretic activity, does not seem altogether consistent with the preliminary treatment of human history as at least the sphere in which the moral consciousness testifies to membership of a whole and the correspondence of individual and social needs signifies the workings of the universal in humanity. The practical, as a field for the evolution of the spirit of the whole, would appear to be not less essential than the theoretic to the end of that "transformation" of appearance through which it is brought nearer reality, if I may borrow the phrase of another philosophy. A further interpreta-

tion of the practical experience of the relations of persons, as a part of the growth of real knowledge, seems required but is not given; for the speculations suggested by such phenomena as are investigated to-day—as “telepathy,” etc., which Driesch considers to be worthy of philosophic interest, concern only the extension of knowledge in the strict sense.

The question which keeps recurring at every stage of this book in which two great lines of thought are so interwoven, is—Does the whole conception of metaphysics here set forth stand or fall with the solipsistic starting-point and method? If so, the superstructure would indeed appear to be weak in respect to its foundation, since I only posit the first stage of mediate objects, nature and other selves, “as if” independent, in order to make first experience, *e.g.*, of the fact of becoming, intelligible, whilst the second stage of mediated-mediate objects, thought of as utterly real in themselves, are posited on account of the needs and aspirations of logic. But a logic which starts solipsistically would have no strength for the metaphysical task, if even it feels the need of comprehending experience at all or can rightly be called logic.

It may be suggested that the solipsistic beginning, which does not seem to give the truth of first experience, whether from the psychological, logical or practical standpoint, is not essential to Driesch's metaphysics as a whole though an idealistic point of departure is essential. But space forbids the working out of this possibility. As regards the final question of Deism, Atheism is definitely rejected, because in Driesch's view, without the conception of God in some form, the real cannot be conceived; but the problem of Pantheism or Theism is left open. Genuine Pantheism, it is argued, must be of the Bergsonian type or creative—“*Dieu se fait*”; and the only freedom possible, in the metaphysical sense, is the freedom of the whole, as creative. To this conception, it may be added, the whole tenor of the work seems to incline.

The problem of the dualism of the real, is once more faced with the question, “Does Zufall proceed from God,”—“*nicht-ganzheit, from ganzheit*”? It is suggested that the question is at least not meaningless. In this form the paradox appears perhaps more intolerable than that of the unmoved source of movement, or the uncaused cause, but it is of the same kind. The statement of the conceivability of the question does not, however, seem consistent with the rejection of the Hegelian principle of contradiction as fundamental irrationalism.

The reader of this remarkable book, the interest of which it is not possible to convey in a short notice, is constantly reminded by something indescribable in its rugged style and point of view, that there is some relation between a philosophy and the time to which it belongs. It appears as if conceived in the spirit of a Stoic of the latter days of the Roman Empire, who might feel himself to be thinking in an age of civilisation which is possibly passing away.

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