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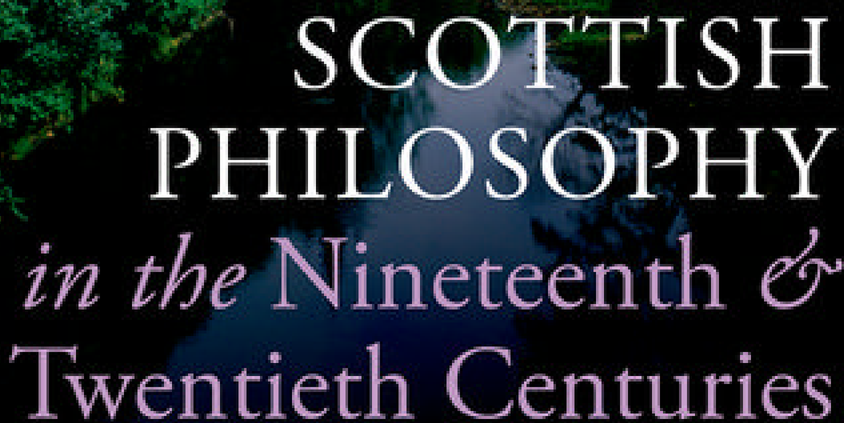
A History of Scottish Philosophy



SCOTTISH PHILOSOPHY *in the* Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries

edited by

GORDON GRAHAM

Scottish Philosophy in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

A HISTORY OF SCOTTISH PHILOSOPHY

David Hume has long been Scotland's most famous philosopher, to the extent of overshadowing all his contemporaries. It was not always so, however, and in the last few decades, philosophers and historians of ideas have come to see Hume once more in the context of debates that occupied a significant number of Scottish Enlightenment figures. Alongside Hume, and partly in response to him, the philosophical and scientific investigations of Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson, George Campbell, Dugald Stewart, and many others, set in train a line of inquiry that was vigorously pursued in Scotland and North America for over two centuries. Moreover, it has come to be better understood that though these Enlightenment philosophers were highly innovative, they drew upon a distinctive intellectual tradition embodied in the ancient Scottish universities, where teaching responsibilities shaped research interests.

A History of Scottish Philosophy is a series of collaborative studies by expert authors, each volume being devoted to a specific period. Together they provide a comprehensive account of the Scottish philosophical tradition, from the centuries that laid the foundation of the remarkable burst of intellectual fertility known as the Scottish Enlightenment, through the Victorian age and beyond, when it continued to exercise powerful intellectual influence at home and abroad. The books aims to be historically informative, while at the same time serving to renew philosophical interest in the problems with which the Scottish philosophers grappled, and in the solutions they proposed.

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EDITED BY
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Preface

There is a very striking contrast between the attention that has been given to Scottish philosophy in the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries. Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, and Reid are names well known beyond the circle of scholars who have made them a special subject of study, and even rather more minor figures like Ferguson, Kames, and Stewart are not unknown to a wider philosophical readership. Philosophers of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, whose standing and prestige in their own time could hardly be exaggerated, are almost completely unknown. Thomas Brown, Sir William Hamilton, James Frederick Ferrier, Robert Flint, Edward Caird, and A. S. Pringle-Pattison have virtually disappeared from modern philosophical consciousness. Their books are long since out of print (except in facsimile editions), and references to them make no appearance in contemporary philosophical debates.

The purpose of this volume, and its compilation in association with a preceding volume devoted to Scottish philosophy in the eighteenth century, is to begin the process of remedying this neglect by uncovering the vigour, novelty, and continuing interest of the philosophical debates that the nineteenth century carried over from the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment. The chapters are devoted both to single figures who were especially highly esteemed, and to intellectual developments that were regarded as especially significant. The first chapter aims to provide something of a synoptic overview and the last a philosophical retrospective. The hope is that the volume as a whole will constitute the first ever complete and coherent account of Scottish philosophy in the nineteenth century. At the same time, the chapters are also intended to serve as informative, free-standing essays for readers with special interests. This means that, even between those by the same author, there is an unavoidable measure of repetition—names, dates, publications, and the like, that each of the essays requires in its own right—and each essay has its own bibliography, using whatever editions the author has thought best.

This volume has been a very long time in the making. In its final form it owes much not only to the authors of the various essays, but to many other people whose advice has been sought and freely given, and to the patience of the publisher. To all of them, grateful acknowledgement is made.

Gordon Graham

Princeton

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1

Scottish Philosophy after the Enlightenment

Gordon Graham

The owl of Minerva, Hegel famously remarks, takes its flight at dusk.[1] True understanding, in other words, has to await hindsight. Although Joseph Priestley had coined the (derogatory) term 'Scotch metaphysics' as early as 1774,[2] the expression 'Scottish philosophy' was unknown when those who subsequently came to be regarded as its principal exponents were engaged in their enquiries. In 1829, Victor Cousin published twelve lectures to which he gave the title *Philosophie écossaise*. Though widely read in Britain, the book was never translated into English, and the expression 'Scottish philosophy' dates from a considerably later period when, in line with Hegel's dictum, those for whom the Scottish style of philosophizing mattered perceived it to be in decline. A key event in this regard was the publication in 1875 of *The Scottish Philosophy: Biographical, Expository, Critical*, by James McCosh, then President of the College of New Jersey, subsequently Princeton University. In this seminal text McCosh traced a course of enquiry that stretched from Gersholm Carmichael, whose teaching career began at the University of St Andrews in 1693, to Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Edinburgh from 1836 until his death in 1854. The starting and ending points are not coincidental; as McCosh notes, it was Hamilton who (in his notes on Reid) declared Carmichael 'the real founder of the Scottish school of philosophy' (McCosh 1875: 36).

Looking back across this century and a half, McCosh perceived 'a unity, not only in the circumstances that its expounders have been Scotchmen, but also and more especially in its methods, its doctrines, and its spirit' (McCosh 1875: 2). Accordingly, his aim was to delineate the general characteristics of a style of philosophical enquiry in which he had himself been educated and to which he was intellectually committed. But he did so precisely because he was grieved by the increasing neglect that he saw it suffering at the hands of his philosophical contemporaries, both in Scotland and abroad.

[1] Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*.

[2] *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind.*

Over the next few decades, the expression 'Scottish philosophy' appeared in a number of books and articles, but always as the name of a traditional inheritance, which, if not vanishing completely, had at least become unfashionable or under threat. Thus in 1877 John Veitch, Professor of Logic at Glasgow, published two lengthy articles surveying Scottish philosophy from its medieval origins to the present day. Their implicit purpose is to vindicate the traditional place of Logic and Moral Philosophy in a university education. Since mid-century, Veitch contends, Scottish philosophers have produced 'an amount and quality' of intellectual work 'not surpassed by any form of scientific effort in the same period' (Veitch 1877: 234). This remark reflects a sense, widely shared, that modern 'scientific' progress had made the Scottish veneration of philosophy antiquated.

The threat was not merely from the new sciences, however. It came from within philosophy, and within Scotland. In his Balfour Lectures *On the Scottish Philosophy* (1885) Andrew Seth (successor but one to Hamilton in the Edinburgh Chair) expressly observed that 'the thread of national tradition . . . has been but loosely held of late by many of our best Scottish students of philosophy' (Seth 1885: 1–2). He had in mind, chiefly, the apparently increasing attractiveness of Hegelian Idealism, a movement to which Seth himself subscribed (in a qualified way). Some years later Henry Laurie, a Scottish-educated philosopher teaching in Australia, published another retrospective book entitled *Scottish Philosophy in its National Development* (1902). In the introduction he records what may be said to be a consensus among all these writers. 'In the present day, Scottish philosophy is somewhat discredited by the influence of the deeper speculations of Germany on the one hand, and on the other by theories in which empiricism has joined hands with the doctrine of evolution.' His task, accordingly, was 'to view it impartially and to appreciate the place to which it is justly entitled in the history of thought' (Laurie 1902: 9).

Even if, as Laurie alleges, by the turn of the twentieth century the Scottish philosophical tradition was 'no longer a living rival to later forms of speculation' its historical pre-eminence reached well beyond the period of the Scottish Enlightenment (an expression coined even later), and thus beyond the authors most immediately identified as 'Scottish' philosophers—Hume, Smith, and Reid, chiefly. Furthermore, the extension runs in both directions—before as well as after. McCosh follows Veitch and Hamilton in looking back to Carmichael, while Laurie thinks that 'the history of Scottish philosophy begins, curiously enough, with an Irishman': namely, Francis Hutcheson, Carmichael's student and successor at Glasgow. Either way, we must find the origins close to the start of the eighteenth century, and thus at least half a century before the emergence of the 'School of Common Sense' inspired by Thomas Reid. McCosh ends with Hamilton, while Laurie extends it to James Frederick Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews, who died in 1864. Much more recently, and *contra* Laurie, Alexander Broadie's *History of Scottish Philosophy* (2008) finds representatives of the tradition working up until the mid-twentieth century, modern manifestations of a seven-century tradition that (according to Broadie) originates in the philosophy of John Duns Scotus (*c.*1266–1308).

The issue is one to be returned to in the final chapter, but in the face of such differences of opinion about the duration of Scottish philosophy after the Enlightenment, the present volume aims to be both catholic and critical. It is catholic in supposing that the 'science of man' with which the Scottish philosophers of the eighteenth century are so closely identified did indeed continue to motivate philosophical thought in the nineteenth century, while placing no definitive date on its demise. It is critical because it makes the issues of continuity and decline philosophical as well as historical—matters to be determined not simply by contingent connection but by philosophical coherence also. The key questions are these. Who is to be counted as working in the same tradition, and on what grounds? Is it philosophically illuminating to see them as continuing it? Do their labours, now for the most part forgotten, promise to be of philosophical as well as historical interest? What does it mean to identify philosophers who often disagreed with one another as parts of a single 'tradition'? Finally, is it important, as McCosh held, to identify this tradition as Scottish, and what exactly does such a national label imply?

The last two questions will be deferred to a concluding chapter. The purpose of this opening chapter is to chart the development of philosophy in Scotland from the end of the eighteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century, and thus to offer an interpretation of its diffusion and decline that will provide a general context within which the more specific topics of the next six chapters can be better appreciated. The eighth chapter explores the story of Scottish philosophy abroad, in Europe, North America, and Australia. The United States spawned a distinctively 'native' philosophy—pragmatism—whose similarity and differences compared to Scottish Common Sense warrant a chapter of its own (Chapter 9). The next two chapters take the subject into the twentieth century, and into the broader perspective of education. In an influential book first published in 1961, George Davie claimed a key role for philosophy in the Scottish educational ideal of 'The Democratic Intellect' (the title of his book). Chapter 10 explores the cogency of this contention from the perspective of fifty years on. Chapter 11 considers the philosophical work of John Macmurray. During his tenure of the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, Macmurray largely stood apart from the linguistic style of analytical philosophy that was coming to dominate British universities, and this raises a question about the extent to which he can be considered a last bastion of the older Scottish tradition. The final chapter returns to the issues with which this one began—the idea of a philosophical tradition and the possibility of its having a national identity.

1.1 Eighteenth-Century Origins

There is little dispute that eighteenth-century Scotland witnessed a remarkable intellectual flowering. The Act of Union of 1707 had made Scotland and England into a single state, and replaced the Scottish and English parliaments with a single legislative body. But the two countries remained very different culturally, and Scotland

retained its own distinctive ecclesiastical, educational, and legal institutions. The Union greatly increased intercourse between Edinburgh and London, certainly. On the other hand, the preservation of these institutions had the effect of creating and maintaining a small but identifiably Scottish intelligentsia, whose members enjoyed a sufficiently high degree of exchange and familiarity to warrant the description 'intellectual community'.

The term 'community' is now so overused that it requires some effort to appreciate what it means when it has real substance—as it did in Enlightenment Scotland. One important unifying element lay in a shared intellectual project: 'the science of man'. The prospect of a new and enormously promising approach to the study of human nature and human society was an idea explicitly or implicitly endorsed by a remarkable company of thinkers. This company included the subsequently famous triumvirate of David Hume, Adam Smith, and Thomas Reid, but it began with their teachers Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull, and was enthusiastically endorsed by most of their contemporaries—George Campbell, Alexander Gerard, Adam Ferguson, James Beattie, John Miller, and Henry Home (Lord Kames), for example. Equally important, if less obviously philosophical, were figures such as the historian William Robertson and the rhetorician Hugh Blair. The list is not exhaustive. The eccentric judge Lord Monboddo, and William Smellie, printer and editor of the first *Encyclopedia Britannica*, might be added, as might Alexander Carlyle, a moderate Presbyterian clergyman who was in many ways an archetype of the educated classes.

The 'science of man' was by no means an idea confined to Scotland, or even native to it. In his inaugural lecture at Glasgow, Francis Hutcheson expressly mentions Samuel Pufendorf, and elsewhere takes Thomas Hobbes as his starting point. In the introduction to his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume, who explicitly employs the term 'science of man', names Hutcheson as one of its innovators—but his name appears alongside John Locke, Lord Shaftesbury, Bishop Butler, and Bernard Mandeville. Nevertheless, though thinkers from further afield were plainly influential, what made the 'science' distinctively Scottish was the extent to which it both stimulated, and was shaped by, discussion and debate within a specific coterie of thinkers. In part this was a consequence of the fact that Scotland's intellectual community had an institutional base: the universities.

In the closing decades of the seventeenth century, steps were put in place to coordinate a single set of Scottish-authored philosophy texts that would be used in all the Scottish universities. Two such texts were finally published in 1701 (a text on metaphysics emanating from Edinburgh and one on logic from St Andrews). Thereafter the idea came to nothing, but it nevertheless reinforced a common character that the universities had always had, and this was strengthened very substantially when all of them underwent a reform in which generalist regents were replaced by specialist professors. The result was that, although Scottish university students continued to be rather young by modern standards, the places of learning in which they studied became more obviously places of enquiry as well.

The leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment had all been students at Scottish universities, and a great many of them subsequently held professorial positions, not infrequently moving between universities. Hume, of course, was a notable exception—in other ways also—but his unsuccessful application for a university post, first in Edinburgh and then in Glasgow, shows how closely the ideas of intellectual distinction and professorial appointment were linked.[3] Hume and his supporters automatically supposed that a university professorship was the obvious occupation for a person with notable intellectual gifts and accomplishments. The same assumption could not apply to England where, De Quincy remarked, speculative philosophy 'has at all times tended to hide itself in theology'.

The intellectual community of Scotland also found institutional expression in the rise of philosophical clubs. It was in the deliberations of the Aberdeen Philosophical Club, the Glasgow Literary Society, the Rankenian Club, and subsequently the Philosophical Society in Edinburgh that many of the ideas and investigations of the 'science' first took place. The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh was especially important in this respect, since the university in Edinburgh, though famous as a school of medicine, was less philosophically vibrant than its counterparts in Aberdeen and Glasgow. The formation of philosophical and scientific societies culminated in the establishment of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1783, of which Adam Smith was a founding Fellow, and to which Thomas Reid was elected.

It was a truly remarkable period of intellectual activity, yet in just twenty years, all the luminaries were dead. Only Adam Ferguson lived on—to the unusually old age of 93, and largely in retirement at St Andrews. Dugald Stewart, who succeeded him in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, can be thought of as the next generation, but he scarcely counts as a new phase. Although a figure of immense prestige in his own day—celebrated teacher, prolific author, biographer of Reid and Smith, and editor of Smith's *Collected Works*—it is debatable whether he made any truly novel contribution to the intellectual tradition he undoubtedly upheld. Indeed his close identification with the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, especially Reid with whom he had studied briefly, makes him, arguably, the last in the Enlightenment line. It is the work of the Scottish philosophers who came after Stewart that needs to be assessed.

1.2 Thomas Brown

Most evidently the first among them was Thomas Brown, Stewart's successor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, and the subject of Chapter 2. Brown was a gifted man and a popular lecturer. His *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect* first appeared in 1805 as a pamphlet, then as a book (1806), which he revised into a

[3] See Emerson 1995.

much more substantial volume finally published in 1818. *Part One* of his textbook, a *Sketch of a System of the Philosophy of Mind*, was published shortly before his sudden and early death in 1820. These volumes address the same issues that engaged Hume and Reid, and expressly discuss their treatment of those issues. But it was the posthumously printed version of Brown's lectures at Edinburgh University that came to be most highly acclaimed. This ran to many editions, and was still widely read by college students and the general public several decades on.

Brown is of special interest to the story of Scottish philosophy for two reasons: he reveals an important tension within it, and he constitutes an early example of the way in which its focus narrowed. The tension, as it emerges in Brown, lies in the relation between Hume and Reid. Reid, of course, had been heralded as having provided a definitive and compelling answer to Hume's scepticism. In a famous quip, recorded by James Mackintosh, Brown drastically reduces the gap between them.

> Reid bawled out that we must believe in an outward world; but added in a whisper, we can give no reason for our belief. Hume cries out we can give no reason for such a notion; and whispers, I own we cannot get rid of it. (Brown 2010: 19)

This quip somewhat disguises the fact that Brown's sympathies lay much more with Hume than with Reid. Indeed, Brown's philosophy of mind rests on an empirical phenomenology that makes nothing of Reidian principles of common sense, and expressly advances a version of psychological associationism strongly reminiscent of Hume. His criticisms of Reid are unapologetic (though he hinted that Stewart rather than Reid may have been their principal target), and he was regarded by many as guilty of a sort of betrayal—the subversion of a tradition into which he had been dutifully inducted.

The charge, which was to be repeated against others regularly over the century, was of course intertwined with debates about morality and religion. Hume's religious scepticism, which had only been revealed in full by the posthumous publication of his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, was not easily disentangled from his philosophical scepticism, and Brown was perhaps less circumspect than Stewart in leaving it unclear just how far the 'rational' religion to which he gave a mild assent made him largely indifferent to Christianity. Still, setting these undercurrents aside, Brown's lectures revealed that the project which had animated the Scottish philosophers of the previous few decades could be pursued in opposition to a 'particular School of Metaphysics prevalent in the northern part of the island' by pressing further in the direction of formulating empirical laws of the mind's operation and in alliance with French 'sensationalism'. This separation between metaphysics and psychology presented itself again and again in the decades that followed.

Brown's divergence from the traditional path had another dimension also. Although he fulfilled his professorial duties in accordance with much the same programme as Stewart, his lectures might more accurately be described as *mental* rather than *moral* philosophy. Social subjects like economics and politics, hitherto the responsibility of the Professor of Moral Philosophy, are largely absent, and ethics is treated as a subject

within the philosophy of mind. This is a departure from Stewart, but an even more radical one from Adam Ferguson. The issue has considerable significance. Is the 'science of man' (Hume's phrase) really the 'science of mind'? Or should the science of human nature (also Hume's phrase) broaden its concept of 'observation' and abandon the method of introspection in favour of experimentation? In which terms should 'the project of the Scottish Enlightenment' be described? Writing in 1945, when the debates with which she was concerned were almost completely forgotten, Gladys Bryson begins her book on 'the Scottish inquiry of the Eighteenth Century' with Adam Ferguson, because she takes him to be the most characteristic of the Scottish philosophers. She gives closer attention to Hume's writings on social and religious matters than to his metaphysics, and is doubtful about including Reid at all, since his philosophical works are so focused on the mind.[4] By contrast, S. A. Grave's *Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense*, published fifteen years after Bryson, contains just two fleeting references to Ferguson. As the title of his book indicates, Grave devotes almost all his attention to Reid and the philosophy of mind, thereby following the common assumption—contrary to Bryson's—that at the heart of Scottish philosophy lies Reid's response to Hume's metaphysical scepticism. These are extremes, perhaps, but they direct attention to key issues that, as we shall see, become more pressing as the nineteenth century proceeds. At the heart of this issue lies a debate about the proper focus of philosophy and the practical value of a philosophical education.

Brown's prestige and popularity were strengthened by the lack of any serious competition. Not everyone was enamoured of the rather flowery style which earned him the sobriquet 'Miss Brown'. The writer Thomas Carlyle, an Edinburgh student at the time, was less than enthusiastic, but he paints an even poorer picture of the philosophy on offer from Brown's colleagues, notably the Professor of Logic, David Ritchie, who contented himself (if Carlyle is to be believed) with a largely uncritical regurgitation of Reid. A similar situation prevailed at the University of Glasgow, where no one even approaching the stature of Hutcheson, Smith, or Reid had appeared to take their place. McCosh, a student at this time, later recorded his memory that 'the dry instruction of the class-room was solid, but not inspiriting. The course of instruction was substantial, but very narrow, and the professors were bitterly opposed to enlarging it' (McCosh 1896: 27). Yet it was from these somewhat inauspicious circumstances that Scottish philosophy's next great luminary, the subject of Chapter 3, emerged: Sir William Hamilton.

1.3 Sir William Hamilton

Hamilton entered the University of Glasgow in 1803. The 'Common Sense School' was still dominant. Hamilton attended the lectures of James Mylne, Reid's successor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy. Mylne was a conscientious and even inspiring

[4] Bryson's contentions are taken up again in Chapter 12.

teacher but he published nothing during his tenure. His colleague in the Logic Chair, George Jardine (a student of Reid), won something of a reputation for innovative pedagogy, but according to McCosh, his lectures showed 'no originality or grasp of intellect' (McCosh 1875: 316). Despite, or perhaps in the context of this mediocrity, Hamilton's academic record at Glasgow was a brilliant one, and gained him a scholarship to Oxford. There it was Aristotle who was in the ascendant, and once more Hamilton proved a brilliant student. He graduated with first class honours in 1811.

The next few years were spent vacillating between law and philosophy, and it was during this period, and in the course of two visits he made to Germany, that he encountered the immensely influential German philosophical movement inaugurated by Kant. This third strand in his intellectual formation gave Hamilton a unique orientation. By the time he finally succeeded in obtaining a philosophical post—the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh—he combined a grounding in the philosophy of Reid with considerable facility in logic and an unrivalled textual knowledge of Kant's philosophy. The combination was to prove key to the development of the Scottish philosophical tradition.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the admiration, amounting almost to veneration, that Hamilton attracted during his lifetime. A large part of this resulted from his astonishing learning, 'perhaps the most learned Scot who ever lived' according to his successor Alexander Campbell Fraser (Fraser 1904: 62). From Ferguson through Stewart to Brown, Moral Philosophy had been the most prestigious of the Edinburgh chairs, but with Hamilton's appointment, the Chair of Logic soon came to be held in higher regard, making it (according to Andrew Seth) 'in some respects the most famous of Scottish philosophical Chairs' (Seth 1892: 42), a status it still retained during the occupancy of Norman Kemp Smith (1919–45).

Hamilton published surprisingly little during his lifetime. His reputation rested principally on three very lengthy articles that appeared anonymously in the *Edinburgh Review* between 1828 and 1831. The first—ostensibly a review of Victor Cousin's lectures—engages Kant and Schelling, and though Reid is not mentioned by name, Hamilton's vigorous arguments against any 'Philosophy of the Unconditioned' are by implication a defence of philosophy 'conditioned' by common sense. The second, entitled 'The Philosophy of Perception', launched a ferocious attack on Thomas Brown's Humean rejection of Reid. The third, a review of Archbishop Whateley's logic, elaborated an alternative, more formal conception of logic.

Hamilton was widely regarded as having made substantial advances in logic, an assessment that still bears investigation. His legacy in this respect was most notable at St Andrews, where successive professors of logic made significant contributions to the revitalization of the subject. William Spalding published an influential textbook on the *Elements of Logic*, while Thomas Spencer Baynes was the author of *An Essay on the New Analytic of Logical Forms* that introduced Hamilton's views on logic to a much wider audience.

But it is the first two essays that were most important for the development of Scottish philosophy. First, they brought Kant and post-Kantian philosophy to the attention of the philosophical community in Scotland. This resulted not only in a general recognition that the tradition of Reid had to take account of an alternative Kantian answer to Hume. It also inaugurated an interpretative endeavour—the Scottish reception of Kant (the subject of Chapter 6)—which lasted well into the twentieth century, one to which Robert Adamson, Edward Caird, Norman Kemp Smith, and H. J. Paton—who all held Scottish chairs—were especially distinguished contributors.

Hamilton's essay also seemed to lay the groundwork for a promising integration of Kant and Reid, while at the same time reasserting the centrality of 'common sense' at the heart of the Scottish philosophical enterprise. This last aspect was further underlined by Hamilton's most enduring contribution to philosophical literature: his heavily annotated edition of Reid's *Collected Works*. Published in 1846, Hamilton's was the first complete edition to appear, and remained the only one for over 150 years. To Reid's own works he added a substantial number of 'supplementary dissertations', including an explication and defence of 'common sense'. Thereafter, his reputation as Reid's most learned champion and true successor was firmly established, at first to the benefit, and then (arguably) to the detriment of Reid's philosophical accomplishment.

The *Edinburgh Review* essays, along with other non-philosophical writings, were republished a few years before his death, and his university lectures a few years after. Within a decade, his philosophical writings came under strenuous attack from several sides (see Chapter 3). The best-known attack came from John Stuart Mill, whose *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* appeared in the same year (1865) as Hutcheson Stirling's *William Hamilton's Philosophy of Perception*. These two books illustrate the same tension revealed by Brown. Both reject the suggestion that Hamilton has successfully integrated Reid and Kant in a happy synthesis. Mill reasserts the spirit of Hume and criticizes Hamilton from the perspective of empirical, associationist psychology, while Stirling, a representative of the new Hegelians, chastises him for being insufficiently metaphysical.

Mill and Stirling were profoundly unsympathetic to Hamilton, but he was not without ardent defenders, notably his student and amanuensis John Veitch, professor at St Andrews and then Glasgow, and H. L. Mansel, regius professor at Oxford, who together edited his lectures for posthumous publication. But despite their best efforts—especially Mansel's scintillating response to Mill in *The Philosophy of the Conditioned* (1866)—Hamilton's brilliant reputation faded surprisingly rapidly.

There had in any case already been significant critics on the inside, as it were, students and admirers of Hamilton who had nonetheless put doubting pens to paper. In 1854, for example, Henry Calderwood, later Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, published *The Philosophy of the Infinite, with Special Reference to the Theories of Sir William Hamilton and M. Cousin* (1854). In the preface he declared himself

'indebted to the instructions of that distinguished philosopher'. Nevertheless, he had, however unwillingly, 'come to results differing widely from those of Sir W. Hamilton' (Calderwood 1854: iv). In a different context, Hamilton's most gifted student—James Frederick Ferrier (the subject of Chapter 4)—reaches the same position. His review of Hamilton's edition of Reid manages to praise the editor highly while wholly deprecating the material he has spent so much time editing.

1.4 Ferrier and Bain

Ferrier is in many ways the test case for any conception of 'Scottish philosophy'. He does not merely reject the philosophy of common sense, he explicitly deplores it, and excoriates Reid in the fiercest of terms. Yet, in a privately printed pamphlet, he declares emphatically that 'my philosophy is Scottish to the very core; it is national in every fibre and articulation of its frame' (Ferrier 1856: 12). This sentence was written in the aftermath of a bitter contention over the contest for Hamilton's successor, and this perhaps raises a doubt about the wisdom of treating it as a strictly intellectual judgement. At the same time, there is good reason to resist the idea that Ferrier's unusually explicit rejection of Reidian 'common sense' automatically rules him out. If appeal to common sense were the test, 'the Scottish School' would exclude a great many—including Hutcheson, Smith, and Ferguson, none of whom could be counted a Scottish philosopher on these grounds. Besides, though there has undoubtedly been a recurrent tendency to identify 'Scottish philosophy' with 'Common Sense', Reid's appeal to common sense has to be seen as an important strategy *within* an intellectual project that was already well under way. This is demonstrated by the fact that the value of that strategy subsequently became a significant debating point among those engaged in that same project. Why should Ferrier not pursue the project's central topics in a way that was radically different from Reid's? The question is a rhetorical one, obviously, but it raises this still deeper issue. By what criteria are the works of different philosophers to be declared engagements in the *same* project?

It is a key question for this book, of course, though its consideration will be deferred until the concluding chapter. At this stage the following observations are worth making. First, Ferrier rejects the Humean conception of the mind as a 'wretched association machine' no less strenuously than he rejects Reid's appeal to common sense. Accordingly, he has no inclination to resolve the problems with which he is concerned by a more obviously empirical approach in the manner of Brown. Second, in his appeal to the philosophy of George Berkeley he identifies the concept of 'matter' that Berkeley's idealism is said to reject, as an idle philosophical construct that lacks any warrant from ordinary life. This is a move that is unmistakably in the spirit of Reid. Third, he reaffirms the educational significance of philosophy by reaffirming the 'moral' over the 'mental'. Philosophy's proper goal is not securing advances in the scientific study of mind, but extending and refining human consciousness. These themes, it is true, are features of the series of essays that appeared in the years 1838–47. The *Institutes of Metaphysic*, first

published in 1854, appears to constitute a more radical departure—a 'demonstrative system of metaphysics' as Veitch describes it, that 'shows the influence of Fichte', as well as Hamilton (Veitch 1877: 229). The *Institutes* proceed by a purely deductive method, and seek to establish the fundamental propositions of philosophy as necessary truths. The book was Ferrier's *magnum opus*, but it was not well received, and it revealed his intellectual estrangement from the other philosophers in Scotland. His endeavour is so far removed from the methods of observation employed not only by Reid, but by Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, Ferguson, and others, that, had it been widely adopted across Scotland, it would have been correct to describe the result as a 'blackout of the Scottish Enlightenment'.

This phrase is George Davie's, part of the title of a short book published well over a century later. However, Davie attributed to Ferrier far greater influence in this respect than appears to be warranted.[5] Much more significant than the *Institutes*, it seems, was *The Secret of Hegel*, by Hutchison Stirling, a book published in 1865, one year after Ferrier's death, and in the same year as Stirling's attack on Hamilton. Interest in Hegel took time to establish itself, however, and it is not hard to find later nineteenth-century philosophers educated and working both in Scotland and abroad, for whom the Enlightenment inheritance still generated important problems waiting to be resolved. Among the more empirically inclined, Alexander Bain (the subject of Chapter 5) constitutes the most distinguished example. A personal friend of J. S. Mill, and an admirer of Hume, Bain was no follower of Reid or Hamilton. What makes him party to the same debate, however, is that he expressly addressed the tension within Scottish philosophy and firmly resolved it in one direction. Having done pioneering work in experimental and empirical psychology, in 1860 he was appointed to the Regius Chair of Logic in the newly united University of Aberdeen, a notable appointment not least because he was an acknowledged agnostic. Bain held the position for twenty years, and in retirement continued to write and publish. In his essay 'On Association Controversies', originally published in *Mind* (the journal he founded) in 1887, Bain writes as follows:

> We are at this moment, in the midst of a conflict of views as to the priority of Metaphysics and Psychology. If, indeed, the two are so closely identified as some suppose, there is no conflict; there is in fact, but one study. If on the other hand there are two subjects, each ought to be carried on apart for a certain length. (Bain 1903: 38)

The uncertainty to which Bain alludes here was widely discussed. His declared preference was to concentrate on empirical psychology informed by physiology, and though he does not explicitly reject metaphysics as a legitimate avenue of enquiry, he describes any attempt to investigate 'ultimate questions' about the mind *in advance of*

[5] In later years even those of an idealist bent did not make much reference to Ferrier. His name does not appear in the indexes of any of Caird's major works, and he is not mentioned by any of the authors of *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*.

substantial empirical progress as 'a device that may be handed over to the Committee for arranging debates in Pandemonium'. This sets him decidedly at odds with philosophers who sought to resolve the tension in a diametrically different direction—by the development of an idealist metaphysics (the subject of Chapter 7).

1.5 Scottish Idealism

Ferrier is an example of this alternative move, but it came to greater prominence within Scottish philosophy some considerable time after his death. Substantial evidence that idealism was finally gaining favour among Scottish philosophers is to be found in a book that was published in 1883. *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* reveals its idealist allegiance immediately because of its dedication—to the memory of T. H. Green. Furthermore, it has a commendatory preface by Edward Caird, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, renowned as an interpreter of Kant and a protagonist of Hegel. The collection was edited by Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane, two of Edinburgh's most gifted recent philosophy graduates. Since all but one of the contributors held philosophy degrees from Scottish universities, and several subsequently held professorial appointments in Scotland, the authors can be said to constitute a new generation of Scottish philosophers. In his preface, Caird denies that they wished 'to advocate any special philosophical theory', and describes them, rather, as having 'a certain community of opinion in relation to the general principle and method of philosophy' (Seth and Haldane 1883: 1). This is precisely, of course, what might be said of the philosophers whose work contributed to the Enlightenment project of the 'science of man'. Caird further observes that 'such an agreement is consistent with great and even vital differences' between the authors of the essays. Once again, this is an observation that might be made in explaining the relation between, for example, Hume and Reid (and their respective followers). Crucially, however, Caird identifies the new generation's agreement as having its source, not in the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, but in Kant and Hegel.

> The writers of this volume believe that the line of investigation which philosophy must follow, or in which it may be expected to make its most important contribution to the intellectual life of man, is that which was opened by Kant, and for the successful prosecution of which no one has done so much as Hegel. (Seth and Haldane 1883: 2)

It was this manifesto, presumably, that Seth was referring to just two years later when (as already noted) he remarked in his lectures *On the Scottish Philosophy* that 'the thread of national tradition' had not found many followers among the 'best Scottish students of philosophy'. By implication, of course, he himself was one, though there is more to be said about this.

Here, if anywhere, it might seem, we can find a deliberate departure from the tradition of Scottish philosophy that stretched back to Hume, Hutcheson, and Carmichael (or even further). Nor is the shift confined to these particular essayists. Edward Caird

was called upon to write the preface because of his intellectual stature. Both he and his brother John, first Professor of Divinity and later Principal of Glasgow University, were highly acclaimed as philosophers who brought great distinction to Scotland. They stimulated not only their own colleagues and students at Glasgow, but at the other Scottish universities as well. Their reputation rested, however, on the deployment of Kant and Hegel to articulate an idealist philosophy, that, though it paid scant attention to Reid, was widely welcomed as both novel and invigorating.[6] Meantime, on the other side of the country, Bain, in a quite different style, was doing something whose innovative character was also heralded. Both, it seemed, had relinquished 'national tradition' as far as philosophy goes.

Writing in the *Princeton Review* of 1882, James McCosh expressly notes the fact. 'In the land of its birth' he says '[the Scottish philosophy] is not particularly strong at this present moment, being opposed by the materialism of Bain and the Hegelianism of Merton College Oxford, and Prof Edward Caird of Glasgow'. It has 'two genuine representatives' he goes on to observe, 'Prof. Calderwood and Prof. Flint of the University of Edinburgh' (McCosh 1882: 327), though he could well have added John Veitch, Caird's colleague (and combatant) in the Logic Chair at Glasgow. These names mean almost nothing now, though they were gifted men who did successfully continue the transmission of important elements of the older philosophical tradition to new generations. Henry Calderwood was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh from 1868 until his death in 1897. He published several books that attracted widespread attention. In addition to his early work criticizing Hamilton (noted earlier and considered at greater length in Chapter 3), he contributed to the debate about evolution, wrote a textbook in ethics that was widely used by colleges in America, and was author of the (posthumously published) study of Hume that appeared in the *Famous Scots*, a series that included Fraser's life of Reid. Calderwood's book on Hume was significant for its sympathetic treatment by a source (Free Presbyterianism) that hitherto had been generally hostile.[7]

Robert Flint was appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews in succession to J. F. Ferrier and, somewhat surprisingly to many, in preference to T. H. Green. In 1868 he lost out to Calderwood in the competition for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, but shortly after was appointed to the Chair of Divinity there. Flint was an immensely popular lecturer, and notable for his innovative work in the philosophy of history, work that culminated in his study of Vico. R. M. Wenley (who succeeded John Dewey as Professor of Philosophy at Michigan), though not one of his students, got to know him well and wrote a perceptive assessment of his philosophical achievements and limitations that does not altogether coincide with

[6] Caird's *Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, first published in 1877, has just four brief references to Reid in 670 pages of text.

[7] Among his most gifted students was James Seth, brother of Andrew, who relinquished his professorship at Cornell to become Calderwood's successor in the Edinburgh Chair.

McCosh's assessment.[8] But there can be little dispute that McCosh was correct in his observation that the tradition had reached a watershed, a fact that the very existence of Seth's Balfour Lectures confirms.

The idealism of Caird and those who followed him (the subject of Chapter 7) is perhaps the more important development to trace. This is partly because Bain's psychology invites, or at least licenses, the abandonment of philosophy *simpliciter*, and indeed over the succeeding decades, psychology, long taught under the auspices of Logic, became a separate subject in the Scottish university curriculum, finally attaining departmental status in its own right. Bain did not hope or expect that psychology would replace philosophy; indeed, the journal *Mind* that he founded expressly aimed to encourage new work in both, as its subtitle—'a quarterly review of psychology and philosophy'—indicates. From one point of view, too, the investigations he so successfully advanced were more continuous with what had gone before than was the Hegelianism of Caird. Associationism, it is plausible to hold, constituted a return to, and a refinement of, Hume through the work of Mill and Bain (as Chapter 5 contends). From another point of view, however, such a return does signal the end of the Scottish philosophy. Seth's subtitle reveals this—'A comparison of the Scottish and German *answers* to Hume'. Hume's associationist psychology cannot constitute the heart of Scottish philosophy, precisely because 'the Scottish philosophy' assumed its most sophisticated form as an *answer* to Hume. Accordingly, the vindication of Hume's philosophy, albeit refined and amended by Mill's logic and Bain's physiological psychology, must warrant the abandonment of the tradition of which Reid was a leading exponent, as indeed it seems to have done in psychological circles.

It is rather less clear, however, whether (as McCosh implies) the inspiration that the new idealists took from Hegel also had to result in an abandonment of the tradition. That there was antagonism between the old and the new is evident. It could hardly be plainer than in D. G. Ritchie's review of John Veitch's *Knowing and Being*. Published in 1889, this was the text of Veitch's Glasgow lectures, in which he attacked the 'Neo-Kantians'. As Hamilton's most enthusiastic torchbearer, Veitch unmistakably represented the 'old' generation of Scottish philosophy, while Ritchie, author of one of the *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, was no less unmistakably among the most brilliant of the new. 'Prof Veitch', he writes, 'obviously cannot find any ground common to himself and the thinkers he is criticizing. And I . . . really cannot find any common ground with a Professor of Logic who will not allow the use of the term *Prius* in any but the temporal sense' (Ritchie 1889: 575). Could there be a clearer declaration of the complete rupture between Scottish philosophy as transmitted by Hamilton and the philosophy that had come to be current among the philosophers of Scotland thirty years later?

Yet the matter is not quite as straightforward as the exchange between Veitch and Ritchie might suggest. A middle ground is to be found in the person of Andrew

[8] Wenley's assessment appears as a chapter in Macmillan (1914).

Seth. Seth, it has been noted previously, was both a contributing editor to *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* and the author of a volume on the Scottish philosophy which gives an airing to Reid that is both critical and sympathetic (a 'kindly rehabilitation', Ritchie called it). His subsequent volume of Balfour Lectures, entitled *Hegelianism and Personality*, may be said to do the same on the other side, since it is both sympathetic to and critical of the new Scottish Idealists ('the most unkindest cut of all', Ritchie calls it, because 'an attack by a friend of idealism'). In fact, Ritchie in his review of Veitch remarks that 'all that I could say by way of argument against the main contentions of this volume I have already said in a review of Prof. Seth's *Hegelianism and Personality*' (Ritchie 1889: 575). In other words, Seth's second set of Balfour Lectures occupies an interesting middle ground; it is composed of arguments which, though framed from within the idealist camp, are of a type that Veitch might nevertheless have called upon.

If, as McCosh contended, 'sober Realism' is the mark of Scottish philosophy, since Seth never ceased to be an idealist, he could hardly count as its representative. Yet it may still be argued that he endorsed a conception of philosophy deeply consonant with that of Hutcheson, Ferguson, Reid, and Hamilton. Seth was an idealist in just this sense; he thought that all forms of materialism (including most versions of 'naturalism') are radically defective *considered as philosophy*. His 'official' conception of what philosophy is, and what makes it worth studying and teaching, is stated plainly in 'The Present Position of the Philosophical Sciences', an inaugural lecture delivered on his appointment to the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh in succession to Alexander Campbell Fraser.

> Much current thought is *naturalistic* at heart—that is to say, it makes human nature only a part of nature in general, and seeks, therefore, to explain away the most fundamental characteristics of intelligence and moral life. Against this naturalistic current, philosophy must be unflinchingly *humanistic*, anthropocentric. (Seth Pringle-Pattison 1902: 42, emphasis original)

This remark comes towards the end of a lecture in which he identifies three areas of inquiry that fall to the occupant of the chair—logic, psychology, and metaphysics. It is the last of these that he describes as 'philosophy in the strict sense', and what the reference to 'human nature' and the emphasis on the 'humanistic' makes plain is that for Seth, 'metaphysics' no less than 'moral philosophy' falls within what the Enlightenment philosophers called 'moral science'. The lecture was subsequently included in *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, a collection whose title captures exactly what Seth thought to be the question that it was the special province of philosophy 'in the strict sense' to address. This is, of course, an 'ultimate' question of just the kind that Bain recommended we leave to one side. Since it is difficult to see that any results we might obtain from experimental psychology, however firmly grounded, could illuminate it, Bain's recommendation in effect amounts to the abandonment of philosophy.

Seven years later, Andrew Seth's brother James marked his accession to the Chair of Moral Philosophy with an inaugural lecture on 'Scottish Moral Philosophy',

subsequently published by the *Philosophical Review*, the journal he had edited when at Cornell. In it he reviews the tradition of ethical enquiry that finds its origins in Hutcheson. But he concludes as follows.

[T]he contribution of the Scottish School to Moral Philosophy is not exhausted by its answer to the technically ethical question. Scottish philosophy itself is, even in its metaphysical aspects, primarily and characteristically ethical in its method and its point of view. The method and the point of view of Common Sense is essentially an appeal to the moral consciousness as an all-important and incorruptible witness to truth. It was in the defence of moral reality that Reid, like Kant, rebelled against the sceptical philosophy of Hume. He and his successors deliberately adopted the ethical point of view as metaphysically valid, and refused to accept a metaphysical system which was inadequate to the interpretation of moral experience. They found in man a higher term of philosophical explanation than in external nature, and they insisted upon construing the universe in terms of man rather than in terms of nature. Reid's own interest in this spiritual significance of his Common Sense principle seems to have deepened in his later years, and the intrepid philosophical genius of Sir William Hamilton did much to develop that significance. But it was reserved for Hamilton's pupil and successor, whom I am proud to claim as my own master in metaphysics, Professor Campbell Fraser, to show us the larger meaning of the Philosophy of Common Sense, in view of contemporary issues and alternatives of thought. In his recent Gifford Lectures on *The Philosophy of Theism*, and, the other day, in his study of *Reid*, Professor Fraser has given to a wider public the lesson which he had already taught to successive generations of students in this University, the lesson of the unwisdom of resisting 'the final venture of the heart and conscience in the interpretation of the world and of human life'. (Seth 1898: 581–2)

At the start of the lecture, James Seth speaks in similarly appreciative terms of Calderwood. Seven years before, Andrew Seth had acknowledged his debt to Fraser in very similar terms. Their respective inaugural lectures show that both men understand themselves to have inherited a conception of the subject which they wholeheartedly endorse—'metaphysics as moral philosophy' we might call it.

'Metaphysics as moral philosophy' captures another important feature of Scottish philosophy—its ambition to speak in a culturally significant voice beyond the classroom. According to Andrew Seth, this is one of its most distinguishing features. Observing the absence of philosophical 'specialists', he remarks that

what Scottish philosophy has lost in scientific precision may have been compensated for, in part, by the greater influence which it has exerted upon the body of the people—an influence which has made it a factor, so to speak, in the national life . . . Hegel's philosophy has had a wide . . . influence in moulding many departments of thought, but as *philosophy*, it has never lived in Germany beyond the confines of the schools. (Seth 1882: 129–30)

The ambition for philosophy in Scotland 'to live beyond the schools' received a powerful boost in 1885 when Lord Adam Gifford left a very substantial sum of money to each of the four Scottish universities to organize lectures that would make serious philosophical thought on the topics of 'natural theology' accessible to as wide a public as possible. The Gifford Lectures began in 1888, and though they were delivered

by scholars of international repute, in many years they were given by the professors of philosophy in Scotland. In the early decades these included Alexander Campbell Fraser, Edward Caird, W. R. Sorley, and Andrew Seth, all of whom gave lectures which admirably fit the description 'metaphysics as moral philosophy'.

The appointment of the Seth brothers to the two Edinburgh philosophy chairs, and the early Gifford Lectures, provide solid evidence that, for all the tensions and vacillations of philosophical debate in Scotland over the preceding hundred years, the Scottish philosophical tradition could still be regarded as firmly in place at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its remaining so, however, was not just a matter of intellectual conviction or pedagogical practice. From the beginning, the teaching and study of 'metaphysics as moral philosophy' had depended on an institutional framework that was vital to its continuance. By the turn of the new century that framework was undergoing important changes.

1.6 The Twentieth Century

In the concluding chapter of *Scottish Philosophy in its National Development* Henry Laurie observes that, '[a]s the years have rolled on, the philosophy of Scotland and that of England have tended more and more to merge into one'. Amongst others, Laurie has J. S. Mill and Alexander Bain in mind as thinkers equally schooled in Scottish philosophy on the one hand, and 'the empiricism which has been prevalent in England' on the other. 'In such circumstances' he says 'the task of retaining any effectual distinction between the later thought of Scotland and of England may well be abandoned as impracticable' (Laurie 1902: 332–3).

Laurie cites 'greater intercourse' as a significant factor. Communication and exchange between Scotland and England were hugely facilitated by the immense improvement in transport that the nineteenth century witnessed. In 1753, the first year in which a stagecoach service operated between Edinburgh and London, the journey time was two weeks. A little over a hundred years later, the Flying Scotsman, an express train service established in 1862, completed the same journey in ten and a half hours. Improvements of this magnitude had dramatic effects on the educational and intellectual dimensions of social life. The age of the stagecoach, one might say, necessarily made Scotland a distinct intellectual environment, while the railway gradually incorporated it into a wider academic world.

One effect of this greater intercourse may be said to be of special consequence. The continuity of Scottish philosophy until the second half of the nineteenth century owed much to the relation of teacher to student over successive generations. It is remarkable, in fact, how many of the occupants of the chairs of philosophy in Scotland succeeded their teachers, and were in turn succeeded by their students. By the turn of the twentieth century this had changed, so that Scottish chairs increasingly came to be occupied by philosophers whose whole education was in England. A. E. Taylor is a good example. Taylor held the Chair of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews from 1908

to 1924, and then at the University of Edinburgh from 1924 to 1941. He thus spent over thirty years at the ancient Scottish universities. But he was educated in classics at New College, Oxford, strongly influenced by the British Idealism of F. H. Bradley (to whom he dedicated his first major book), and had taught in England and Canada for sixteen years before arriving in Scotland.

Conversely, unlike the long line of Snell Exhibitioners at Oxford that included Adam Smith, William Hamilton, and Edward Caird, Scottish-educated philosophers increasingly left Scotland's universities for England and did not return, or only for a short spell. W. R. Sorley is a notable example. His biography, up to a certain point, is typical of the kind of person who had regularly taken up the mantle of one of the historic chairs. Son of a Presbyterian minister, he studied under A. C. Fraser at Edinburgh (alongside James Seth) and proved a brilliant student. He won a Shaw Philosophical Fellowship to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was elected a Fellow in 1883. Ten years later, he returned to Scotland where he held the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen for a relatively short time (1894–1900) before succeeding Henry Sidgwick at Cambridge. And there he remained for the rest of his life. Sorley's Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen (1913–15) show him to have been part of the tradition I have called 'metaphysics as moral philosophy', but he taught outside a context that would have enabled him to hand it on.

Even if he had remained in Scotland, that context was disintegrating, not simply because of changing social and economic conditions, but as a result of parliamentary reforms to the universities of Scotland. The first and in some ways most important of these was the Universities Act of 1858. This reform was prompted by widespread acknowledgement both within Scotland and beyond that the Scottish universities were in serious need of revitalization. Though something of a compromise between traditionalists and modernizers, this was accomplished, for the most part, at the level of governance and organization. It left the traditional structure and curriculum of the Faculty of Arts largely in place, with modernizing additions. The reform of 1892, by contrast, was much more directly concerned with 'modernizing' the curriculum. It set in train the introduction of wide-ranging studies in foreign languages and literatures, in mathematics, and in the natural sciences. The spirit of the 1858 reform still focused on the liberal education of individuals. The reform of 1889 looked to the general benefits that universities might bring to society at large. Its spirit, accordingly, was a much more utilitarian one.

Reflecting on this difference, Alexander Campbell Fraser, who was prompted by the immanence of the 1892 reforms to retire from the Edinburgh Chair of Logic (he had in any case reached the age of 71), recalled Francis Bacon's remark that 'if any man thinks Philosophy and Universality to be idle studies, he doth not consider that all professions are from thence served and supplied' (Fraser 1904: 225). However salutary this warning, there is little doubt that from this point on the central place of philosophy in the Scottish university curriculum declined. Eventually, in a break with a 500-year practice, philosophy lost its place as a required part of the studies of every student in Arts.

This was a slow process. It took more than fifty years, in fact, but it was the inevitable result of curricular changes in which, more and more, philosophy in the Scottish universities came to be just one subject among many. Once again the owl of Minerva took its flight, this time in George Elder Davie's book *The Democratic Intellect*, first published in 1961. By Davie's account, the changes in the status of philosophy that the nineteenth century witnessed had a threefold source—educational reforms emanating from London, the Disruption in the Church of Scotland that took place in 1843, and the tensions within Scottish philosophy itself. One critical moment, for Davie, is the contest for the Edinburgh Chair in succession to Sir William Hamilton, which subsequently led to a 'thirty years war' in which the competing factions within Scottish philosophy were driven further and further apart.

Davie's book—originally intended as merely a preface to his study of *The Scotch Metaphysics*, itself finally published forty years later—attracted great attention and was hugely influential in the enthusiasm that it subsequently created for Scotland's educational past. It appeared just as another great period of change was beginning—the expansion of the universities into a centrally funded, UK-wide 'system' of higher education that oversaw the creation of many new purpose-built universities and colleges, and vastly increased the numbers of British students and graduates. The cogency, and the accuracy, of Davie's book was widely contested, and its somewhat 'romantic' vision of the former role of philosophy in Scottish universities and Scottish cultural life was subjected to searching criticism. The decades that have passed since its publication allow a more measured estimation of the causes and significance of the changes by which Davie was so stirred (the subject of Chapter 10), but it seems incontestable that he was right at least in this regard: by mid-twentieth century, the centrality of philosophy within Scotland's universities, and thus its place within the education of the Scottish 'clerisy' (to use Coleridge's useful term), was at best a shadow of what it had been 100 years before.

Ostensibly, the explanation of this change is Davie's principal focus, but throughout his book explanation is intertwined with evaluation. Was the decline of philosophy and the rise of technology and the sciences a social and educational loss or gain? There is not much doubt that from Davie's point of view it was a loss, and, as such, a defeat for the traditional educational practices and intellectual ideals of Scotland. It is hard to think, however, that his thesis, right or wrong, is of much moment now. Even in 1961 too much had changed. Yet there are two related questions that there is still a point in asking. Did anything of the 'metaphysics as moral philosophy' conception survive? And does it constitute a viable alternative, and salutary corrective, to other styles and conceptions of philosophy that have more currency?

Once more, the second of these questions will be left to the concluding chapter of this book. In exploration of the first, there is another interesting author to be turned to: John Macmurray (the subject matter of Chapter 11).

1.7 John Macmurray

In several ways John Macmurray exemplifies the background typical of Scottish philosophers throughout the nineteenth century. Born in 1891, he was raised in a strict Presbyterian family, educated in Aberdeen, and then at the University of Glasgow where he graduated with first class honours in 1913. He followed the time-honoured path as a Snell Exhibitioner to Balliol College Oxford, where his tutor—A. D. Lindsay—was a Scot of similar background and abilities who had graduated from Glasgow and studied at Edinburgh.

Lindsay returned to Glasgow briefly as Professor of Moral Philosophy from 1922 to 1924. Macmurray's connection with the universities of Scotland was rather longer, but similarly tangential. He spent twenty-five years teaching philosophy in Manchester, South Africa, Oxford, and London before becoming Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh in succession to A. E. Taylor, a position he held from 1944 to 1958. He published widely, and was a popular broadcaster, but his most substantial philosophical works were the Gifford Lectures he delivered in Glasgow between 1952 and 1954.

In these lectures, as in other places, the philosophical position Macmurray adopts and defends can properly be called 'humanistic', one that rejects all forms of physical and organic reduction. In the introduction to his first set of Gifford Lectures he writes: 'the thesis I have tried to maintain is this: All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action for the sake of friendship' (Macmurray 1957: 15). His elaboration and defence of this thesis can properly be described as an exploration of human nature in which he relies upon the facts of experience. Moreover, though early in his career he published papers in professional journals, in these lectures, in his university classes, and in his broadcasts, he distanced himself from the 'academic' philosophy that was now the stock in trade of most of his colleagues, both in London and in Edinburgh.[9]

In 1933, Macmurray published a book entitled *Interpreting the Universe*. The title's similarity to Andrew Seth's *Man's Place in the Cosmos* published thirty-six years previously is striking. But there is no connecting reference. In the same way, though the books he published while in Edinburgh may be said to be exercises in the philosophy of human nature, they contain no reference to Smith, Ferguson, Reid, Stewart, or Hamilton. His London lectures on *Reason and Emotion*, republished in retirement, make no reference to Bain. The single exception is Hume, but Hume appears alongside Descartes and Kant as he might in a philosophy book from almost any tradition.

In short, though Macmurray may be said to philosophize in the same spirit as Campbell Fraser and the Seths, he is not, as they were, engaged in serious dialogue

[9] Macmurray opposed and lamented the appointment of A. J. Ayer as his successor as the Grote Professor of Mind and Logic at University College London.

with the historical community of Scottish philosophers. We may, if we wish, ally him with that company arguing *via negativa* (as it were) that Macmurray stood apart from the scientific empiricism and linguistic analysis that came to dominate the philosophy departments of Scotland, as they did across the UK at large. But this falls substantially short of full inclusion. At best, Macmurray stood for a style of thought to which the tradition of Scottish philosophy had once given powerful and illuminating expression, sufficient to make its influence reverberate across the world. By Macmurray's time, however, that tradition was well and truly history.

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2

Revolting against Reid

The Philosophy of Thomas Brown

Thomas Dixon

2.1 Thomas Brown's Place in Nineteenth-Century Philosophy

Thomas Brown was one of the most influential and widely read British philosophers of the first half of the nineteenth century. As Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh from 1810 until his early death in 1820, Brown delivered a series of lectures on the philosophy of the human mind which, in their published form, went through numerous editions, winning him a reputation for metaphysical brilliance on both sides of the Atlantic. His thought provided a bridge between the Scottish school of 'Common Sense' associated with Thomas Reid, and the later positivism of John Stuart Mill and others.[1] Brown shared with his Common Sense predecessors the view that certain beliefs, such as the belief in an external world and in causation, were primary and irresistible intuitions. In other ways, however, Brown's thought had more in common with eighteenth-century sceptics and empiricists, including such figures as David Hume and Etienne de Condillac. As James Mackintosh put it, much of Brown's philosophy constituted 'an open revolt against the authority of Reid' (Mackintosh 1837: 345). Writing in 1900, Leslie Stephen suggested that Brown was 'the last in the genuine line of Scottish common-sense philosophers' and that his thought illustrated the gravitation of that school towards 'pure empiricism' (Leslie 1900: 285).

Thomas Brown made significant contributions to several areas of philosophy. In the philosophy of perception he emphasized the importance of the 'muscle sense' in bringing about beliefs in external objects. In the philosophy of the human mind,

[1] For useful general characterizations of Brown's philosophy, see Welsh 1825; Mackintosh 1837: 335–52; McCosh 1875: 317–37; Stephen 1900: 267–87; Harris 2002b; Copleston 2003: 383–92; Stewart-Robertson 2004; Paoletti 2006. On the Scottish Common Sense school, see McCosh 1875; Grave 1960; Martin 1961; Davie 2000.

Brown rejected the traditional faculty psychology, which posited such entities as the will and the intellect, and reduced all mental phenomena instead to a series of associated 'states' or 'affections'. These he divided into three categories: sensations, thoughts, and emotions. His was one of the first and most sustained treatments of the 'emotions' as a coherent psychological category, which would come to subsume and supersede established categories such as the 'passions', 'affections', or 'active powers' of the mind.[2] In the philosophy of science, Brown was rigorously phenomenalist, rejecting all metaphysical entities, whether subtle fluids, mental faculties, or causal powers. His *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect* (1818) provided a perceptive and influential commentary on the views of David Hume, and also gave the first unambiguous defence of what has become known as the 'uniformity' or 'regularity' view of causation (Psillos 2010, 2011). Although many expressed concerns over Brown's apparent lack of Christian orthodoxy, and over his reduction of moral judgements to the experience of a particular kind of emotions, his *Lectures* and his *Inquiry* both included reasoned arguments in favour of theistic belief.

Brown's reputation was at its height during the two decades after the posthumous publication of his *Lectures* in 1820. These were widely acknowledged to be the most successful and popular work of their kind ever to have appeared. Henry Cockburn described the book as one of the most 'delightful books in the English language', which had enjoyed 'unexampled success' (Cockburn 1909: 347). The historian of Scottish Common Sense philosophy, James McCosh, painted a vivid picture of the impact of Brown's lectures:

> A course so eminently popular among students had not, I rather think, been delivered in any previous age in the University of Edinburgh, and has not, in a later age, been surpassed . . . In the last age you would have met, in Edinburgh and all over Scotland, with ministers and lawyers who fell into raptures when they spoke of his lectures.

The published version of the lectures enjoyed 'a popularity in the British dominions and in the United States greater than any philosophical work ever enjoyed before'. 'The writer of this article', McCosh added, 'would give much to have revived within him the enthusiasm which he felt when he first read them' (McCosh 1875: 322–4). Writing at the end of the nineteenth century, the British philosopher Robert Adamson wrote of the *Lectures*: 'It is no exaggeration to say that never before or since has a work on metaphysics been so popular' (quoted in Trotter 1901: 431).[3]

Several former Edinburgh students later wrote about the experience of hearing Thomas Brown lecture in person. The historian and philosopher J. D. Morell recalled:

> The style was so captivating, the views so comprehensive, the arguments so acute, the whole thing so complete, that I was almost insensibly borne along upon the stream of his reasoning and eloquence. Naturally enough I became a zealous disciple; I accepted his mental analysis as

[2] I have written about Brown's role as the 'inventor of the emotions' in Dixon 2003: 109–34, 2006: 27–31.

[3] On the *Lectures*, see also Welsh 1825; Harris 2002b.

almost perfect; I defended his doctrine of causation; with him I stood in astonishment at the alleged obtuseness of Reid. (Morell 1846: vi–vii)

Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law John Gibson Lockhart included an account of a lecture by Brown in his fictionalized portrait of Edinburgh society, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819). The students in the lecture room awaiting Brown's appearance, in Lockhart's version of the scene, include 'a Pyrrhonist from Inverness-shire' alongside an 'embryo clergyman' hoping for enlightenment about cause and effect and 'feeling rather qualmish after having read that morning Hume's Sceptical Solution of Sceptical Doubts'. Nearer the professor's table sits 'a crack member of some crack debating-club'. At last the dandyish Professor himself arrives 'with a pleasant smile upon his face, arrayed in a black Geneva cloak, over a snuff-coloured coat and a buff waistcoat' with a 'physiognomy very expressive of mildness and quiet contemplativeness'. Brown's elocution is 'distinct and elegant' and his metaphysics enlivened by quotations from the poets (Morris 1819: i. 173–8).

Brown's fastidious manner and poetical style were not, however, to everyone's taste, and the positive appraisals of his work could seem embarrassingly overdone. The poet Edwin Atherstone's exuberant praise of Brown in 1831 was a case in point. 'For myself', Atherstone wrote, 'I know not a writer, with the exception of Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, and Scott, from whom I have derived such high delight as from Dr Brown' (Napier 1879: 107). This was too much for one reviewer. 'Was ever such a category put on paper before?' he asked. 'It is as if a man should say his favourite musical instruments were the organ, the harp, the trumpet, the violin, and the sewing-machine' (Browne 1879: 447). Thomas Carlyle might have agreed, recalling Brown as 'an eloquent acute little gentleman, full of enthusiasm about simple suggestions, relative, etc.' which he found utterly dry and uninteresting (Froude 1882: i. 25). Carlyle described the 'immaculate Dr Brown' as 'a really pure, high, if rather shrill and wire-drawing kind of a man'; and is reported to have referred to him as 'Miss Brown' and 'that little man who spouted poetry' (Shepherd 1881: 16–17; Jessop 2004). Another contemporary commentator, Mrs Anne Macvicar Grant, wrote from Edinburgh to a friend in Glasgow of Brown's 'great fertility of mind' and 'delightful variety of intelligence and playfulness in conversation, which, in the long run, conquers the prejudice resulting from a manner so affected and so odd, that there is no describing it' (Grant 1845: 99–100).

Brown's influence was felt well beyond the lecture halls of Edinburgh. His readers included not only British and American university students who read his *Lectures* as a textbook, and the educated public at large, but also many of the most distinguished thinkers of the nineteenth century. John Stuart Mill was influenced by Brown and defended him against a ferocious attack by the Kantian metaphysician William Hamilton ([Hamilton] 1830 repr. in. Hamilton 1853: 39–99; Mill 1865b: 153–89). Another of Mill's philosophical antagonists, William Whewell, had also been engaged by Brown's philosophy as a young man, writing to a friend in 1822: 'Have you read Brown's books? They are dashing, and on some material points strongly wrong,

but about cause and effect he has an admirable clearness of view and happiness of illustration' (quoted in Snyder 2006: 47n.). In the United States, Brown's works were widely reviewed in the periodical press and were particularly championed by Samuel Gilman and Francis March ([Gilman] 1821, 1824, 1825; [March] 1860). The American philosopher Noah Porter wrote in 1874 that 'The influence of Brown's terminology and of his methods and conclusions has been potent in the formation and consolidation of the Associational Psychology—represented by J. Mill, J. S. Mill, Alexander Bain and Herbert Spencer' (Porter 1874: 410). William James would later recall, when delivering his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, that he had spent his youth 'immersed in Dugald Stewart and Thomas Brown', whose works had inspired 'juvenile emotions of reverence' that he had not yet outgrown (James 1902: 2). Brown could count among his nineteenth-century admirers positivists, empiricists, and pragmatists. But another of his most enthusiastic followers was the leader of the evangelical revival that culminated in the 1843 Disruption in the Scottish church, Thomas Chalmers. And it was one of Chalmers' deputies in the evangelical movement, the church historian David Welsh, who was to become Brown's biographer.[4]

Brown's reputation did not diminish considerably before 1850, and after that primarily through the influence of William Hamilton and his circle (of which Thomas Carlyle was also a member). The reprinting of Hamilton's 1830 *Edinburgh Review* article 'Philosophy of Perception: Reid and Brown' in his *Discussions* in 1852 made available to a much wider audience in Britain and America a savage attack on Brown's philosophical competence and probity. Hamilton accused Brown of silently appropriating his ideas from French sources and of completely misunderstanding the philosophy of Thomas Reid. Several significant discussions of the philosophy of perception, with particular reference to Brown and Hamilton, were subsequently published. Two of these (by John Stuart Mill and by Francis March) staunchly defended Brown and accused Hamilton, in turn, of misrepresentation and intellectual dishonesty (Alison 1853; [March] 1860; Maguire 1860; Mill 1865b: 153–89). Even Hamilton seems to have had at least some second thoughts about his assault on Brown. In the republished version of the 1830 article, after a section describing Brown's interpretation of Reid's philosophy as 'not a simple misconception, but an absolute reversal of its real and even unambiguous import', Hamilton added the terse parenthetical observation: 'This is too strong' (Hamilton 1853: 60).

In France, where Brown's lectures made less of an impact (and were never translated), the reception was, again, mixed. François Réthoré, Professor of Logic in Tours and the principal French commentator on Brown, described him as the greatest metaphysician Scotland had ever produced (Réthoré 1863: 247). Victor Cousin, on the other hand, thought Brown a very mediocre philosopher, and one who had been responsible for giving Hume's theory of cause and effect a 'deplorable popularity' in

[4] On Welsh's life and thought, see Dunlop 1846; Harris 2002a.

both Britain and America. He also considered Brown to be an 'infidel' (Maine de Biran 1834: xxv–xxvi). In 1834, having recently received a copy of the seventh edition of Brown's *Lectures*, Cousin wrote to William Hamilton to encourage him to keep up the fight against Brown's influence: 'Mon Dieu! Luttez, mon cher Monsieur, luttez sans cesse contre cette funeste popularité.' Hamilton wrote back that he was 'delighted to find you estimating Brown at his proper value' (Veitch 1869: 153–4).

2.2 Education and Early Life: Physician, Philosopher, Poet

Thomas Brown was born on 9 January 1778, the thirteenth and youngest child of Reverend Samuel Brown, minister of Kirkmabreck, Galloway, and his wife Margaret. Reverend Brown died in Thomas's infancy. Having been tutored at home in Edinburgh by his mother, and schooled in England under the care of his uncle, Brown enrolled in the University of Edinburgh in the winter of 1792–3, just before his fifteenth birthday. He followed a wide variety of courses, including logic (with Professor James Finlayson) and moral philosophy (with Professor Dugald Stewart), before embarking on legal studies. He did not persist in this course, however, turning instead to medicine, and eventually taking his MD in 1803. Brown practised as a physician from 1803 onwards, entering into partnership in 1806 with Dr James Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Physic in the university. Brown only ceased medical practice when he was appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1810.

During Brown's years of study, he made friends with a group who were to become enormously influential through their founding of the *Edinburgh Review*. The three most important events during these years were Brown's involvement in the founding of a new natural-philosophical student society, the Academy of Physics in 1797; his publication, in 1798, of a substantial critique of Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia* (1794–6); and his contributions to the early numbers of the *Edinburgh Review*. This fertile formative period, from 1797 to 1803, was the source of all the key ideas that he would develop further in his mature philosophical works.

On 7 January 1797, two days before his nineteenth birthday, Brown was one of a group of Edinburgh students who met to found a philosophical club called the Academy of Physics. The driving force behind the society was Henry Brougham, who would go on to become Lord Chancellor. Other founder members included Brown's good friends John Leyden, William Erskine, and James Reddie. Francis Horner and Francis Jeffrey (later the first editor of the *Edinburgh Review*) subsequently joined too. Five to ten students would be present at each meeting to hear and discuss a paper on a subject in physics, chemistry, philosophy, or history. Brown gave a few papers himself, including one on the philosophy of heat, and was acting as secretary to the Academy at the time of its dissolution, to be superseded by a new Chemical Society, in May 1800. Brown's attendance at the Academy provided an opportunity for him

to discuss the views on natural philosophy and metaphysics that became central to his responses to Erasmus Darwin. The Academy had agreed a philosophical manifesto including the statements that mind existed and matter existed, but that nothing could be known of their essences, and that 'Every change indicates a cause but of the Nature of necessary connection we are entirely ignorant.' These principles embodied the same sparse metaphysics, and phenomenalist epistemology, which Brown would espouse in all his later published works.[5]

The young Brown's first performance on the public stage as a writer and metaphysician came during this same student period. His *Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin* (1798) was described by James Mackintosh as 'the perhaps unmatched work of a boy in the eighteenth year of his age' (Mackintosh 1837: 336). The book gained Brown an early reputation for philosophical acumen as well as the nickname 'Darwinian Brown' (Bain 1882: 48). Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles) was, as Brown would later be, a poet, a physician, and a philosopher. He had, like Brown, studied medicine in Edinburgh, although almost half a century earlier. Alongside the posthumously published *Temple of Nature* (1803), and *The Botanic Garden* (1789–91), Darwin's *Zoonomia, or, The Laws of Organic Life* (1794–6) was his most important published work.[6] *Zoonomia* was controversial for its suggestion that all living things had developed from a common ancestor, and for its materialistic account of mind.

Prior to publishing his *Observations*, Brown had sent a manuscript version of his criticisms to Darwin, which led to a somewhat heated correspondence. This correspondence started in October 1796, when Brown was indeed only 18 years old, and continued into the following year, during the period of the founding of the Academy of Physics. It may have been the realization that he was dealing with a mere student that contributed to the irritation evident in some of Darwin's responses to Brown. One of these was omitted by Welsh from his account of Brown's life on the grounds that it cannot possibly have been intended for future publication. In his response to this particular letter Brown refers to Darwin's 'angry feelings' and to 'the contemptible light in which you view the manuscript'. On the envelope of one of his letters to Brown, Darwin scribbled: 'I wrote the inclosed [*sic*] at a public house when I was much fatigued, and I fear you will not be able to decipher it . . . I do not recollect any other of your objections, but I thought them all easily answered' (Welsh 1825: 44–66; King-Hele 1981: 298–303).

In the *Zoonomia*, Darwin had constructed a Romantic metaphysics, opposing mechanistic accounts of life with his own brand of vitalism. Naturally, in the 1790s, in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, political anxieties about the

[5] The Academy of Physics Minute Book is held at the National Library of Scotland, Acc. 10,073/1: 41–4. See also Welsh 1825: 77–9, 498–506; Cantor 1975.

[6] On Erasmus Darwin's career and writings, see Stirling 1894: chs 2 and 3; King-Hele 1963: ch. 4; Primer 1964; King-Hele 1977: ch. 12, 1986: 14; McNeil 1987: 100–5; Porter 1989.

implications of materialism and atheism were intense. Although, at the beginning of the work, Darwin endorsed the standard metaphysics of the day—including the separation between two substances, spirit and matter—as the work progressed it would have become clear to his readers that Darwin was not using the word 'spirit' in a conventional sense. Darwin rather used the terms 'spirit', 'spirit of animation', and 'living principle' to refer to a subtle fluid, 'which resides throughout the body', but especially in the brain and nerves; which may be 'matter of a finer kind', and which causes contraction of animal fibres. This 'spirit of animation', Darwin argued, even if it may be, in some ambiguous sense, immaterial, must be able to assume the property of solidity in order to interact causally with the muscles and limbs (Darwin 1794–6: i. 10–12, 23–30, 109–16).

Brown's response in his *Observations* undertook a sometimes wearyingly detailed unpicking of the arguments of *Zoonomia*, focusing especially on the appeal to subtle fluids and on the associated, apparently materialistic, account of mind. In the course of this critique can be found the seeds of many of Brown's later philosophical positions. It is here, for example, that we find the first indication of certain views, later described as 'positivist' by John Stuart Mill and others:

> To philosophize is nothing more, than to register the appearances of nature, and to mark those, which each is accustomed to succeed; and, though we have words, which seem to express, causation, we shall find, if we examine the ideas signified, that they merely state the existence of a change.

Philosophy should be, Brown argued, 'nothing more than the statement of a series of phenomena'. It was for these reasons that Darwin's appeal to unobservable subtle fluids was unphilosophical. If natural philosophy was in the business of describing mere regularities in phenomena, nothing was added to the account by appealing to the action of unseen substances supposedly intervening between the observed causes (such as stimulation of the bodily senses) and observed effects (such as mental sensations).

This rejection of the interposition of an ethereal fluid between mental and physical events would be extended in Brown's later writing on cause and effect to a rejection of any intervening item at all, whether an ethereal 'fluid' or a mysterious 'power', between causes and effects. In the *Observations*, this minimalist account of causation was also used to attack Darwin's alleged materialism. 'The systems of materialism', Brown wrote, 'owe their rise to the groundless belief that we are acquainted with the nature of causation.' The difference between the materialist and the 'mentalist', as Brown termed himself, was that the latter was prepared to admit ignorance of the manner in which material changes caused mental changes, whereas the former claimed to know that ideas were constituted by the movements of an unobserved subtle fluid (Brown 1798: Preface).

The *Observations* thus contained early statements of Brown's opposition to materialism and subtle fluids; his stance on philosophical method and the nature of

causation; and also his scepticism about Darwin's controversial view that the 'various species of animal, and vegetable life' had proceeded 'from a single living filament, susceptible of modification, by the accretion of parts, and by its own exertions' (Brown 1798: 463).

Opposition to materialism also set the tone for several articles written by Brown for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802–3. The core members of the Academy of Physics and the founders of the *Edinburgh Review* were in large measure the same people. They had attended Dugald Stewart's moral philosophy lectures, were Whigs rather than Tories, tended more towards rational and natural religion than full-blown Christianity, and were also united by a worldview based on reverence for inductive natural philosophy. The names of Bacon and Newton had almost saintly status for these individuals (Clive 1957; Cantor 1975: 131–4). Brown contributed six articles in the first year of the review's existence, including one criticizing Thomas Belsham's materialistic philosophy of mind, and another casting a sceptical eye at the new science of phrenology ([Brown] 1803b, 1803c). Brown also contributed an article on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, one of the first on this subject to be published in Britain. The article reviewed a summary of Kant by the French philosopher Charles Villers (1801). The fact that Brown based his account on a secondary French source rather than on the original German has, understandably, been a cause for criticism. René Wellek's judgement on Brown's review, in his 1931 study on *Immanuel Kant in England, 1793–1838*, was that Brown had succeeded only in destroying a philosophical idol who bore the faintest of similarities to the real Kant, and that he thus misled and deterred many potential readers of Kant unnecessarily (Wellek 1931: 32–8). James McCosh wrote of Brown's article simply that 'the whole review is a blunder' (McCosh 1875: 320).

Brown's main criticism of the Kantian system as he understood it was that it failed, despite its claims, to establish a third way between dogmatism and scepticism. He added that there was an unnecessary 'minuteness of nomenclature' in the system, which did not correspond to the discovery of a comparable number of new facts or relations ([Brown] 1803a: 263–4). He would later make the same criticism of Reid and the Common Sense school (Brown 1828, Lecture 32: 207). It was perhaps fitting that Brown's influence and reputation would be seriously damaged later in the century by the efforts of William Hamilton, who was both a Kantian and the leading nineteenth-century proponent of the Scottish Common Sense philosophy. Through Hamilton, the Kantians ultimately had their revenge for Brown's youthful dismissal of their system.[7]

The following year, 1804, saw the publication of Brown's first volume of poetry. Sir Walter Scott wrote to a friend: 'Tom Brown is well, but having published a collection of poems which were rather too metaphysical for the public taste, he has

[7] McCosh 1875: 319–20 makes the same point. On Hamilton's philosophy, see Tropea 2001.

become shyer than ever' (Grierson 1932: 309). Brown seems to have been alone in thinking his time and talents equally well used in composing poetry as in writing and teaching metaphysics. Cockburn recalled that 'His friend Dr Gregory described his poetry as too philosophical, and his philosophy as too poetical' (Cockburn 1909: 347). Welsh recorded, similarly, that there was increasing consternation during the later years of Brown's life about the frequency with which he published new poetical works and the amount of time he spent on these at the expense of philosophy (Welsh 1825: 393–4). The most successful of Brown's poetical works was *The Paradise of Coquettes* (1814), which was published anonymously, and reviewed favourably by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* ([Jeffrey] 1814). His collected poetical works were published in four volumes posthumously in 1820. There was never any demand for a second edition.[8]

2.3 The Leslie Affair: Cause and Effect

The 'Leslie Affair' of 1805–6 provided the occasion for Brown's first mature philosophical work: his treatise on cause and effect. The idea behind all three editions of this work was simple. There was nothing more to causation than uniform succession:

> It is this mere relation of uniform antecedence, so important and so universally believed, which appears to me to constitute *all* that can be philosophically meant, in the words *power* or *causation*, to whatever objects, material or spiritual, the words may be applied. (Brown 1818: 15)

Brown gave an even more succinct formulation in his *Lectures*:

> To express, shortly, what appears to me to be the only intelligible meaning of the three most important words in physics, immediate invariable antecedence is power; the immediate invariable antecedent, in any sequence, is a cause; the immediate invariable consequent is the correlative effect. (Brown 1828: Lecture 7, p. 38)

Brown's treatment of causation was widely praised from the outset, first as a controversial pamphlet in 1805, through its development into a more substantial second edition the following year, and then into its fullest and final form, the weighty *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect* of 1818. Brown's friend Erskine described the *Inquiry* as 'the first perfect work on a metaphysical subject' and 'the crown of modern metaphysics' (quoted in Welsh 1825: 154, 454). A possibly more impartial judge, Henry Buckle, considered the book to be 'one of the greatest which the century has produced' (quoted in Burke 1970: 342–3). The Scottish philosopher Alexander Campbell Fraser later referred to it as a book which had exercised 'so considerable an influence in my early education' (Fraser 1904: 83–4).

The controversy that gave rise to Brown's treatise concerned the proposed appointment of John Leslie to the Edinburgh Chair of Natural Philosophy. Leslie,

[8] On the relationship between Brown's metaphysics and his poetry, see Rands 1970, 1974.

the favoured candidate of the evangelical wing of the church, had enthusiastically endorsed Hume's account of causation. Opponents of his appointment, wishing to see a local clergyman appointed, now claimed that this endorsement of Hume by Leslie implied religious heterodoxy.[9] Brown and Dugald Stewart were both prominent among those who sprang to Leslie's defence (Wright 2005). The incident serves as a useful illustration both of the complexity of religious and political alliances in the university (in this case Christian evangelicals and religious rationalists found themselves allied against the moderate wing of the church), and also of the way that local political circumstances can provide both the motive and the occasion for the production of new philosophical works. In this case, Brown's desire to see the Edinburgh Town Council abandon its custom of appointing only ordained ministers to chairs was the motive, and the furore surrounding Leslie's candidature, and his endorsement of Hume, was the occasion.

The product was the 1805 pamphlet, in which Brown argued that Hume's doctrine in no way tended towards infidelity. In fact, Brown argued, the reverse was the case. It was those who believed in the reality of a third item—some causal power intervening between cause and effect—who were demeaning the Deity. On his theory, Brown concluded, the glory of the Creator was increased, 'by destroying that supposed connecting link between the antecedent will of the Deity and the consequent rise of the World, which, if it be not greater than the Creating Will, must at least seem to divide with it the grandeur and the glory of the Magnificent Effect' (Brown 1818: xiii–xiv). Despite the ingenuity of the argument, and the successful appointment of Leslie to the chair, the allegation that this view of causation undermined causal arguments for the existence of God persisted, notably in Lady Mary Shepherd's 1824 *Essay upon the Relation of Cause and Effect*.[10]

Brown's ideas about causation continue to be invoked in contemporary philosophical discussions. Stathis Psillos has made a particular study of Brown's view, which he describes as 'intricate, deep, and interesting' and as a partially successful attempt to 'carve a conceptual space between Reid and Hume and to combine the thought that causation as it is in the world is invariable sequence with the thought that belief in causality need not require observations of invariable successions'. In light of this, Psillos suggests, Brown's place in the history of thought about causation 'needs to be favourably reassessed' (Psillos 2011: 239). Such a reassessment of Brown's *Inquiry* might examine three particular aspects of its importance: first as an extended critique of David Hume's theory of causation; secondly as the first substantial defence of the 'uniformity' or 'regularity' view of cause and effect; and finally as a source of later positivist ideas.

[9] On the details of the Leslie case, see Clark 1962; Morrell 1975.

[10] See [Shepherd] 1824: 136–51, and also Blakey 1848: iv. 39–46. Wright 2005: 338–40 provides an excellent summary of the theological issues at stake. On Shepherd's contributions, see McRobert 2000; Bolton 2011.

Bernard Rollin has written that the *Inquiry* 'probably contains more careful, detailed, textually documented criticisms of Hume's theories than any work which preceded it' (Rollin 1977: ix). Brown disagreed with Hume about the source of our unshakeable belief in the necessity of causal connections. Hume argued that it came from habit or custom; that the many times we had observed B follow A in the past led us, on seeing A the next time, automatically to expect that B must again follow. Brown argued, on the other hand, that the notion of a causal connection between A and B was a simple intuition, not an idea that was a copy of any impression or series of impressions, nor the product of a rational inference: 'it is intuition, only, that passes over the darkness that is impenetrable to our vision, and speaks to us, as from another world, of the things which are beyond' (Brown 1818: 356). Brown emphasized that, as Hume had himself recognized, it did not follow any more from our seeing a stone fall a thousand times than it did from our seeing it fall once that it would always fall in the future:

> [T]he propositions *B has once succeeded A*, and *B will for ever succeed A*, are not more different, nor less comprehensive the one of the other, than the propositions *B has a thousand times succeeded A*, and *B will for ever succeed A*. Why should the future resemble the past? At every stage of observation, this question may be equally put; and, at every stage, it is equally unanswerable. (Brown 1818: 356–7; see also Brown 1828: Lecture 6, p. 35)

In other words, although we cannot justify the practice, we cannot help projecting past regularities into the future. But, for Brown, we are addicted to such projection from birth, not addicted to it by repeated experience, as Hume would have us believe. In this case Brown displayed his affinity with the teachings of the Common Sense school, and dissented from the Humean account. [11]

In other key respects, however, Brown definitively rejected the Common Sense school's analysis of the problem. Brown took Reid and his followers to task for alleging that Hume thought we lacked any meaningful notion of causal power. Brown explained that Reid and others had wrongly ascribed to Hume the following syllogism: 'We have no idea which is not a copy of some impression; we have no impression of power; we therefore have no idea of power.' When in fact what Hume argued was: 'We have no idea which is not a copy of some impression; but we have an idea of power; there must therefore be some impression from which that idea is derived' (Brown 1818: 442–3). This then returned Brown to the question of the true source of the idea of causation, which, as we have seen, he held to be innate and which Hume had suggested was acquired.

Brown also struck out into new territory by providing the first substantial defence of the 'uniformity' or 'regularity' view of causation, and by countering Reid's famous objection that on this account night must be considered the cause of day (Brown

[11] For further discussions of Brown and Hume on causation, see also Rollin 1969, 1977; Mills 1984; McRobert 2000; Fieser 2005: ii. 69–76; Harris 2005; Wright 2005; Psillos 2010: esp. 136–9; Psillos 2011.

1818: 384–7). The regularity view has sometimes been attributed to Hume. In fact the idea of causation, for Hume, involved not just an idea of uniform temporal succession but also one of necessary connection. There is much dispute over how to interpret Hume on this point.[12] But Norman Kemp Smith and others have denied that Hume was an exponent of the mere 'uniformity' view. 'Thomas Brown is the first and outstanding exponent of the uniformity view of causation', Kemp Smith wrote, 'and has been eulogized by Mill precisely on this account' (Smith 1941: 91n.).[13] Brown asserted that 'cause' and 'power' simply meant invariable antecedence; whereas Hume's point was that, however hard we looked for causal power, all we perceived was invariable antecedence.

Although Brown's philosophical writings on cause and effect preceded by three decades the creation of the *philosophie positive* by Auguste Comte, it was certainly the case that later British thinkers sympathetic to positivism (including Buckle and Mill) saw in Brown an able thinker who could be posthumously recruited to their cause. Leslie Stephen, in his 1900 volume on James Mill, wrote that Brown followed Hume and anticipated Comte in his insistence that 'cause' did not mean power, but merely invariable antecedence. Brown, Stephen concluded, was a man 'clearly on the way to positivism' (Stephen 1900: 273). Mill was influenced in his own thinking on causation by reading Brown's *Inquiry* in 1822. He, like Stephen, seems to have thought that Brown's and Hume's views on causation were identical, and that both were also largely identical with Comte's view:

> Among the direct successors of Hume, the writer who has best stated and defended Comte's fundamental doctrine is Dr Thomas Brown. The doctrine and spirit of Brown's philosophy are entirely Positivist, and no better introduction to Positivism than the early part of his *Lectures* has yet been produced. (Mill 1865a: 8)

John P. Wright has demonstrated, furthermore, that later logical positivists, in adopting David Hume as a celebrated forerunner of their own views on science and causation, were in fact adopting Brown's views rather than Hume's (Wright 2005: 345–7).

2.4 Revolting against Reid: The Philosophy of the Human Mind

Like John Leslie and many others before him, Thomas Brown had to overcome local political and theological resistance before he could be elected to a chair at Edinburgh University. Doubts about Brown, a layman with Whig sympathies, had hampered his candidacy for the chairs of rhetoric and of logic. But the vigorous support of

[12] On the place of this issue of Humean interpretation within the broader 'New Hume' debate, see Strawson 1989; Psillos 2002: ch. 1; Beebee 2006; Craig 2007.

[13] This is reiterated by Strawson 1989: 7n.; Psillos 2010: 136–9.

Dugald Stewart, the proviso that Brown should be appointed jointly with Stewart and not solely in his own right, and the support of some influential Tories, including Dr James Gregory, ensured that Brown was eventually appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy on 2 May 1810. In practice, he had already taken over from Stewart, whose health had prevented him from continuing to lecture. Francis Horner wrote to Brown a few days later to congratulate him that 'the interests of philosophical opinion in Scotland' had been 'rescued from the danger which seemed to threaten them with complete ruin, of the chair of Moral Philosophy being filled by one of those political priests who have already brought such disgrace upon the university'.[14]

There is some evidence that Dugald Stewart later came to regret his enthusiastic support for Brown's candidature, and to moderate his high opinion of his talents (Stewart 1792–1827: iii, Note C). His young colleague's lectures, while following a similar format to his own, covering the philosophy of physical enquiry, the philosophy of mind, ethics, and natural theology, were, in terms of doctrine and emphasis, radically different. Brown's main passion was for the philosophy of the human mind (hence the title of the published *Lectures*), and the majority of the lectures were given over to developing his 'physiology of the mind' or 'mental chemistry', and elaborating upon his 'laws of suggestion' (similar to the laws of 'association' of ideas found in earlier writers such as David Hartley, David Hume, and Erasmus Darwin). As a result of this, some of Stewart's favoured topics in moral philosophy, ethics, and political economy were marginalized. More importantly though, the *Lectures*, in revolting openly against Reid were revolting tacitly against Stewart. This, indeed, was precisely how Brown himself saw it. In a letter to his friend Erskine, at the end of his first academic session as Professor of Moral Philosophy, he wrote: 'I was very much *constrained*, as you may believe, by the unpleasantness of differing so essentially from Mr Stewart on many of the principal points. But . . . *Dr Reid's* name fortunately served every purpose, when I had opinions to oppose in which Mr Stewart perhaps coincided' (quoted in Welsh 1825: 195).

That first series of lectures in 1810–11, Thomas Chalmers later wrote, had been 'gotten up with something like the speed and power of magic' (Chalmers 1846: x). Brown made some further alterations to his series of a hundred lectures (over half a million words in length) in the succeeding academic sessions. He also continued to work during these years on his treatise on cause and effect, which reached its final form in 1818. But his career as Professor of Moral Philosophy was to be cut short by illness. Having collapsed while lecturing in December 1819, Brown was sent to London by his physician for a rest and change of air. He died there on 2 April 1820 at the age of 42. Brown's *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* was hurriedly posthumously prepared from his manuscripts and published before the year was out, reaching its twentieth British edition in 1860.[15] The *Lectures*, which were never intended for

[14] On this episode, see Welsh 1825: 163–90; Cockburn 1909: 237; Bourne and Taylor 1994: 635.

[15] The MS lectures are held by Edinburgh University Library, Dc.2.10–13.

publication, preserve something of their author's poetical lecturing style, and reveal Brown's thoughts on emotions and ethics, which he did not write about elsewhere.

The version of his philosophy of the human mind that Brown did intend for publication was a textbook, based on his lectures, which was published in unfinished form shortly before his death. The book's full title was *Sketch of a System of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Part First, Comprehending the Physiology of the Mind*. Not even this first part had been completed, but Brown decided it better to publish this than nothing. In the preface, Brown emphasized that this was merely a sketch, rather than a full discussion of his 'many original views of the general phenomena of the mind, and many new analyses of some of its most perplexing phenomena'. He used the same preface to give a very forceful statement of his opposition to the faculty psychology of 'a particular School of Metaphysics' that was 'prevalent in the northern part of the Island' (Brown 1820: viii, x). The order and division of the material in the *Sketch* mirrors closely that followed in the first half of the *Lectures*, the principal difference between the two treatments being the brevity of argument, simplicity of prose, and relative lack of illustrative examples in the *Sketch* compared with the *Lectures*. The decisions Brown took about which aspects of the material to emphasize in his textbook give us some clue as to what he considered the most important topics. Around a quarter of the *Sketch*, for example, is taken up with a discussion of the muscular feeling of resistance and of Reid's and Hume's arguments regarding belief in an external world (Brown 1820: 77–144).

One key aspect of Brown's revolt against Reid was on this question of belief in the external world, which had become a staple of eighteenth-century philosophical debate. Brown denied that Reid had, as had sometimes erroneously been claimed on his behalf, successfully refuted the sceptical arguments of Berkeley and Hume, and given a reasoned proof of the existence of an external world. It may be, however, that on this point Brown was closer to Reid's own position than he realized. We could not help believing in an outward material world, Brown taught, just as we could not help believing in the regularity of nature, but neither experience nor reasoning could provide an adequate basis for those beliefs; it was intuition that was their source. As we have seen, Brown's philosophy of cause and effect combined the emphasis on intuitive universal beliefs characteristic of the Common Sense school with an inherent sympathy for Humean scepticism. This combination was also apparent in the *Sketch* and the *Lectures*. Brown could, perhaps, be described as a 'Common Sense sceptic'. A quip of Brown's, asserting the similarity of the Reidian and Humean philosophies, suggests that he did indeed think it quite possible to combine the two:

> Reid bawled out that we must believe in an outward world; but added, in a whisper, we can give no reason for our belief. Hume cries out we can give no reason for such a notion; and whispers, I own we cannot get rid of it. (Mackintosh 1837: 346; Brown 1820: 142–4)

Brown's aim was to assert each proposition with equal force.

Brown's analysis of the belief in an outward world was distinctive in the emphasis it put upon a sixth sense—the muscular sense of resistance. His Scottish and French

predecessors alike (for example, Reid, Stewart, and Condillac) had agreed that the five senses together, and especially the sense of touch, were sufficient to produce belief in the reality of an external world. Brown placed a great deal of emphasis on the feeling of resistance in the muscles and the bodily frame. This, he said, was the sensation that was most responsible for bringing about such belief. Several commentators, past and present, have cited this theory as one of Brown's most important and original contributions to the history of psychological thought (McCosh 1875: 328; Boring 1950; Reed 1997: 64–74).

However, it was this very same doctrine that was at the heart of the accusations made by William Hamilton from 1830 onwards that Brown had, in addition to misunderstanding Reid, made countless 'silent appropriations' from the French *Idéologues* in general, and from Antoine Destutt de Tracy in particular (Hamilton 1852: 868n.; Hamilton 1853: 99n.; Halévy 1901–4: iii. 247). The accusation of disguised dependence, if not out and out plagiarism, was subsequently repeated in two works by French writers (Réthoré 1863: v–vi, 128–9, 238–51; Picavet 1891: 494–7). There was certainly a good deal of similarity between de Tracy's and Brown's accounts of the special role of muscular resistance in bringing about belief in external objects.[16] However, this might just as well be explained by common sources (including Condillac and Berkeley) as by Brown's dependence on de Tracy. [17] Another source for Brown's ideas on the muscle sense would have been Darwin's *Zoonomia*. Darwin had suggested that 'the whole muscular system may be considered as one organ of sense', and that this organ was the primary source of our notions of solidity and extension (Darwin 1794–6: i. 123).

The connection between Brown's philosophy of the human mind and that of the French *Idéologues* was also made by three of the nineteenth century's principal historians of philosophy. Robert Blakey, J. D. Morell, and James McCosh all accused Brown of expounding a philosophy of mind that was at least allied with, if not identical to, French Sensationalism (Morell 1846: ii. 27, 33; Blakey 1848: iv. 28; McCosh 1875: 10). Brown himself was, in fact, very critical of Condillac and the sensationalists for their 'excessive simplification' of Lockean mental philosophy, but he was equally opposed to the Reidian multiplication of powers and faculties. Oversimplification of the mind and the creation of redundant categories were both equally mistaken, and 'the philosophy of Dr Reid, with its long catalogue of intellectual and active powers of the mind, may be considered as exemplifying one extreme, as the philosophy of Condillac exemplifies the other' (Brown 1820: 178–9). Brown differed from Condillac in that Condillac claimed that sensations were somehow transformed into more complex mental states, whereas Brown preferred the statement that certain primary sensations caused more complex mental states; he called Condillac's system a form of 'intellectual alchemy', in contrast to his own 'mental chemistry' (Brown 1828: Lectures 32–3, pp. 207–13).[18]

[16] Compare Brown 1828: Lecture 24, esp. pp. 148–51, with Destutt de Tracy 1970: i. 124–9.

[17] For further discussion, see also Mills 1987; Stewart-Robertson 1988.

[18] On the similarity of Brown's and Condillac's systems, nonetheless, see Stephen 1900: 282–4.

The principal ways, then, in which both the *Lectures* and the *Sketch* constituted a revolt against the philosophy of Reid and Stewart can all be traced back to the same origin: namely, Brown's refusal to believe in the reality of unobservable metaphysical entities. As we have seen, 'power' was interpreted by Brown as shorthand for invariable antecedence and not as the name for any kind of entity. He was equally iconoclastic when it came to belief in physical qualities or properties; these were to be understood as shorthand for the fact that certain substances existed in particular causal relations with other substances. Again, when it came to the philosophy of the human mind, Brown rejected belief in the reality of psychological 'powers' or 'faculties'. All that existed, on Brown's philosophy of mind, was the mind itself in different states (Brown 1828: Lecture 16, pp. 97–103).

These ideas certainly had considerable influence within the fields of mental science and psychology during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Several of Brown's teachings, including especially his version of the 'mental science' methodology, and his new classification of mental states, were widely adopted. Brown had divided mental-scientific methodology into two tasks: first, analysing mental states into their components ('mental chemistry'—an idea picked up on by both the Mills), and, secondly, discovering the laws of succession of mental states ('mental physics') (Mill 1829; Mill 1843: ii. 502–5). These were what Brown called his 'laws of suggestion'. The division of mental phenomena into 'Sensations', 'Thoughts', and 'Emotions' was another characteristic feature of Brown's system that was adopted by several later psychologists; as was the classification of the emotions as 'Retrospective', 'Immediate', and 'Prospective'. Later writers who showed their indebtedness to Brown by adopting some or all of these positions included the Congregationalist divine George Payne, James and John Stuart Mill, evangelicals such as David Welsh, Thomas Chalmers, and Thomas Upham, the Scottish philosophical writers John Abercrombie and George Ramsay, the Scottish-Canadian minister William Lyall, and later nineteenth-century psychologists including Herbert Spencer, Alexander Bain, and James McCosh. It was through the works of writers such as these that Brown's presence continued to be felt in theology, philosophy, and psychology through to the end of the nineteenth century.[19]

2.5 Rational Religion and Ethical Emotions

Many of the later nineteenth-century philosophers and psychologists who were influenced by Thomas Brown were to be found at the secular end of the spectrum of thought. And accusations of religious heterodoxy, explicit or implicit, were a

[19] Payne 1828; Mill 1829; Chalmers 1833; Lyall 1842, 1848, 1855; Mill 1843; Ramsay 1848, 1853, 1857; Upham 1856; Bain 1859; Spencer 1870–2; McCosh 1880, 1886, 1887. On Brown's impact on psychology, see Stephen 1900: 271–87; Page 1980; Flynn 1988; Richards 1992: 332–9; Reed 1997: 68–76; Dixon 2002a, 2002b, 2003: chs 4 and 5.

recurring feature of nineteenth-century responses to Brown's writings, especially in reviews written for Christian periodicals in Britain and America. Even Brown's friend and student David Welsh felt some anxiety about taking on the role of biographer to someone who was reputed to be indifferent to Christianity, and whose published works were indicative of a purely philosophical and natural religion, rather than the distinctively Christian faith of the evangelicals, with its emphasis on the Bible, sin, and salvation. Welsh's biographer wrote that 'No one lamented more than Dr Welsh his distinguished friend's religious views. He, during Dr Brown's life, pressed on him the arguments in favour of the Christian faith', but apparently without success (Dunlop 1846: 24).

The championing of Brown by another divine was a major factor in the continued attention devoted to his work during the 1830s and 1840s. The evangelical leader Thomas Chalmers has been described variously as 'the second most influential Scotsman of his generation', as 'possibly the most influential Scotsman of his generation', and, by James McCosh, as a thinker who 'had greater influence in moulding the religious belief and character of his countrymen than any one since the greatest Scotchman, John Knox' (McCosh 1875: 393; Hilton 1988: 55; Devine 1999: 364). Chalmers led an ultimately unsuccessful campaign to have a monument erected to Brown in Edinburgh.[20] He did, however, succeed in keeping the memory of Brown's thought alive by writing the preface to an 1846 reissue of the ethical portions of Brown's *Lectures*. The influence of Brown's ideas, especially his treatment of the emotions, had also been very evident in Chalmers' 1833 Bridgewater Treatise, *On the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man*.[21]

Chalmers held that the most important function of natural theology was 'guiding the way to our Revealed Theology'. He noted that Brown did 'not expressly treat of revelation', and later that 'Brown had very low and inadequate views of the character of God.' But Chalmers reassured his readers that many of Brown's views 'shed a pleasing and confirmatory light on what may be termed the moral dynamics of the gospel'. What Chalmers' preface to the ethical portion of the *Lectures* sought to show was that Brown's views could be profitably used by Christians, even though they were not themselves inherently Christian. Chalmers recommended that Brown be read alongside Dugald Stewart and Bishop Butler, and that readers would then discover that Brown's philosophy could suggest 'many accordances between the science of mind and the subject-matter of Christianity' (Chalmers 1846: xxii–xxiii; see also Hilton 1988: 179). As is clear from several of the reviews of Brown's works in the periodical press, however, many were not convinced that his works could be thus baptized. The

[20] On Chalmers' admiration for Brown, see Hanna 1878: i. 490–4; ii. 4–5, 99, 104–5. Letters relating to the planned memorial are held in New College Library, Edinburgh, CHA 4.54.42; 4.64.3–7; 4.101.1–2; 4.240.83. See also National Library of Scotland, MS 3704, fos 84–6.

[21] For further discussion, see Dixon 2003: 127–34.

Christian Spectator in 1826, for example, complained that Brown's *Lectures* contained 'scarcely the remotest reference to a single passage' of scripture, that his system was 'essentially pagan', and that it could prove dangerously 'seductive' to 'inexperienced youths, fond of speculation', not yet settled in their Christian commitment (Anon. 1826: 153–5). In his lectures on natural theology, Brown, it was true, did not invoke the Bible. He confined his remarks instead to standard philosophical arguments for the existence, power, and goodness of the Author and Preserver of nature. His religion seemed more rational than revealed, which is what his evangelical critics would have meant by calling him 'pagan'.

Brown's ethical system seemed more pagan than Christian to such critics too. Here Brown's interest in the 'emotions' was again prominent. Brown's view of moral judgement was that it was in fact a kind of emotion. We might detect here an echo of Hume's famous dictum that 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions' (Hume 1978: 415; see also Dixon 2003: 104–9). Brown distinguished his view from that of 'moral sense' theorists such as Hutcheson, as well as from the utilitarian theory of William Paley (Brown 1828: Lectures 80–2, pp. 535–56). For Brown, our moral approval of an action is identical to a particular kind of feeling. 'To say that an action excites in us this feeling', Brown wrote, 'and to say, that it appears us to us right, or virtuous, or conformable to duty, are to say precisely the same thing.' Our moral capacities, Brown concluded, could be traced back to an 'ultimate fact in the constitution of our nature': namely, the 'original tendency of the mind, by which, in certain circumstances, we are susceptible of moral emotions'. The universality of morality was justified by the identical constitutions of all human minds, and this constitution revealed the intentions of the Deity (Brown 1828: Lecture 74, pp. 493–9).

Jerome Schneewind has emphasized the originality of Brown in defending this ethical emotivism: 'Brown, apparently alone among nineteenth-century moralists, denies that morality is a matter of reason, and claims that it rests solely on feeling' (Schneewind 1977: 78). Only in the twentieth century would it become more common for philosophers, notably logical positivists and existentialists, to interpret moral statements as expressions of emotion rather than as ascriptions of objective moral qualities. In ethics then, as well as in metaphysics and epistemology, Thomas Brown seems indeed to have been a man clearly on his way to positivism.

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3

A Re-examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy

Gordon Graham

In *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* John Passmore takes the publication of John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* in 1843 as his starting point, calling it a 'natural watershed' between philosophical past and future. And he attributes a part in this important shift in philosophical orientation to Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*.

> Hamilton was a philosopher with an enormous, not to say fantastic, reputation. He inherited the tradition of 'Scottish philosophy' initiated by Thomas Reid in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764), a work which Hamilton edited with copious annotations. But as well, he brought to philosophy an awe-inspiring erudition—not always, indeed, of the most accurate sort, but there were few fit to dispute his scholarship. In particular, he wrote as an expert on Continental philosophy, which he set out to conjoin, at certain points with the Scottish tradition. The greater part of Mill's *Examination* is devoted to showing that this combination is an unstable one, that Hamilton's philosophy, indeed, is a tissue of inconsistencies and ambiguities. So effectively did he undertake this thankless task that the 'Scottish school' never really recovered from the blow, although it lingered on for some time in Scotland and in the United States, where it became a sort of 'official philosophy' in the less adventurous Colleges. (Passmore 1966: 29–30)

Passmore's various contentions in this passage do not bear very close critical scrutiny. If there was a period in which the 'Scottish School' had near official status in the American colleges, it was during the earlier era when John Witherspoon established Scottish moral philosophy as the foundation of college education at Princeton in 1768, and his successor Stanhope Smith gave Reid canonical status until his retirement for the presidency of Princeton in 1810. In Hamilton's own day the colleges at Princeton and Yale, it is true, had presidents who thought very highly of him, but they can hardly be described as 'less adventuresome', especially in the period during which they laid the foundations of the major universities that they were to become.[1] Nevertheless,

[1] For more on this, see Chapter 8 in this volume.

Passmore does give succinct expression to a remarkable phenomenon—Sir William Hamilton's spectacular and rapid fall from intellectual grace. During his tenure of the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh, between 1836 and 1856, Hamilton was regarded, not only in Scotland but in Britain, Europe, and North America, as possibly the greatest living philosopher, to be ranked alongside Descartes, Kant, and Hegel.

In the years immediately following his death this reputation persisted. Hamilton was explicitly ranked alongside Plato and Kant in the Blackwood book series 'Philosophical Classics'. Four volumes of his unpublished lectures were prepared for publication by Henry Mansel, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and John Veitch, Professor of Logic at Glasgow, who declared in the introduction that Hamilton's 'speculative accomplishments [and] profound philosophical learning . . . were conjoined in an equal degree by no other man of his time'.

Noah Porter, subsequently President of Yale, records that the articles Hamilton published in the *Edinburgh Review* were considered by the many Americans who read them as 'the most remarkable contributions to the history and criticism of metaphysical science . . . in the English language for that generation' (Porter in Veitch 1869: 421). In Canada, John Clark Murray, Professor of Mental and Moral Science at Queens University, carefully assembled excerpts from Hamilton's lectures as a standard philosophical text for Canadian students, and in a short introductory note to the resulting volume, which was widely adopted, James McCosh described Hamilton as 'the greatest metaphysician of his age' (Clark Murray 1870: xxiii).

Few philosophers have ever been accorded such high praise by their professional contemporaries. Yet within thirty years or so, Hamilton had virtually disappeared into academic obscurity. Though this was lamented by a faithful few, for the most part his work was disregarded in the community of philosophers, and increasingly his name was unknown. Such a dramatic reversal must be very nearly unique in the annals of philosophy. Furthermore, Hamilton's reputation has never really recovered. Whatever the truth of Passmore's comment about the 'Scottish school' at the time he made it, since the mid-1960s Thomas Reid's philosophical reputation has undergone a notable revival, evidenced in the publication of a new edition of his collected works, a great many journal articles devoted to him, and several full-length monographs published by major academic presses. Nothing like this has happened to Hamilton. In the same period probably not more than a dozen articles have mentioned him.

Passmore also articulates a view still relatively widely held, if largely in ignorance, that it was Mill's devastating *Examination* of Hamilton which was chiefly responsible for this complete philosophical demise. This belief has led, ironically perhaps, to the *Examination* being Mill's least-read work, so that those who subscribe to it are rarely in a position to assess the cogency of his critique. This fact provides some reason to undertake a re-examination of Hamilton's philosophy, which is the purpose of this chapter. Its aim is fourfold—to sketch the context of Hamilton's philosophical work in a way that makes his contemporaries' assessment intelligible, to provide an exposition of his central contentions, to examine the relevance and force of Mill's

critique, and to offer some assessment of how, in retrospect, Hamilton's philosophy should be regarded.

3.1 The Rise and Fall of Hamilton's Reputation

The verdict of history with respect to Hamilton seems to be certain; no one now would place him in the company of the 'great' philosophers, as his inclusion in the Blackwood series did. Why then did his contemporaries regard him so highly? This question is relatively easy to answer. Partly it was a result of his impressive personal appearance and intellectual charisma—'bright affable manners . . . radiant with frank kindliness, honest humanity and intelligence', Thomas Carlyle records in his *Memoir*, as well as lectures delivered in 'a strong, carelessly melodious tenor voice, the sound of it betokening seriousness and cheerfulness; occasionally something slightly remonstrative was in the undertones, indicating well in the background possibilities of virtuous wrath and fire' (quoted in Veitch 1883: 19). More important than his personal impressiveness, however, was the fact that Hamilton was held to have revitalized philosophical thought, both in Scotland and abroad. After the vigour of the eighteenth century, its practitioners seemed to have fallen into the stale repetition of familiar and very well-worn positions. This was true in France where Condillac's 'sensationalist' psychology had held unchallenged sway, though as Hamilton himself, writing in 1830, remarks, '[i]n the history of French philosophy . . . the last ten years stand in the most remarkable contrast to . . . the state of thralldom in that country during the [preceding] century to one of chronic despotism—perpetuating itself by paralyzing speculation' (Hamilton 1853: 42). Against the background of philosophical luminaries like Hume, Smith, and Reid, the decline of philosophy in Scotland was especially bad, and made to seem worse because of the 'contrast . . . which the philosophical enthusiasm of France exhibits to the speculative apathy of Britain' (Hamilton 1853: 43). 'In 1836', the year that Hamilton was appointed to the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh, 'philosophy was at a lower ebb in Scotland than at any time since the advent of Francis Hutcheson from Ireland to Glasgow', Alexander Campbell Fraser, then a student in Edinburgh, tells us. 'Thomas Brown had passed away sixteen years, Dugald Stewart eight years, and Sir James Mackintosh nearly four. The Scottish chairs of philosophy were no longer occupied by philosophers' (Fraser 1904: 47).

Hamilton's appointment to the Chair of Logic changed all this. Students like John Veitch suddenly experienced someone whose 'power as a teacher . . . inspired the youth who listened to him by the feeling of an absolutely disinterested love of truth . . . [so that] to those who followed from day to day the clear, firm-paced, vigorous and consecutive steps of his prelections, he became the moulder of their intellectual life' (Veitch 1883: 25). Personal encounter was not the whole explanation of Hamilton's influence, however. His approach to philosophy, as conveyed by his writings, was equally powerful. Across the Atlantic in the United States, which Hamilton never

visited and where no one knew him personally, the colleges were experiencing 'a period of fermentation and almost revolutionary anarchy in philosophical thinking'. When the anonymously authored *Edinburgh Review* papers first made their entry into this ferment, Noah Porter recalls, 'the learning, acuteness, and strength which were so lavishly expended on the discussion [of the topics they dealt with] could not fail to be responded to by the appreciating regard of many youthful students who were just waking to the sublime but critical attractions of philosophical inquiry' (Porter in Veitch 1869: 423). 'The article on the Philosophy of Perception attracted attention among all our philosophical students, and established at once the highest reputation for its then unknown author . . . The article became at once a classical treatise which it was necessary for every thorough student to read and master' (Porter in Veitch 1869: 424).

The power of Hamilton's philosophical essays on the thought of his time at home and abroad resulted from the unusual combination of philosophical sources in which he was educated. Born in Glasgow, where his father was Regius Professor of Anatomy and Botany at the University (and Thomas Reid's family physician), he became a student at the University of Glasgow in 1803. Reid's 'Common Sense School' was still the dominant, and increasingly moribund, philosophy. Hamilton's teachers included James Mylne, the Professor of Moral Philosophy, who, though 'probably the most independent thinker in the Scottish philosophical professoriate' according to Campbell Fraser, published nothing in his long tenure of the post. Hamilton's outstanding academic record at Glasgow enabled him to win a Snell Exhibitioner, and thereby follow (among others) Adam Smith in continuing his studies at Balliol College, Oxford. At Oxford the study of Aristotle was in the ascendant, and Hamilton acquired an extensive knowledge of Aristotle, graduating with a first class arts degree in 1811. There followed a period at the Bar, during which legal investigations enabled him to claim the baronetcy of the ancient family of Hamilton, in abeyance since 1701. Consequently, it was as Sir William Hamilton that he made two key visits to Germany in 1817 and 1820, as a result of which he became fluent in German and widely read in German philosophy. He thus became the first Scottish (and British) philosopher of any consequence to engage with the immensely influential movement that Kant had inaugurated. This third strand in his intellectual formation gave Hamilton a unique orientation. His grounding in Common Sense philosophy in Glasgow left him with an enduring admiration for Thomas Reid. His study of Aristotle at Oxford resulted in a great facility in logic, and a deep belief in its importance. His two visits to Germany gave him an unrivalled textual knowledge of Kant's philosophy as well as Schelling's (though not of Hegel's it seems). And his avid collecting of books everywhere he went gave him a large personal library, which, annotations show, he studied closely.

This mastery of material from ancient, Scottish, and continental sources, virtually ensured Hamilton's pre-eminence in the philosophical context in which he finally found an academic position. Hitherto, 'Scottish philosophy', John Veitch noted in two lectures on Hamilton that he gave to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in 1883,

. . . in its origin and main features [had] no marks about it of a foreign importation . . . [T]he free speculative thought of Scotland was born in the universities of the country . . . [a condition] almost peculiar to Scotland. In France the free thought of the country was represented by Descartes and Malebranche, in Holland by Spinoza, in England by Locke . . . not one of them men identified with the universities of their country, rather out of sympathy with them . . . That Scottish speculative thought was a product of the universities, that it was given first to a body of students in the way of lectures, and not in the form of books for the world, may serve to explain its moderation, some people would say its timidity, on purely speculative questions; certainly to explain the simple, untechnical style in which it is for the most part clothed . . . [T]he philosophy of Scotland may be characterized as the common-sense of mankind analysed, purified, and vindicated. (Veitch 1883: 9–13)

Against this background, Hamilton's much more high-flown philosophical style in the *Edinburgh Review* essays, with their unparalleled knowledge of 'continental philosophy' and use of technical language, could hardly fail to impress, and the essays were initially made yet more intriguing by the fact that they appeared anonymously.

In executing these essays, commissioned as book reviews by the *Review*'s enterprising editor, Macvey Napier, Hamilton was compelled to garner his vast learning and focus it clearly on some fundamental problems regarding knowledge and perception. For a considerable time, these had come to be regarded as insoluble. The fact that they took recent publications as their starting point connected them immediately with the contemporary philosophical world. In that world, though, they had real novelty, and by bringing new resources to bear on old problems, they struck readers as fresh and revitalizing.

It was just three essays—on 'The Philosophy of the Unconditioned', 'The Philosophy of Perception', and 'Logic'—that led to Hamilton's first (and only) significant academic appointment at the relatively late age of 48. During his tenure of the Edinburgh Chair he published a collected edition of Thomas Reid's *Works* in two volumes, to which he appended very lengthy supplementary essays amounting to almost half the second volume. A few years later, despite ill health, he completed a collected edition of Dugald Stewart's works. The philosophy essays appeared in book form in 1852 (with a second edition one year later), but the larger part of the book was composed of other contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* on different topics—education, literature, and university reform. Following his death in 1856, the lectures he gave at Edinburgh were eventually published under the editorship of Henry Mansel and John Veitch. They ran to four volumes, but turned out not to have changed much over the twenty years in which he delivered them. All things considered, then, despite the hundreds of pages that he wrote and published, the true corpus of Hamilton's philosophical work consisted in those first three essays. One hundred and fifty pages of material, presented in the form of book reviews, is a rather slender basis for enduring philosophical greatness, and this is part of the explanation why, when it came under close and rather less sympathetic examination, Hamilton's philosophy was not deemed to bear very much scrutiny.

3.2 Kant, Reid, and Hamilton's 'Philosophy of the Conditioned'

The first of these essays was, ostensibly, a review of Victor Cousin's *Cours de philosophie*, the text of lectures Cousin had given to great acclaim, and published in Paris in 1828. It was Cousin who first coined the expression *Philosophie écossaise* (the title of a work never translated into English), and he represented it as a distinctive answer to the persistent challenge of the philosophical scepticism inaugurated by David Hume. This 'Scottish' answer was to be contrasted with an alternative 'German' one. The first—which appealed to the principle of 'Common Sense'—owed its origins to the empirical moral psychology of Reid's *Inquiry*, while the second—which invoked the concept of 'transcendental apperception'—had developed out of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Neither answer was deemed wholly satisfactory, and in his *Cours de philosophie*, Cousin aimed to repair their deficiency by an 'eclectic' mix of both, along with other philosophical components.

In 'The Philosophy of the Unconditioned' Hamilton identifies Cousin's eclecticism as one of four logical possibilities, the other three being transcendental idealism (Kant), mysticism (Schelling), and a 'philosophy of the conditioned' or 'natural realism', as his version of Common Sense came to be called. Natural realism was intended to, and for a while was held to, resolve the problem of scepticism by judiciously combining Kantian insights about the limitations of human thought, with the firm foundation that Reid's appeal to the principles of common sense was supposed to have supplied. The key to this project lay in seeing that recognition of the inescapably 'conditioned' nature of human knowledge did not carry the implication that reality is thereby fashioned by the concepts we employ.

> The conditioned is the mean between two extremes—two inconditionates, exclusive of each other, neither of which can be conceived as possible, but of which, on the principles of contradiction and the excluded middle, one must be admitted as necessary. On this opinion, therefore, reason is shown to be weak, but not deceitful. The mind is not represented as conceiving two propositions subversive of each other, as equally possible; but only, as unable to understand as possible, either of two extremes; one of which, however, on the ground of their mutual repugnance, it is compelled to recognize as true. We are thus taught the salutary lesson, that the capacity of thought is not to be constituted into the measure of existence; and are warned from recognizing the domain of our knowledge as necessarily co-extensive with the horizon of our faith. And by a wonderful revelation, we are thus, in the very consciousness of our inability to conceive aught above the relative and finite, inspired with a belief in the existence of something unconditioned beyond the sphere of all comprehensible reality. (Hamilton 1853: 15)

The 'inconditionates' to which Hamilton here refers are the Infinite and the Absolute. The Absolute is that which admits of no further division or analysis, and the Infinite is that which admits of unlimited division. This was a novel use of the terms 'absolute' and 'infinite', because, for the most part, philosophers had hitherto used them interchangeably. An important, and subsequently highly contended, step in Hamilton's

philosophy was to employ them as opposites. His key premise, accordingly, is that the 'Infinite' and the 'Absolute' are mutually exclusive conceptions of 'the unconditioned'. At the same time, they exhaust the possibilities; either reality is without limit—the Infinite—or it has some limit which human thought cannot penetrate—the Absolute. We know that one must be true, but we cannot know which one. That is what is meant by saying that 'the domain of our knowledge [is not] necessarily co-extensive with the horizon of our faith'. This necessary combination of affirmation and ignorance means that all human knowledge must fall, and be content to fall, between the two, while at the same time acknowledging 'a belief in the existence of something unconditioned beyond the sphere of all comprehensible reality'.

This argument about the necessary either/or of the Absolute and the Infinite reveals the way in which Hamilton's thought was influenced by Kant. The 'antinomies' to which Kant draws attention uncover the inescapable limits of the human mind's endeavours. The question is whether, and how, Hamilton's assertion differs from the Kantian postulation of a world of unknowable 'things-in-themselves'. And in what relation, if any, does the 'mean' which this 'philosophy of the conditioned' commends stand to Reid's 'Principles of Common Sense'? Hamilton's answer to the first of these questions is as follows. 'Kant has clearly shown, that the Idea of the Unconditioned can have no objective reality—that it conveys no knowledge—and that it involves the most insoluble contradictions' (Hamilton 1853: 17). However, the distinction that Kant draws between Reason (*Vernunft*) and Understanding (*Verstand*) creates a difficulty. *Vernunft*, supposedly, gives us access to the Unconditioned, while *Verstand* give us access to the Conditioned. This lends a spuriously positive character to the Unconditioned, Hamilton contends. It suggests that at some level or other we could have knowledge of things-in-themselves—which is to say, knowledge of the unknowable, a plainly contradictory supposition. It is thus essential, Hamilton thinks, that the 'unconditioned' should be defined purely negatively—as 'containing nothing even conceivable'. Employing Kant's distinction, Hamilton argues, shows Understanding to be 'weak', but it shows Reason to be 'deceitful'.

> The imperfection and partiality of Kant's analysis are betrayed in its consequences. His doctrine leads to absolute scepticism. Speculative reason, on Kant's own admission, is an organ of mere delusion. The idea of the unconditioned, about which it is conversant, is shown to involve insoluble contradictions, and yet to be the legitimate product of intelligence. Hume has well observed, 'that it matters not whether we possess a false reason, or no reason at all.' If 'the light that leads us astray, be a light from heaven' what are we to believe? If our intellectual nature be perfidious in one revelation, it must be deceitful in all . . . Kant annihilated the older metaphysic, but the germ of a more visionary doctrine of the absolute, than any of those refuted, was contained in the bosom of his own philosophy. He had slain the body, but had not exorcized the spectre of the absolute; and this spectre has continued to haunt the schools of Germany even to the present day. (Hamilton 1853: 18)

It is in the sentence 'If our intellectual nature be perfidious in one revelation, it must be deceitful in all' that we can find the connection with Reid. Reid argues, against

Hume, that rational arguments in favour of scepticism about the external world presuppose that reason is reliable, while concluding that our senses are deceptive. But this preference for reason over experience is groundless. If our perceptual faculties truly are 'perfidious', to use Hamilton's term, then we have no grounds for thinking that our rational faculties are not 'perfidious' also.

Kant figures prominently in Hamilton's first *Edinburgh Review* essay. Reid figures even more prominently in the second. 'The Philosophy of Perception' takes as its starting point the recently published French edition of *Reid's Works*, translated by Jouffroy and Royer-Collard, his two leading proponents in France. A few pages in, however, the essay becomes an attack on Thomas Brown, Dugald Stewart's successor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh. Brown's well-known criticisms of Reid, Hamilton argues, are a result of the fact that 'he has completely misapprehended Reid's philosophy, even in its fundamental position'. In part, however, Reid himself is at fault by failing to articulate his central insight adequately, and Hamilton's essay is a sustained attempt to make good this deficiency. There are, he holds, two major errors in Reid's analysis of the human mind. First, like Kant, he drew a distinction where he ought not to have done—between consciousness and perception. According to Hamilton, consciousness is not a faculty of the mind comparable to perception, imagination, memory, and so on, but simply the generic name for all of these. We can certainly draw a logical distinction between seeing on the one hand, and our awareness that we are seeing on the other. But it is a profound mistake to confuse this with a psychological distinction, because it is in fact psychologically impossible to be conscious that we are seeing (a horse, say) without at the same time being conscious what it is (a horse) that we are seeing.

This first error is not a very grave one. It is of significance chiefly because it misleads people like Brown.

> Reid's erroneous analysis of consciousness is not perhaps of so much importance in itself, as from causing confusion in its consequences. Had he employed this term as tantamount to immediate knowledge in general, whether of self or not, and thus distinctly expressed what he certainly taught, that mind and matter are both equally known to us as existent and in themselves; Dr Brown could hardly have so far misconceived his doctrine, as actually to lend him the very opinion which his whole philosophy was intended to refute, viz. That an immediate and consequently a real, knowledge of external things is impossible. (Hamilton 1853: 52)

The second error (by Hamilton's account) is much more significant. Reid's 'superstitious horror of the ideal theory' led him to deny what seems incontestable—that memory and imagination 'are of necessity, mediate and representative'.

> There exists, therefore, a distinction of knowledge—as immediate, intuitive, or presentative, and as mediate or representative. The former is logically simple, as only contemplative; the latter is logically complex, as both representative and contemplative of the representation . . . Representative knowledge is purely subjective, for its object known is always ideal; presentative may be either subjective or objective, for its one object may be either ideal or material . . . Considered in relation to each other: immediate knowledge is complete, as all-sufficient in itself; mediate incomplete, as realized only through the other. (Hamilton 1853: 53)

Perception tells us about the world around us; imaginary objects are in the mind only, and in this sense these objects of knowledge are purely subjective. Accordingly, and *pace* Reid, knowledge can be of mental 'ideas' as well as external 'objects'. On the basis of this emendation of Reid, Hamilton endorses what he calls 'Natural Realism'. At its heart lies a conviction in the 'veracity of consciousness'. In precisely the same spirit as Reid, Hamilton writes:

> As we did not create ourselves, and are not even in the secret of our creation, we must take our existence, our knowledge *upon trust*: and that philosophy is the only true, because in it alone *can* truth be realized, which does not revolt against the *authority* of our natural *beliefs*. (Hamilton 1853: 63, emphasis original)

The watchword of the natural realist is 'The facts of consciousness, the whole facts, and nothing but the facts', and an inescapable fact is this: In any act of consciousness we are aware, and cannot but be aware, of a distinction between 'Ego' and 'Non-ego'. We apprehend this distinction immediately as a fact of consciousness. The Absolute Idealist denies this distinction and holds that Ego and Non-ego are ultimately identical. The subjective idealist believes that Non-ego is simply a manifestation of Ego, while the Materialist believes the opposite—that Ego is a manifestation, or a product, of Non-ego. The 'Hypothetical Realist'—or 'Cosmothetic Idealist'—tries to straddle these divisions by supposing that Ego (the contents of mind) somehow mediately represents Non-ego. Hypothetical realism, Hamilton declares, 'although the most inconsequent of all systems has been embraced, under various forms, by the immense majority of philosophers' (Hamilton 1853: 56).

> The scheme of Natural Realism (which it is Reid's honour to have been the first, among not forgotten philosophers, virtually and intentionally, at least, to embrace) is . . . the only system on which the truth of consciousness and the possibility of knowledge can be vindicated; whilst the 'Hypothetical Realist', in his effort to be 'wise above knowledge', like the dog in the fable, loses the substance, in attempting to realize the shadow. (Hamilton 1853: 68)

Is Hamilton's 'Natural Realism' truly the solution to the problems that haunted philosophers since Hume? And is it a skilful combination of the metaphysics of Kant with the psychology of Reid? Despite their adulation, his admirers did not suppose, any more than his detractors, that Hamilton had said the final word on these matters. The question, rather, was whether his philosophy in some important way advanced matters, or whether it was in reality an unholy concoction of radically disparate elements.

3.3 Hamilton's Critics

The first full-length criticism of Hamilton appeared in his lifetime. This was Henry Calderwood's *The Philosophy of the Infinite, with Special Reference to the Theories of Sir William Hamilton and M. Cousin* (1854). Calderwood's book has nothing to say about perception or Hamilton's version of Reid. It takes issue with Hamilton's starting

point, and examines closely the significance of his unusual use of the terms 'Infinite' and 'Absolute'. Calderwood notes that it is not clear whether Hamilton, in describing them as opposites, is merely deploying these terms in a different way from previous philosophical use, which generally treated them as interchangeable, or whether he is declaring this previous use to be radically mistaken. Either way, however, Calderwood argues that we can make no sense of Hamilton's account of them as opposites.

> Is there such an Absolute as that which Sir William postulates, and which he asserts to be contradictory of the Infinite? Is that which he postulates really absolute, or has it any existence at all? In endeavouring to answer this question, let us recall Sir William's definition of the Infinite and of the Absolute; it is this—the Infinite is the unconditionally unlimited, the Absolute is the unconditionally limited. Now we cannot understand in what sense the Absolute can be called unconditionally limited, in what sense anything can be called unconditioned which is at the same time limited. Is not limitation a condition of existence; to be limited, to be conditioned? May we not as well speak of the unlimitedly limited, or of the unconditionally conditioned, as of the unconditionally limited? If the Infinite is unconditioned inasmuch as it is unlimited, must not the Absolute be conditioned in as much as it is limited? (Calderwood 1854: 23)

In short, Hamilton has failed to show the existence of two 'inconditionates', and thus failed to establish any extremes between which 'the conditioned' can be the mean. It is just such a mean, however, that underwrites, and is supposed to commend, his 'philosophy of the conditioned'.

Calderwood next goes on to argue that Hamilton's characterization of 'the Infinite' as a purely 'negative notion' that is 'incognisable and inconceivable' is also mistaken. For a start, it makes the very existence of the term in our language a mystery. If 'the infinite' really is inconceivable, how can it serve as well as it does, in mathematics for example? More importantly, the idea that it is in some deep way incoherent relies on a failure to distinguish properly between the 'infinite' and the 'indefinite'. The latter must be a property of subjective human thought, since objective reality cannot be 'indefinite'. The Infinite by contrast must signal something independent of thought, since by definition it cannot be contained within thought. To say that it cannot be contained within thought, however, is not to say that it is completely unknowable. The 'indefinite' ideas that certain experiences generate within us—the blue depths of the sky, the impenetrability of a dark night, the endlessness of causal chains, are among Calderwood's examples—can plausibly be interpreted, he argues, as hints or 'traces' of a reality that is infinite. Experience of the 'indefinite' points thought in a direction—the Infinite—which it cannot fully comprehend. But this does not make the thought nugatory. If this is correct, then *pace* Hamilton, it is possible for us to have knowledge of the Infinite. Calderwood's background, but chief, concern is the possibility of knowledge of God which Hamilton's argument excludes. In denying the possibility of any *knowledge* of 'the Infinite', Hamilton does not mean to undermine religious belief because 'the domain of our knowledge' does not set 'the horizon of our faith'. This claim implies, however, if it does not expressly state, the post-Kantian thought that though we can hold beliefs about God in faith, we can never convert

them into knowledge properly so called. Hamilton explicitly admitted as much in a letter to Calderwood following the publication of Calderwood's book: 'when I deny that the Infinite can be *known*, I am far from denying that by us it is, must and ought to be *believed*' (Hamilton 1872: 530–1, emphasis original). The claim that Calderwood wants to press, however, is that, if the concept of the Infinite on which this contention rests is incoherent, there is no need to differentiate faith and knowledge in this way.

If Calderwood's criticism of Hamilton is severe, it is not unsympathetic. He had himself been an admiring and successful student of Hamilton's, being appointed to the Edinburgh Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1867. He readily acknowledged his intellectual debt to his teacher, and lamented that he had 'found it necessary to differ from Sir William Hamilton to a degree that is painful to one who has been indebted to the instructions of that distinguished philosopher' and for whom he felt 'a degree of esteem and respect which can be appreciated only by those who have listened to his prelections' (Calderwood 1854: v–vi).

By contrast, two books published a decade after Calderwood's, both in the year 1865 but from radically different philosophical perspectives, were deeply unsympathetic. The first of these, *Sir William Hamilton: Being the Philosophy of Perception, an Analysis*, was written by James Hutcheson Stirling, already well known as the author of *The Secret of Hegel*, the first book to introduce Hegelian philosophy to an English readership, and one that did much to turn Scottish philosophy in an idealist direction. Stirling's book on Hamilton is relatively short and, as its subtitle suggests, confined to Hamilton's analysis of perception. He claims to find in Hamilton's writing 'a certain vein of disingenuousness that . . . has probably caused the retardation of general British philosophy by, perhaps, a generation' (Stirling 1865: vii). This charge, if true, is obviously serious, and yet at the same time striking testimony to Hamilton's standing in the world of philosophy. Only someone whose work was hugely influential could plausibly be accused of retarding the whole of British philosophy.

Stirling's tone throughout is one of intellectual outrage. He accuses Hamilton of systematically misrepresenting those he claims to expound in order to vacillate on crucial questions, thereby allowing himself to seem to square some philosophical circles. At the heart of his argument is the contention that Hamilton unites the insights of Kant and Reid in an entirely superficial way. He tries to integrate Kantian 'phenomenalism' with Reid's 'presentationism', but massively fails to do so. Kant holds (on this account) that our immediate awareness is of phenomena and never of the 'things-in-themselves' that cause those phenomena. Reid holds that things in the world directly present themselves to our consciousness so that it is correct to say that we are immediately aware of them. Hamilton, according to Stirling, 'holds all our knowledge to be phenomenal', while at the same time 'unequivocally' asserting 'presentationism' (Stirling 1865: 12). 'It seems', he says, 'never to have struck Hamilton that presentationism is noumenalism, and therefore the logical contrary of phenomenalism. Nowhere does he seem aware that he may appear to have committed the contradiction of directly identifying these opposites' (Stirling 1865: 13).

This last sentence is not quite right. In the second edition of the *Discussions*, in which the essay on the philosophy of perception with which Stirling is principally concerned was reprinted, Hamilton directs the reader to his further thoughts on the subject in the appendix on perception that he included in his edition of Reid's collected works. The purpose of this supplementary 'dissertation' is to elaborate at much greater length a distinction between 'sensation' and 'perception'. The former is 'subjective', the latter 'objective', but both can be said to occur 'within' the mind of the human organism. He notes, however, that 'it may appear, not a paradox merely, but a contradiction that the organism is, at once, subjective and objective, Ego and Non-Ego'. Nevertheless, he contends, it is a fact, though how the material can be united with the immaterial is 'the mystery of mysteries to man' (Hamilton 1872: 880).

The identification of a 'mystery' can hardly be said to be a solution to a philosophical problem, but this passage is sufficient to show that Stirling was wrong to accuse Hamilton of being blithely unaware of the problem. Indeed this supplementary dissertation is a very lengthy, and somewhat laboured, attempt to address the relationship of sense experience to the apprehension of objects, by contrasting the bare experience of sights and sounds with their occurrence in perceptual judgements. Hamilton thinks (a) that we *must* draw such a distinction, and (b) that we can do so without running the risk of scepticism about or ignorance of the objects that we see and hear. Sensation invariably accompanies perception, but perception is sensation with an 'Assertory judgment', which is to say, 'the recognition by Intelligence of the phaenomena presented in or through its organs' (Hamilton 1872: 878). 'In *or* through' is the key phrase here, since it allows him to assert that we are immediately aware of our immaterial sensations, and no less immediately aware of material objects.

How can this be? Surely if we are aware of material objects *through* sense perceptions, we are thereby *mediately* aware of them. And if this is the case, how does Hamilton's 'natural realism' differ from the position of the 'hypothetical Realist', who thinks that material objects are to be inferred from sensitive experience, thereby, according to Hamilton, losing the substance, in attempting to realize the shadow? The difference lies, or is supposed to, in Hamilton's invocation of common sense, interpreted as an intuitive conviction of the identity of the immaterial sensation and the material object.

> When I concentrate my attention in the simplest act of perception, I return from my observation with the most irresistible conviction of two facts, or rather, two branches of the same fact; that I am—and that something different from me exists. In this act I am conscious of myself as a perceiving subject, and of an external reality as the object perceived; and I am conscious of both existences in the same indivisible moment of intuition. The knowledge of the subject does not precede nor follow the knowledge of the object;—neither determines, neither is determined, by the other . . . Such is the fact of perception revealed in consciousness, and as it determines mankind in general in their equal assurance of the reality of an external world, and of the existence of their own minds . . .

Consciousness declares our knowledge of material qualities to be intuitive. Nor is the fact, *as given*, denied even by those who disallow its truth. So clear is the deliverance, that even the philosophers . . . who reject an intuitive perception, find it impossible not to admit, that their doctrine stands decidedly opposed to the voice of consciousness and the natural conviction of mankind. (Hamilton 1853: 54–5, emphasis original)

Hamilton's crucial claim, then, is that the perception of external objects is no less immediate than sensitive experience because the two are united 'in the same indivisible moment of intuition'. But what exactly is this moment of intuition? Is it a psychological experience? If it is, then there remains the question of its logical force. Let us agree that there is a natural conviction that the objects we seem to see do in fact exist. This much Hume was happy to agree with. The issue is whether that natural conviction is rational or merely psychological. What Hamilton calls Reid's 'superstitious horror of the Ideal theory' was really Reid's determination to resist the supposition that mental images authoritatively warrant a belief in their existence in a way that perceptual judgement cannot. It is the rational authority of perceptual judgement that he focuses upon, not the role of sensation in perception. Reid's 'direct realism' is compatible with our saying, if we wish, that sense impressions are 'immediate' in a way that perceptual judgements are not. The error is to suppose or imply that this 'immediacy' gives them privileged epistemological status.

Unfortunately, in another supplementary dissertation on common sense, Hamilton appears to say precisely this.

[T]o argue from common sense, is simply to show, that the denial of a given proposition would involve the denial of some original datum of consciousness; but as every original datum of consciousness is to be presumed true, that the proposition in question, as dependent on such a principle, must be admitted . . . Here, however . . . it is proper to take a distinction . . . the neglect of which has been productive of considerable error and confusion. It is the distinction between the data or deliverances of consciousness considered simply in themselves, as apprehended facts or actual manifestations, and those deliverances considered as testimonies to the truth of facts beyond their own phaenomenal reality. (Hamilton 1872: 743–4)

Hamilton goes on to argue that while scepticism in regard to this 'phaenomenal reality' is impossible, we still have to consider the merits of common sense as an argument for the truth of facts 'beyond' that reality. In the end his contention appears to be that common sense requires us presume the truth of such facts, and to hold this presumption as vindicated unless we can be shown that there is something contradictory about doing so.

The problem is that this seems to be a position the 'hypothetical realist' can happily accept. If so, this shows it to be at odds with the 'Natural Realism' which it had been Reid's 'honour' to embrace before anyone else. As Baruch Brody has argued, Reid's argument from common sense does not rest upon widely held convictions, as Hamilton's does, but on deeply rooted human practices of thinking, arguing, and judging.

Reid claimed that there are three elements in any act of perception.

> First, some conception or notion of the object perceived; Secondly, a strong and irresistible conviction and belief in its present existence; and, Thirdly, that this conviction is immediate, and not the effect of reason (*EIP*, II/5.)

What Reid wanted to claim is that [the second element], which is universally held and whose denial seems absurd and leads to paradoxical consequences if acted upon . . . is a common-sense belief. In other words Reid is not claiming that some general belief about the external world is a common sense belief. Such a claim would be false since such a belief is usually not even formulated by most people, much less held by them. What is universally believed, and what is a common-sense belief, is that the object I see now exists. (Brody 1971: 489)

Philosophers may set about formulating 'the principles of common-sense' that underlie the practices of reason, as Reid himself does, but this should not be taken to mean that ordinary people in any sense 'believe in' those principles, or could even articulate them.

Stirling is wrong, then, to contend that Hamilton is oblivious to, and does not address, the difficult issues confronting any attempt to transcend the phenomenal/noumenal distinction. He does do so, and believes that his account of 'sensation' and 'perception' held together by 'intuitive conviction' can provide a resolution to them. On the other hand, Stirling is right in his belief that Hamilton's solution does not work. His use of 'Common Sense' to forge an identity between the phenomenal and the noumenal fails. Furthermore, it is not true to the Reidian insights he claims to employ.

Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, first published in two volumes, is a much more comprehensive treatment than either Calderwood or Stirling. Mill investigates not only the philosophy of the conditioned and Hamilton's treatment of perception, but his account of causation and his logic, as well as the extension of his thought to religion that H. L. Mansel had undertaken in his Bampton Lectures entitled 'The Limits of Religious Thought' and delivered in Oxford in 1858.

Mill does not contest Hamilton's extraordinary erudition, but he does accuse him of constant vacillation on key points, amounting to flat contradiction, baldly declaring that 'Sir W. Hamilton forgets in one part of his speculations what he has thought in another' (Mill 1865/1884: 222). Though his two volumes range over a large number of topics, it is striking that six out of fourteen chapters are devoted to the role of psychology in Hamilton's philosophy. The reason is that Mill's deepest criticism of Hamilton is methodological. He thinks that Hamilton's 'interpretation of consciousness' is an unscientific mix of psychological introspection and a priori speculation, resulting in questionable generalizations about the human mind that are then lent a specious authority by being declared the universal deliverances of 'Common-Sense'.

Idealists, and Sceptics, contend that the belief in Matter is not an original fact of consciousness, as our sensations are, and is therefore wanting in the requisite which, in M. Cousin's and Sir W. Hamilton's opinion, gives to our subjective convictions objective authority. Now, be these persons right or wrong, they cannot be refuted in the mode in which M. Cousin and Sir

W. Hamilton attempt to do so—by appealing to Consciousness itself. For we have no means of interrogating consciousness in the only circumstances in which it is possible for it to give a trustworthy answer . . . [W]e have no means of now ascertaining, by direct evidence, whether we were conscious of outward and extended objects when we first opened our eyes to the light.

. . .

The proof that any of the alleged Universal Beliefs, or Principles of Common Sense are affirmations of consciousness, supposes two things; that the beliefs exist, and that they cannot possibly have been acquired. The first is in most cases undisputed, but the second is a subject of inquiry which often taxes the utmost resources of psychology. Locke was therefore right in believing that 'the origin of our ideas' is the main stress of the problem of mental science, and the subject which must be first considered in forming the theory of the Mind . . . [W]e cannot study the original elements of mind in the facts of our present consciousness. Those original elements can only come to light as residual phenomena, by a previous study of the modes of generation of the mental facts which are confessedly not original . . . This mode of ascertaining the original elements of mind I call the psychological, as distinguished from the simply introspective mode. It is the known and approved method of physical science, adapted to the necessities of psychology.

. . .

That we cannot imagine a time at which we had no knowledge of Extension, is no evidence that there has not been such a time. (Mill 1865/1884: 182–6)

As this last sentence reveals, Mill takes Hamilton's contentions about the *nature* of consciousness to be contentions about the *history* of consciousness. But as was quickly pointed out by those who leapt to Hamilton's defence, notably Mansel and Veitch, this is a deep misunderstanding. Hamilton nowhere makes any claims about 'what Consciousness told us at the time when its revelations were in their pristine purity' (Mill 1865/1884: 182). To suppose that he does is to reject Reid's most basic insight—that any serious intellectual investigation must either presuppose the reliability of consciousness from the outset, or be vitiated. How, in the first place, would 'a study of the modes of generation of the mental facts', such as Mill supposes psychology to be, be possible without a prior exercise of consciousness? We can only assemble, arrange, and theorize facts that we have first been able to ascertain. And how, in the second place, does Mill imagine we are to ascertain the facts his study requires, unless we hold it to be incontestably true that our acts of consciousness, though no doubt erroneous from time to time, generally give us reliable access to facts that are not of our own manufacture?

From the perspective of Hamilton, Mill inevitably slides back into some version of sterile Lockean 'sensationalism'. All we have access to are mental sensations. The Hypothetical Realist declares these to be the product of an objective world we cannot access. Mill, it seems, does not even go this far. By his account the only intelligible conception of 'matter' is 'a Permanent Possibility of Sensation', which, he thinks, 'includes the whole meaning attached to [the concept] by the common world' (1865/1884: 243). However, Possibility, even if it is permanent, is not Reality, from which it would appear to follow that mental sensations are all in all. If so, we are back to a version of 'the ideal theory' that wholly vindicates Reid's 'superstitious horror'.

3.4 Assessments of Hamilton

In 1866, Henry Mansel, then Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford, published a vigorous response to Mill, defending Hamilton and accusing Mill of wholly misunderstanding the position he meant to attack. In the course of it he takes notice of Stirling as well. 'It is curious', he writes in a note, 'that the very passage which Mr Mill cites as proving that Hamilton, in spite of his professed phenomenalism, was an unconscious noumenalist, is employed by Mr Stirling to prove that, in spite of his professed presentationism, he was an unconscious representationalist' (Mansel 1866: 85). The passage in question is to be found in the first volume of Hamilton's posthumously published lectures (Hamilton 1879: 1. 146), and it is difficult not to conclude that it is Hamilton who is primarily responsible for the 'curiosity'. His account of the relations between mental image, physical object, and sense organ is hard to follow. It does not clearly come down on one side or other of the presentationist/phenomenalist dichotomy, but neither does it adequately transcend that dichotomy. Stirling's idealism and Mill's empiricism are at odds, certainly, and both might be expected to attack a position that sought to occupy middle ground. The fact that they could cite the same passage in support of competing positions is evidence, *pace* Mansel, of Hamilton's failure even to articulate clearly a third possibility.

Mansel, however, does identify a deeper and ultimately more important difference between Mill and Hamilton. This is their contrasting conceptions of the enquiry in which they are engaged.

> Psychology, which with Hamilton is especially the philosophy of man as a free and personal agent, is with Mill the science of 'the uniformities of succession; the laws, whether ultimate or derivative, according to which one mental state succeeds another'. (Mansel 1866: 61, quoting Mill's *Logic* VI 4 §3)

The contrast between 'philosophy' and 'science' is significant. Hamilton, successfully or unsuccessfully, is attempting to do something that lies at the heart of Common Sense philosophy—namely, establish a philosophical conception of mind and matter that avoids the errors of both sensationalism and materialism. Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind upon the Principles of Common Sense*, and everything that took a lead from it, aimed to construe the relation between the mental and the material worlds properly, by doing justice to the facts of both. In this sense it seeks a middle ground between the traditional dichotomy of mind and matter, while at the same time connecting the facts of human psychology with the norms of rational thought. For Mill, however, this is a necessarily fruitless endeavour since there is no middle ground. The 'laws of the mind', he tells us, are either 'the laws of association according to one class of thinkers, [or] the Categories of the Understanding according to another' (1865/1884: 183). If we pursue the former, then the future lies with empirical associationist psychology. If we pursue the latter, we will engage in logic. The speciousness of any 'middle ground' is revealed by the fact that it necessarily trades in simple opinion. This is the charge that Mill ultimately brings against Hamilton.

In the mode he practices of ascertaining [the primary facts of consciousness], there is nothing for science to do. For, to call them so because in his opinion he himself, and those who agree with him, cannot get rid of the belief in them, does not seem exactly a scientific process. It is, however, characteristic of what I have called the introspective, in contradistinction to the psychological, method of metaphysical inquiry. (1865/1884: 189)

Whatever the justice of this charge, Mill is here reflecting an increasingly widespread opinion of his time—that the project of Reid's *Inquiry* was at bottom unscientific, and in the hands of some of its proponents even anti-scientific. As this opinion gathered strength, the established philosophers in Scotland increasingly abandoned 'the Scottish School', though 'anti-scientific' meant different things to different critics. James Frederick Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews from 1845 to 1864, was especially strident is his denunciation of Reid on whom, he thought, Hamilton had wasted his exceptional talents.[2] Since 'Common Sense' was necessarily unphilosophical, 'the philosophy of Common Sense' was a contradiction in terms. The associationist psychology favoured by Mill was expressly advocated, and considerably advanced, by his friend Alexander Bain, founder of the journal *Mind*, who was appointed Regius Professor of Logic at the newly united University of Aberdeen in 1860.[3] This empiricist criticism was not endorsed, but it was matched with another from those of a more metaphysical cast of mind. In broadly the same period, Edward Caird held the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, and assumed a leading role in a new generation of Scottish philosophers attracted to the Absolute Idealism of Hegel.[4] For them, the appeal to 'Common Sense' was no better than Samuel Johnson's method of 'refuting' Berkeley's immaterialism by kicking a stone.

This accusation—that the 'method' of common-sense is anti-intellectual—is a recurrent theme among the critics of 'the Scottish School'. It is one to which John Veitch expressly offers a reply in his 1883 exposition of Hamilton.

In ordinary usage, common-sense of course means a general shrewdness and sobriety of intelligence in the affairs of life, native rather than acquired. Because, apparently, of this one sense of the term . . . it has actually been supposed that the thinkers of the Scottish school meant to leave the problems of philosophy to be dealt with by the shrewd practicality of ordinary intelligence . . . is not this the abandonment of the scientific or speculative intelligence, which is our true help to pure knowledge . . .? Of course, no thinker who can fairly be taken to be representative of the Scottish school ever thought of elevating common-sense in its ordinary usage of native shrewdness to the place of a judge in philosophy . . . The method of common-sense, as interpreted almost uniformly by Reid, and always by Hamilton, is 'not an appeal from philosophy to blind feeling' or to ordinary belief. 'The first problem of philosophy' says Hamilton, 'is to seek out, purify, and establish by intellectual analysis and criticism, the elementary feelings and beliefs in which are given the elementary truths of which all are in possession. This is dependent upon philosophy as an art.' (Veitch 1883: 37).

[2] See Chapter 4 in this volume.

[3] See Chapter 5 in this volume.

[4] See Chapter 7 in this volume.

The principles of common sense, Veitch goes on to argue,

. . . are found to be embodied in consciousness, in language, in action, in science, in art, in religion. A philosophy which is true, sound and complete, must recognize those notions, and seek their guarantee, try to determine their meaning and applications; or if it says they are illusions, it is bound consistently with its pretensions to show how those illusions have grown up in the common consciousness of mankind. (Veitch 1883: 38)

Philosophy, we might say, is the art of making sense of common sense; it is not the attempt to identify 'uniformities of succession; the laws, whether ultimate or derivative, according to which one mental state succeeds another', which, as Mill and others hoped, would form the demonstrable basis of a new science. Hamilton, in fact, expressly rejects the establishment of truths as the proper end of philosophy. In commenting on philosophy in France before the advent of Cousin, he observes that 'discussion had ceased', not because Condillac had demonstrated the truth of his psychological theories beyond reasonable doubt, but because his sensationalism was widely accepted as true. *But*, he then goes on to add:

Nor would such a result have been desirable, had the one exclusive opinion been true, as it was false—innocent, as it was corruptive. If the accomplishment of philosophy is simply a cessation of discussion—if the result of speculation be a paralysis of itself; the consummation of knowledge is the condition of intellectual barbarism. Plato has profoundly defined man—'The *hunter* of truth'; for in this chase, as in others, the *pursuit* is all in all, the success comparatively nothing. 'Did the Almighty' says Lessing, 'holding in his right hand *Truth*, and in his left *Search after Truth*', deign to proffer me the one, I might prefer;—in all humility but without hesitation, I should request—*Search after Truth*. We exist only as we energise . . . In *action* is . . . the perfection of our being; and knowledge is only precious, as it may afford a stimulus to the exercise of our powers, and the condition of their more complete activity. Speculative truth is, therefore, subordinate to speculation itself . . . every learner in science, is now familiar with more truths than Aristotle or Plato ever dreamt of knowing; yet compared with the Stagirite or the Athenian, how few, even of our masters of modern science, rank higher than the intellectual barbarians! Ancient Greece and modern Europe prove, indeed, that 'the march of intellect' is no inseparable concomitant of 'the march of science'. (Hamilton 1853: 40–1, emphasis original)

If speculative truth is indeed subordinate to speculation itself, at least as far as philosophy is concerned, then we may say that the esteem in which Hamilton's contemporaries held him was indeed warranted. 'I am and always have been a disciple of Hamilton', Veitch writes, 'not in the sense of following his opinions, or teaching these . . . but in the way of the spirit of the man . . .'

What I have felt as the greatest thing about Hamilton is, not his philosophy, powerful as this is, but the man himself . . . For there is even a higher standard by which we may test . . . the intellectual power of a man than the real or supposed correctness of the conclusions he has sought to establish . . . The electric force of intellect is not to be measured merely by the degree of illumination which it casts over the field of human knowledge; it is to be gathered as well from the amount of vitality which it imparts to the minds through which it passes, and which it quickens to the life of thought . . . (Veitch 1883: 27)

There are thus two different standards of success by which Hamilton's status can be re-examined. Judged by the degree to which Hamilton quickened the life of thought in his own time, he can be heralded as one of the nineteenth century's major philosophers, a champion in 'the march of the intellect'. Mill, of course, is judging exclusively by the 'supposed correctness of the conclusions [Hamilton] sought to establish', and by this standard it seems correct to say that Hamilton's contribution to 'the march of science'—the resolution of the intellectual problems with which he was concerned—is both limited and uncertain. Insofar as Mill's standard is based upon an unspoken preference for 'psychology as a science' over 'philosophy as an art', we might conclude from this that his *Examination* is ill conceived, because it is as a philosopher, not as a scientist, that Hamilton must be judged. There is this to be added, however. Whereas Plato's dialogues are eminently worth reading even though almost everyone acknowledges that there is not much 'correctness' about 'the conclusions he sought to establish', the modern reader who is interested in the philosophical problems that exercised Hamilton and his contemporaries will gain relatively little by returning to the philosophical texts he left behind. This marks an important difference between Hamilton and other Scottish philosophers like Hutcheson, Hume, Reid, and Smith. It is in his contribution to the activity of philosophy, and not to its repository of texts, that Hamilton's accomplishment is to be found. A similar assessment might be made of Socrates, of course. Perhaps it is in the writings of some of Hamilton's students and successors that we should seek to find a more enduring philosophical legacy.

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4

James Frederick Ferrier

The Return of Idealism and the Rejection of Common Sense

Jennifer Keefe

4.1 Introduction

James Frederick Ferrier (1808–64) is of significance in the history of Scottish philosophy because his work marks a turning point within it. Ferrier was the student, friend, and protégé of Sir William Hamilton who did so much to promote the philosophy of Thomas Reid and who was the last of the significant Scottish common sense philosophers.[1] Yet, Ferrier did not continue the Reidean tradition of common sense realism. Instead, he provides an idealist metaphysics which he develops from his rejection and revision of aspects of common sense philosophy as well as from a defence of Bishop Berkeley's idealism. Further, in Ferrier we see the first post-Hegelian system of Absolute Idealism in British philosophy; his philosophy bridges the gap between the end of the Enlightenment and the fragmentation of philosophy and psychology. In his work we see an abandonment of a science of man and a foreshadowing of the idealism that was to dominate British philosophy until the beginning of the twentieth century.

Ferrier was Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St Andrews between 1845 and his death in 1864. He came from a reasonably wealthy and well-connected[2] Edinburgh family, and his private life was unremarkable.[3] He started his university

[1] Hamilton's philosophy differs from Reid's in various important ways. Nonetheless, he was a central figure in promoting Reid's philosophy and viewed himself, rightly or wrongly, as a proponent of common sense philosophy.

[2] His father-in-law was John Wilson, also known as 'Christopher North', and his aunt was Susan Ferrier, the successful novelist. As a child he came into contact with such family friends as Sir Walter Scott and Thomas De Quincey.

[3] For further information about the life of Ferrier, see Haldane 1899, Lushington 2001, and Thomson 1985. The last of these contains an interesting account of Ferrier's life, although some dramatic conclusions are drawn from slim evidence, specifically the assertion that Ferrier died of syphilis. This conclusion seems to be based on three potentially unrelated facts: (1) Ferrier visited London on university business, (2) before his death he perused a book on chemistry from his university library, and (3) Thomson's detection of a squint in a painting of Ferrier by Sir John Watson Gordon. It is not inconceivable that he did die from syphilis, although to believe so assumes more than the evidence warrants.

education in Edinburgh, the city of his birth, in 1825, and he completed it at Magdalen College in Oxford. He then briefly worked as a lawyer in Edinburgh, and it was at this time that he started to develop a serious interest in philosophy; from 1838 he published a number of philosophy articles in *Blackwood's Magazine*. In 1842 he acquired his first academic chair when he became Professor of Civil History at the University of Edinburgh, and he remained there until he moved to St Andrews. He wrote several articles on philosophy, most notably 'An Introduction to a Philosophy of Consciousness', 'Berkeley and Idealism', and 'Reid and the Philosophy of Common Sense', as well as various articles and pamphlets on other topics. In 1854 he published his major work, the *Institutes of Metaphysic* and then a supplementary defence of this in *Scottish Philosophy: The Old and the New*.

The dominant school of philosophy in Scotland throughout Ferrier's life was the philosophy of common sense deriving from Reid. He was schooled in common sense philosophy, his own philosophy is developed in part from his reaction to common sense philosophy, and, at times, he claimed to have provided an enlightened form of common sense philosophy. Yet, Ferrier's philosophy differs from that provided by Reid and his school in many important respects. In order to determine his place in the tradition of Scottish philosophy, it is useful to consider the ways in which he compares and contrasts with Reid. On the one hand, they share a focus on the content of consciousness and a rejection of representative theories of perception. On the other hand, Ferrier rejects the methodology of his Scottish predecessors; he abandons the Enlightenment goal of trying to develop a science of man, and he rejects the humility of the common sense philosophical project. Hence, although in some ways he shares the agenda that is set forth by Reid and his school, the end result is very different. Ferrier provides a post-Enlightenment, idealist system of metaphysics which discards some of the central ideas and motivations of the Scottish school of Common Sense.

4.2 A Rejection of Representationism and Things-in-Themselves

According to Reid, the principles of common sense are essential for the acquisition of knowledge; they are primary, a priori features of knowledge, which are, as he says, the 'foundation of all reasoning, and of all science' (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay I, Chapter II, 36). They include such beliefs as the belief in one's own existence, a conviction in the testimony of memory, and, most importantly for present purposes, a belief in the existence of the external world. For Reid, accepting the principles of common sense is to trust in what is given by consciousness. In this respect it is important to recognize that he makes a distinction between consciousness and reflection. The former is a natural and constant condition whereas the latter involves an act of will. He says that although all people are constantly conscious of the

operations of their minds, many do not reflect upon them. Therefore, it may be the case that a person accepts the principles of common sense and lives her life accordingly yet she does not realize that this is so. According to Reid, the possession of the principles of common sense are common and necessary to all people who can interact with others and the external world. He maintains that evidence for the existence of the principles is strongly exhibited by both communication and behaviour. Hence, even those who deny the existence of the principles reveal that they do in fact assent to them. So, for example, regardless of whether or not an individual says or even thinks that she believes in the existence of the external world, her behaviour shows that she does. Reid says:

> It is evident that a man who did not believe his senses could not keep out of harm's way an hour of his life; yet, in all the history of philosophy, we never read of any sceptic that ever stepped into fire or water because he did not believe his senses, or that shewed in the conduct of life less trust in his senses than other men have. This gives us just ground to apprehend that philosophy was never able to conquer the natural belief which men have in their senses; and that all their subtile reasonings against this belief were never able to persuade themselves. (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay II, Chapter V, 109)

Judgement is central to Reid's account of perception. Yet, the judgement which takes place does not involve logical inference; so, for example, a person who sees a tree does not see something and subsequently judge it to be a tree. Instead, in order for that person to see anything at all she makes implicit judgements by engaging in the activity of perception. Such judgements are of 'principles that are self-evident' (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay VI, Chapter 2, 523), or, in other words, the principles of common sense. So, when perceiving a tree a person simultaneously judges that there is a tree before her, that there is an external world and that she accepts the testimony of her senses. In this way, in virtue of perceiving at all, a person reveals that she believes in the existence of the external world.

Reid is certainly a realist, yet the question of whether or not he is a *direct* realist is the subject of much discussion in Reid scholarship. The overwhelming majority of commentators, whether supporters or critics, argue that he is a direct realist, and I am inclined to agree with this view. His account of the principles of common sense derives in part from his rejection of the doctrine of ideas. According to this doctrine, external and internal senses are the vehicles by which impressions and/or ideas are formed in an individual's mind. And, in criticizing the doctrine of ideas, which he regards as synonymous with Berkeley and Hume, he hopes to diminish representationism by emphasizing that it is the things themselves, rather than ideas and impressions, which are the immediate objects of perception. Hence, it seems that a central tenet of his philosophy is the common sense belief in the existence of a real world, which can be *directly* perceived and the existence of which does not depend upon our perception of it; he says: '*those things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be*' (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual*

Powers, Essay VI, Chapter V, 587). Undoubtedly, Ferrier accepts that Reid holds that the direct objects of perception are things-in-themselves, and this forms the basis of his rejection of Reid's philosophy. For instance, in response to his contemporary, Alexander Campbell Fraser, who suggested that Ferrier was mistaken to consider Reid a direct realist, he says:

> when we take into account [Reid's] distinction of the primary and secondary qualities, which was drawn by him for the express purpose of establishing this independency—when we consider that his aim was to refute the sceptics and the idealists, who had either doubted or denied the independent existence of matter; and, above all, when we attend to this most decisive circumstance, that he strove to controvert the representationists, who held that we had no *immediate knowledge* of material things—it is impossible to put any other construction on his words, or (admitting these to be sometimes ambiguous) on the whole spirit of his teaching, than that he intended to declare that matter and its primary qualities had an existence out of all relation to intelligence, and that we *knew* this to be the case. (Ferrier 1856: 49–50)

Hence, rightly or wrongly, Ferrier's own philosophy was in part developed from a reaction against Reid's direct realism, and his own position on things-in-themselves is presented as an alternative to Reid's account.

In his 1841 article 'The Crisis of Modern Speculation', Ferrier focuses on the natural distinction that a person makes between herself and the external world. He agrees with Reid that the perception of the world as external is a conviction which naturally occurs for human beings, but he does not think that philosophy should leave this truth as it is in its natural state. Instead, he wants to rationally examine and explain what the implications of this conviction are. In order to do this he provides an analysis of visual perception. On the one hand there is the light, the objective thing that is seen, and, on the other hand, there is seeing, the subjective ability attached to the percipient being. He says that it is impossible to know or to conceive of either of these components abstractly, or removed from one another, or in other words, it is impossible to know or to conceive of either seeing-*in-itself* or light-*in-itself*. He says:

> as sure as you are a living and percipient being, you will find that, in all your efforts to think of light, you invariably begin and end in thinking of *the seeing* of light. You think of light by and through the thought of seeing, and you can think of it in no other way. By no exertion of the mind can you separate these two. They are not two, but one. The objective light, therefore, when thought, ceases to be purely objective; it becomes both subjective and objective, both light and seeing in one. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 271)

One year later in 'Berkeley and Idealism' he says that when considering whether or not things-in-themselves exist, the first question which must be asked is whether or not it is possible to abstract ourselves from what we know; he asks: '*can* we suppose ourselves away or annihilated?' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 304). He follows this by saying that we must answer 'no' to this question because it is impossible to imagine the world bereft of percipient beings. To illustrate his point he asks if it is possible to imagine aspects of the world, such as green grass or loud thunder, existing in the absence of

a percipient being. He asserts that it is impossible to do so because when we think of unperceived green grass we must posit an ideal seer. The same argument also applies to sound and hearing and all of the other subjective–objective relations in perception. Moreover, he adds that even the non-existence of things similarly require an ideal percipient; in order for an individual to conceive of the non-existence of the world, she must refer to an ideal percipient who sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells *nothing*. In this way, the objects of thought cannot be abstracted from the thinker, even in cases in which the object is a lack of something; he says: 'my great doctrine is, that *no* phenomena, not even, as I have said, the phenomenon of the absence of all phenomena, are thus independent or irrespective' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 315). According to Ferrier, the natural conviction that there is a distinction between an individual and the external world is not denied in the respect that in a given act of perception a person perceives something; for instance, she sees light or hears a voice. And, in this respect, he agrees with Reid. But, for Ferrier, this is strictly a distinction; the subject and object cannot be actually abstracted from one another.

One of Ferrier's main concerns throughout his work is the impossibility of philosophy based upon inconceivabilities. In 'The Crisis of Modern Speculation' he says: 'Before we can be entitled to speak of what *is*, we must ascertain what we *can think*' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 272). He believes this mandate must be observed in the philosophy of perception because philosophers who discuss light bereft of seeing are asking their readers to conceive of an inconceivability. Yet, it must be noted that even if he is correct and things-in-themselves are indeed inconceivable, it may yet be the case that there really is light-in-itself, albeit unknowable light-in-itself. But, in Ferrier's view, to even suggest this is to engage in poor philosophy, for considering either seeing-in-itself or light-in-itself is impossible because it is inconceivable. In this way it is meaningless to talk of things-in-themselves, because if it is impossible to conceive of what is said the statement is negated in the very act of saying it. For instance, if it is the case that seeing *is* inconceivable in itself and I speak of 'seeing-in-itself' what I am *really* saying is 'seeing-*with*-light in itself'. For Ferrier it is impossible to consider the ontological status of things-in-themselves; indeed, the philosopher is confined to the laws of thought set out by epistemology: 'this question touching the reality or non-reality of an external world cannot be answered, not because it is unanswerable, but because it is unaskable' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 287).

'An Introduction to a Philosophy of Consciousness' is a series of seven articles published in *Blackwood's Magazine* between 1838 and 1839, and it marks the first, and perhaps best, of Ferrier's published philosophy. Here he notes that whilst Reid dismisses impressions and ideas as hypothetical barriers, which stand between a perceiving agent and the world, he holds on to the notion of a 'mind'. Ferrier maintains that in doing so Reid 'lopped no more than a very insignificant twig from the tree of ignorance and error, which darkened, and still darkens, both the heavens and the earth' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 31). According to Ferrier, by holding on to the notion of a 'mind' a philosopher violates Ockham's razor by placing an unnecessary entity between the

perceiving agent and the world. He notes that if agents have minds which perceive then the perceptions are the immediate objects of consciousness, whereas the world is the remote object of consciousness that is known mediately through an agent's perception of it. It follows that if Reid's realism allows for both an immediate object and a mediate object of perception then it must retain a degree of representationism. This problem could be mitigated by identifying the mind with the self. But, he rejects this solution because he believes it presents an even greater difficulty. If the mind is identical with the self the philosopher, unlike the scientist of the world, is at once both the subject and the object of her study. And as such, she cannot wholly abstract from herself the object that she wishes to consider (her*self*) without negating the subject of her science. To study the self as an object the philosopher must exclude the self's most distinctive feature, namely, self-consciousness, which remains with the subject, and in doing so she will inevitably end up with an inaccurate science. Interestingly, he argues that identifying mind with the self is at odds with common language, and thereby he uses a key feature of common sense philosophy against the common sense picture of the knowing agent.

Ferrier further develops his accusation that Reid is an unwitting representationist in 'Reid and the Philosophy of Common Sense', which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1847 in response to the publication of Hamilton's *The Works of Thomas Reid* in 1846. One of the key concerns of Ferrier's philosophy throughout his published work is the perception of an external world, and 'Reid and the Philosophy of Common Sense' is his third consecutive article devoted to a consideration of the perception of a material world.[4] Here he argues that not only does Reid insufficiently complete the task of refuting the ideal theory, but he also provides his own representative account. Ferrier uses this article as an opportunity to realize his own idealist account of perception, which is developed, in this case, through a critical analysis of Reid's philosophy of perception.

Ferrier, similarly to Reid and the common sense school, rejects representative theories of perception which state that the objects of perception are mediate entities that lie between the percipient being and the real world. He provides the following description of representationism:

> The representative theory is that doctrine of perception which teaches that, in our intercourse with the external universe, we are not immediately cognisant of real objects themselves, but only of certain mental transcripts or images of them, which, in the language of the different philosophical schools, were termed ideas, representations, phantasms, or species. According to this doctrine we are cognisant of real things, not in and through themselves, but in and through these species or representations. The representations are the immediate

[4] The preceding articles I refer to are 'Mr Bailey's Reply to an Article in Blackwood's Magazine' and 'A Speculation on the Senses'. Additionally, 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness', 'The Crisis of Modern Speculation', and 'Berkeley and Idealism', whilst not strictly devoted to the subject, all consider the question of the 'perception of matter'.

or proximate, the real things are the mediate or remote, objects of the mind. The existence of the former is a matter of knowledge, the existence of the latter is merely a matter of belief. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 413, 414)

His description of representationism is not dissimilar to Reid's portrayal of the doctrine of ideas. Reid argues against philosophical systems which depend upon the ideal theory, including Locke's indirect realism, Berkeley's idealism, and Hume's scepticism. Reid says:

The ideas of whose existence I require the proof, are not the operations of any mind, but supposed objects of those operations . . . Nor do I dispute the existence of what the vulgar call the objects of perception. These, by all who acknowledge their existence, are called real things, not ideas. But philosophers maintain that, besides these, there are immediate objects of perception in the mind itself: that, for instance, we do not see the sun immediately, but an idea: or, as Mr Hume calls it, an impression in our own minds. The idea is said to be the image, the resemblance, the representative of the sun, if there be a sun. (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay II, Chapter XIV, 198)

According to Reid's realist theory of perception, real things, such as the sun,[5] are the immediate objects of our perception, whereas ideas are a philosophical invention. Thus, both Ferrier and Reid dismiss the ideal theory, according to which the immediate objects of perception are impressions which represent real things rather than the real things themselves. However, Ferrier thinks that whilst Reid refutes the ideal theory he produces a theory of perception which is similarly representative. Moreover, he asserts that Reid misreads the significance of Berkeley and Hume's contribution to the debate; Ferrier argues that Reid wrongly contends that Berkeley holds a representative theory and denies the existence of the external world, and that Reid's criticisms of Hume's scepticism reveal that he misunderstands the role of sceptics in the history of speculation.

In 'Reid and the Philosophy of Common Sense' Ferrier contends that philosophical investigations concerning perception can be broadly divided into two schools: the metaphysical school and the psychological school. Both schools accept that the 'perception of matter' occurs; this is the 'given fact' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 410). The difference is located in the way in which each school of thought considers the given fact. On the one hand there is the metaphysical school, which looks at the perception of matter as a whole, indivisible unit:

In the estimation of metaphysic, the perception of matter is the absolutely elementary in cognition, the *ne plus ultra* of thought. Reason cannot get beyond, or behind it. It has no pedigree.

[5] In an editorial footnote (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay II, Chapter XIV, 199) Hamilton notes that if Reid is correct, it is not the sun (or moon) which we immediately perceive but 'rays of light emanating from them . . . in contact and relation with our organ of sight'. Whilst this may be true with respect to the sun we also perceive the moon via the sun's rays. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this discussion the key point is that Reid believes that we immediately perceive the *real* object regardless of whether that is identified as the sun, the moon, or rays of light.

> It admits of no analysis. It is not a relation constituted by the coalescence of an objective and a subjective element. It is not a state or a modification of the human mind. It is not an effect which can be distinguished from its cause. It is not brought about by the presence of antecedent realities. It is positively the FIRST, with no forerunner. The perception-of-matter is one mental word, of which the verbal words are mere syllables. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 410, 411)

This is the approach that Ferrier favours. On the other hand, there is the psychological school, which analyses the 'perception of matter' into its constituent parts: the subjective perception and the objective matter:

> Psychology, or the science of the human mind, teaches us a very different doctrine. According to this science, the perception of matter is a secondary and composite truth. It admits of being analysed into a subjective and an objective element, a mental modification called perception on the one hand, and matter *per se* on the other. It is an effect induced by real objects. It is not the first *datum* of intelligence. It has matter itself for its antecedent. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 411)

Thus, according to Ferrier, the key question for debate between metaphysicians and psychologists is whether the perception of matter is an indivisible synthesis or a combination which can be broken down into its constituent parts: perception and matter. He attempts to show that the psychological approach towards perception favoured by Reid and others is fundamentally flawed. He hopes to demonstrate that not only is Reid's account of perception unsatisfactory but that it leads to the very thing it was designed to dispel: representationism.

He asserts that the psychological school holds that the 'perception of matter' can be analysed into constituent parts. The psychological analysis is as follows: on the one hand there is the material world which exists regardless of whether it is perceived or not, and on the other hand there are percipient beings who know the material world via their perceptions of it. Hence, matter is the objective part of the 'perception of matter'; matter is the external world as it is in itself. Perception is the subjective part of the 'perception of matter'; perception refers to the percipient being's knowledge. He argues that, similarly to representative theories of perception, the psychological doctrine makes a distinction between immediate and remote objects of knowledge and, in doing so, reveals that all psychological theories of perception are essentially representative theories of perception. He says:

> When a philosopher divides, or imagines that he divides, the perception of matter into two things, perception *and* matter; holding the former to be a state of his own mind, and the latter to be no such state; he does, in that analysis, and without saying one other word, avow himself to be a thoroughgoing representationist. For his analysis declares that, in perception, the mind has an immediate or proximate, and a mediate or remote object. Its perception of matter is the proximate object, the object of its consciousness; matter itself, the material existence, is the remote object—the object of its belief. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 415)

Here he observes that in the psychologist's analysis there are two objects of consciousness in an instance of perception: the perception and matter per se. The perception is

part of oneself and is an immediate object of consciousness, whereas matter per se is separate from oneself and is a remote object of consciousness. Matter is known through an individual's perception rather than as it is in itself, or, in other words, matter is known through a mediate entity. In this way the psychologist can be considered to be a representationist. Moreover, he argues that if the psychologist's doctrine is a representative theory, then it is vulnerable to scepticism. He points out that the psychological doctrine states that matter, specifically matter per se, is the remote object of consciousness; the experience of perception leads a person to hypothesize that *something* is the cause of her perception. Ferrier says that if we allow that matter is not an immediate object of consciousness, then, we cannot be sure that it plays a part in the process of perception or even exists at all, thereby 'the psychological analysis of the perception of matter necessarily converts all those who embrace it into sceptics or idealists' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 435). In 'Berkeley and Idealism' and the *Institutes of Metaphysic* he argues that matter per se is not merely unknowable but inconceivable. In 'Reid and the Philosophy of Common Sense', for the sake of argument, he accepts the psychologist's starting point and postulates that matter per se is conceivable, but he shows that, even if this is true, matter per se can only be a remote object of consciousness and thereby forms the basis of representationism. Hence, he shows that an insistence on the existence of things-in-themselves leads to either a contradiction or representationism. Consequently, philosophy should disregard theories of knowledge which allow for the independent existence of the external world in itself.

The motivation behind Reid's direct realism is to show that the ideal theory is mistaken and that perception is shown to be of things rather than of ideas of things. Hence for Reid, it is the case that a person directly perceives x rather than an idea of x. Similarly, according to Ferrier, a person directly perceives x. What Ferrier is keen to stress is that this process, namely, the perception of x, cannot be submitted to further analysis. In this way his focus on the common sense account of perception particularly concerns the accompanying belief in matter per se. According to Ferrier, things in themselves are unknowable and inconceivable. He says:

> No man can observe matter prior to his perception of it; for his observation of it presupposes his perception of it. Our observation of matter *begins* absolutely with the perception of it. Observation always gives the perception of matter as the *first* term in the series, and not matter itself. To pretend (as Reid and Stewart do) that observation can go behind perception, and lay hold of matter before it has given rise to perception, this is too ludicrous a doctrine to be even mentioned; and we should not have alluded to it, but for the countenance which it has received from the two great apostles of common sense. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 439, 440)

He believes that correct observation of the process of perception does not allow for matter per se; this can only be achieved by an inductive hypothesis, whereas an instant of perception only reveals perception-*with*-matter. In this way he surmises that 'Reid, so far from having overthrown the representative theory, was himself a

representationist' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 417) and that Reid's refutation of the ideal theory is devalued by the production of a similarly representative theory of perception. Therefore, he does not think Reid should be credited with having refuted the ideal theory; he says that, at most, Reid may be considered *one of* the first philosophers[6] to point out that representative theories of perception are problematic. Further, he asserts that Reid's inadvertent representationism renders his alleged intuitionist theory of perception impossible. He says:

> If we have proved [Reid] to be a representationist, he cannot be held to be an intuitionist. Indeed, a doctrine of intuitive perception is a sheer impossibility upon his principles. A doctrine of intuition implies that the mind in perceiving matter has only one, namely, a proximate object. But the analysis of the perception of matter always yields, as its result, a remote as well as a proximate object. The proximate object is the perception, the remote object is the reality. And thus the analysis of the given fact necessarily renders abortive every endeavour to construct a doctrine of intuitive perception. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 418, 419)

In part, Ferrier inaccurately reflects Reid's account of perception because the belief, which Reid describes as essential in perception, is not so distant from Ferrier's concept of matter-*with*-perception. According to Reid the perception of matter signifies an act of knowledge and there is an immediate belief about the existence of matter in every instance of perception. The matter that Reid rejects is that which *only* possesses a mental existence; the 'absurd and objectionable idealism' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 456) that Ferrier also rejects. In this respect, the philosophical systems of Ferrier and Reid are more alike than the former admits. Thus, Ferrier shares Reid's rejection of the doctrine of ideas, although he does not believe that Reid's arguments are sufficient to overcome its central flaw. On the basis of immediate perception, Ferrier develops an account radically different from Reid's; instead of direct realism he provides a system of absolute idealism.

Reid attacks scepticism and idealism for suggesting that the world has no existence beyond an individual's perception of it, in opposition to the irresistible belief that there are real objects which have independent existence, irrespective of whether or not they are perceived. Ferrier agrees with Reid and says that sceptics and idealists do deny that there is a world-in-itself, but he also denies that anyone can conceive of the world-in-itself. Hence, given that Reid holds that common sense leads us to believe in a world that exists independently of our perception of it, he thinks that it is Reid rather than the sceptics and idealists who is at odds with common sense. He maintains that 'Reid falsified the fact in regard to our primitive convictions, in regard to those principles of common sense which he professed to follow as his guide' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 427). In fact he rejects the idea that any person holds this belief, because it is impossible to conceive of matter devoid of perception. Hence, there is an 'impossibility of complying with the *condition* of the belief' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 424) in matter per se, because possessing such

[6] In Ferrier's view, Reid was preceded in this respect by Berkeley.

a belief contradictorily involves a person bringing about a transformation so that an object of her thought is no longer an object of her thought, and then thinking about the object which she has cut off from her thought. According to Ferrier this contradiction is caused by an adherence to the psychological interpretation of the 'perception of matter'; and it is a contradiction which is at odds with the laws of thought.

Nonetheless, although Ferrier denies that we have a belief in matter per se, he asserts that we do and must believe in the existence of matter, albeit matter-*with*-perception. Yet he thinks that the observation that we believe in matter is trivial. He says that Reid's common sense beliefs, such as the belief in the existence of matter or the belief that a person is the same person today as she was yesterday, whilst essential in life, are of little philosophical import and that we acquire such beliefs just as easily and automatically as we come by atmospheric air 'in unlimited abundance for nothing and thanks to no man' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 429, 430). His characterization of common sense in this way is similar to Kant's in the *Prologomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, and it seems to be directed at the version of common sense put forth by figures such as James Beattie and James Oswald rather than Reid. It is arguable whether Reid's sophisticated form of common sense can be sustained or must inevitably degenerate into something like Beattie's view; the latter merely refers to the holding of shared beliefs rather than the more complex deeply embedded notion which is perhaps best expressed by Dugald Stewart's expression: 'the *vincula* which give coherence to all the particular links of the chain' (Stewart 1994: 39). Yet, Ferrier believes that the original common sense project should be abandoned because it is fundamentally unphilosophical. He asserts that the immediate facts of consciousness should not be left in their original state but rather submitted to philosophical analysis in order to uncover the necessary truths of reason. He refers to such beliefs as 'the apparently Common Sense convictions of Dr Reid', which he distinguishes from the '*really* Common Sense convictions of mankind', that he contends 'can only be got at through the severest discipline of speculation' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 432). In his view, the belief that matter-*with*-perception is an indivisible union is one such *real* principle of common sense. In this way, although Ferrier criticizes Reid's principles of common sense and offers alternatives in their place, to some extent he continues Reid's project of uncovering the principles of common sense. He shares Reid's aims, yet he criticizes Reid for being hasty in identifying the source of the problem and thereby failing to properly undermine representationism; Ferrier says:

> [Reid's] appeal to the conviction of common sense was premature. He appealed to this belief without allowing scepticism and idealism to run their full course; without allowing them to confound the psychological analysis, and thus bring us back to a better condition by compelling us to accept the fact, not as given in the spurious analysis of man, but as given in the eternal synthesis of God. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 453)

Ferrier wants to radically alter common sense philosophy. As he notes in 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness' he believes that the principles of common sense set the agenda for philosophy and that the purpose of philosophy is

to 'rationally explain and justify them' (Ferrier 2001: iii. 64). They are thereby the problem of philosophy rather than its solution. He insists that the common sense philosophers have failed to realize the purpose of philosophy:

> common sense, the problem of philosophy, is by no means identical, in the first instance at least, with the solution which philosophy has to supply (a consideration which those would do well to remember who talk of the 'philosophy of common sense', thus confounding together the problem and the solution). It is only after the solution has been effected that they can be looked upon as identical with each other. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 64)

Ferrier does not negate the existence of the principles of common sense. However, he believes that Reid does not philosophically examine the principles but instead merely states what we already know. He thinks that the only truths of philosophical interest are necessary truths and that an enlightened common sense philosophy entirely consists of a body of necessary truth. The significance Ferrier attaches to necessary truth and his disregard for contingent truth is clear in his *Institutes of Metaphysic*, where he says:

> When the cause of philosophy is fairly and fully pled at the bar of *genuine* common sense, it is conceived that a decision will be given by that tribunal in favour of the necessary truths of reason, and not in favour of the antagonist verdicts of the popular and unreflective understanding which Dr Reid took under his protection. (Ferrier 2001: i. 496)

Therefore, in this respect, the way in which he separates himself from the common sense school is the way in which he hopes to develop philosophy via the common sense principles. He believes that a genuine philosophy of common sense requires a systematic development of the necessary principles.

4.3 A *New* Scottish Philosophy?

In the mid-nineteenth century Scottish philosophy changed in a number of significant ways, reflecting the changing landscape of European thought in general. The philosophical project of the Enlightenment that had united both Reid and Hume—the science of man—came to an end. The separation of psychology and philosophy was critical in this respect; hereafter, in this time of increasing specialization, the philosopher was no longer a polymath and became a specialist like the psychologist, mathematician, or chemist. The 'science of the mind' continued, yet this was an empirical project developed by the new psychologists.

Ferrier is certainly Scottish and a philosopher. However, it is not clear that he is a 'Scottish Philosopher'. In order to properly define Ferrier's place within the tradition of his country it is important to consider the limits of Scottish philosophy.[7]

[7] There are various answers to the question 'What is Scottish Philosophy?'. See Chapter 12 in this volume. In *Why Scottish Philosophy Matters* Alexander Broadie (2000) makes the more ambitious case for a distinctive Scottish content from the medieval period to the Enlightenment.

Kant separated the early modern figures into 'Rationalists' and 'Empiricists' after the fact, creating a distinction that the philosophers concerned would not necessarily recognize. And, whilst it is generally reasonable to call Descartes a 'Rationalist' and separate him from the 'Empiricists' in this way, it is not always a useful distinction given that Descartes shares important aspects of his philosophy with the empiricist Locke that he does not with his fellow rationalist Spinoza (for instance, dualism). Similarly, it was during the nineteenth century, many years after Reid's death, that 'Scottish Philosophy' became an expression referring not only to philosophers who were Scottish but rather to a specific group of Scottish philosophers with Reid at the centre. Therefore, 'Scottish Philosophy' is a turn of phrase that should be used with a degree of caution.

If there is a 'Scottish Philosophy' with a common content, then Ferrier is not a Scottish Philosopher. His philosophy differs from that of the Reidean Scottish school in two important ways: (1) the philosophical project of Reid is descriptive; he notes the excellence of the human mind's given constitution. Ferrier's account, however, is corrective; he argues that the philosopher should systematize and rework what is given. (2) Reid and his school are empiricists engaged in a 'science of mind', whereas Ferrier rejects the very possibility of such a project. Yet, despite these crucial differences, there is much that they do share—most notably, a focus on consciousness and a rejection of representationism. Thus, given that Ferrier's philosophy emerges from his reaction to the Scottish tradition, it contains some similarities with his Scottish predecessors, including Reid. But, more importantly, with respect to the history of Scottish philosophy, his idealist metaphysics marks a transition into the post-Enlightenment period.

In the decades following Reid's death, his common sense philosophy attained the position of being the orthodox view in Scotland. As such, it became *de rigueur* for Scottish philosophers to promote, or at least respectfully develop, common sense philosophy. Ferrier mocked Reid and his school and promoted a philosophy at odds with this tradition. This partly led to his failure to achieve two important chairs at the University of Edinburgh: Moral Philosophy in 1852 and Logic and Metaphysics in 1856. The Moral Philosophy chair became vacant when Ferrier's father-in-law John Wilson died, and the Logic and Metaphysics chair arose as a result of the death of Hamilton. Ferrier's failure to obtain the former was largely a result of sectarian politics, whereas his inability to acquire the latter was mainly because his philosophy was not deemed sufficiently Scottish. Both chairs had considerable influence within Scotland, and at the time they were amongst the most powerful academic chairs in Europe. Thus, it is reasonable to surmise that Ferrier's influence upon Scottish philosophy would have been greater if he had acquired either of the Edinburgh chairs.

The Disruption was the internal split in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland over the relationship between church and state. Much of the controversy was connected to the ability of congregations to appoint their own ministers, which was allowed by the General Assembly but later deemed unlawful by the Court of Session and the House

of Lords. A breakaway group of ministers, led by Thomas Chalmers, believed that the decision by the Court of Session and House of Lords undermined the church's spiritual independence, and so in 1843 walked out of the General Assembly in protest and formed a new church: the Free Church of Scotland. The Disruption had a significant impact upon the culture of the thoroughly religious Scotland of the 1840s, and Ferrier, himself an Episcopalian, became involved in the debate.

Ferrier's contribution to the arguments surrounding the Disruption is his pamphlet *Observations on Church and State*, which was published in 1848. Nominally this pamphlet is a review of the Duke of Argyll's 'Essay on the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland'. Here he examines what he describes as: 'bewildering abstractions', 'church and state', 'civil and spiritual jurisdiction' (Ferrier 1848: 6), and manages to criticize both sides of the dispute. His argument is based on an historical analysis of the Reformation. He says that the theory of the Reformation: 'regards all Christians as ecclesiastical persons, and the ministry as not more so than others' (Ferrier 1848: 9). In relation to this he points out that the Scottish Parliament was traditionally composed of clergy, nobles, and laymen, all of whom had equal rights and interest in the legislation of the church and other matters of state. In this way the governance of the Church of Scotland was intended as a '*national* and not an *ecclesiastical* board' (Ferrier 1848: 11). However, as a matter of convenience the Parliament split and the General Assembly was formed to deliberate over spiritual matters as opposed to the other affairs of state. Ferrier maintains that instead of being a separate institution to the Parliament, the General Assembly 'was only the first under a new face and somewhat different organization' (Ferrier 1848: 16). He suggests that those who formed the breakaway Free Church forgot the underlying principle of the Reformation, which binds church and state together and identifies them as two aspects of the same thing.

Ferrier's notion here of an indivisible church–state is of philosophical interest because it has strong parallels with his epistemological concept of a subject–object synthesis. In relation to both church-*with*-state and subject-*with*-object, he argues in favour of indivisible unions and against improperly abstracting one half of a synthesis from another. He resists unnecessary abstraction throughout his philosophy, and in this way he places himself within the Scottish tradition, which is characteristically opposed to needless abstraction. Ferrier believes that by resigning from their positions and setting themselves up in opposition to the state, the Free Church group recognized a false distinction between church and state. In addition, he says that in claiming authority over spiritual matters, the Free Church elevates the clergy above the rest of the congregation and thereby violates a core principle of the Protestant church which puts all men on a level as regards spiritual matters. In fact he maintains that by attributing spiritual authority to ministers, the Free Church group imitates the hierarchical system of the Roman Catholic Church. Further, he contends that the Parliament is flawed because it views itself as a 'superior tribunal' (Ferrier 1848: 20) to the General Assembly rather than another aspect of the same thing, and thereby also fails to realize the indivisibility of the union between church and state.

Four years after the publication of this pamphlet, when Ferrier strove to acquire the 1852 Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, he was defeated by the Free Church's candidate MacDougall. George Davie points out that the defeat of Ferrier, an established writer who was supported by prominent academics, and the success of 'the obscure' (Davie 1961: 289) evangelical candidate MacDougall was the result of a Free Church bias within Edinburgh Town Council. In this contest the Reverend John Cairns led the opposition to Ferrier; Cairns repeated this role four years later when Ferrier attempted to acquire the Logic and Metaphysics chair.

The competition for the 1856 Chair of Logic and Metaphysics retained a sectarian flavour, but this competition is possibly best categorized as one concerning the promotion of *Scottish* philosophy and as a matter of philosophical rather than religious politics. Again Ferrier was unsuccessful, and this time he lost out to Alexander Campbell Fraser. Fraser had some prominent allies in his application for the chair. He was supported by Cairns, who was partly responsible for Ferrier's downfall in his earlier attempt to secure an Edinburgh Chair of Philosophy. In addition he had the support of Victor Cousin and De Rémusat. Davie argues that the French efforts to maintain the *tradition* of Scottish philosophy gave campaigners such as Cairns an excuse to add faithful adherence to the tradition of Reid to the list of fundamental attributes required of the Professor of Logic and Metaphysics. He says: 'The partisans of Fraser, hitherto perhaps not very noted for being national-minded, grasped the opening presented by the French gesture, and the Rev. Cairns was then able to attack Ferrier in the name of the intellectual tradition of the nation' (Davie 1961: 301). Ultimately Fraser was successful, and the result enraged Ferrier and his supporters. W. E. Aytoun wrote a satirical poem in which he parodies the involvement of the Free Church party as well as Fraser and his allies. The following extract mockingly suggests what Fraser's reaction might have been upon discovering that Ferrier was his challenger for the chair, and portrays Fraser as seeking Cairns' help to denigrate Ferrier's reputation:

> 'Would you believe it? Ferrier's in
> To do up half my chance!
> The fellow that made a game of you
> When you were in a trance.[8]
>
> 'Write you a pamphlet—prove him—say
> A sceptic—or suppose a
> Broad hint that he's a Pantheist
> Like Hegel or Spinoza.' (Davie 1961: 296)

Ferrier also reacted strongly to his defeat, and it led him to produce *Scottish Philosophy: The Old and the New*.

[8] Allegedly Cairns went into a trance during a séance at one of Hamilton's gatherings and Ferrier mocked him for this; a reaction which supposedly enraged Cairns (Haldane 1889: 65).

In *Scottish Philosophy: The Old and the New* he rejects the characterization of Scottish philosophy as equivalent to common sense philosophy. *Scottish Philosophy* is a polemical work, offered as a reaction to his failed bid to achieve the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Edinburgh as well as a defence of his *Institutes of Metaphysic*. Therefore, this work is infused with a rather personal sense of outrage. He vehemently denies the accusation that was levelled at him by supporters of his opponent[9] for the chair that his philosophy is not Scottish enough simply because it differs from figures such as Reid and Hamilton. He maintains that an attempt to preserve a philosophical tradition of discipleship is fundamentally unphilosophical. He says: 'Philosophy is not traditional. As a mere inheritance it carries no benefit to either man or boy. The more it is a received dogmatic, the less it is a quickening process' (Ferrier 1856: 9). He draws a distinction between the 'old' and the 'new' systems of Scottish philosophy. The former is epitomized by philosophers such as Reid and Hamilton, and the latter is represented by Ferrier himself.

He notes that there are two key differences between the two Scottish systems he has defined. First, in opposition to the 'Old Scottish School', he denies that the principles of common sense can be identified as the first truths of philosophy. Ferrier believes that the first truths of philosophy are necessary truths, which may only be revealed by demonstration; several examples of such necessary truths are presented in his *Institutes of Metaphysic*; in particular, his proposition that self-consciousness is the constant concomitant of knowledge (Ferrier 2001: i, Proposition I, Section I: The Epistemology). It should be noted that he oversimplifies Reid's system here. The principles of common sense do consist of several contingent principles however; many of Reid's principles are described as necessary truths (Reid 1880, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, Essay 6, Chapters 5 and 6). Secondly, Ferrier notes that the Common Sense school works on the assumption that human thought is usually correct, whereas he maintains that philosophy exerts a corrective function over 'the natural inadvertencies of loose, ordinary thinking' (Ferrier 1856: 12). Here he emphasizes a key difference between his own system and Reid's: his philosophy is corrective, unlike Reid's, who refers to the excellence of the original constitution of the mind. The common sense philosophers frequently point out the limits of philosophy. For example, in *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* Stewart says:

> The truth is, that one of the most valuable effects of genuine philosophy, is to remind us of the limited powers of the human understanding; and to revive those natural feelings of wonder and admiration at the spectacle of the universe, which are apt to languish in consequence of long familiarity. The most profound discoveries which are placed within the reach of our researches, lead to a confession of human ignorance; for while they flatter the pride of man, and increase his power, by enabling him to trace the simple and beautiful laws by which physical events are regulated, they call his attention at the same time to those general and ultimate

[9] Ferrier's attacks are levelled not at Fraser, who successfully acquired the Edinburgh chair, but are instead directed at Cairns, Henry Longueville Mansel, and Edinburgh Town Council.

facts which bound the natural circle of his knowledge, and which by evincing to him the operation of powers, whose nature must for ever remain unknown, serve to remind him of the insufficiency of his faculties to penetrate the secrets of the universe. (Stewart 1994: 109)

Ferrier, unlike the common sense philosophers, does not exhibit such a modest approach to the possibilities of philosophy. Even in his first philosophical articles he suggests that he has greater ambition than his predecessors. For instance, when he denies that the self can be identified with the mind, he agrees with Stewart, who also says that the mind is not the thing in which sensations, feelings, and so forth reside. However, in 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness' Ferrier contrasts his own reasons for denying this with Stewart's as follows:

[Stewart] rejected the question as one which was *above* the powers of man: we scout it as one which is immeasurably *beneath* them. He refused to acknowledge it because he considered the human faculties weakly incompetent to *it*: we scorn it, because, knowing what the true business and aim of psychology is, we consider *it* miserably incompetent to *them*. In short, we pass it by with supreme indifference. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 52).

Unlike the common sense philosophers, Ferrier does not believe that there are restrictive limits imposed upon epistemology and ontology. In the *Institutes of Metaphysic* he tries to develop a system in which the final outcome is an idealist ontology. The question of human ignorance not only marks one of the key differences between Ferrier and the common sense school, but is also one of the most interesting and distinctive aspects of his philosophy. In the *Institutes* he devotes a whole section to a consideration of ignorance (Section II: the Agnoiology). He defines ignorance as 'an intellectual defect, imperfection, privation, or shortcoming' (Ferrier 2001: i. 405). Thus ignorance involves the *lack* of knowledge, a deficit of something which an intelligent being can possess. He contrasts ignorance with nescience, which is not knowing the unknowable. Therefore, ignorance signifies an imperfection whereas nescience is a sign of the perfection of reason. In this way, Ferrier shows that even human ignorance can be clarified and understood systematically.

Ferrier's definition of the two schools of Scottish philosophy correctly observes the central differences between himself and his predecessors, yet it also contains its own limits. First, the figure who is noticeably absent and who does not fit into either his 'old' or 'new' schools is David Hume, who is perhaps the most significant of all Scottish philosophers. Hume allows for the natural tendency of human beings to assume such beliefs as the principle of causality or the continuance of one's own personal identity. Yet, given his scepticism it would be grossly incorrect to call such natural tendencies first principles of philosophy. Indeed, Hume does not consider philosophy to either endorse or exert a corrective influence over ordinary thinking. In this way he is truly an empiricist; he simply *describes* the passionate and irrational nature of humanity. Moreover, although Ferrier rejects the identification of Reid's philosophy with Scottish philosophy he cannot avoid allocating common sense philosophy a central and defining place in his own account. Ferrier's 'New Scottish Philosophy' is defined

as opposed to Reid. In this way, in his opposition he is dependent upon Reid's philosophy. In his revolt Ferrier echoes Reid who derives his philosophy in opposition to Hume's. It seems that if there is a continuous thread that ties Scottish philosophy from Hume to Reid to Ferrier it is a pattern of rejection. Hume is certainly a proponent of the Enlightenment project of a science of man, and he shares this with Reid, and in this way Ferrier is opposed to both Hume and Reid. But, Ferrier and Reid both reject the theory of ideas, and in this way they are united against Hume. One thing that all three philosophers share is a focus on the immediate contents of consciousness. Yet this is by no means unique to Scottish philosophers.

One of the first texts devoted to an exposition of Scottish philosophy is James McCosh's *The Scottish Philosophy, Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton* of 1875. McCosh lists the following criteria as essential characteristics of the philosophy produced by members of the Scottish school: 'I. It proceeds on the method of observation . . . II. It employs self-consciousness as the instrument of observation . . . III. By the observations of consciousness, principles are reached which are prior to and independent of experience' (McCosh 1875: 2, 4, and 6). McCosh's definition of a Scottish philosopher is fairly broad. In his analysis the expression 'Scottish philosopher' is not synonymous with 'common sense philosopher'. In his view 'Scottish Philosophy' is an inclusive expression; Hume, Reid, Thomas Brown, James Mill, and Chalmers are only some of the disparate 'Scottish Philosophers' presented in his account. Yet despite his inclusivity, McCosh makes it clear that he discounts Ferrier from the Scottish tradition; he says:

> As the unkindest cut of all, Mr. Ferrier, who was supported by Hamilton in the competition for the moral philosophy chair in Edinburgh . . . and with whom Hamilton . . . was long in the habit of consulting, published the 'Institutes of Metaphysic', which is a complete revolt against the whole Scottish philosophy; and Kant was not more annoyed with the idealism of Fichte than Hamilton was with the 'Object *plus* Subject' of Ferrier. (McCosh 1875: 422)

The comparison of the development from Hamilton to Ferrier with that of Kant to Fichte is an interesting one, and although this discounts him from the McCoshian version of the Scottish tradition, it seems likely that Ferrier would be happy to accept such a comparison. Ferrier was more sympathetic to the philosophy of Fichte than that of Kant. Also, few would discount Fichte from the German tradition of philosophy. Whilst Kant may have rejected the overt idealism of the German Idealists there is no question that they are all part of a German tradition of philosophy and not only because of their nationality. The philosophy of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel differs in various important respects from their influential predecessor; nevertheless, they are all indebted to Kant, and any account of 'German Philosophy' would include all of these figures. Indeed, in retrospect Kant is significantly closer to them than the other major figures of German philosophy. Yet perhaps this connection is only obvious many decades after the fact. The question is: can the same be said of Ferrier and the Scottish philosophers who preceded him?

Ferrier cannot be described as a McCoshian Scottish philosopher, because although he fulfils the second and third criteria in that his system has self-consciousness at its centre and unveils a priori laws of the mind, his philosophy follows the deductive method rather than the method of observation, which contradicts the first of McCosh's required criteria. This is certainly a key difference between Ferrier and philosophers such as Reid and Hume. Yet, at first glance, it seems arbitrary to discount him on this one point, because the difference between Reid's realism and Hume's scepticism is an equal if not more significant distinction. Yet there is one thing that can be said of all of the Enlightenment Scottish philosophers that cannot be said of Ferrier. In their different ways, Reid and Hume were engaged in constructing a science of man and inductive reasoning as an essential tool in such a project. In 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness' Ferrier vividly describes the object of a science of man as follows; it is:

> Not the picture of a man; but the representation of an automaton, that is what it cannot help being; a phantom dreaming what it cannot but dream; an engine performing what it *must* perform; an incarnate reverie; a weathercock shifting helplessly in the winds of sensibility; a wretched association machine, through which ideas pass linked together by laws over which the machine has no control; anything, in short, except that free and self-sustained centre of un-derived, and therefore responsible activity, which we call *Man*. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 195)

Reid, by contrast, was an Enlightenment philosopher who was engaged in the key project of the Enlightenment: trying to develop a science of man. He emphasizes that the correct method which should be adopted when trying to understand the human mind is 'the way of observation and experiment' (Reid 1880, *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, Chapter I, Section I). He models his system on that of Newton and Bacon, and maintains that it is possible to determine truths about the human mind by induction from a collection of empirical evidence. Therefore, by observing human language and behaviour it is possible to determine the principles of common sense which humans naturally assent to. Placing method, specifically induction, at the centre of an understanding of Reid's philosophy highlights the principal distinction between Reid and Ferrier. Ferrier discards the notion of a science of man, and then in his *Institutes of Metaphysic* he replaces induction with deduction. Thus, methodologically, Ferrier wholly rejects the philosophy of his predecessor. This is the key difference between Ferrier and his predecessors, and his rejection of inductive reasoning, as noted by McCosh, is indicative of that. In this way, and to paraphrase the title of Davie's short book on Ferrier, his philosophy marks the blackout of the Scottish Enlightenment (Davie 2003).[10] The philosophical climate of the mid-nineteenth

[10] In Davie's view, Ferrier's later works, especially the *Institutes of Metaphysic*, coincide not only with a blackout of the Scottish Enlightenment but also with a change in and subsequent collapse of Ferrier's philosophy. It is clear that some of his early articles such as 'An Introduction to a Philosophy of Consciousness' are the best examples of his philosophy. Nevertheless, the *Institutes* does not contain different content; here, we see a development of the central themes of his earlier works: idealism, systematic consciousness, and a rejection of things-in-themselves.

century was not merely a wrestle between idealism and common sense philosophy. Although not prominent in Scotland at this time, the developing subject of psychology found its Scottish voice in the Aberdonian Alexander Bain.[11] Bain was a very different philosopher from Ferrier, yet they enjoyed a mutual respect for one another. They each represent a different development from the common root of the Scottish Enlightenment. Ferrier rejects a science of man with his idealist metaphysics, whereas Bain reimagines a less holistic science of mind via the development of psychology. And these different approaches are not at odds with one other. Ferrier is in favour of psychology provided it does not try to be philosophy,[12] and, whilst giving primacy to psychology, Bain considers psychology and metaphysics as separate and complementary tasks (Bain 1990: 37, 38). The specialization of the nineteenth century seems to mark the end of a McCoshian 'Scottish Philosophy', which is principally an Enlightenment movement. Thereafter, there was a new era of Scottish and indeed British philosophy. Nonetheless, both Ferrier and Bain developed their respective systems out of the tradition of Scottish philosophy.

4.4 German Philosophy Refracted through a Scottish Medium

Ferrier had an abiding interest in the intellectual life of Germany, especially in the poetry of Schiller.[13] Moreover, he was acquainted with the German philosophers who immediately preceded him, notably Kant and the German Idealists. In 1834 he travelled around Germany, and when he was there he attended some of Schelling's lectures and purchased a medallion and a photograph of the recently deceased Hegel (Haldane 1889: 33). However, in response to accusations that his philosophy was German in style and origin, he says:

It has been asserted, that my philosophy is of Germanic origin and complexion. A broader fabrication than that never dropped from human lips, or dribbled from the point of pen. My philosophy is Scottish to the very core; it is national in every fibre and articulation of its frame. It is a natural growth of old Scotland's soil, and has drunk in no nourishment from any other land. Are we to judge of the productions of Scotland by looking merely to what Scotland has *hitherto* produced? May a philosopher not be, heart and soul, a Scotsman—may he not be a Scotsman in all his intellectual movements, even though he should have the misfortune to differ, in certain respects, from Dr Reid and Sir William Hamilton? . . . If my system presents points of contact or coincidence with the speculations of foreign thinkers, I cannot help that. Is a man to reject the truth which he has discovered by his own efforts, because a person in

[11] See Cairns Craig, 'Alexander Bain, Associationism, and Psychology', Chapter 5 of this volume.

[12] Ferrier often uses the word 'psychology' to refer to the science of man in general. This is to be distinguished from when he refers to psychology as a separate discipline—as a consideration of the association of ideas. See *Institutes of Metaphysic*, Epistemology, Proposition III, §13.

[13] Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Poems and Ballads of Schiller* is dedicated to Ferrier as a 'slight token of gratitude for candid criticism and of respect for enlightened erudition' (Lytton 1834).

> another country has touched upon something like it? The new Scottish philosophy would have been exactly what it is, although Germany and the whole continent of Europe had been buried, centuries ago, in the sea. (Ferrier 1856: 12, 13)

It must be acknowledged that his words here are in response to a concerted attempt to prevent him from acquiring an academic chair on the basis that his philosophy was not appropriately Scottish. Hence his angry remarks are not directed at a reasonable philosophical comparison between his philosophy, and German philosophy, but rather at what he perceived to be underhand political manoeuvres by Edinburgh Town Council and his opponent's supporters. Although Ferrier is correct to define himself as a Scottish philosopher it is a little disingenuous for him to suggest that the similarities between himself and other writers are simply coincidences. It is true that he does not accept the whole of Hegel's system and that his own idealism resulted from a reworking of Berkeley's philosophy rather than Hegel's. Yet that does not imply that Hegel did not influence Ferrier's philosophy or prevent his system from being compared to Hegel's.

The expression 'German philosophy refracted through a Scottish medium' derives from Thomas de Quincey's testimonial in favour of Ferrier's unsuccessful attempt to acquire the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1852. Here De Quincey outlines what he perceives to be Ferrier's intellectual influences. Primarily he cites Hamilton, and his uncle John Wilson, but in addition to these key home influences, De Quincey points out that Ferrier's philosophical approach is informed by his response to German philosophy. He says:

> On the one side, it was for Mr Ferrier an incalculable benefit that he was introduced, as if suddenly stepping into an inheritance, to a German Philosophy refracted through an alien Scottish medium. For Scotland, on the other side, it would be a benefit of corresponding value, that now—that at this crisis—that at the opening of a new era, when railroads will bring to universities critical auditors of a new class—countrymen of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel—the supreme chair of Philosophy should be filled by one who has such a mastery of the Continental philosophies as at once qualifies him for appropriating their uses, and for the task (now become even more important) of disarming their evil tendencies. (1852 *The Testimonials of J. F. Ferrier, candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh*, Second Series, p. 22)

An examination of this testimonial is illuminating for two reasons. First, it is clear that De Quincey does not state that Ferrier's philosophy is equivalent to German Idealism. In fact he believes that Ferrier's knowledge of the field allows him to 'disarm the evil tendencies' of German philosophy. Secondly, this testimonial does not say that Ferrier's philosophy *is* 'German philosophy refracted through a Scottish medium' but rather that Ferrier's reading of German philosophy was from his own Scottish perspective: 'he was introduced, as if suddenly stepping into an inheritance, to a German Philosophy refracted through an alien Scottish medium.'

In light of the importance of Kant's philosophy, the absence of a considered discussion of Kant in Ferrier's published works is a notable omission. Despite this there are

clear similarities between Ferrier's system and Kant's. This is noted by Henry Laurie, who says:

He does not appear to have been fully aware of his indebtedness to German philosophy. Yet, when we compare his philosophy with that of Kant, we find the same prominence given to a theory of knowledge, the same separation of philosophy from psychology, the same refusal to follow the guidance of popular thought, and even the same Copernican illustration of the distinction between the ordinary thoughts of men and the results to be attained by the *savant* or the philosopher. (Laurie 1902: 310, 311)

Although there is limited mention of Kant, Ferrier was one of the first Scottish philosophers to appreciate Kant's contribution to philosophy, and to some extent he anticipates the assimilation of German philosophy by the British Idealists in the decades following Ferrier's death. Bernard Mayo says:

His attack on metaphysical psychologists in *Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness* reads very like Kant's own strictures on empirical psychologists. For this decisive swerve Ferrier deserves credit indeed, Scottish ignorance of Kant at the time was profound. (Mayo 1969: 3)

Nevertheless, Ferrier wrote very little about the German philosophers throughout his career. In fact, on the majority of occasions when Ferrier mentions Hegel it is to highlight his impenetrability. In relation to the charge levelled against him that his philosophy is Hegelian, he responds by saying:

I have read most of Hegel's works again and again, but I cannot say that I am acquainted with his philosophy. I am able to understand only a few short passages here and there in his writings; and these I greatly admire for the depth of their insight, the breadth of their wisdom, and the loftiness of their tone. More than this I cannot say. If others understand him better, and to a larger extent, they have the advantage of me, and I confess that I envy them the privilege. But, for myself, I must declare that I have not found one word or one thought in Hegel which was available for my system, even if I had been disposed to use it. (Ferrier 1856: 13, 14)

This sentiment in which he depicts Hegel as an unintelligible genius is reiterated elsewhere in his philosophy (Ferrier 2001: i. 95). G. F. Stout describes an incident related to him by James Hutchison Stirling,[14] who discovered Ferrier 'diligently engaged on a volume of Hegel which turned out to be upside down. Ferrier's explanation was that, being utterly baffled in the attempt to understand his author the right side up, he had tried the other way round in desperation' (1911 *Votiva Tabella*, p. 155). In addition, Bain agrees with Ferrier's assessment that his system is not Hegelian. In his *Autobiography* he relates a conversation he had with Ferrier whilst in St Andrews in 1846. He says:

[14] G. F. Stout refers to James Hutcheson Stirling (1911 *Votiva Tabella*), yet this appears to be a spelling error, because James Hutchison Stirling was an Hegelian who was contemporaneous with Ferrier. His most notable publication was *The Secret of Hegel*, which was published in 1865, the year following Ferrier's death.

Among other topics of conversation, he dwelt upon his attempts to understand the system of Hegel, but professed himself unable to comprehend the author's drift in speaking of 'being and not-being as the same'. The essential relativity of all knowledge, and the necessity of assigning to each proposition affirmed a counter proposition denied, made the very essence and framework of the *Institutes*; but there was evidently nothing corresponding to this in the Hegelian coupling of the opposites being and not-being, in spite of a certain semblance of agreement. (Bain 1904: 193)

Ferrier did write entries on both Schelling and Hegel for the *Imperial Dictionary of Biography*, which are, as the title of the volume in which they appear suggests, largely biographical. Yet whilst the entries do not provide a thorough evaluation by Ferrier of the German Idealists, they are illuminating in some respects. The Schelling entry is particularly interesting because it underlines the philosophical division Ferrier believes to pervade philosophy (Ferrier 2001: iii. 551–5). On the one hand there are philosophers such as Schelling, and on the other hand there are philosophers like Hamilton. The former group, according to Ferrier, hold that the object of philosophy is the absolute: universal and unconditioned truth in relation to all (possible and actual) forms of intelligence, whereas the latter group maintain that the only truth which can be grasped is truth as it relates to any particular given intelligence; namely, the conditioned. Ferrier's philosophy reveals him to be firmly entrenched in the Schelling group, as he is concerned with the laws of reason that apply to all knowledge rather than any given intelligence in relation with the world. What underlies his argument here is a point that is central to his whole philosophical system: all intelligence shares a single essence. Thus, for Ferrier the synthesis between a human intelligence and the world is structurally akin to the synthesis between the Supreme intelligence and the world, although it is less extensive due to its finite and flawed nature. This is a point that he reiterates in his 'Biography of Hegel' in which he develops his notion of the absolute, which depends upon a level of uniformity acting on the laws of intelligence. He says:

'The absolute' has nothing to do with the extent, but only with the constitution of cognition. Wherever knowledge or thought is, even in its narrowest manifestation, there 'the absolute' is known; because there something is apprehended by intellect simply, something which is intelligible, not merely to this or to that particular mind, but to reason universally. (Ferrier 2001: iii. 567)

It should be noted in connection with assessing Ferrier's relationship with the Scottish school that his view of the absolute dramatically differs from a common sense perspective, which does not compare finite human intelligence with the Supreme intelligence and believes there is a level of truth which transcends limited human faculties.

Ferrier's continental influences did not extend solely to Germany; he was also very familiar with the French system of eclecticism propounded by Cousin. Ferrier's familiarity with Cousin is likely to have developed as a result of Cousin's correspondence

with Hamilton.[15] Also, Ferrier was keen to develop a correspondence with Cousin himself, and wrote to him in 1842, 1846, 1852, and 1856. In the first letter he encloses his articles 'The Crisis of Modern Speculation' and 'Berkeley and Idealism'. Here he says:

> I am yet sometimes bold enough to think that they contain a portion of the concentrated spirit of Hegelianism, conveyed too, I trust, in an original and sufficiently *intelligible* form. But if you will honour them with a perusal they will speak for themselves—and, hoping that this may not be the last time on which I shall have the honour of addressing a philosopher whose profound and eloquent works have contributed so much to my instruction and delight. (Ferrier 1842)

Hence he clearly indicates his admiration for Hegel. The contrast between his words here and those in *Scottish Philosophy: The Old and the New* perhaps signal his attitude towards his intended audience; Cousin he hoped, unlike the Edinburgh Town Council, would not accuse him of betraying his national philosophy if he acknowledged some debt to Hegel. Davie asserts that at its best, Ferrier's philosophy reveals Cousin's influence. He says: 'Something of this French affinity probably passed to him from Hamilton, and thus the general effect of the synthesis: *Scottish plus German* is to give a French look to Ferrier's best pages' (Davie 1961: 283). Ferrier believes that the establishment of necessary truths is of the utmost importance in the development of a worthwhile philosophy. In placing reason at the centre of his philosophical system he echoes Cousin, who says:

> we maintain that the common sense of the human race exists, because every man is in possession of a reason, not individual but general, which being the same in all, because it is individual in none, constitutes the true fraternity of men, and the common patrimony of human nature. Otherwise common sense is a mere hypothesis. (Cousin 1839: 35)

However, unlike Cousin, Ferrier hopes to diminish the role of contingent truth in philosophy and build a system from a single, primary, axiomatic proposition by applying the criterion of contradiction. He dismisses the role of induction and experience in the determination of the necessary truths of reason, and argues that a system which possesses truth but is not reasoned 'has no scientific worth' (Ferrier 2001: i. 3).

Despite Ferrier's respect for Cousin, the sentiment was not mutual. Prior to his attempt to acquire the 1852 Edinburgh Chair of Moral Philosophy, Ferrier wrote to Cousin enclosing a list of his published works as well as some of the testimonials in favour of his candidacy for the Chair, and he asked for Cousin's support. Then again, in 1856 he made a similar request in relation to his candidacy for the 1856 Chair of Logic and Metaphysics. Yet Cousin did not provide a testimonial in favour of Ferrier on either occasion. And another French philosopher, Charles de Rémusat, wrote a testimonial in favour of his opponent Fraser. De Rémusat found Ferrier's rudeness towards Reid unacceptable. Ferrier's writing style possesses a distinct literary quality; his works are replete with dramatic metaphors and expressions, and at times his wit is rather vicious, especially when speaking of other philosophers. Reid is one of

[15] Hamilton's *Reid's Works* is dedicated to his intellectual ally Cousin.

his primary targets; he reveals the scorn he holds for his influential predecessor by portraying him as an incompetent philosopher. For example, he says:

> With vastly good intentions, and very excellent abilities for everything except philosophy, he had no speculative genius whatever—positively an anti-speculative turn of mind, which, with a mixture of shrewdness and *naïveté* altogether incomparable, he was pleased to term 'common sense'; thereby proposing as arbiter in the controversies in which he was engaged, an authority which the learned could not well decline, and which the vulgar would very readily defer to . . . Dr Reid, in the higher regions of philosophy, was as helpless as a whale in a field of clover. (Ferrier 2001: i. 494–5)

Comments like these can be found intermittently throughout Ferrier's work. Even though Ferrier sometimes claims that he is engaged in the production of a revised and Enlightenment form of common sense philosophy, he clearly distances himself from Reid by continually attacking his worth as a philosopher. Such remarks led De Rémusat to say: 'When philosophers greet one another in the manner in which Mr Ferrier treats Dr Reid it is a day of diversion for the public, and one of the causes which has done most harm to the credit of the science' (Davie 1994: 106). Further, De Rémusat's testimonial contends that Fraser is the candidate most likely to continue the Scottish tradition of the common sense philosophers; he says:

> The desire of the University of Edinburgh, and of its honourable Patrons, ought to be to perpetuate in the Chair . . . the promulgation of the same doctrines, and to preserve to the country of Reid and Dugald Stewart, the privilege of the public inculcation of a Philosophy that solidly establishes, on truly scientific grounds, the most cherished beliefs of humanity, and the most sacred ideas of the human mind. Among the writers who, in these latter times, have discussed the difficult questions of Metaphysics, no one has appeared to me as more happily representing the qualities of the Scottish School than Mr A. C. Fraser. (1856 *Testimonials in behalf of Professor Fraser's application for the chair of logic and metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh*, Part III, pp. 100, 101)

Ferrier's philosophical links in Germany and France were essentially detrimental to his ambitions as an academic. On the one hand, the perceived German tone to his philosophy prevented his attainment of an important professorial position. On the other hand, the French philosophers were actively involved in trying to prevent him from acquiring the said chair. Yet both schools, German Idealism and French eclecticism, may be said to have had an influence on the development of Ferrier's own philosophical system.

4.5 Conclusion

Following Ferrier's death, Scottish philosophy, and British philosophy more generally, was to a large extent a development of the thought of German thinkers such as Kant and Hegel. T. M. Knox suggests that:

> it was Ferrier's writings above all others which helped to produce that climate of opinion which made it possible for Scotland to become receptive to the Hegelian influence transmitted

through Hutchison Stirling and the Cairds. That is the great contribution that Ferrier made to the intellectual life of his country. (1950 *Veterum Laudes*, p. 74)

In the late nineteenth century, Scottish philosophy was no longer equivalent to common sense philosophy. The new Scottish philosophy, which Ferrier preceded with his own philosophy, was Scottish Idealism. If Ferrier is considered the first in a series of idealists then perhaps he is not merely a curious philosophical oddity between the old and the new Scottish schools of philosophy. Moreover, looked at from the point of view of the tradition of idealism, Ferrier's tenure at St Andrews was to be repeated by a number of significant British Idealists. While T. H. Green unsuccessfully contested Ferrier's chair upon his death, the University of St Andrews did later employ a succession of idealists, including Bernard Bosanquet, Henry Jones, David Ritchie, and Andrew Seth.

Ultimately, *any* system of idealism must be considered to be at odds with common sense philosophy, even one which was formed, as Ferrier's was, by attention to the contents of consciousness and the rejection of representationism. In abandoning the science of man, both methodologically and in spirit, Ferrier moved too far from Reid and his followers to be considered part of their school. Nevertheless, Reid is ever present in Ferrier's philosophical career, and his philosophy must be considered within the Scottish context where it was developed. As Laurie says: 'The opposition of Ferrier to his predecessors was so decided that some have found a difficulty in assigning him a place in the development of the national philosophy. But philosophy progresses by antagonism as well as by discipleship' (Laurie 1902: 292). Ferrier's work marks a turning point in the history of Scottish philosophy: the end of the Enlightenment. Thereafter there was indeed a new Scottish philosophy, albeit one that Ferrier anticipated rather than took part in.

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5

Alexander Bain, Associationism, and Scottish Philosophy

Cairns Craig

In 1882, when he was 64 years old and recently retired from the Chair of Logic and Rhetoric at the University of Aberdeen, Alexander Bain published two biographies on which he had been working in the two previous years: one on James Mill, and one on his son, John Stuart Mill. Together these works are testimony to Bain's awareness of how closely his own work is related to theirs, as well as to his long friendship with the younger of them. In the preface to his *Logic* (1873a), he notes that 'Mr. Mill's view of the relation of Deduction and Induction is fully adopted, as being the solution of the otherwise inextricable puzzle of the syllogism, and the means of giving unity and comprehensiveness to Logic' (Bain 1873a: iii), and concludes apologetically with the admission, 'as I may be open to the charge of presumption in appearing as a rival to Mr. Mill, I will venture the remark, that an attempt to carry out still more thoroughly the enlarged scheme of logical method, seems the one thing hitherto wanting to the success of his great work' (Bain 1873a: v).

Bain had begun a correspondence with John Stuart Mill in 1839, when he was 21 years old, as a result of an introduction made by an Aberdonian friend by the name of John Robertson, who was Mill's sub-editor on the *London and Westminster Review* (Bain 1882: 59–64), and it was Robertson who took Bain to India House in April of 1842, where he 'realized [his] dream of meeting Mill in person' (Bain 1882: 64). Mill had clearly been impressed by the articles that Bain had been publishing—on scientific topics—since graduating from Marischal College in Aberdeen in 1840, sufficiently so to send him a copy of his father's *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, published in 1829, which Bain 'perused with close attention, and often went back upon' (Bain 1904: 112). In 1842 Mill had just completed the text of his *Logic*, the book which was to establish him as a major figure in the intellectual world of Victorian Britain, but it had been rejected by the London-Scottish firm of John Murray and awaited publication the following year by another publisher: in the interim, Bain was

given the manuscript to read, and though the impression it made on him was 'very profound', he noted problems which he helped Mill to revise:

> The main defect of the work, however, was in the Experimental Examples. I soon saw, and he felt as much as I did, that these were too few and not unfrequently incorrect. It was on this point that I was able to render the greatest service. Circumstances had made me tolerably familiar with the Experimental Physics, Chemistry and Physiology of that day, and I set to work to gather examples from all available sources. (Bain 1882: 66)

It was a service Mill was to return a decade and half later in 1859 when Bain was 'preparing for publication my volume on *The Emotions and the Will*. I showed the MS. to Mill, and he revised it minutely, and jotted a great many suggestions' (Bain 1882: 102). Mill's expectations of Bain can be seen in his correspondence with the French philosopher Auguste Comte, to whom he wrote on 30 August 1843:

> Je vous dirai maintenant une bonne nouvelle. Nous avons fait pour notre philosophie commune une conquête de premier ordre: c'est celui [*sic*] de jeune Bain, dont j'ai fait une mention honorable dans mon livre, que je lui avais communiqué avant sa publication, et qu'il a enrichi de beaucoup examples et même de quelques idées utiles.
>
> [I will tell you now of a good bit of news. We have made for our common philosophy a conquest of the first order: that of young Bain, to whom I gave an honourable mention in my book, which I had sent him before publication, and which he has enriched with lots of examples and even with some useful ideas.] (Mineka 1963: 594)

Indeed, by 30 October 1843 he had identified Bain as the follower who would take over his own role if he were to die: 'Je ne vois que Bain en qui, si je mourais demain, je serais sûr de laisser un successeur' [I see only Bain as the one, if I were to die tomorrow, in whom I would be sure of leaving a successor] (Mineka 1963: 637). In the following decade they worked together in preparing a new edition of James Mill's *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, each supplying footnotes to bring the work up to date: 'I had necessarily a long correspondence with him on the allocation of topics', Bain wrote, 'but each of us took our own line in regard to the doctrines. Coincidence of view was the rule, the discrepancy seldom went beyond the mode of statement, the chief exception being the topic of Belief' (Bain 1882: 129). John Stuart Mill believed that his father's work had appeared too early to be properly appreciated, and that the reissue of the *Analysis* with new annotations would not only re-establish the reputation of his father's work, and the continuing relevance of the central conception on which his psychology and Mill's own *Logic* was founded—the 'association of ideas'—but would help roll back the influence of the 'intuitionists', who, since the arrival in Britain of Kantian thought in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Sir William Hamilton, had threatened to undermine the 'Experience-philosophy' (Bain 1882: 82) of the British empirical tradition.

The relationship with Mill placed Bain firmly in the Benthamite, utilitarian tradition which James Mill had done so much to promote and which John Stuart Mill had attempted to enlarge to take in those aspects of life—such as art—which Bentham had seemed to denigrate. It implied both a support for radical politics and a dubiety

towards the truths of the Christian religion: Mill noted in a letter to Comte that Bain had written to him to say that, 'at a distance, one can hardly believe, how very few points of every day human life are touched by theological views. Theology is descending rapidly to the mere Esthetic & to a bond of social agglomeration, the desire of which last is its greatest hold' (Mineka 1963: 611). About his book *Utilitarianism*, Mill wrote to Bain:

> I have not written it in any hostile spirit towards Xtianity, though undoubtedly both good ethics & good metaphysics will help Xtianity if it persists in allying itself with bad. The best thing to do in the present state of the human mind is to go on establishing positive truths (principles & rules of evidence of course included) & leave Xtianity to reconcile itself with them the best way it can. By that course, in so far as we have any success, we are at least sure of doing something to improve Xtianity. (Mineka and Lindley 1972: 421)

Bain's public commitment to such views were to cost him several university chairs for which he applied, and also raised against him a storm of protest when he applied for the new Chair of Logic created as a consequence of the union of King's College and Marischal College to form the University of Aberdeen in 1860. As he recounts in his *Autobiography*, his opponents, mostly Free Church supporters of James McCosh, then professor at Queen's University in Belfast and, later, President of Princeton, believed that 'they ought not tamely to sit and see an infidel appointed to a Chair' (Bain 1904: 264–5). Nonetheless, thanks to friends of Mill such as George Grote (another contributor of notes to the new edition of James Mill's *Analysis*) and to Mill's own influence at the Home Office, Bain was appointed, the announcement being made during the parliamentary recess to deny the opposition the opportunity to complain. Bain's only previous post had been at Anderson College in Glasgow, where he had had taught scientific subjects—he resigned after a year because of the workload—and he had no public standing in the field of Logic, except insofar as his analysis of the workings of the mind in his two major books of the 1850s—*The Senses and the Intellect* (1855) and *The Emotions and the Will* (1859)—provided a psychological foundation by which logic could be explained. He developed, therefore, a 'detailed course of lectures' that were based 'upon Mill, in all the parts beyond the usual syllogistic treatment' (Bain 1904: 274), and in which 'the treatment was so close that Mill's volumes, which might be in every student's hands, formed a convenient adjunct, and saved some lecturing time' (Bain 1904: 274). That Bain would, after his retirement in 1880, turn to writing biographies of the Mills was nothing less than an acknowledgement of a profound commitment to the intellectual projects of the Mills, both father and son.

That indebtedness, however, poses a significant issue about Bain's place within the tradition of Scottish philosophy. In James McCosh's *The Scottish Philosophy* (1875), both Bain and John Stuart Mill are presented as the inheritors and developers of the elder Mill's theories—theories which themselves have Scottish sources: 'Acquainted with mental science (at that time not studied in London) through his training in Scottish philosophy, and his reading of Hartley, he [Mill senior] became the leader in

metaphysical thought in the metropolis' (McCosh 1875: 343). But the tradition which actually passes from James to John Stuart Mill is, according to McCosh, that deriving ultimately from Hume: 'Mr. J. S. Mill, in his *Examination of Hamilton*, has reproduced to a large extent the theory of Hume, but without so clearly seeing or candidly avowing the consequences. I rather think that Mr Mill himself is scarcely aware of the extent of the resemblance between his doctrines and those of the Scottish sceptic; as he seems to have wrought out his conclusions from data supplied him by his own father' (McCosh 1875: 126). For McCosh, however, Hume is not a representative of Scottish philosophy, but its ultimate 'foe' (McCosh 1875: 147), because 'the Scottish philosophy, so far as it is a co-ordination of the facts of consciousness, never can be antagonistic to a true theology' (McCosh 1875: 23). Hume, according McCosh, was most at home in an atheistic and immoral France, and his philosophy would produce a similar 'moral tone in a community in which the word of God is discarded, and utilitarian principles are adopted' (McCosh 1875: 122). John Stuart Mill follows Hume's example to the extent of adopting and promoting French philosophers such as Comte—'Hume's philosophy, in its result, may be considered as an anticipation of the positive school of M. Comte, which in the British section of it approaches much nearer the position of Hume than most people are aware of' (McCosh 1875: 143)—and is therefore effectively detaching itself from the tradition of Scottish philosophy. To McCosh, Hume and Mill are equally alien to the true spirit of Scottish philosophy. It is a point taken up by George Davie in *The Democratic Intellect*, in which he distinguishes the Scottish tradition in philosophy from 'English associationism' (Davie 1961: 335)—an associationism that goes back to the eighteenth-century English thinker David Hartley, whose version of associationism is materialist and physiological, rather than to Hume, who is closer, at least in some respects, to Berkeley's phenomenalism. It is a point Davie reiterated in the 'Introduction' to his *The Scotch Metaphysics*, in which he describes the 'English tradition in philosophy' as 'practical utilitarianism, Bentham, John Stuart Mill and his father, Russell, Ryle and Popper' (Davie 2001: 7). If the Mills are thus central to the 'English tradition', then Bain must also be accounted part of the same tradition, his twenty years of teaching in Aberdeen counterbalanced by the fact that his two major works were published while he was working in London in the 1850s; and, certainly, from a continental perspective, the translator of Bain's work into French, Théodule Ribot, included both the Mills and Bain in his *La Psychologie anglaise contemporaine: l'école expérimentale* (1870) (translated as *English Psychology: Hartley, James Mill, Herbert Spencer, A. Bain, G. H. Lewes, Samuel Bailey, John Stuart Mill*), this 'English' psychology being identified as quite distinct from the 'Scotch': 'The *Analysis* proceeds much more from Hartley than from the Scotch School' (Ribot 1870: 40). In his recent *History of Scottish Philosophy*, Alexander Broadie straddles this divide by including James Mill and Bain on the basis of their empiricism and associationism (Broadie 2009: 302), but mentioning John Stuart Mill only as a critic of Dugald Stewart (Broadie 2009: 285).

Not only, however, was Bain the product of a Scottish undergraduate degree in which he took the courses in Moral and Natural Philosophy which were characteristic

of the Scottish universities—as well as courses in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, and Natural History—but after graduation he deputized for three academic years for his own teacher in Moral Philosophy, Dr Glennie, delivering lectures which Glennie had himself received from James Beattie, to whom he had been appointed assistant in 1793 (Bain 1904: 120). This grounding in Scottish eighteenth-century thought Bain was to extend by an intensive reading of Hamilton's edition of Reid, noting in a footnote that Hamilton's account of 'the doctrine of Muscular Sense . . . is not the least valuable and interesting of his many contributions to the history of mental and metaphysical science' (Bain 1855: 116). If Bain is thus deeply rooted in Scottish philosophy, perhaps the problem as presented by Davie and as implicitly accepted by Broadie, is that John Stuart Mill himself needs to be read as a major *Scottish* philosopher of the nineteenth century, his engagement with Hamilton's philosophy representing a refusal to accept that the tradition of Hume should be set aside for that of Reid and Kant. Mill's insistence that the external world should be defined as the 'permanent possibility of sensation' (Mill 1878: 230) corresponds to Hume's reduction of the external world to our 'impressions' and 'ideas'; his associationism builds on Hume's account of the human mind in the *Treatise of Human Nature* (Craig 2007); his secular utilitarianism derives from Hutcheson's and Hume's elaboration of an ethics of 'happiness' (Raphael 1972–3). Mill's intellectual environment, in other words, was Scottish, even though he grew up in London; his father's promotion of Bentham's utilitarianism balanced by Bentham's own acknowledgement of the influence of Hume in the formulation of his ideas: 'Philosophic radicalism, the philosophy and politics associated with Bentham from which Mill sprang, shares important doctrines with Hume. Bentham generously acknowledged Hume's influence in leading him to a clear distinction between the normative and the factual' (Skorupski 1998: 2). Mill senior refused to send his son to Cambridge because he thought that Cambridge had nothing to teach him, and the younger Mill, himself a devotee of French philosophy, wrote to Auguste Comte in 1844 that 'Je crois d'ailleurs que la philosophie positive trouvera plus d'apôtres actuels en écosse qu'en angleterre . . . à cause de l'influences antécédants philosophiques de ce pays, qui sont, comme vous savez plus voisins de l'esprit positive' [I believe moreover that the positivist philosophy will find more real followers in Scotland than in England . . . because of the influence of the earlier philosophy of this country, which as you know is much closer to the spirit of positivism] (Mineka 1963: 637). The Positivism which Mill at that time admired in Comte, will find a home in Scotland because it is a development of an already-existing and specifically *Scottish* approach to philosophy. Mill's conception of the difference between Scottish and English traditions and of the similarity of Scottish thought to the French is underlined in his correspondence with Comte:

je trouve qu'il y a une analogie réelle dans la tournure de l'esprit écossais et de l'esprit français. Vous n'avez certainement pu méconnaître à quel point les Hume, les Ferguson, les Adam Smith, les Millar, les Brown, les Reid, même les Chalmers ressemblent intellectuellement à des français, tandis que nos philosophes anglais, en exceptant peut être Hobbes, appartienne

à une type différent: chez Locke, chez Berkeley, chez Hartley, chez Coleridge, chez Bentham même, c'est un ordre d'idées et de tendances intellectuelles profondément disparates, et je pense qu'un esprit vraiment anglais, sorti de notre éducation publique, et étranger à toute culture continentale, est à beaucoup d'égards, plus éloigné du véritable esprit positif qu'aucun autre homme instruit.

[I find that that there is a real analogy between the Scottish way of thinking and the French. You have certainly not misconstrued the extent to which the likes of Hume, Ferguson, Adam Smith, Millar, Brown, Reid, even Chalmers, resemble the French in things intellectual, while our English philosophers, except perhaps Hobbes, belong to a different type; in the case of Locke, Berkeley, Hartley, Coleridge, even Bentham, there is an order of ideas and intellectual tendencies that is profoundly disparate, and I think a truly English character, deriving from our public education, and ignorant of all continental culture, is in many respects further from the true spirit of positivism than any other educated man.] (Mineka 1963: 638–9)

Mill, never having had an English education, is ready to align himself with the 'esprit positif' and to see in Bain its possible future in Britain. Of the Scottish philosophers whom Mill here lists, John Skorupski, in his 'Introduction' to *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*, emphasizes what Mill shares with Reid. While acknowledging that the Mills 'share with Hume an adherence to associationism', he suggests that 'the Mills took a rather hostile attitude to Hume. They saw him as a littérateur whose sceptical arguments were an aspect of his literary pretensions, a diversion from the sober science of the mind' (Skorupski 1998: 7–8). Like Reid, however, Mill was in search of those dispositions that Skorupski calls 'primitively normative' (Skorupski 1998: 8), which correspond in function, though not in detail, to Reid's principles of common sense:

In [Mill's] view various principles of Reidian common sense . . . are not primitive or 'original' but can be explained away. So his portfolio of primitively normative dispositions is much slimmer than Reid's. He holds that the only primitive form of reasoning is enumerative induction. He further recognises as normative a primitive disposition to accept past-tense propositions on the basis of memory. On this austere basis Mill develops his science of inductive logic and his account of logic and mathematics as inductive sciences. (Skorupski 1998: 8)

Mill's method thus can be seen to derive from Reid, even though his means—the association of ideas—derive from Hume. Mill's achievements are thus built on the foundations of eighteenth-century Scottish philosophy; his failures, in Bain's view, lie in his effort to build bridges with its nineteenth-century antagonists, nowhere more so than in his articles on Bentham (1838) and on Coleridge (1840). Mill's emphasis on 'Bentham's deficiency in Imagination, his omission of high motives in his Springs of Action, and his aversion to the phrases "good and bad *taste*" ' are criticisms, according to Bain, 'not taken by any other of Bentham's friends and disciples' (Bain 1882: 56), and undervalue the strengths of his views, while in 'Coleridge' Mill goes to the other extreme in order to find 'the truth that there is in Conservatism, when purified by Coleridge and raised to a coherent system' (Bain 1882: 56). The inequality in Mill's treatment of those with whose politics he agreed and those with whom he disagreed

could not help, Bain comments, but make 'a temporary alienation between Mill and his old associates, and planted in their minds painful misgiving as to his adhering to their principles or to any principles' (Bain 1882: 56), a misgiving underlined by what they saw as his 'consequent making himself at home' with the conservatism of 'Maurice, Stirling, and Carlyle' (Bain 1882: 84). Bain notes that George Grote, their mutual friend, had once said, ' "Much as I admire John Mill, my admiration is always mixed with fear"; meaning that he never knew what unexpected turn Mill might take' (Bain 1882: 83). It was a fear that Bain was to find confirmed when Mill's posthumous *Essays on Religion* were published in 1874: their contents, he judged, 'do not correspond with what we should have expected from him on that subject', since 'never, so far as I know, did he give any hint of wishing or attempting to reconstruct a system of theism on a scientific basis' (Bain 1882: 133). Mill's effort to reconstruct Christianity belied the very basis of his and Bain's shared views, for 'the fact remains, that in everything characteristic of the creed of Christendom, he was a thorough-going negationist' who 'admitted neither its truth nor its utility' (Bain 1882: 140), and whose final apostasy, or, as his admirers might phrase it, his concession, showed that he had not sufficiently studied 'the sceptics that preceded him', in particular the 'whole cycle of Hume's argumentative treatises' (Bain 1882: 139).

Bain's admiration for, and disappointment in, John Stuart Mill points directly to what is most important in Bain's own thought: Bain believed that Mill's 'greatest theoretical errors as a scientific thinker' were twofold:

> The first is—his doctrine of the natural equality of men. On this subject he was, in my opinion, blind to a whole region of facts. He inherited the mistake from his father, and could neither learn nor unlearn, in regard to it. The other error was perhaps less to be wondered at; I mean the disregard of the physical conditions of our mental life. He might have educated himself out of this error, but he never did. I do not mean to say that he made no allowances for the physical element of our being; my contention is, that he did not allow what every competent physiologist would now affirm to be the facts. I am afraid that, on both these errors, his feelings operated in giving his mind a bias. Whatever be the explanation, the effect was practically injurious. (Bain 1882: 146–7)

For Bain, truth is to be reached by scientific methods, and the most important modern science for anyone concerned with the nature of human experience and human values is physiology. It is, indeed, as a physiological psychologist that Bain is best remembered. Writing in 1933, J. C. Flugel accorded Bain the place of honour as the first serious psychologist: Bain, he declared, 'must for ever remain a figure of significance; for he was in a certain sense the first—the first, that is, to make psychology his life work, the first for whom the study of the mind appeared as a task worthy, in itself and for its own sake, of a man's best efforts' (Flugel 1933: 79). For Edwin G. Boring in his monumental *A History of Experimental Psychology*, Bain was equally significant, because Bain's books shaped the discipline of psychology at a key moment, 'with philosophical psychology stretching out behind and experimental physiological psychology lying ahead in a new direction. The psychologist of the twentieth century can read much

of Bain with hearty approval; perhaps John Locke could have done the same' (Boring 1950: 240). The apparent modernity of Bain's psychology in the early twentieth century, as Flugel notes, derived from the fact that his books were for so long foundational in the training of several generations of students of psychology: they, therefore,

> remained the standard British texts until superseded by the works of Sully and Stout at the end of the nineteenth century. Bain, in fact, really determined the form in which the majority of general treatises, up to and including very recent years, were to be written. Thus Bain's books seem but little antiquated even to the modern student. (Flugel 1933: 80–1)

Part of that continuing relevance was the prominence that Bain gave to physiology. Chapter I of *The Senses and the Intellect* presents some initial 'Definition and Divisions of Mind', the definition identifying 'Mind' as the remainder that is left when we subtract from the totality of experience all that belongs to the 'External World', which can be identified by virtue of the one property that it does *not* share with Mind—extension (Bain 1864: 1). The 'phenomena of the Inextended Mind' are then presented as:

> I. Feeling, which includes, but is not exhausted by, our pleasures and pains. Emotion, passion, affection, sentiment—are the names of Feeling.
>
> II. Volition, or the Will, embracing the whole of our activity as directed by the feelings.
>
> III. Thought, Intellect, or Cognition. (Bain 1864: 2)

Bain relates this classification not only to those of Reid, Brown, Hamilton, Kant, and Herbart but to those of contemporary physiology—in particular the work of Dr Sharpey in Quain's *Anatomy*, 6th edition (Bain 1864: 8)—and the argument of *The Senses and the Intellect*, after the introductory first chapter, begins from physiology: 'The connexion of the mental processes with certain of the bodily organs is now understood to be of the most intimate kind. A knowledge of the structure of those organs may therefore be expected to aid us in the study of mind' (Bain 1864: 11). Those 'mental processes' are not simply part of an identity between mind and brain—rather, mental process is the product of the brain's interaction with the organs of sense through the nerves which transmit a 'force' that 'is of a *current* nature; that is to say, a power generated at one part of the structure is conveyed along an intervening substance, and discharged at some other part. The different forms of Electricity and Magnetism have made us familiar with this sort of action' (Bain 1864: 61). The whole pattern of activity through the brain and the nerves to the organs of sense, Bain suggests,

> may thus be seen to resemble the course of a railway train. The various central masses are like so many stations where the train drops a certain number of passengers and takes up others in their stead, whilst some are carried through to the final terminus. A system of telegraph wires might be formed to represent exactly what takes place in the brain. (Bain 1864: 31–2)

The brain, therefore, is only a very large junction for a continuous circuit of bodily information, and Bain uses this 'scientific' perspective to criticize traditional philosophical conceptions of the mind and brain:

The old notion supposes that the brain is a sort of receptacle of the impressions of sense, where they lie stored up in a chamber quite apart from the recipient apparatus, to be manifested again to the mind when occasion calls. But the modern theory of the brain . . . suggests a totally different view. We have seen that the brain is only one part of the course of nervous action; that the completed circles take in the nerves and the extremities of the body; that nervous action consists of a current passing through these completed circles, or to and fro between the ganglia and the organs of sense and motion; and that, short of a completed course, no nervous action exists. The idea of a cerebral closet is quite incompatible with the real manner of the working of nerve. Seeing, then, that a sensation, in the first instance, diffuses nerve-currents through the interior of the brain outwards to the organs of expression and movement, the persistence of that sensation after the outward exciting cause is withdrawn, can be but a continuance of the same diffusive currents, perhaps less intense, but not otherwise different . . . (Bain 1864: 343–4)

For Bain, 'mind' is entirely dependent on these physical processes: 'When the mind is in the exercise of its functions, the physical accompaniment is the passing and repassing of innumerable streams of nervous influence. Whether under a sensation of something actual, or under an emotion or an idea, or a train of ideas, the general operation is still the same. It seems as if we might say, no currents, no mind' (Bain 1864: 66).

This is not merely a matter (as Boring and Flugel both suggest) of a parallelism between mind events and brain events, each progressing within its independent causal sequence in a kind of pre-established harmony: 'Bain adopted the view that mental events and the brain processes that correspond to them are two parallel series; there is no interaction of one with the other, but the double series of events can be studied in either aspect. He thus made popular the doctrine of "psycho-physical parallelism", which, in one form or another, explicit or implied, has dominated the majority of textbooks ever since' (Flugel 1933: 81). For Bain, however, mind has no independent existence: 'the mind is completely at the mercy of the bodily condition; there is no trace of a separate, independent, self-supporting, spiritual agent, rising above all the fluctuations of the corporeal frame' (Bain 1873b: 41). And this dependence of mind on body is not simply a condition of its existence, it is the very source of its being: mind is not a given of the human condition but develops from and in interaction with the body. It is by concentration on the introspective evidence of mind alone—Hume's 'Of Ideas, their Origin, Composition, Connexion, Abstraction, &c.', with which the *Treatise* commences, or Reid's fundamental introspection in *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*: 'let us now attend carefully to what the mind is conscious of when we smell a rose or a lily' (Reid 1997: ch. 2, sect. II), or John Stuart Mill's reliance on those 'Examples of truths known to us by immediate consciousness, [which] are our own bodily sensations and mental feelings' (Robson 1974: 7)—that philosophy has failed to give an effective account either of subjective human experience or of our relationship with the external world. When Hume dismisses the body in the opening pages of the *Treatise*—'the examination of

our sensations belongs more to anatomists and natural philosophers than to moral; and therefore shall not at present be enter'd upon' (Book I, Part I, Section II)—he makes scepticism about our self-identity and about our relation to an external world inevitable, because he has erased from his discussion the very medium through which we engage with both. For Hume, ideas in the mind are 'guided by some universal principles, which render it, in some measure, uniform with itself in all times and places', principles which are reducible to the three types of association of ideas: 'Resemblance, Contiguity in time or place, and Cause and Effect' (Book I, Part I, Section IV). Bain, too, will analyse the mind as operating through the principles of association, but the fundamental associations for Bain are not between ideas but between actions. If Hume had followed the logic of his insistence 'that beasts are endow'd with thought and reason as well as man' (Book I, Part III, Section XVI), he would not have conceived the mind as 'a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away' (Book I, Part IV, Section VI); for Bain, it is not with those evanescent impressions and ideas that we must begin but with the body as a reservoir of energy that needs to expend itself in action:

> If there be times of active gesticulation and exercise that show no connexion with the sights and sounds or other influence of the outer world, and that have no peculiar emotional character of the pleasurable or painful kind, we can ascribe them to nothing but the mere abundance and exuberance of self-acting muscular and cerebral energy, which rises and falls with the vigour and nourishment of the general system. (Bain 1902: 66)

It is this 'tendency in the moving system to go into action, without any antecedent sensation from without or emotion from within, or without any stimulus extraneous to the moving apparatus itself' (Bain 1902: 67) that explains 'the activity of young animals in general' (Bain 1902: 66), and of human infants in particular, of 'a child jumping in the arms, or lying on its back and kicking' (Bain 1902: 281). It is through such spontaneous action that our fundamental associations are formed, for the 'Law of Contiguity' is, in the beginning, a law discovered in the body:

> I shall commence the detailed exposition of the Law of Contiguity with the case of Muscular Activity; including under this head all kinds of movements, attitudes, and efforts of resistance. Through the intellectual property of adhesiveness or plasticity, as expressed by this principle of contiguous association, movements can be linked together in trains, and made to succeed each other, with the same certainty and invariable sequence that we find in the instinctive successions of rhythmical action . . . (Bain 1902: 343)

Spontaneous and, initially, random or accidental movements gradually coalesce by association into repeatable patterns, patterns which, by becoming inscribed in the fibres of the nervous system, make their repetition increasingly easier and more controllable:

> The limbs, the features, the eyes, the voice, the tongue, the jaw, the head, the trunk, etc., begin to move in consequence of an unprompted flow of stimulus from the nerve centres.

This flow will be sometimes to one set of members, and sometimes to another; so that the organs may act separately and independently under the influence thus imparted. Now, such spontaneous movements are, without doubt, confirmed by repetition, and are thereby made to recur more readily in the future. Any movement struck out by central energy leaves, it may be supposed, a trace behind: a less amount of nervous impulse will be required for its renewal. By a spontaneous stimulus, the hands are closed; the act of closing determines a current or bent in that direction, and the next exertion is so much the easier. (Bain 1902: 344)

The associationist tradition's 'trains of ideas' become 'trains of movements', both muscular movements of the body and movements of the currents that flow through the nervous system. Answering philosophical questions requires that we attend not just to the mental experiences that we have, but to the fact that our psychological experience is one with the body: the unresolvability of many philosophical issues derives, in Bain's view, from the continuing assumption of a boundary line between mind and body: 'We look for a boundary between two parishes, two estates, two adjoining tissues of the animal framework; but between the extended body, and the unextended mind, the search for a boundary line is incompetent and unmeaning' (Bain 1873b: 193).

The way in which Bain uses the 'embodied mind' to tackle metaphysical issues can be seen in his response to Berkeley's account of matter, an expression which Berkeley finds 'devoid of meaning' because 'if there were external bodies, it is impossible that we should know it; and if there were not, we should still have the same reason for believing it' (Bain 1872: 204). 'All the ingenuity of a century and a half', Bain believes, 'has failed to see a way out of the contradiction exposed by Berkeley' (Bain 1872: 205), and Bain himself accepts that

There is no possible knowledge of a world except in reference to our minds. Knowledge means a state of mind; the notion of material things is a mental fact. We are incapable even of discussing the existence of an independent material world; the very act is a contradiction. We can speak only of a world presented to our own minds. By an illusion of language, we fancy that we are capable of contemplating a world that does not enter into our own mental existence; but the attempt belies itself; the contemplation is itself an effort of mind. (Bain 1864: 399)

Berkeley's 'contradiction', however, rests on an inadequate account of the nature of vision and of how we derive the notion of an external world from the sense of touch. The sense of 'touch' cannot be treated in isolation from our whole bodily experience of resistance:

if we were confining ourselves to the class of sensations of soft touch, where we have the passive pleasure of the sense in highest perfection, we should not find much superiority in this sense over smell, on the point now under consideration. It is hard contact that suggests externality; and the reason is, that in this contact we must put forth force of our own. The more intense the pressure, the more energetic the activity called forth by it. This mixed state, produced through reacting upon a sensation of touch by a muscular exertion, constitutes the sense of resistance—the feeling that is the deepest foundation of our notion of externality. (Bain 1864: 401)

Degrees of 'resistance' are the constant accompaniment of all our sensations, a 'resistance' which we have to overcome as we move through the world:

> Having felt again and again that a tree becomes larger to the eye as we move; that this movement brings on at last a sensation of touch; that this sensation of touch varies with movements of our arm, and a great many other similar coincidences; the repetition of all this experience fixes it in the mind, and, from the sight alone, we can anticipate all the rest. We then know that our movements will bring about all the changes and sensations above described, and we know no more; but this knowledge is to us the recognition of external existence—the only thing, so far as I see, that external existence can possibly mean. (Bain 1864: 403)

The 'externality' of the world is nothing other than the predictability of the experiences produced by our own activity: 'Whether the causes of appearances are external to our mind or not, we are at all events certain that they are external to our bodies; for between the world and each one's corporeal presence a comparison is possible; while between the world and mind there is no comparison, the things not being homogeneous' (Bain 1864: 403–4). The external world is the world external to the body and which the body traverses and encounters through locomotion. There is no requirement for the Kantian notion of space as an a priori category of the mind because the experience of locomotion builds up our sense of space as a series of associations and, therefore, of expectations as to how we relate to the objects around us: the meaning of extension is nothing other than

> a given movement of body or limb. If I say that a log of wood I see before me is six yards long, I mean that it would take a certain number of my paces to traverse its length: the visual impression of itself cannot mean or imply any fact of this kind, until experience has connected the sweep of the eye with the sweep of the legs or other movable parts. (Bain 1864: 394)

Our ability to judge size and distance is directly based on locomotive experience, but in a more complex fashion than philosophy has allowed, since part of that locomotive experience is the experience of the movement of the eye itself—'a combination of our two most sensitive organs—the retina and the ocular group of muscles' (Bain 1864: 392). From the action of these as we focus on different objects in our view we learn to judge size and distance without having to make the locomotive effort of measuring them by the sweep of the hand or by the number of strides that would traverse them: 'In mature life, we are rarely conscious of these retinal changes, being accustomed regularly to translate the fluctuating appearances into some constant real magnitude' (Bain 1864: 392). When Dr Johnson sought to refute Berkeley by kicking a stone he was, according to Bain, exemplifying correctly that 'it was his own exertion with its consequences, and not the optical impression of a stone on the eye, that satisfied him as to the existence of something outside of him', because 'the sum total of all the occasions for putting forth active energy, or for conceiving this as possible to be put forth, is our external world' (Bain 1864: 400).

Bain's use of physiological psychology to offer a resolution of such a long-standing philosophical problem is indicative of his belief that most philosophical problems, and most philosophical systems, arise either from inadequate scientific information—as in Descartes' suggestion that the pineal gland was the connecting point between the immaterial soul and the material body (Bain 1872: 100)—or from the misuse of language, as in Descartes' 'I think, therefore I am', which Bain deconstructs in order to reveal what he considers to be its vacuousness:

> But the proposition 'I think' may itself be subjected to analysis and criticism, which will illustrate farther the illogical character of the whole transaction. Let us separate the proposition into its two parts—subject and predicate; let us inquire what is the precise meaning of the subject, and what of the predicate: we then discover whether it is a real proposition, whether the predicate *adds* anything to the subject. What is 'I'? The answer must be, all that is included in the terms 'man' or 'human being'– all the parts and functions of body and mind that go to make up an individual man or woman. Consequently to say 'I think' is mere redundancy; whoever understands 'I' already knows that much; it is only repeating a part of the meaning of the subject of the proposition. In short, it is a mere verbal or analytic proposition; it may serve a purpose, but that purpose is not to found an inference. (Bain 1877: 263–4)

Scientific and linguistic precision reveals the redundancy of many metaphysical entities: 'The variation of language is often a great intellectual help. It is, however, a source of danger. One of the lures and snares of language lies in the tendency of the mind to suppose that two different forms of expression mean two different things' (Bain 1873a: 124). Thus of the notion that people consist of two substances, one spiritual and one material, Bain declares: 'the arguments for the two substances have, we believe, now entirely lost their validity; they are no longer compatible with ascertained science and clear thinking' (Bain 1873b: 196). And while Thomas Reid, for instance, is praised for the clarity of his exposition of how we can judge distance by the changing colours of objects (Bain 1864: 408–9)—which fits with Bain's own account how the eye can judge distance—he is criticized for a definition of mind as 'that in him which thinks, remembers, reasons, wills', to which Bain retorts that it is 'a definition by means of a division at once defective and redundant: the defect lies in the absence of Feeling; the redundancy in the addition of "remember" and "reason" to the comprehensive word "think"' (Bain 1872: 3). Notably, Bain finds no place for 'philosophy' in the list he gives of the categories of knowledge in his *Logic*: 'for the purposes of the present day', he states, 'the sciences may be classified as follows:—I. Logic, II. Mathematics; III. Mechanics or Mechanical Physics, IV. Molecular Physics, V. Chemistry, VI. Biology, VII Psychology' (Bain 1873a: 25–6). 'These seven branches', Bain adds, 'contain the laws of every known process in the world, whether of matter or of mind; and set forth those laws in the order suitable for studying and comprehending them to the greatest possible advantage' (Bain 1873a: 27). Psychology, last and most complex of the disciplines, provides the foundation for practical sciences such as the 'Science of Society, Politics, or Sociology, which applies the laws of Mind to

human beings aggregated in Society' (Bain 1873a: 28), and for all the activities which characterize 'human beings aggregated in Society'—'Ethics, Logic (in its practical aspect), Aesthetics, Rhetoric, Grammar, Education, Politics, Jurisprudence, Law, Political Economy' (Bain 1873a: 29). Bain's own writings on education (*Education as a Science*, 1879) and on rhetoric (*English Composition and Rhetoric*, 1866) will follow this fundamental structure—a scientific understanding of them requires that they be related to principles by which the mind is structured.

Bain's account of the mind, therefore, seeks to establish the 'laws' by which it is governed, and from which we can understand and improve all the practical disciplines of our social life. For Bain, there are three fundamental laws that make possible our intellectual life: first, the 'Law of Relativity', which, in its most general form, indicates 'the dependence of each state upon the state or states preceding it' (Bain 1864: 8), but which, in a more fundamental way, indicates that consciousness is itself dependent on change: we can be conscious only of that which changes, so that 'if we lived in an even temperature, heat and cold would be alike unknown' (Bain 1864: 137). It is from Relativity that we derive the most basic information from our senses—the discrimination of *difference* (Bain 1864: 93) and of *similarity* or *agreement* (Bain 1864: 335)—which 'although occurring together, the two modes can always be kept separate, and their intellectual consequences run far apart; the one, discrimination, pointing to the individual, the other, agreement, pointing to the general' (Bain 1864: 335). Our ability to recognize unique elements in experience and our power of generalization thus rest on the principle of relativity, with the result that the development of science itself, as the identification of unique elements in experience and the discovery of general laws by which those unique elements are ordered, is nothing but the elaboration of this fundamental property of consciousness. The second law is that of 'Retentiveness', 'the name for the most generalized aspect of our powers of memory, habit, or acquisition, and may be described under two modes or gradations' (Bain 1902: 336). These 'modes or gradations' are, first, continuance or persistence of conscious impressions, after the withdrawal of the agent or 'cause'—as, for instance in an after image. This allows Bain to envisage individual sensations as a certain current of the nerves which can continue after its initial stimulus has disappeared, providing a model for the second mode in which we bring back to mind our past experiences. Recollection is the reactivation of a current 'ingrained' in the brain (Bain 1902: 336–7). This is why the capacity for retentiveness is different in different people, and why Bain could not accept Mills' belief in the equality of human beings. This capacity for 'Retentiveness' makes it possible for us to connect present with past experiences and, therefore, provides the ground for those 'Laws of Association' by which we can understand the workings of the mind:

one circumstance or condition of restoring any one of these former states of consciousness, is the presence of something that had more or less frequently been *in company* with that state. Thus, we are reminded of a name—a star, tree, house—by seeing the thing; the previous

concurrence of name and thing has brought about a mental adhesion between the two. So pervasive is this condition in the workings of the Retentive, or Plastic, property of the mind, that we take it along with the designation *Association by Contiguity* . . . (Bain 1902: 337)

Equally, the 'recognition, identification, or discovery of likeness in unlikeness' produces 'association by similarity' (Bain 1902: 338). From these develop the whole hierarchy of our intellectual faculties, which 'resolve themselves into the three primitive operations of intellect now specified':

The faculty called Memory is founded chiefly in the Retentive Power, or contiguity, with a certain aid from Similarity. The processes of Reason and Abstraction are in the main due to Similarity; there being in both the identifying of resemblances under more or less of difference. What is termed Judgment may consist in Discrimination, on the one hand, or in the Sense of Agreement, on the other: we judge two or more things either to differ or to agree. (Bain 1902: 338)

The final fundamental law is the 'Law of Stimulus'—the 'general principle that the mental impressions due to outward stimulation of the Senses, are proportioned to the intensity of the stimulus in each case' (Bain 1902: 8). Weak stimuli are not recorded by the Retentive Power with sufficient force to be inscribed in the nerves and thus be reproducible at a later date. To these three laws, Bain adds one more to encompass all aspects of the workings of the mind and body—the 'Law of Conservation' or of 'Self-Conservation', which states that pleasure increases the vital energies of the body and pain saps them. The effect of pleasure is signalled in the face and limbs:

the erectness of the body, the raising and throwing back of the head, the gesticulation with the arms and the activity of the movements generally, in whatever exercise is suggested for the time, are the normal expression of a pleasurable outburst. The smiling expression of the features, the stimulus to laughter, are also usual accompaniments. In the ordinary synonyms of the word pleasure, we find such epithets as lively, animated, gay, cheerful, hilarious, applied to the movements and expression—all tending to suggest that our energies are exalted for the time. (Bain 1864: 310)

The effect of pain, on the other hand, is that 'the body is dejected into collapse, the voice feeble and characterized by a long-drawn wailing note, the features assume their painful attitude although modified and disguised by the convulsive accompaniments of grief. In states of pain and depression, among the various symptoms there stand forth prominently the enfeeblement and collapse of the body and limbs' (Bain 1864: 311). The 'will', in this context, is nothing other than the pressure for 'Self-Conservation', which aims 'to attain our own pleasures and remove our own pains' (Bain 1902: 362) in order to maximize the body's vital energies.

With these resources, Bain believes he can give a complete account of our mental life and its relationship to the body, as well as of all the skills—in mechanical production, in language, in science, in business, in the fine arts, in history and narrative—which human beings are able to develop and apply in the course of their

lives. For these more complex achievements he provides an analysis of 'compound association'—in which 'associations that are individually too weak to operate the revival of a past idea, may succeed by acting together; and there is thus opened up to our view a means of aiding our recollection, or invention, when the one thread in hand is too feeble to effect a desired recall' (Bain 1902: 577)—and 'constructive association', in which earlier associations are recombined into entirely new conglomerates. Together these account for invention, creation, innovation, but without going beyond the laws of association as the fundamental mechanisms of mental activity: 'the intellectual forces operating in those creations are no other than the associating forces already discussed. The new combinations grow out of elements already possessed by the mind, and brought to view according to the laws already laid down' (Bain 1902: 606). All aspects of the mind are, therefore, organized by the same fundamental laws: the traditional psychology of 'faculties', each operating on autonomous principles, is replaced by a single interlocking structure. The mind and the body are thus brought to order within testable scientific laws in exactly the same fashion that Newtonian physics brought the apparently disorderly structure of the physical world to order. Indeed, the power of attraction between similarities in widely discrepant environments, the power which allows the scientist to discover that those laws apply in apparently different environments, is, in its operation, as effective and as mysterious as gravity:

> In truth, the very essence of generalization being the bringing together of remote thing through the attraction of sameness, this attractive energy is the right hand of a scientific inquirer. To cite the greatest example that the history of science contains—the discovery of universal gravitation, or the identifying of the fall of heavy bodies on the earth with the attraction between the sun and the planets—this was a pure stroke of similarity, prepared by previous contemplation of the two facts apart. (Bain 1902: 537)

Associations formed by the recognition of similarities are the mental equivalent of the attractive force of gravity, and as powerful an explanatory mechanism in relation to mind as gravity is in relation to bodies.

Bain uses this analysis of the embodied mind to address what he sees as the unresolved philosophical issues of his day. Given, for instance, that we are subject to all these laws of mind in its interaction with body, it is absurd, Bain thinks, to ask whether we are 'free' or, equally, if we are 'determined'. Our actions are directed by the avoidance of pain and the gaining of pleasure—'We are constantly avoiding physical injuries, organic disease, cold, hunger, exhaustion, fatigue, and the list of painful sensations and feelings; we are seeking after the opposites of all these generally, while we are devoted with express assiduity to something that has a distinguishing charm to our minds' (Bain 1859: 460)—but we do so in a complex, not to say chaotic, environment whose influences we cannot resist:

> We are put under instruction and discipline, as to the attainment of pleasurable ends, and the avoidance of painful. We are taught at first to eat and to drink, to take exercise and to rest,

independently of our own promptings. Besides being under compulsion, we are in the presence of persons whose example we imbibe; and thus the traditions of the past, facing us in the customs of the present, take the initiative of life out of our own hands, and mould it according to a pre-established model. When this system has done its work, we are altered beings. (Bain 1859: 461)

Nonetheless, character is largely predictable and with sufficient information would always be predictable. The science of character—'ethology' as John Stuart Mill called it—may only be in its earliest infancy, but 'ever since men came to live in society, they have been in the habit of predicting the future conduct of each other from the past. The characters affixed to individual men, covering the whole of their mature life, could not be sustained except on such a principle of uniformity' (Bain 1859: 479). Human beings are predictable because their choices are not anarchic acts of freedom but the outcome of contending motivations of pleasure and of pain:

If I am interfered with by another person compelling me to act in one way, then it may be said, intelligibly enough, that I have not liberty of choice; the child may be taken to the shop where a dress is to be purchased, but some one else makes the selection. But, as between the different motives of my own mind, there is no meaning in 'liberty of choice'. Various motives—present or prospective pleasures and pains—concur in urging me to act; the result of the conflict shows that one group is stronger than another, and that is the whole case. Any person watching me at that moment, and knowing exactly the different prompting considerations, would take a lesson as to my character from the trial, and would have some guidance as to what might be expected from me on similar occasions. (Bain 1859: 487–8)

'Liberty', 'freedom', 'necessity', 'determination' are, for Bain, terms which have been fatal to making progress in understanding human agents: 'The following up of pleasure, and the recoil from pain, are the ultimate facts, and most comprehensive types, or representations of volition' (Bain 1859: 488). Everything else is simply a misuse of language:

In truth, the terms in question have weighed like a nightmare upon the investigation of the active region of the mind. It is a fact that the progress made in explaining the will bears no proportion to what has been achieved in the other departments—the senses, the understanding, the affections, the emotions of taste, &c.—and my only explanation is, that the authors that have contributed towards our enlightenment on the subject of the human mind have had their strength wasted, and their pages usurped, by a problem that is in great part spurious. (Bain 1859: 489)

All such language needs to be excluded from any properly *scientific* discussion of the will, so that we focus not on abstractions but on particulars:

We understand the difference between slavery and free-citizenship, between a censorship and a free press, and between despotism in any shape and the liberty of the subject; but if any one asks whether the course of volition, in a man or an animal, is a case of despotism, or a case of freedom, I answer that the terms have no application whatsoever to the subject. The question put into some one's mouth by Carlyle, 'Is virtue then a gas?' is not too ridiculous a parody upon the foregoing. (Bain 1859: 484)

The same misuse of language Bain identifies in discussions of the notion of the *self*, as some kind of originating source of our actions:

> The proper meaning of self can be nothing more than my corporeal existence, coupled with my sensations, thoughts, emotions, and volitions—supposing the classification exhaustive, and the sum of these in the past, present, and future. Everything of the nature of a moving power belonging to this totality is a part of self. The action of the lungs, the movements of the heart, are self-determined; and when I go to the fire to get warm, lie down under fatigue, ascend a height for the sake of a prospect, the actions are as much self-determined as it is possible for actions to be. No one can vouch for an inscrutable entity in the depths of one's being, to which the name is to be distinctively applied, and which consist not of any bodily organ or function, or any one mental phenomenon that can be specified. (Bain 1859: 492)

There is no ghost in the machine, only a highly developed organism able to connect past to future and make decisions about how to avoid pain and increase pleasure.

Understanding that organism means understanding it in action as well as in reflection. The case of 'belief' is typical of the confusion introduced when philosophers search for an inner 'something' that 'causes' belief rather than setting belief in the context of a creature willing pleasure and avoiding pain by its actions:

> Is, or is not, Belief essentially related to Action, that is, volition? I answer. It is. Preparedness to act upon what we affirm is . . . the sole, the genuine, the unmistakable criterion of belief. Columbus shewed his belief in the roundness of the earth, and in the existence of an unbroken ocean between Europe and the east coast of Asia, when he undertook his voyages. (Bain 1859: 505)

The test of whether something is believed is whether those who say they are believers are prepared to act on it. The sources of such actions may arise from beliefs which are later discovered to be false, but a belief which cannot give rise to action is not a belief:

> Not merely the sober and certain realities of every man's experience, but also the superstitions, dreams, vagaries, that have found admittance among the most ignorant and misled of human beings, are conversant with the same field. When we people the air with supernatural beings, and fill the void of nature with demons, ghosts, and spirits; when we practise incantations, auguries, charms, and sacrificial rites, we are the victims of a faith as decided and strong as is our confidence in the most familiar occurrences of our daily life. In all such cases, the genuineness of the state of belief is tested by the control of the actions, while the subject-matter of it is some supposed fact, or occurrence, of nature. (Bain 1859: 506)

Human beings have an initial tendency to believe everything, as children do—they have not had sufficient exposure to the unreliability of their beliefs. Through experience, and only through experience, we begin to make judgements about which beliefs we can act upon with reasonable trust that we will not be deceived. But credulity is a continuous threat, evidenced as much in modern conceptions of the freedom of the self as in primitive superstition: 'In the early stages of the human mind, there is too much belief at one point and too little at another. The anthropomorphic explanation of

nature is an over-belief in a particular uniformity; the doctrine of so-called free-will is an under-belief in fixed laws of human action' (Bain 1859: 515). The laws of action are also invoked by Bain to reveal how little turns on such 'metaphysical' speculations: 'But I lay down provisionally, as the test of a Metaphysical question, the circumstance, that the holders of opposite views regarding it accept the same rules, and act in the same way in their practice. So long as I find that a Determinist and a Free-will advocate employ identical motives under identical circumstances—deal out punishments, rewards, persuasion, on precisely similar estimates of their effects—I regard the question, whatever importance it may have otherwise, as devoid of Ethical bearing' (Bain 1903: 67).

That human beings have believed so many different things is not, for Bain, a challenge to his utilitarian account of ethics: all social systems work, he argues, by a mixture of utility and sentiment, and the sentiments are largely an historical deposit deriving from past decisions about what will increase happiness (tradition), or the imposition on a community of one person's or one group's personal preferences (sentiment). The power of tradition and sentiment arises from what John Stuart Mill describes as 'the social state', which 'is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances, or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives of himself otherwise than as the member of a body' (Bain 1859: 294), a body from whose values he can detach himself only with difficulty. It is because of our being accustomed to this social state that we are not simply driven by selfish desires: a prime pleasure in life, for instance, is 'the pleasure of pity': 'The impulses to relieve distress have a double motive; the giver of aid derives the direct pleasure of pity, and the indirect pleasure of relief from pain' (Bain 1859: 143). The capacity for sympathy and benevolence is matched, however, by humanity's capacity for 'pure malevolence': 'If there were no intrinsic delight in giving pain, retaliation, like punishment, would be remedial and nothing more. But, as there are tyrants in the family, the school, the shop, the state, who are overjoyed when any one commits a fault, so there is a satisfaction in being angry, far beyond the necessities of self-protection' (Bain 1903: 77). Only an unsated capacity for malevolence can explain the actual behaviour of human beings:

> It would take us too far to go into the wide subject of sensational crimes worked up for our entertainment in romance, and depicted upon canvas. But for our lurking pleasure in the contemplation of suffering, these could not interest us ; indeed, if our sympathy were alone affected by spectacles of misery and horror, a very large part of the history of the past would be unbearable. The much debated pleasures of tragedy are not so enigmatical, when allowance is made for the uncrucified malevolence of our nature. (Bain 1903: 77)

Nonetheless, the refusal to apply 'utility' as the measure of the value of particular actions 'resolves itself into a sentimental preference, amounting to the abnegation of reason in human life' (Bain 1859: 278), but until 'utility' is properly understood and acted on in the organization of human societies, 'reason' can have only a very limited

role in the history of humanity. Such historical contextualizations of how the workings of the mind have impacted on ethical traditions and social structures reveal the extent to which Bain's work was not only laying the foundations of empirical psychology but was, at the same time, providing the basis on which social anthropology would develop in the four decades after his major books were published. J. G. Frazer's influential account of the primitive mind depends on the theory of 'contiguous associations', and assumes that magic and religion arise from the inability to distinguish between real (that is, causal) contiguities and those which are accidental, resulting in the latter being attributed the powers of the former. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (first published in 1890 and extending, by 1916, to twelve volumes) could be seen as a vast elaboration on Bain's psychological analysis of primitive rituals relating to the dead:

> . . . food and arms are consigned with the corpse to the tomb, in the belief that both will be used, and that the dead man can still put forth living powers. Now, if any one were to start such a notion suddenly, he would be placed in confinement as a lunatic; the lower the state of civilization, the more intolerable would be the suggestion, and the more summary the fate of the proposer. Yet whole races of men, neither insane, nor extraordinarily gifted with imagination, have held such beliefs. The fact is, however, that such positions could not have been taken up at once: they are the last stage of a long series of growths; each being explicable on some of the ordinary laws of the growth of belief. Judging from the experience of human progress, which shows that any one step is ordinarily due to a man of superior mental reach, we may conjecture that the way to the full-formed supernatural was led by individual minds unusually susceptible to the illusion required at each stage; while the condition of success was that too much should not be proposed at once. Moreover, an adequate starting point had to be furnished, in what is now regarded as the origin of the conception of Spirit, namely, the Dream or Apparition, in conjunction with the Shadow. Irrational as may be the attributing of mind to the inanimate world, the primitive mind seems to have been led to it step by step, through an almost unavoidable interpretation of Dreams. (Bain 1859: 529)

If there is nothing in Bain's work to imply a prefiguration of Freud in the final phrase of this passage (though, of course, Freud had read Frazer), it is nonetheless the case that Bain's re-establishment of association as the fundamental building block of the mind was to have a significant impact on those who succeeded him—whether in Freud's development of the technique of 'free association' as a means of accessing the unconscious or in William James' influential conception of 'the stream of thought'. James develops this notion in the context of attacking associationism's atomistic assumption that 'whenever an object of thought contains many elements, the thought itself must be made up of just as many ideas, one idea for each element, and all fused together in appearance, but really separate' (James 1890: i. 277), and argues instead that

> Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. (James 1890: i. 239)

James ignores, however, that 'stream' is Bain's own preferred image, both for the currents that flow through the nerves and for the consciousness that they produce: 'Our past life may, therefore', he writes, 'be conceived as a vast stream of spectacle, action, feeling, volition, desire—intermingled and complicated in every way, and rendered adherent by its unbroken continuity' (Bain 1864: 277–8). James is often credited with having provided the context for the modernist 'stream of consciousness' novel, but it is to Bain that James is himself indebted for the notion of mental life as a stream.

Ever both assertive about what he considered to be the truth, and humble about his own capacities for confirming it, Bain held out little hope for his own future reputation:

> But in the philosophy of the mind the displacement of one system by another is proverbial. All that we can count upon, when we have done our best, is that some of our stones may be found to fit into the structures of our successors; and as this needs time, the consummating of one's reputation is necessarily postponed. (Bain 1904: 413)

As he revised *The Senses and the Intellect* for its fourth edition, published in 1904, nearly forty years after its first publication, Bain was conscious that the original conflict to which his work had been directed—that between the a priori intuitionists and the 'experience philosophy'—had been made largely redundant by the theory of evolution, with its evidence 'of the hereditary transmission of foregone aptitudes or acquirements' (Bain 1902: ix):

> Instead of Kant's contention that the notion of Space, as a 'form of thought', is prior to any experience on the part of each individual, the question now is, whether or not we possess at birth a large contribution towards the full realizing of the three dimensions of the extended world. Such a mode of looking at the problem changes the whole character of the research into origins; depriving us of the right to define the absolute commencement of any of the great fundamental notions, and leaving us merely to watch their accessions of growth within the sphere of our observation, and to reason by analogy as to their probable course or manner of growth before entering that sphere. (Bain 1902: ix)

If hereditary acquisition provided the newborn human being with 'ideas' or 'capacities' that might confirm the intuitionists' insights, nonetheless the source of those 'innate' capacities was itself experience: 'It may, however, be still argued, without fear of rejoinder, that experience or acquisition is the remote genesis of what transcends our available sources of knowledge' (Bain 1902: ix). The defence of the 'experience philosophy' remained central to Bain's final collection of philosophical essays, gathered under the title of *Dissertations on Leading Philosophical Topics* (1903). These had mostly appeared as contributions to *Mind*, the journal he had founded in 1876 and for which he provided the financial backing amounting to several thousand pounds until 1891 (Davidson 1904: 175). Its editor during those years was George Croom Robertson, a former student who had helped Bain revise the second edition of his *The Senses and the Intellect*, and had also contributed two chapters to Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric* of 1866 (Bain 1904: 277–8), but the direction of the journal

came from Bain. Significantly, he had described his aim as the establishment not of a psychological but of a 'Philosophical journal' (Bain 1904: 327–8), but for Bain philosophy could not be separated from scientific psychology. While acknowledging that 'the mode of regarding the infant mind as a *tabula rasa* inscribed upon by sensible experience, and developed by conjunctions and successions of mere sensations, is not now the received doctrine of any school' (Bain 1903: 134–5), Bain nonetheless continued to defend the 'empiricist position', which he now expresses in the form that *valid* knowledge can only be got from experience: 'Intuition, to whatever length it may be suggestive, is in no case valid, without the confirmation of experience. The empiricist may not quarrel with intuitive or innate ideas; his quarrel is with innate certainties' (Bain 1903: 134). Equally, after reviewing a wide range of contemporary theories, Bain declares himself satisfied with association—together with discrimination—as the fundamental operations of the mind, and the language of associationism as more appropriate than new terminologies introduced by his successors: of Wundt's 'apperception', for instance, he insists that 'All that it is intended to convey is much better expressed by our old phraseology'(Bain 1903: 52); and against Adamson's theory of the priority of 'motives' in directing attention, Bain holds up the power of association itself, for 'If there be any part of the mind open to the description of being "infinitely numerous" in details, it is Association in its characteristic feature of linking mental elements together' (Bain 1903: 53). The language of association, as developed by the Mills and by Bain himself, is the best adapted to a clear understanding of the psyche:

> I do not doubt that association might be described under these various kinds of intellectual working; but I think a great deal would be lost, and nothing gained, by regarding simply the outcome of the associating processes, and saying nothing of the immense fabric that has to be reared before there can be any outcome. (Bain 1903: 54)

It was to tracing the detailed working of that 'immense fabric' in the construction of the everyday world of human judgements, feelings, emotions, and actions that Bain had dedicated his best efforts: what Bain described as 'a Natural History of the Feelings' (Bain 1864: viii) was, in significant ways, the culmination of that 'science of Man' (Hume 1888: xix) on which David Hume had embarked in the 1730s, as well as a prefiguration of the ways in which Scottish philosophers from Andrew Seth (Pringle-Pattison) in the 1880s and 1890s, to Norman Kemp Smith in the 1920s and 1930s, would seek to develop philosophies that could move beyond the stark opposition between empiricism and idealism that the German answers to Hume had provoked (Seth 1885).

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6

The Scottish Reception of Kant

Common Sense and Idealism

Paul Guyer

6.1 Introduction

Some of the very first translations of Kant into English were done by a Scotsman, John Richardson, although he was living in Germany rather than Scotland when he did them, and his work did not presage an immediate impact of Kant in Scotland. On the contrary: in a country dominated by the philosophy of Thomas Reid, above all by his critique of the 'ideal theory' of philosophers from Descartes to Hume and his defence of the principles of 'common sense', Kant was initially seen as both trapped in the past by his own allegiance to the 'ideal theory' and as otiose, because his defence of such general principles as the universal principle of causation was rendered unnecessary by the home-grown philosophy of Reid. In the last third of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, however, a series of great scholars and philosophers from Robert Adamson and Andrew Seth (later A. S. Pringle-Pattison) to Herbert James Paton, including between them Edward Caird and Norman Kemp Smith, came to appreciate the depth of Kant. Beginning with Adamson and Seth, they realized that Kant's attempt to derive the categories and the associated principles of empirical knowledge from the basic idea that all cognition must be expressed in judgement gave a systematic way of grounding the principles that Reid took for granted; and they realized that however precisely it should be interpreted, Kant's transcendental idealism was by no means reducible to the straightforward subjective idealism or 'ideal theory' of Descartes, Berkeley, and Hume. Paton summed up the Scottish consensus about the first of these points when he wrote that Kant 'became aware that the one activity of understanding which contained all the rest, and differentiated itself into different forms in order . . . to bring the manifold of ideas under the unity of thought—was judgment' (Paton 1951: 61). The difficulty in describing Kant's escape from the 'ideal theory' or subjective idealism, or perhaps more precisely the description of Kant's own difficulty in making this escape, is captured above all in Kemp Smith's account of Kant's attempt to reach a consistent statement

of 'phenomenalism', the subtle position according to which the 'phenomenal world' is not literally 'constructed out of the sensations of the special senses' as a 'small selection of its constituent parts', the objective thus being constructed out of the subjective, but according to which 'the distinction between the subjective and the objective' is rather 'made to fall within the system of natural law', or in which 'the subjective is not opposite in nature to the objective, but is a subspecies within it', but also according to which 'the realm of noumenal existence' underlies 'this entire system, conditioning both physical and psychical phenomena' (Kemp Smith 1923: 276, 279–80). This chapter will describe how the consensus over Kant's revolutionary theory of judgement developed from Adamson and Seth to Paton while the precise character of Kant's attempt to reconcile the realism of common sense with his own transcendental idealism was debated throughout this period.

Scottish scholarship on Kant did not exhaust British scholarship on Kant in the period between the 1870s and the 1930s; the Englishmen Thomas Hill Green at Oxford and Henry Sidgwick at Cambridge also offered important interpretations of Kant. Nor was the Scottish interpretation of Kant confined to Kant's theoretical philosophy: both Caird and especially Paton made important contributions to the interpretation of his practical philosophy as well. And of course the boundaries between Scottish and English academia were not impermeable: all of the figures to be discussed here spent parts of their academic careers in England except for Kemp Smith, who spent a decade at Princeton, which however had always been an outpost of Scottish philosophy in the United States. Nevertheless, there was both a level of scholarship achieved by the Scots from Adamson to Paton and a coherence of interpretation among them that makes the Scottish reception of Kant's theoretical philosophy an object of interpretation in its own right.

Allow me also to put this point autobiographically. I was introduced to Kant's theoretical philosophy as a college sophomore, in the spring of 1967, by a very young and very American Robert Nozick, at a moment of great ferment in Kantian studies stimulated by such books as the 1962 *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* by Graham Bird, then a lecturer at Aberdeen; the 1963 *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity* by Robert Paul Wolff, another American and one of the last students of the American pragmatist Clarence Irving Lewis, who had taught Kant at Harvard until a decade before I came as a freshman; and especially the two 1966 books by the Englishman Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, and the English-educated New Zealander Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Analytic*. But the background for all these books, not merely two great monuments on my own bookshelf but two well-thumbed works to which I turned daily for help, remained Kemp Smith's *Commentary* and Paton's 1936 *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*. Only later did I learn that these two books were merely the tip of the iceberg of the Scottish interpretation of Kant, or, to change the metaphor, that these two giants stood on the shoulders of other giants, Adamson, Seth, and Caird. The present chapter will present an account of this body of work. Some of this work has been obscured by the body of Kant scholarship that has developed since the 1960s,

beginning with the works of that decade just mentioned; but the earlier work to be discussed here deserves not merely to be memorialized as an important phase in the history of philosophy in Scotland but also to be kept alive for its continuing insight and inspiration for the study of Kant. For all the beneficial effect that Strawson's work, for example, had on a generation of students of Kant, his approach was deeply influenced by post-Second World War philosophy of language, while the Scottish work of the earlier decades, which took synthesis as the central concept of Kant's transcendental psychology far more seriously than Strawson did, remained closer to Kant's own way of thought but continues to be illuminating.

6.2 Initial Reception

The details of the earliest reception of Kant in Scotland as well as England have been discussed in earlier work, notably in the misnamed early work by René Wellek, who would go on to become a renowned historian of literary criticism, namely *Immanuel Kant in England, 1793–1838* (see also Micheli 1990). I will not go over that ground here. I will, however, comment on the reception of Kant by Dugald Stewart (1753–1828), in order to show by contrast how advanced the interpretation of Kant in Scotland would subsequently become. In his *Dissertation First: Exhibiting a General View of the Progress of Metaphysical and Ethical Philosophy since the Revival of Letters in Europe*, originally undertaken in 1813 as an article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and published in a supplement to the *Encyclopedia* in 1815,[1] Stewart, who had first published his own philosophy as *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* nearly twenty-five years earlier, reviewed the history of modern philosophy from the Renaissance to the moment of writing. His brief treatment of Kant, based on Latin and English translations, shows that the initial Scottish response to Kant was that Kant had made little advance over his British and Scottish predecessors and contemporaries. Stewart regarded Kant's main contributions as the distinction between the 'sensibilitive' and 'intellectual faculties', the enumeration of the fundamental categories or 'notions' of the intellect, and the insistence on the merely subjective validity of the fundamental forms of sensibility, space, and time, as well as of the categories of the intellect; Stewart regarded the use of transcendental idealism with its denial of the ultimate reality of spatiality and temporality, and thus of causation, for a solution to the problem of freedom of the will as an '*afterthought*' founded on the 'metaphysical *conundrum*, that the human mind (considered as a *noumenon* and not as a *phenomenon*) neither exists in space nor in time' (Stewart 1824: 198). But Stewart regarded Kant's distinction between sensibility and understanding as entirely anticipated by Ralph Cudworth, whose 'treatise on *Eternal and Immutable Morality*', posthumously published in 1731, half a century after it was written and exactly a half-century before

[1] See MacIntyre 2003: 182–8.

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'could scarcely fail to be known, before the period in question, to every German scholar, by the admirable Latin version of it, published by Dr. Mosheim' (Stewart 1824: 191); not surprisingly, Stewart regards the Neoplatonist Cudworth himself as having derived the distinction from Plato, and as 'having advanced at least as far as Kant, in drawing the line between the provinces of the senses, and of the understanding', and as 'far superior to the German metaphysician, both in point of perspicacity and of precision' (Stewart 1824: 192). Stewart makes no mention of Kant's attempt to ground the distinction between sensibility and understanding in the logical distinction between their characteristic kinds of representation, intuitions, and concepts; that is, between the particularity of the former and the generality of the latter, a distinction not to be found in Cudworth. And while he does emphasize Cudworth's view that 'some ideas of the mind proceed not from outward sensible objects, but arise from the inward activity of the mind itself', he does not note that Cudworth had made this claim without distinguishing between intuitions (or their forms, space and time) and concepts (or their forms, the categories), but had instead applied it indiscriminately to ideas of any and all sorts of relations—'cause, effect, means, end, order, proposition, similitude, dissimilitude, asymmetry, whole and part, genus and species, and the like' (Cudworth 1731: 84)—a list which for Kant would have been as much of a hodge-podge as Aristotle's unordered list of categories (Kant 1998: A 81/B 107). Nor does he note Kant's argument for the contrast between intuitions and concepts from the constructability of mathematical proofs contrasted to the mere analysis of concepts that is possible for philosophy. And, although Kant does appeal to the subjectivity of relations as one argument for the mind-dependency of our representations of space and time (Kant 1998: A 20/B 34), Stewart does not note that Kant's chief argument for the transcendental ideality of space and time in particular, from the synthetic a priori character of our cognition thereof (see especially Kant 1998: A 46–9/B 64–6) is not to be found in Cudworth.

Second, Stewart finds no novelty at all in Kant's response to Hume on the subject of causation. After quoting at length the passage in Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* in which Kant claims that it was Hume's difficulty in explaining the origin of our concept of causation as well as in justifying our commitment to the universal principle of causation that set him on the path to his own critical philosophy, Stewart asserts that 'It is difficult to discover any thing in the foregoing passage on which Kant could found a claim to the slightest originality.' He appeals to the authority of Richard Price to prove this point, whom he quotes as saying that 'Our certainty that every new event requires some cause, depends no more on experience than our certainty of any other the most obvious subject of intuition. In the idea of every *change*, is included that of its being an *effect*' (Stewart 1824: 194, quoting from Price 1769: ch. I, sect. 2). Stewart fails to notice that Price sets the understanding of causation back to where it had been before Hume by making both the general assertion of causation and the assertion of any particular causal connection analytic rather than synthetic, in Kant's terminology: it was precisely Hume's insight that such assertions

are synthetic rather than analytic, which Kant fully endorsed, that had triggered Kant's own search for a general theory of synthetic a priori cognition. In asserting that Kant's response to Hume had been entirely anticipated by such a philosopher as Price, Stewart thus reveals that he had failed to understand both Hume's argument about causation and Kant's attempt to respond to it while sharing its most fundamental premise. Stewart's immediately following comment that 'In the works of Dr. Reid, many remarks of the same nature are to be found' (Stewart 1824: 194) therefore suggests that his confidence that Reid had already said everything Kant had to say on the origin of the categories of the understanding shows as little understanding of what Kant had actually attempted to argue as his confidence that Cudworth had fully anticipated Kant's theory of space and time previously demonstrated. In particular, Stewart's omission of any mention of Kant's view that the categories of understanding can be derived from the logical forms or 'functions' of judgement shows that he had no inkling that Kant argued in a very different style from Reid even if some of their conclusions, such as of the necessity of the universal principle of causation to the structure of human thought about spatio-temporal events, are the same.

6.3 Adamson and Seth

But it was precisely the recognition of the originality of the centrality of the concept of judgement to Kant's derivation of the categories that inaugurated the great period of the Scottish reception of Kant. We can find evidence of this in brilliant books by Robert Adamson (1852–1902) and Andrew Seth (1856–1931) (who would later adopt the name A. S. Pringle-Pattison to fulfil the terms of a bequest). Adamson published an introduction to Kant in 1879 that emphasizes the centrality of judgement in Kant's thought, and Seth's book on *The Scottish Philosophy* presents Kant's conception of judgement as precisely the means by which he overcomes the shallowness of Reid's response to Hume. From a chronological point of view, it might make sense to discuss the Kant reception of Edward Caird (1835–1908) before those of Adamson and Seth, as he was some years older than either, and his first book on Kant, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, appeared in 1877, two years before Adamson's Kant book and half a dozen years before the work of Seth's that will be discussed here. But Caird's main work on Kant, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant* in two volumes, appeared only in 1889, after the publication of Adamson's and Seth's books; and more importantly, Caird's monumental work perforce considers a much wider range of issues than Adamson considers in a brief introduction or than Seth considers in the one volume of his lectures on the Scottish philosophy and the response thereto of Kant and Hegel. So it seems reasonable to use the smaller works of these two figures as an introduction to Caird's larger one.

Robert Adamson was born in Fife and entered Edinburgh University at 14, graduating four years later with first class honours and numerous awards. After a brief period in Heidelberg, he returned to Edinburgh as the assistant first to Henry Calderwood

and then to Alexander Campbell Fraser, and also wrote for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. At 24 he was appointed Professor of Logic at Owens College, Manchester. He returned to Scotland for a post at Aberdeen in 1893 and as Professor of Logic at Glasgow in 1895, but enjoyed that position for only seven years before his untimely death at the age of 50 in 1902.

Adamson's 1879 book *On the Philosophy of Kant*, although published while he was at Manchester, was based on Shaw Fellowship lectures he gave at Edinburgh in January 1879, and thus surely constitute part of the Scottish reception of Kant.[2] It consists of three lectures directly on Kant and a final lecture in which Adamson critically scrutinizes recent work by the German Neo-Kantians Hermann Cohen and Friedrich Albert Lange. In the lectures on Kant, Adamson stresses several points that would be central to the Scottish reception of Kant from Caird to Kemp Smith and Paton. First, while emphasizing the importance of the concept of judgement to Kant, he argues that it is nevertheless misleading of Kant to cast his fundamental philosophical problem as one about the possibility of synthetic a priori judgements exclusively, for Kant is interested in the possibility of judgement and therefore knowledge in general. In Adamson's words, 'The question . . . How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible is but a special mode of expressing the quite general problem, How is knowledge itself possible' (Adamson 1879: 32–3). What Kant is really concerned with is the synthesis that is the ground of the possibility of any knowledge at all, 'the original act of all cognition' (Adamson 1879: 37), and the a priori principles of such synthesis. This point is reiterated in the treatment of Kant in Adamson's posthumous 1903 *The Development of Modern Philosophy*, edited from student notes by W. R. Sorley, where Adamson states that 'The question in the long run is, How and under what conditions is Synthesis at all possible? For it is in the synthesis that the essential characteristic of all real knowledge is to be found' (Adamson 1903: i. 170). In his earlier work, Adamson adds that 'Synthetic *a priori* judgments in the highest sense are not in truth judgments that present themselves to us in experience', but are rather 'general formulæ, expressive of those conditions under which experience is possible' (Adamson 1879: 38). In other words, in ordinary life we make, for example, particular causal judgements and do not go around asserting that every event has a cause; but that a priori principle and the a priori category it involves ground the possibility of the particular judgements we do make.

Second, Adamson argues that Kant's chief advance over Hume is his realization that consciousness cannot be reduced to its passively received data, indeed that such data are themselves only abstractions from the complex phenomenon that is consciousness, and that consciousness in its complexity is inseparable from cognition of objects. 'In opposition to Hume', Adamson writes, 'Kant had to show that the theory of receptivity as the one function of mind'—a way of describing the fundamental

[2] There is a brief discussion of Adamson's book in Mander 2011: 58.

assumption of empiricism from Locke to Hume—'omitted the factor which alone rendered cognition of phenomena possible.' He continues that 'A stream of conscious states, which to Hume makes up the substance of mind and experience, is to Kant pure abstraction, arrived at by thrusting out of sight the nature and significance of consciousness itself' (Adamson 1879: 30). Further, Adamson argues that Kant's insistence that perceptions and our conceptual awareness of them are separated only by abstraction from our unitary experience is not only an advance over Hume, but also forestalls the objection by Salomon Maimon that Kant cannot really combine intuitions and concepts, which was in turn the inspiration for German Idealism's attack upon 'Kantian dualism'. As Adamson interprets Kant, 'we must on no account regard Notion, Schema, and Intuition, as three parts of perception which would exist in isolation' (Adamson 1879: 55). He does not entirely excuse Kant for having caused some confusion on this point; Kant's frequent laxity in the use of language, in spite of a superficial appearance of precision, and his style of exposition, in which he initially appears to accept distinctions that his subsequent argumentation is meant to undercut, are not without risk. Thus Adamson writes, in a passage worth quoting at length, that

> The possibility of misunderstanding on this essential matter arises mainly from Kant's over-anxiety to distinguish between Sense and Understanding, from the misleading analogies connected with the term *subsume*, and from the extreme laxity with which *Intuition* is employed. It is worth while recalling that soon after the appearance of the *Kritik*,[3] Kant's attention was drawn to the possibility of misconception regarding his doctrine through certain difficulties raised by that acute thinker, Salomon Maimon. Maimon asked how it could be shown that sense and understanding, which are quite heterogeneous, must of necessity harmonise, and how it was possible to think that the pure notions of the understanding should be laws for all objects whatsoever? To this Kant makes the brief but significant reply, that objects are merely phenomena, consequently, in one aspect at least, subjective, as being conditioned by our faculty of representation; while, on the other hand, they have *objectivity*, since they are united according to the forms of pure consciousness. Moreover, since we can have no experience which is not *so* constituted, intuitions not harmonising with the pure forms of thought are for us nothing. Of them we can have no knowledge whatsoever. In other words, we may say the harmony is not to be conceived as the uniting of two opposed and completed parts; the parts may only exist *so* in the unity itself. The harmony, or organic union, alone has existence; the parts are merely aspects of the whole. (Adamson 1879: 55–6)

Perhaps we could gloss this statement in contemporary terms by saying that it may be an issue for natural science to explain just how inputs originating at sensory surfaces are ultimately processed into conscious, conceptualized representations of objects in the brain, but that from a philosophical point of view we have to conceive of both sensory inputs and further processing in the brain as theoretical entities that we posit in the world of objects that we experience, not obstacles to the possibility of

[3] Here Adamson must mean the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1787.

such experience. We will see that both Caird and Adamson's one-time assistant and eventual successor Kemp Smith argue along similar lines, Kemp Smith doing so with particular clarity.

Adamson also emphasizes Kant's recognition of the interconnection between consciousness of objects and consciousness of self—a theme that is likewise to be central to the subsequent Scottish reception of Kant. Conceiving of 'conscious states', ideas, impressions, representations, or whatever they may be called, not as the immediate objects of consciousness from which advance to any other objects becomes inexplicable, but rather as mere abstractions from our actual interconnected experience of both self and external objects, is also central to Kant's advance over Hume as seen by Adamson and subsequently Caird and Kemp Smith. Adamson emphasizes that the central insight of Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories is that the categories of the understanding are the forms for the unification of our experience into both a unified representation of objects and a representation of a unified self or sequence of consciousness, each of which depends on the other. Thus he writes that 'The synthetic connection . . . which we call union in an object, or the object simply, is nothing but the condition of the unity of self-consciousness in the manifold of experience. Without *object*, no unity of self', or 'The analytical unity of consciousness . . . implies synthetic unity of the manifold of experience.' Yet at the same time, 'Consciousness of the unity and identity of Self is necessary for all representations, as otherwise they could not be *for me*, could not form parts of *my experience*'; in other words, without unity of self, no object. Drawing these thoughts together, Adamson concludes that 'Thus the three facts, unity of self-consciousness as the condition of possible experience, the determination of intuitions according to the categories or pure notions, and the reference of intuitions to the orderly objective context of experience, are not three but one. They are but three aspects or modes of regarding the fundamental synthesis, which is perception or real cognition' (Adamson 1879: 50–2). This single synthesis produces consciousness of both self and object, so the objection that these are independent entities that cannot be brought back together is fundamentally misguided.

Adamson's emphasis on the unity of experience, with both intuitions and concepts and objects and self being abstractions from that unity, is the basis not only for his understanding of Kant's critique of Hume and his defence of Kant against the charges of Maimon and subsequent German Idealism but also for his own critique of the contemporary German Neo-Kantians with whom he was already familiar in 1879, especially F. A. Lange. Adamson criticizes Lange precisely for supposing that we start out with 'conscious states . . . regarded as so many separate facts, each with its definite nature (for all the world like so many beads on a string)', which we then have to unite by means of 'an impulse toward unity which is somehow imbedded in our organisation' (Adamson 1879: 161–2)—although if this model is taken seriously, then, just as with Hume's bundle theory of the self, there is no 'organisation' to be doing the uniting, relating the unrelated. Adamson's argument is that this paradox can be avoided only if we take the distinctions between perceptions and conceptions,

conscious states and consciousness, objects and self, to be a mere abstraction in the first place, and that is the insight to which he and his successors Caird and Kemp Smith see Kant as striving.

Let us now turn to Andrew Seth, later known as A. S. Pringle-Pattison, but to be referred to here by his original name, for it was under that name that the work to be discussed was published. Seth was educated at the Royal High School and then, like Adamson, four years his senior, at the University in Edinburgh, following which he spent even more time in Germany than Adamson had; namely two years divided between Berlin, Jena, and Göttingen. Again like Adamson, Seth returned to Edinburgh for three years as assistant to Alexander Campbell Fraser, but then became Professor of Logic and Philosophy at Cardiff, following that with an appointment at St Andrews. He was called back to Edinburgh as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in 1891, and held that position until 1919, when he was succeeded by Kemp Smith. He gave the lectures on Scottish philosophy and the German response at Edinburgh in 1882–3, and they were published in 1885, with a second edition following in 1890, the year after Caird's great work.

Scottish Philosophy: A Comparison of the Scottish and German Answers to Hume, consists of six lectures, the first recounting what Seth considers to be the 'philosophical presuppositions' from Descartes and Locke that underlie the 'philosophical scepticism' that he attributes to Hume in the second.[4] Like Adamson, Seth sees Kant as above all attacking the atomistic assumptions of previous empiricism. His conception of the philosophical presuppositions that Hume accepted from his predecessors is summed up in his statement that 'The logical consummation of Locke's theory . . . leaves him nothing but the unrelated atoms of sense, the simple or particular ideas with which he set out as the materials of all our knowledge', although 'this consummation is evaded by Locke himself, partly through open departure from his own principles, and partly through the looseness of his language' (Seth 1890: 31). In the second lecture, Seth follows in the footsteps of Reid in arguing that Berkeley and then, above all, and in Seth's view 'independently' (Seth 1890: 44), Hume drew the consequences from Locke's premise, restricting our knowledge to our own ideas or in Hume's terms 'perceptions'. In particular, and in line with his general doubts about the rationality of causal inference, 'Hume cuts short the question of the cause of our impressions as a transcendental inquiry, which does not arise so long as we are content, in the genuine spirit of "the empirical method", simply to investigate the facts before us—"the perceptions themselves" ' (Seth 1890: 46). Indeed, Seth goes so far as to say that 'to an attentive reader of Locke and Berkeley, Hume's celebrated account of causality really contains nothing new' (Seth 1890: 53)! This is because 'the theory itself is perfectly inevitable, if we start with relationless units of impression', each of which 'exists on its own account, and is independent of all the rest' (Seth 1890: 54).

[4] W. J. Mander discusses not this work by Seth but a different volume, *The Development from Kant to Hegel* of 1882; see Mander 2011: 59–60.

But as soon as he considered space and time, and above all the activity of the mind that relates the supposedly unrelated units of impression, Hume was forced to recognize the existence of entities beyond mere impressions, thus himself pointing the way to what would subsequently be argued by both Reid and Kant (Seth 1890: 56). In particular, when Hume invoked the imagination to explain what he held to be the illusion of identity and continuity among mere impressions, he was compelled to admit there is something beyond mere impressions and that it really is unified: 'They *are* united, then, somewhere, in spite of all disclaimers; and whether the principle of union be called Memory, or Imagination, or Self, is of comparatively little account' (Seth 1890: 63).

In his third lecture, Seth considers Reid's response to Hume. On his view, 'the only alternative remaining' for Reid 'was to attack the *prōton pseūdos* of the theory—the assumption, namely, that experience yields as its ultimate data such self-subsistent, "loose", or relationless units of sensation as Hume begins and ends with' (Seth 1890: 63)—or more precisely, on Seth's own account, as Hume begins and tries but fails to end with. Seth thus emphasizes not so much Reid's rejection of the equation of the objects of knowledge with our own representations that had prevailed from Descartes and Locke through Berkeley and Hume, but rather his rejection of the characterization of the objects of our knowledge as relationless, and therefore as dependent on the activity of our own minds to yield relations among the objects of knowledge, but relations that are only subjectively valid. In his words, 'the theory of Representative Perception, and the doctrine of Natural Realism which' Scottish philosophers following Reid 'oppose to it . . . is not for us, the most vital point from which to attack the general philosophical question' (Seth 1890: 75). And on Seth's account, the form that Reid's opposition takes to Hume's conception of impressions as relationless units is a doctrine of judgement: 'We do not start, [Reid] insists, with ideas, but with judgments.' As Seth interprets Reid, finding in him the position that Adamson had already attributed to Kant, ideas or impressions are not given as such, a fortiori are not given as separate, unrelated units, but are rather abstractions from the intrinsically relational activity of the mind summed up by the term 'judgement', which must be a response to the genuinely relational activity of reality outside the mind.

So far from being the primitive act of mind, Simple Apprehension, or the knowledge of sensations *per se*, is a species of abstract contemplation only attainable at a later stage 'by resolving and analysing a natural and original judgment.' 'Apprehension accompanied with belief and knowledge must go before simple apprehension.' In other words, we do not have sensations first, and refer them afterward to a subject and an object; our first having of a sensation is at the same time the knowledge of a present object and (implicitly) of that object as somehow related to me. Locke's definition of knowledge, therefore, as consisting in a perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas, is entirely false. We are never restricted to our own ideas; at the very first step we pass beyond our sensations into a real and permanent world on which they depend, and of which they are merely the signs. (Seth 1890: 78–9)

Both prongs of Seth's interpretation of Reid are visible here: the claim that the mind begins from judgements of relation, not unrelated impressions, so that unrelated impressions are an abstraction from the real character of thought, not its building blocks; and the claim that the relational character of thought naturally reflects the relational character of reality itself. And since Hume's philosophy only makes explicit what is already entirely implicit in Locke, Reid's criticism of Locke fully applies to Hume as well.

Reid having arrived, in Seth's view, at the position that 'Every operation of the senses, in its very nature, implies judgment or belief, as well as simple apprehension' (Seth 1890: 103), what can there be, in Seth's view, for Kant to add to Reid's response to Hume? In general terms, nothing, for according to Seth 'Reid again occupies the same position as Kant, who makes judgment the badge of objectivity in cognition, and professes accordingly to deduce his table of the categories from an act of judgment' (Seth 1890: 102). However, Seth's attitude toward Kant is not as dismissive and thus as much like the response of earlier Scots such as Stewart as this passage might suggest. For Seth goes on to concede that Kant's conception of judgement is more developed and informative than Reid's. There are two parts to this concession. First, Seth sees that Kant does not let the judgemental character of thought stand unsupported on its own, or stand on merely empirical observation, nor does he derive it from the superficial structure of language; rather, he recognizes that Kant links the judgemental character of thought with the 'unity of apperception', and thus with 'a permanent Self, as principle of synthesis' (Seth 1890: 120). That is, he recognizes Kant's insight that all thought must take the form of judgement because *self*-consciousness itself takes the form of judgement. Second, he recognizes that Kant's '*clue* to the discovery of principles, which require afterwards the transcendental proof', in other words, the *metaphysical* deduction, which derives the categories of the understanding from the logical functions of judgement rather than just taking them for granted or appealing to 'common sense' for them, 'gives Kant his chief advantage over his Scottish contemporary' (Seth 1890: 124–5).

Yet in spite of this advantage, or perhaps better potential advantage, Seth holds that Kant did not in fact succeed in breaking away completely from Hume's form of subjectivism. On his view, Kant has 'vindicated rationality and necessity of connection for our universe . . . at a terrible cost. For we have to bear in mind that, without exception, as Kant puts it, the objects we are dealing with are "not things-in themselves, but the mere play of our ideas, which in the end are merely determinations of the internal sense"' (Seth 1890: 136–7). In other words, for Seth Kant's transcendental idealism is ultimately no different from Hume's reduction of the objects of our knowledge to unrelated impressions: in his attempt to explain the necessity of our judgements, Kant does not match Reid's confidence in the congruence of thought and nature, but rather falls back into a subjectivism in which judgement after all turns out to be 'mere play' with 'determinations of the internal sense'; that is, representations considered merely as representations rather than, as they were conceived by Reid, as 'signs' of the essentially relational character of nature itself.

Thus, both Adamson and Seth saw Kant as trying to overcome empiricist assumptions leading to subjectivism, but Seth saw Kant as less successful in breaking away from those assumptions than Adamson had seen him to be. Subsequent Scottish interpreters of Kant would fully accept Seth's recognition of the sophistication of Kant's derivation of the categories from the functions of judgement and the connection between the unity of apperception and judgement, but would struggle to find an interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism that does not have Kant falling back into a mere Humean play with ideas, thus justifying the more triumphalist interpretation of Adamson. Let us now consider how they attempted to do that, beginning with Edward Caird.

6.4 Caird

Edward Caird (1835–1908) spent the beginning and end of his career in England, but the main years of his career in Scotland. He started his studies at Glasgow, graduated from Merton College, Oxford, and was a fellow there for two years before becoming Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow. He held that position for nearly three decades, leaving it only in 1893 to succeed Benjamin Jowett as Master of Balliol at Oxford. He remained in that office until 1907, a year before his death. But Caird wrote his two works on Kant, first *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant* (1877), and then his magisterial two volumes on *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (1889), during the years he occupied the Glasgow chair, and these works in turn set the stages for the later works of Kemp Smith and Paton. Caird thus stands at the centre of the Scottish reception of Kant.

Caird is generally regarded as an Hegelian, and the influence of Hegel is evident in one persistent theme of his Kant interpretation and criticism; namely, his insistence that the distinction between intuition and concept is an abstraction from the unity of our actual experience, not a distinction between two unrelated kinds of building blocks that have to be put together before experience is possible in the first place,[5] although in his view this position is only gradually stated over the course of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'The *Aesthetic* is the statement of a dualism, which is partly overcome in the *Analytic* by the reduction of sense and thought to elements or factors in empirical knowledge' (Caird 1889: i. 285). Another persistent theme of Caird's work is the argument, which might be seen as a riposte to Adamson, that Kant did not set out to offer a general theory of experience, but only to provide as much of such a theory as is necessary to explain the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition: 'Kant began by asking for the conditions of the *a priori* knowledge of empirical objects, taking that as one species of knowledge, which can be set alongside of *a posteriori* or

[5] This aspect of Caird's interpretation of Kant is also stressed by Mander in his treatment of Caird; Mander 2011: 55–6.

empirical knowledge: but now he finds that *a posteriori* is impossible without *a priori* knowledge' (Caird 1889: i. 249–50). These two themes are interconnected in Caird's central argument that not only did Kant (as Seth had already argued) make serious progress over Reid in his conception of judgement and his deduction of the categories and principles of understanding therefrom, but that he also (as Adamson had argued) made serious progress over Hume, his argument that the distinction between intuition and concept is only an abstraction from the unity of our experience undercutting the 'ideal theory' or theory of representative perception of traditional empiricism, and his demonstration of the a priori principles of empirical knowledge as well as his resolution of all antinomies concerning these principles preventing scepticism about things in themselves, 'the region *beyond*' experience, from migrating 'to the region *within*' experience (i. 248). Work would remain to be done by Kemp Smith and Paton to show precisely how and to precisely what degree Kant's transcendental idealism can be understood as a rejection of the subjective idealism of empiricism and above all Hume rather than as succumbing to it, but Caird began the Scottish project of showing that Kant's transcendental idealism can be understood better as a form of critical realism than as a form of subjective idealism. He thus starts the project of showing that Kant was not superseded by Reid on the issue of realism any more than he was on the issue of the categories and their relation to judgement.

Nor is Caird's treatment of these two issues unconnected. But let us try to pry them apart to some degree, and begin with the theme of judgement on which Seth had already touched. For Caird, Kant's contrast between analytic and synthetic judgements is crucial to his entire programme, for while an 'analytic judgment is conceived as an act of the mind in which it abides in itself and merely determines the relation of its own ideas', 'a synthetic judgment expresses the process by which the mind, so to speak, makes a matter its own or goes out of itself to apprehend a matter outside of it itself', or is 'an act of the mind in which it determines objects' (Caird 1889: i. 267). Caird recognizes that synthetic judgement plays a twofold role for Kant, connecting representations of properties or states with each other to constitute the thought of an object but also connecting representations with the idea of the mind that represents them. A synthetic judgement is 'synthetic in two ways: as it unites a certain matter of perception to self-consciousness, and as it unites a perceived matter which has not yet been thought to a perceived matter which already has been thought' (i. 267). Caird develops the implications of this insight into the twofold character of synthetic judgement over many pages, but this formulation brings out what is central to Kant's strategy: while the mind's synthesis of the representations of many properties into the representations of unified objects necessarily takes the form of judgements structured by the logical functions of judgement and therefore employs the categories of the understanding in the representation of objects, the mind's recognition that judgement also expresses a relation between itself and its objects means that the representation of the self and the representation of a world of objects are interdependent, thus forestalling subjective idealism and scepticism. The twofold character of synthetic judgement is thus the key to Kant's progress beyond both Hume and Reid.

Caird's Hegelianism is on display to good effect in his treatment of Kant's 'metaphysical deduction' of the categories. The 'metaphysical deduction', as Kant renamed the 'clue' to the discovery of the categories of the understanding in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is of course the passage in which Kant argues that all our cognition of objects takes the form of judgement, so that the logical functions that structure judgements must have correlatives in the way we structure our conceptions of objects, namely the categories that provide the forms for all our more particular concepts of objects, whether concepts of ordinary empirical objects or concepts of the pure objects of mathematics. In Kant's terms, 'In the *metaphysical deduction* the origin of the *a priori* categories in general was established through their complete coincidence with the universal logical functions of thinking' (while in the transcendental deduction what remains to be established is that all of our intuitions are in fact subject to judgement and therefore to knowledge of objects: 'in the *transcendental deduction*, however, [the] possibility [of the categories] as *a priori* cognitions of objects of an intuition in general', or all intuition, 'was established') (Kant 1998: B 159).[6] In his Hegelian distrust of dualisms, Caird first argues that Kant's presentation of the argument of the metaphysical judgement is distorted by an initial focus on the case of *analytic* judgements (Caird 1889: i. 332). One might find it difficult to ground this charge in Kant's text, which starts with the assertions that 'We can . . . trace all actions of the understanding back to judgments, so that the *understanding* in general can be represented as a *faculty for judging* or thinking', while 'Thinking is cognition through concepts' and 'Concepts, however, as predicates of possible judgments, are related to some representation of a still undetermined object' (Kant 1998: A 69/B 94), for this emphasis on judgements as the means by which concepts are connected in order to make the representation of an undetermined object more determinate certainly sounds like Caird's own description of one of the functions of synthetic judgements rather than a characterization of the task of analytic judgements, which is merely to make explicit and communicate a connection among predicates of an object that has already been determined, 'to communicate to others a thought or synthesis which for us has been already accomplished' (Caird 1889: i. 268). But where Caird's Hegelianism shows itself off to good effect is in his more convincing argument that the three forms of judgement and categories that Kant lists under each of his headings of quantity, quality, relation, and modality, and indeed those headings themselves, 'do not stand beside each other' as mutually exclusive alternatives 'between which a choice must be made, but really express different "*momenta*" or phases in one process of thought, to which indeed we may separately direct attention, but which we cannot treat as independent processes' (Caird 1889: i. 341). What Caird means by this statement is that while a universal judgement may be contrasted to a particular one, an affirmation to a negation or limitation, the relation of an accident to the subject in which it inheres

[6] For my defence of this way of expressing the difference between the metaphysical and transcendental deductions, see Guyer 2010.

to a causal connection, or possibility to actuality or necessity, in the actual cognition of any particular object all of the categories come into play. For example, 'The pure affirmative relation of a predicate to a subject would have no meaning if there were not also a difference which might take the form of a negative judgment' (Caird 1889: i. 341). Similarly, any object that may be regarded as a unit in comparison to some other objects may also be regarded as itself a multitude of parts, or 'the determination of an individual is always a determination of it as one particular form of a universal, or as itself a universal in which many particulars are reduced to unity' (Caird 1889: i. 342); cause and effect in a causal relation are also both particular states of substances, that is to say, particular accidents of substances; and what is possible is always relative to something actual, as is likewise what is necessary, certainly what is necessary in the sense of being causally determined. The distinct forms of judgement that can be constructed from Kant's catalogue of the logical functions of judgement 'can only be distinguished from each other as special "*momenta*" in the process of determination, which cannot be separated from each other, though attention may be especially directed to one or another of them' (Caird 1889: i. 342), and if this is true of the different forms of judgement, it must also be true of the categories: for example, if any particular object can be the subject of both universal and particular judgements, both categorical and hypothetical judgements, then its concept must also be subject to or constructed in accordance with the categories of both universality and particularity, substance-and-accident and cause-and-effect, and so on. Which form of judgement and which category are used may vary from moment to moment and context to context, but all must be applicable to every object at some time or other.[7]

The emphasis on the unity of experience, with different forms of judgement and different categories being only different ways to bring out aspects of the fundamental unity of experience, also underlies Caird's extensive treatment of the interdependence of self-consciousness and consciousness of objects, which is central to his recognition of Kant's progress beyond Hume and to his influence on subsequent Scottish interpreters of Kant such as Kemp Smith. The interdependence of self-consciousness and consciousness of a unified world of objects is at the heart of Caird's involuted and repetitive but profound chapter on Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories. In eighty-four pages, without giving the reader the courtesy of any subdivisions, Caird traces the development of Kant's argument through the two editions of the *Critique*, the intervening *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, and Benno Erdmann's then recently published transcription of the notes toward the eventual revision of the *Critique* that Kant made in his own copy of the first edition, and also

[7] This point would have to be stated more carefully to avoid a problem about one class of objects that seem subject to all the categories except one: namely, the category of cause-and-effect. Kant creates a problem for himself on this point by including cause-and-effect on the list of categories, when in fact what he should include there is something more general such as 'ground and consequence', with cause-and-effect appearing only on a list of schematized categories, those taking temporality into account in precisely the way that purely mathematical and even geometrical concepts do not.

traces the course of Kant's argument within each edition of the *Critique* through its introduction, preliminary exposition, and final exposition. It is not possible to follow all the twists and turns of Caird's own exposition here. But the central idea of his interpretation is clear enough. First, Kant sees that self-consciousness and consciousness of a unified world of objects are interdependent: an object or domain of objects can only be recognized insofar as the manifold representations of them are recognized to belong to a single, conscious self, but a single self can be recognized only insofar as it is recognized as continuous experience of a coherent domain of objects. Caird complains, as have many since, that Kant does not make the connection between this central idea of the transcendental deduction and the strategy of the preceding metaphysical deduction sufficiently explicit, but the connection must be that since consciousness of objects always takes the form of judgement and consciousness of objects is a necessary condition of self-consciousness, self-consciousness is also dependent on judgements of objects and therefore the application of the categories to them, while since self-consciousness is also a form of judgement and consciousness of objects is dependent on self-consciousness, cognition of objects must for that reason too take the form of judgement. But second, Caird also thinks that Kant has created a problem for himself, or recreated a problem that goes back to Plato's worry that knowledge must be both discovery and reminiscence (Caird 1889: i. 371–4), namely that the coincidence between consciousness of objects and self-consciousness is just a pre-established harmony, something that must be seen as both imposed by the self and yet dependent on objects beyond the control of the self. Caird thinks that Kant's own solution to this problem, namely the distinction between the unconscious synthesis of the manifold of experience by the imagination which creates the unity of both object and subject and the conscious synthesis of the manifold by the understanding which recognizes the unities thus created, is not satisfactory, and tries to avoid the duplication of syntheses by instead positing a primordial synthesis of unified experience and then the separation out of that of the two poles or moments of object and subject by abstraction rather than a second synthesis. Here Caird's Hegelianism once more shows its hand.

Caird's celebration of Kant's recognition of the interdependence of subject and object, self-consciousness and consciousness of objects, is on display from the beginning of his chapter. The 'central point' of Kant's deduction, he begins, 'lies in what Kant calls "The Transcendental Unity of Apperception"'. Caird explicates the Leibnizian heritage of this idea as 'self-consciousness, and that consciousness of objects which goes with self-consciousness, as opposed to perception, a consciousness of objects which is not "reflective", or does not return upon itself and become aware of itself in distinction from its objects'—the use of the phrase 'return upon itself' surely signalling an Hegelian interpretation of Leibniz too. Caird then continues that 'it is Kant's view that we can be conscious of one self in relation to which all our ideas form a unity, only if, and in so far as, we are able to bind together all the elements of our 'perception' in the consciousness of one objective world' (Caird 1889: i. 350). This is the idea

that Kant then attempts to work out over the course of the two editions of the *Critique*, the *Prolegomena*, and the contemporaneous notes. Caird rings many variations on this statement of Kant's central idea, but one of the clearest comes some pages later when he states that consciousness of an object presupposes consciousness of the identity of 'conception' that guides the synthesis of the multiple representations of the object, which in turn requires consciousness of the identity of the self that is synthesizing these representations, and then interprets consciousness of the identity of the self as both required for yet arising out of consciousness of the identity of its object. All this applies, so to speak, both microeconomically and macroeconomically; that is, it holds in the experience of a single object and a corresponding stretch of selfhood and for the whole of one's experience of objects and one's experience of oneself. Here it is worth quoting Caird at some length:

I am conscious of the object as one through all the manifold of perception united in it, because, and in so far as, I recognize the identity of the conception which has guided me in the whole process whereby I put the elements of perception together. And the same principle must be extended to the whole content of consciousness; for my consciousness, that it is one objective world which is represented in all my perception, is the same thing with my consciousness that it is one thought which has guided me in putting all these perceptions together . . . Kant's thought, then, may be thus expressed:—The consciousness of an object means the recognition that the imaginative synthesis, whereby the elements of a perception are put together, agrees with a certain conception, and so can be subsumed under it. But when the mind thus carries on its synthesis according to conception, and recognizes that it does so, it is recognizing that its thought maintains identity with itself through the synthetic process. Hence, what on the one side is the consciousness of the object, is on the other side the consciousness of the identity of the self that knows it. The mind in apprehending the object as such, apprehends really the identity of its own action in the synthesis whereby the object is constituted. And thus in correlation, the consciousness of self and the consciousness of not-self spring out of the same synthetic act. (Caird 1889: i. 364–5)

Allowing the temporal character of our manifold of representations and synthesis thereof to become explicit (which Kant had stressed at the beginning of the first edition of the Transcendental Deduction but allowed in only at the second stage of the second edition),[8] Caird adds that our recognition of the *continuing* identity of the self is dependent on recognition of the continuing identity of the world of objects and vice versa:

If there were any break between perceptions, so that they could not be connected with each other as referring to one world, there would be a corresponding break in the consciousness of self. As some have imagined that we are in different worlds when we wake and when we sleep, so here there would be a *hiatus* in consciousness, which we might describe as a difference of worlds; this again would involve a *hiatus* in the consciousness of self, which would be equivalent to the existence in us of more than one self: in other words, as more than one self

[8] On this, see the famous article by Dieter Henrich, 'The Proof-Structure of Kant's Transcendental

is an absurdity, it would involve the impossibility of any consciousness of self at all. (Caird 1889: i. 355)

Note that Caird does not say that consciousness of self is therefore necessary no matter what; it is only the conjunction of multiple selves with the idea of one self that is an 'absurdity'. His claim is rather that consciousness of the continuing identity of the self is dependent on consciousness of the continuing identity of its world of objects, and vice versa.[9]

Caird continues that for Kant 'this unity of the world is not given to us through sense: the world is one for us only so far as we make it one.' This also means that the unity of the self is not simply given to us, but is also made: 'In bringing the perceptions together with each other as perceptions of one object or world of objects, the understanding also brings them together with the one self as *its* perceptions, and thus only makes possible a consciousness of that self, as one with itself in apprehending all these objects' (Caird 1889: i. 355). But precisely here is where Caird raises the threat of a 'pre-established harmony' between the manifold of perception and the unities imposed upon it. What he seems to be worrying about is the need for a harmony between the manifold of perception on the one hand, and both unities, the unity of objects and the unity of self, on the other, which the self is supposed to make, but which would not be possible to make unless the items in the manifold are suitably preformed or amenable to the synthesizing activity of the self. Caird's account of Kant's response to this purported problem is complex. He first admits that Kant may simply have been willing to live with this problem, allowing that it is ultimately contingent that we do have consciousness of both a world of objects and a unified self, although we can have neither of the latter without the other (Caird 1889: i. 356–7). He then transforms the worry into a worry about whether harmony is guaranteed between the two faculties of sensibility and understanding (Caird 1889: i. 358), a problem that Kant ultimately solves in the second edition of the Transcendental Deduction by arguing that the categories and the synthesis of the understanding are already involved even in the unity of any sensible intuition (see Kant 1998: B 160–1). But ultimately what Caird is concerned with is the threat of a duplication of syntheses, according to which it is first an unconscious synthesis by the imagination that creates the unity of the manifold, and second a conscious synthesis by the understanding that would replicate the work already done by the imagination, the duplication present in the idea that 'sensuous perception, in its very genesis, is conformed *a priori* to the unity which afterwards in relation to it expresses itself in the form of a conception' (Caird 1889: i. 361). And Caird thinks that Kant's ultimate response to this threat, although he never became completely clear about it, is to recognize that the manifold of sensible inputs on the one

Deduction' (Henrich 1969), and the literature this article has generated, too large to be catalogued here. For my most recent discussion of this issue, see Guyer 2010.

[9] This passage in Caird anticipates by three-quarters of a century a once well-known paper by Anthony Quinton, 'Spaces and Times'.

hand and the application of concepts to it on the other are not two separate things that have to be brought together, but are rather abstractions from a primal unity of experience: 'In this way we are brought to the conclusion that the abstraction of an analytic intelligence, which becomes synthetic only in relation to the manifold of sense, is as unreal as the abstraction of a manifold of sense, which is in itself unconnected, and which derives all its connexion from the action of the understanding' (Caird 1889: i. 389). He continues that 'Kant, on the one hand, distinguishes the unity of perception from the unity of conception; yet, on the other hand, maintains the ultimate identity of the principle manifested in both'; that is, the identity of the synthesis of both representations and concepts. 'If apperception is thus a development of the same activity present in perception, it is not difficult to understand how the images of the latter should be adapted *a priori* to conceptions which are "the species of apperception" ' (Caird 1889: i. 393); that is, the categories that are the forms of the particular empirical or mathematical concepts used in actual judgements about objects. Caird's view is that Kant never fully broke away from an initial view that intuitions on the one hand and concepts on the other are really separate entities rather than different stages in the consciousness of the unity of a single world of both objects and self, but that he at least began a reconception of this dualism that was carried further by Schelling (see Caird 1889: i. 392) and then Hegel. But in spite of the incompleteness of Kant's insight, 'it is the most important effect of the transcendental deduction, and of Kant's whole method of dealing with the subject, that it enables us to realize the truth, that the development from consciousness to self-consciousness is not merely the addition of the latter to the former, but at the same time the transformation of the former in relation to the latter. Something like this indeed is essentially involved in the idea of an organic development in all cases, and *a fortiori* in the case of the development of intelligence' (Caird 1889: i. 393).

Caird continues his account of Kant as like Moses at the River Jordan, glimpsing but never fully developing this idea that intuitions and concepts and thus the syntheses of imagination and understanding are not separate items that have to be brought together but more like different stages or aspects of a single 'organic' process, into his exposition of the System of the Principles of the Understanding, and especially his path-breaking exposition of the Analogies of Experience. Here he clearly recognizes Kant's strategy against Hume in the argument over causation; namely, that of showing that we cannot reconstruct our consciousness of 'what happens' on Hume's narrow basis of isolated perceptions alone, but only on a basis that recognizes the continuity of our use of concepts with our consciousness of perceptions (Caird 1889: i. 523–4). He also argues that Kant clearly recognizes that the three 'time-determinations' of endurance, succession, and coexistence and their related concepts of substance, causation, and interaction 'are not isolated from each other, so that one of them could be explained without the other' (Caird 1889: i. 526). So on Caird's account Kant here does not struggle to contrast the unity of an organic process of cognition with the artificiality of separating out elements that are already combined that bedevilled Hume, but

clearly recognizes the benefits of an organic conception of knowledge in overcoming the doubts and paradoxes of his predecessor.

But there is no room here to further pursue the details of Caird's interpretation of the Analogies, or of the rest of Kant's philosophy in his second volume. Instead, we will now see that Norman Kemp Smith's picture of Kant as struggling to break away from the abstraction of perception into a self-sufficient object of knowledge that underlies Humean empiricism, but never entirely succeeding in doing so, is very much in the interpretative tradition established by Caird and, before him, Adamson.

6.5 Kemp Smith

Norman Smith (1872–1958), who called himself Norman Kemp Smith after his marriage to Amy Kemp in 1910, was born in Dundee and went up to St Andrews in 1888, where Andrew Seth was Professor of Logic, Rhetoric, and Metaphysics until he was called to the Chair in Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh in 1891. Kemp Smith's education continued under the Welsh idealist Henry Jones. After graduating with first class honours in 1893, Kemp Smith was awarded the Ferguson scholarship, open to candidates from all four Scottish universities, for which he was examined by Robert Adamson. This enabled him to spend a semester in 1894 at Jena. Henry Jones then moving to Glasgow to become Edward Caird's successor, he invited Kemp Smith to be his assistant, a post Kemp Smith held for one year before further study at Zurich, Berlin, and Paris. Kemp Smith returned to Glasgow as assistant to Adamson, now Professor of Logic and Rhetoric. After Adamson's sudden death, at the age of 50, in 1902, Kemp Smith carried on the work of the chair, but was not appointed professor. After one term as assistant to Samuel Alexander in Manchester, he was appointed to the Stuart Chair of Psychology at traditionally Scottish-oriented Princeton University by its President, and later President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. Kemp Smith took leave from Princeton in 1916 to work in the war effort in Britain, and spent three years in the intelligence section of the Ministry of Munitions. Finally, in 1919 he was appointed to succeed his original teacher Andrew Seth, now A. S. Pringle-Pattison, in the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh, which he occupied until his retirement, delayed by the Second World War, in 1945. Kemp Smith thus spent considerable periods of his career both at Glasgow and Edinburgh, and while he came to the former only in the immediate aftermath of Caird's departure, he had extensive personal contact with both Seth and Adamson. He was thus personally as well as professionally well situated to carry on the Scottish tradition of Kant interpretation, and he did so with great distinction.[10]

Kemp Smith's indebtedness to his Scottish predecessors, and especially Caird, is evident in his portrayal of Kant's ultimately successful even if not entirely complete effort to break away from the subjectivism of Hume—although Kemp Smith was and

[10] The biographical data about Kemp Smith come from Porteous 1967: 3–37.

remains at least as renowned for his path-breaking interpretation of Hume as a naturalist rather than a sceptic as for his Kant scholarship, which consisted above all in his *Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, first published in 1918, and his standard-setting translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, first published in 1929.[11] But the effect of his years of study in Germany is also evident in his espousal of the 'patchwork' hypothesis of the composition of the *Critique* of Hans Vaihinger, for which he was the major proponent in English and for which he was subsequently criticized by H. J. Paton. Although Vaihinger's thesis that *Critique*, especially its transcendental deduction, is a palimpsest of arguments that Kant developed at different times in the composition of the work is an exaggeration, it clearly complemented the evolutionary view of Kant's philosophy that Kemp Smith inherited from Caird. However, Kemp Smith's portrayal of Kant's struggle to develop an alternative to subjectivism consistent with his own transcendental idealism can stand independently of the details of Vaihinger's patchwork thesis.

The patchwork thesis is essentially the thesis that the first edition of the transcendental deduction of the categories is a record of four different stages in Kant's thought.[12] The thesis is that Kant first tried to relate self-consciousness (apperception) to things-in-themselves through the concept of the transcendental object (for example, A 104–10), a 'thoroughly un-Critical' position as Kemp Smith himself says (1923: 204); next tried to relate apperception to objects through the categories but without the cooperation of the productive imagination (for example, Kant 1998: A 92–4, 95–7, 110–14, and B 124–7); third, added in the 'productive imagination' as 'a necessary intermediary in order to combine preconsciously the manifold into objects through categorial synthesis'; and finally, added the doctrine of the threefold synthesis of apprehension, reproduction, and recognition (see Vaihinger, 'Transcendental Deduction', 61), and Kemp Smith 1923: 203–4). The claim is that these different sections of the first-edition Deduction (with some parallel sections preserved in the second edition) were literally composed at successive times, or largely taken over from notes written at different times. Paton subsequently devastated this thesis by arguing that it fails to acknowledge Kant's own method of exposition, moving from a provisional statement of his argument to a fuller statement, but even more importantly that it fails to recognize Kant's own distinction between the 'objective' and the 'subjective' sides of the deduction, the argument on the one hand that self-consciousness is possible only through consciousness of objects and that in turn is possible only with the

[11] Kemp Smith's interpretation of Hume was first published in 'The Naturalism of Hume' I and II, and then developed at length in *The Philosophy of David Hume*. His *Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'* is standardly read in the revised and enlarged second edition, and his translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* likewise underwent a second edition.

[12] Vaihinger stated the patchwork thesis in *Die transcendentale Deduktion der Kategorien*; this text is translated as 'The Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in the First Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*', in Gram 1967: 23–61. Kemp Smith expounds Vaihinger's thesis at nearly equal length in 1923: 202–34. H. J. Paton rebutted the thesis in Paton 1930.

use of the categories, and the explanation on the other that the application of the categories is effected by the productive imagination, whose work can itself be further broken down into apprehension, reproduction, and recognition (this is how the productive imagination broadens the scope of merely reproductive imagination) (see Paton 1930 reprinted in 1951: especially 71–5). This objection demolishes in particular the distinction that Vaihinger and Kemp Smith made among the putative second to fourth chronological stages of the deduction. That Kant could ever have conceived of what Vaihinger and Kemp Smith describe as its first stage, the application of the categories to things-in-themselves without benefit of the categories, is inconsistent with the very project of a transcendental deduction *of the categories*, and moreover is inconceivable once Kant had committed himself to the transcendental idealism of his 'Transcendental Aesthetic', the thesis that our spatio-temporal intuitions do not present things to us as they really are, and the thesis that 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (Kant 1998: A 51/B 75), for the thesis that concepts deliver cognition only when applied to sensible intuitions self-evidently implies that the knowledge delivered by the former is limited by the limitations of the latter. To have overlooked this at any stage in the composition of the Deduction, Kant would have had to have been, as Paton says, 'abnormally stupid' (Paton 1930 reprinted in 1951: 75). Implausible as the details of the patchwork thesis may be, however, Kemp Smith's advocacy of it was clearly linked to his recognition that Kant was unsure just how to relate our empirical knowledge, arising as it does from the combination of our sensible intuitions with our categories of the understanding, to a world of objects that exist independent of cognition of them—the common sense world that Reid and his followers opposed to the 'ideal theory' that had culminated in the scepticism of Hume. Kemp Smith's sounder presentation of Kant's struggle to escape from the ideal theory while reconciling it with his own transcendental idealism, which argues that space and time are mere forms of intuition, neither things in themselves nor properties or relations of them (see Kant 1998: A 23/B 37–8, A 26/B 42), is his description of the struggle between what he calls 'subjectivism' and 'phenomenalism' in Kant, with the latter ultimately triumphant but never completely distinguished from the former.

Kemp Smith's allegiance to the emphasis of the importance of judgement for Kant by his teacher Seth and to Adamson's and Caird's emphasis on the interdependence of self-consciousness and consciousness of objects is evident early in the Introduction to his *Commentary*. After an historical section in which he states that 'Kant is compelled to acquiesce in the inevitableness of the dilemma which Hume propounds'—'Either Hume's sceptical conclusions must be accepted, or we must be able to point to some criterion which is not subject to the defects of the rationalist and empirical methods of proof' (Kemp Smith 1923: xxvii)—but insightfully concludes that Kant 'strives to determine how much of Leibniz's belief in the legislative power of pure reason can be retained after full justice has been done to Hume's damaging criticisms' (Kemp Smith 1923: xxxiii), Kemp Smith turns to the judgemental character of self-consciousness and its interdependence with judgements about objects for Kant's

solution to Hume's dilemma. In the most general terms, he states that 'The problem of knowledge may therefore be described as being the analysis of the consciousness of duration, of objectivity, and of self-consciousness, or alternatively as the analysis of our awareness of meaning. Kant arrives at the conclusion that the conditions of all four are one and the same' (Kemp Smith 1923: xxxiv). He emphasizes the judgemental character of all consciousness, whether of self or objects, in these terms:

> Kant . . . contends that all awareness, no matter how rudimentary or apparently simple, is an act of judgment, and therefore involves the relational categories. *Not passive contemplation, not mere conception but synthetic interpretation, is the fundamental form, and the only form, in which our consciousness exists.* This, of course, commits Kant to the assertion that there is no mode of cognition that can be described as immediate or unreflective. There is an immediate *element* in all knowledge, but our consciousness of it is always conditioned and accompanied by interpretative processes, and in their absence there can be no awareness of any kind. (Kemp Smith 1923: xlii)

This is a statement of Kant's insight into the judgemental character of all consciousness, previously emphasized by Seth. But it leaves open the possibility that consciousness of self and consciousness of objects, though both judgemental, therefore conditioned by the logical functions of judgement and the categories, might be parallel rather than interdependent, with the possibility of self-consciousness thereby offering no guarantee for the possibility of knowledge of objects and thus no starting point for an answer to Hume. Kemp Smith takes the further Adamsonian and Cairdian step of asserting the interdependence and not mere parallelism of self-consciousness and consciousness of objects when he adds that

> Our mental states do not run parallel with the system of natural existences; nor are they additional to it. They do not constitute our consciousness of nature; they are themselves part of the natural order which consciousness reveals. They compose the empirical self which is an objective existence, integrally connected with the material environment in terms of which alone it can be understood. The subjective is not opposite in nature to the objective, but a subspecies within it. (Kemp Smith 1923: xlvi)

This is part of what Kemp Smith means by the 'phenomenalism' that he ascribes to Kant, using this term in a way that to this extent seems diametrically opposed to the sense that this term has when it is used to designate the position of Berkeley or Mill that objects are nothing but permanent possibilities of perception: for Kemp Smith, Kant's position is phenomenalism because it treats conscious states not as building blocks to which nature must be reduced, but rather as part of the phenomena of nature itself. Consciousness, particularly its duration and determinate order, can be cognized only insofar as conscious states are treated as part and product of nature and its laws, not as antecedent to nature. This dependence of consciousness or our cognition of it on nature and its laws is of course what Kant works out in detail in the 'Analogies of Experience', and is the heart of his answer to Hume.

Yet in spite of the difference between this Kantian 'phenomenalism' and 'a *subjectivism* that is thoroughly Cartesian—we might almost, allowing for his rationalism,

say Berkeleian—in character' (Kemp Smith 1923: xlvi); that is, 'the belief that subjective or mental states, 'ideas' in the Lockean sense, are the objects of consciousness, and further are the sole possible objects of which it can have any direct or immediate awareness, knowledge 'carrying us further only in virtue of some additional supervening process, inferential, conjectural, or instinctive' (Kemp Smith 1923: 272), Kemp Smith sees Kant has having difficulty fully separating his phenomenalism from traditional subjectivism, and thus of overcoming Hume as well as his other predecessors, just as Reid and his followers had alleged. This is of course because of Kant's transcendental idealism, his conviction that in spite of the fact that 'the psychical is thus to be regarded as a class of known appearances, and as forming together with the physical a single system of nature, this entire order is, in Kant's view, conditioned by an underlying realm of noumenal existence' (Kemp Smith 1923: xlvi–xlvii). No sooner does Kant avoid the usual problem of treating mental representation as antecedent to the physical world and the latter as some sort of inference or construction from the former than he is in danger of treating the natural world of which psychical phenomena are a part as something subjective, a mere appearance. His challenge is to preserve both the interdependence thesis and transcendental idealism.

The trick to solving this problem lies, of course, in the interpretation of transcendental idealism. Another solution, of course, would be to reject transcendental idealism altogether by maintaining that Kant never had a sound argument for it in the first place, but Kemp Smith no more than any of the other Scots dares this solution. Empiricists from Locke to Hume, of course, had a problem about subjectivism because they began with the assumption that the immediate objects of cognition are the mind's own ideas, and, at least in the eyes of their critics, could never successfully explain how we knew anything else on this basis. Kant saw the futility of trying to infer our way out of confinement to our own mental states, but nevertheless seems to have backed himself into a similar problem by means of his theory that we only know appearances, that is, how things appear to us, rather than things in themselves, that is, how things are in themselves. As Kemp Smith emphasizes, Kant's primary argument for this theory is his view that we have 'pure and *a priori*' yet synthetic cognition of properties of space and time in general, the forms in which all objects appear to us, and of geometry in particular, the form in which outer objects appear to us, and 'to account for our power of anticipating experience' by means of such synthetic a priori cognition, 'we must view space' and *mutatis mutandis* time 'as existing only in the perceiving subject as the form of its sensibility' (Kemp Smith 1923: 111). Of course, Kemp Smith recognizes that Kant also has the indirect argument that only the thesis that space and time are merely features of appearance can resolve the purported antinomies of pure reason, and that it may even have been 'the existence of the antinomies which first and chiefly led Kant to assert the subjectivity of space and time' (Kemp Smith 1923: 113). Kemp Smith takes up the famous objection of Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg that Kant's positive argument for transcendental idealism from the existence of synthetic a priori cognition is incomplete because even

though we must indeed have a priori representations of space and time to explain our synthetic a priori cognition of their properties, that does not preclude that space and time are also features of things as they actually are, thus that 'There is a third alternative, namely, that though our intuition of space is subjective in origin, space is itself an inherent property of things in themselves' (Kemp Smith 1923: 113). He endorses Trendelenburg's objection and agrees that Kant's argument is 'quite inconclusive'. Stating that 'Kant does not anywhere in the *Aesthetic* even attempt to offer argument in support of [the] assertion' that space cannot be a property of things in themselves, Kemp Smith overlooks Kant's own attempt to forestall the third-alternative objection twice, in the Transcendental Aesthetic at A 46–9/B 64–6 and in the *Prolegomena* at §13, Note I, where he argues that if space and time were features of objects independently of our representations of them, they would only be so *contingently*, which would undermine the universal and *necessary* validity of our synthetic a priori cognition of them. To be sure, as I have argued elsewhere, Kant's anticipatory argument against the third-alternative objection is a bad argument, because it just assumes that whatever is necessarily true of our representations must be necessarily true of any objects of which it is true at all, an assumption to which Kant is not entitled.[13] Perhaps Kemp Smith is being sympathetic to Kant in not criticizing his key positive argument for transcendental idealism beyond allowing that it is 'inconclusive'. He could have taken the failure of Kant's argument to have relieved us of further worry about transcendental idealism, and then have reconstructed Kant's argument about the interdependence of self-consciousness and cognition of objects in an entirely realistic rather than subjectivist manner, in this way making Kant, in Scottish terms, an unconflicted Reidian. Yet his own sympathy as an historian requires him to interpret Kant's attempt to escape from subjectivism in Kant's own terms, thus consistently with transcendental idealism, and therefore leads Kemp Smith to ascribe to Kant at most the position he calls phenomenalism, that is, the view that the mental as well as the physical are part of a single nature, but that such a nature is nevertheless the product of an interaction between noumenal self and noumenal object that cannot be understood explained from within the standpoint of our experience of nature and its terms as expressed above all by the categories.

Thus, in his most detailed explication of 'The Distinction between Phenomenalism and Subjectivism' (Kemp Smith 1923: 270–84), Kemp Smith states that for the phenomenalist Kant 'The problem of knowledge, properly conceived, is no longer how consciousness, individually conditioned, can lead us beyond its own bounds, but what a consciousness, which is at once consciousness of objects and also consciousness of a self, must imply for its possibility' (Kemp Smith 1923: 274). Such a phenomenalist recognizes that 'To explain the phenomenal world as constructed out of the sensations of the special senses is virtually to equate it with a small selection of its constituent parts',

[13] See Guyer 1987: 354–69.

which commits the 'absurdity of attempting to account for the origin of the phenomenal world by means of events which can exist only under the conditions which it itself supplies' (Kemp Smith 1923: 276).[14] Yet at the same time Kant also holds that the 'synthetic processes' that constitute our experience of the unitary nature that includes both self-consciousness and empirical objects must be 'non-conscious activities . . . ascribed . . . to noumenal conditions which fall outside the realm of possible definition', which can be conceived only 'on the analogy of our mental processes . . . because of the limitation of our knowledge to the data of experience' (Kemp Smith 1923: 278). Thus Kemp Smith concludes that for the phenomenalist Kant 'Subjective states do not run parallel with the objective system of natural existences, nor are they additional to it', 'For they do not constitute our consciousness of nature; they are themselves part of the natural order which consciousness reveals'; yet at the same time 'underlying this entire system, conditioning both physical and psychical phenomena, is the realm of noumenal existence', which both prevents us from 'dogmatically asserting' in the 'Cartesian sense' that external objects are nothing but states of the 'knowing self' but at the same time also makes the relation of the phenomenal to the noumenal 'a problem, the complete data of which are not at our disposal' (Kemp Smith 1923: 280). It is difficult to state this limitation without falling back into the pre-revolutionary way of talking about the objects of knowledge as if they were just states of the knowing subject as one empirical object among others after all, and Kemp Smith's insistence that Kant did not always succeed in distinguishing his own phenomenalism from ordinary subjectivism after all reflects this difficulty.

Yet Kemp Smith had no difficulty in avoiding this problem in his independent philosophical work, when he was not burdened with the challenge of taking Kant's transcendental idealism seriously in spite of his own recognition of the inconclusiveness of Kant's main argument for it. On his own account, Kemp Smith argued precisely for phenomenalism without noumenalism, that is, for the view that the knowing subject is part of nature from the outset, and that its perceptual states are therefore also parts of nature, not building blocks out of which nature is to be constructed, without any suggestion that such a mind-including-nature is itself the product of an interaction between mysterious noumenal selves and objects. In his remarkable 1924 *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*, published just a year after the second edition of his Kant *Commentary*, Kemp Smith defends the position that 'time, space, and the categories are directly apprehended as constituent of the natural world' and that 'sensa exist not as "qualities"' out of which the natural world is to be constructed but as '"events" [that] have a quite definite *biological* function' within this world, 'that of defining the perspective necessary for the purposes of practical adaptation' (Kemp Smith 1924: 13). On this account, 'though the sensory perspective in which [objects] are experienced is peculiar to each observer, we do not have to regard it as subjective, but only as private' (Kemp Smith 1924: 12). What makes Kemp Smith's own theory of knowledge 'idealist' is not that it holds this whole world of nature

[14] Kemp Smith 1923: 276.

that includes mental perspectives upon itself to be the product of unknown objects working behind the scenes, but only that it supposes that 'The physical world is, as the positive sciences demonstrate, so extraordinarily complicated that anything approaching complete experience of it, or even at the moment of any one part of it, far exceeds the utmost capacities of the human, no less than of the animal, mind' (Kemp Smith 1924: 11). In other words, on Kemp Smith's own account idealism is merely a quantitative rather than qualitative limitation of our knowledge. This is what Kant's phenomenalism might have been had Kant himself not been burdened with transcendental idealism, and had Kemp Smith not been so scrupulous as to present Kant warts and all.

The Scottish tradition of Kant interpretation from Caird to Kemp Smith thus recognizes a conflicted Kant. The final figure in this tradition, Paton, presents a less conflicted Kant, although he continues to focus attention on the two central issues in the Scottish reception of Kant: Kant's conception of judgement, and his response to Cartesian and empiricist subjectivism or representationalism. Let us conclude this survey therefore with some comments on Paton's approach to Kant.

6.6 Paton

Like Edward Caird, Herbert James Paton (1887–1969) was Scottish born and bred, but divided his career between Scotland and England. After graduating from the University of Glasgow, he was a Snell exhibitioner at Balliol College at Oxford, although having been too young to study with Caird at Glasgow, he arrived there in 1908, the year after Caird had retired from Balliol as well. Paton became a Fellow at Queen's College in 1911. He interrupted his fellowship there to serve in intelligence at the Admiralty, returning to Queen's in 1917 and remaining there until 1927, when he was called to the Chair of Logic and Rhetoric at Glasgow. He remained there for ten years until he returned to Oxford as White's Professor of Moral Philosophy. Appropriately enough, his main work on Kant's theoretical philosophy was done while he was at Glasgow, in the chair with the more theoretical orientation, and his work on Kant's moral philosophy done while he was the Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford.

Paton presented his views about Kant's theoretical philosophy in a number of articles beginning in 1930 and in his two-volume commentary on the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[15] His work on Kant's moral philosophy culminated in his commentary on Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* in 1947 and his translation of the *Groundwork* the following year, although this work had been preceded by an independent work on moral theory with the Kantian title *The Good Will* and inspired by the Kantian idea that 'goodness belongs to the coherent will' published in 1927 at the end of his first Oxford period.[16] As already mentioned, Paton rejected the Vaihinger–Kemp Smith patchwork theory of the

[15] The articles are collected in *In Defence of Reason*.

[16] Paton 1947; Kant 1948; Paton 1927. The citation is from Paton 1927: 20.

Transcendental Deduction, instead presenting Kant as a consistent thinker subject only to the normal difficulties of exposition involved in introducing any radically new theory. He particularly rejected the idea that we could infer a chronology from any inconsistencies in Kant's exposition, stating serenely that 'It is not my experience of the human mind that inconsistencies of thought and expression are always, or even generally, due to differences in the date of writing' (Paton 1951: i. 41). In general, Paton sees Kant's transcendental idealism as expounded in the *Critique* in three stages, reflecting his distinction among 'intuition, understanding, and reason'. 'Intuition involves an immediate relation to a given individual object', takes place through the forms of space and time, and 'In the Aesthetic Kant maintains that our intuitions of space and time are *a priori* intuitions' that 'cannot give us knowledge of things as they are in themselves' but 'do give us *a priori* knowledge of things as they must appear to human minds'. The categories of the understanding, in turn, 'are meaningless and empty, except as applied to temporal and spatial things, that is, to appearances given in human intuition'. Hence the categories too 'cannot give us *a priori* knowledge of things-in-themselves, but only of appearances', the matter given to them by intuition (Paton 1951: i. 73). Finally, in the Dialectic Kant argues that reason 'falls into hopeless contradictions when it supposes that our human categories apply to things-in-themselves' (Paton 1951: i. 74). But since Paton's commentary does not discuss Kant's Dialectic, and his subsequent work concerns only Kant's theory of practical reason, not theoretical reason, his commentary and associated essays are confined to the first two stages of Kant's overall argument, the argument for transcendental idealism in the Aesthetic and the argument in the Analytic that the use of the categories is also restricted by transcendental idealism because the categories and the concepts more generally are only forms for understanding intuitions that are themselves restricted by transcendental idealism. Paton's two chief concerns, then, are Kant's derivation of transcendental idealism from his theory of intuition and his derivation of the categories from the essentially judgemental character of human understanding—the two great themes of the Scottish reception of Kant's theoretical philosophy.

Since Paton's treatment of Kant's theory of judgement is straightforward and particularly lucid, we can comment on that first. It is presented with particular concision in a 1936 Aristotelian Society lecture on 'Kant's Analysis of Experience', a statement of the chief results of his commentary also published that year. Indeed, it would be harder to restate Paton's account of Kant's theory of judgement more concisely than he does himself:

> Every judgment makes use of concepts; and this implies . . . that it must hold a plurality of homogeneous individual objects together in a totality. Every judgment, when we consider it concretely and not abstractly, affirms in denying and denies in affirming, and so delimits. Every judgment applies its conceptual predicates to a reality which in the last resort must be other than a conceptual predicate: it presupposes an ultimate subject to which its concepts apply. Every judgment is made for some ground or reason. Every judgment, in applying its concepts, treats its objects as a system of individuals . . . which mutually exclude and so

mutually determine one another. And perhaps we may even say that every judgment must be possible, actual, and necessary. (Paton 1936: i. 34)

There are two key points here. First, as soon as we conceive of judgement as applying a predicate from among a universe of predicates to a part or whole of a universe of objects, the rationale of Kant's table of the logical functions of judgements is self-evident: every judgement applies one or more predicates from its universe of predicates to one, some, or all of the objects in its domain of objects; to apply one predicate is to exclude one or more others; a predicate is applied to its object or objects with some reason, and that reason selects one judgement from a domain of mutually exclusive possibilities; and every judgement of an actuality also implies the possibility of that actuality as well as, being made for some reason, its necessity relative at least to that reason. 'It is commonly asserted that the table of judgements has been doctored for Kant for his own ends', Paton remarks in another paper, 'but even the most controversial form of judgement on Kant's list, the "infinite judgment" ', which Paton in the above quote has implied immediately falls out of the fact that any affirmative judgement also implicitly denies and limits, 'has a respectable pedigree, going back as far as Aristotle himself' (Paton 1951: 63). As soon as *anyone* thought clearly about the *function* of judgements, in other words, the *logical* functions of judgement and therefore the possible *forms* of judgement had to become apparent.

The second point of Paton's account bears on the relation between the logical functions and the possible forms of judgement, or perhaps more precisely on the relation between these functions and forms and the *act* of judgement. It might be tempting to think that each logical function of judgement—quantity, quality, relation, and modality and the three further determinations, such as singular, particular, and universal, ranged under each of these four headings—correlates to a distinctive form of judgement. That assumption is quickly refuted as soon as one realizes that any particular form of judgement is determined only by a conjunction of determinations from all four groups: for example, a universal affirmative categorical judgement of possibility is one form of judgement, an actual denial of a singular categorical judgement another, and so on. But what Paton's injunction to think about judgements 'concretely' rather than 'abstractly' implies is that any judgement in one form itself implies a variety of others, so that any single *act* of judgement at least implicitly uses all the possible forms of judgement: thus the affirmation of one singular categorical judgement will imply the denial of some related universal judgement, one judgement of necessity will imply not only some actuality and therefore some possibility, but also some other impossibility, and so on. In other words, not only are the objects of judgements always parts of some system of objects, but judgements themselves are always parts of some system of judgement. Here it could perhaps be said that the lingering Hegelianism of the Scottish and especially Glaswegian approach to Kant—Paton is here developing an argument earlier stated by his Glasgow predecessor Caird—clarifies a truth only implicit in Kant himself.

This is Paton's account of the first step of Kant's metaphysical deduction. Next, he gives his account of its second step and the transition to the transcendental deduction

of the categories. The key thought is the simple idea that 'judgement, in virtue of its necessary forms, makes certain demands on the objects to be judged'. While the details of these demands can only be fleshed out later in Kant's argument, especially in the 'Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding', where Kant draws out the implications of the fact that the objects about which our judgements will be made are always spatial and/or temporal, certain implications are immediately clear:

> So far as thought is conceptual, so far, that is to say, as it holds a plurality of homogeneous individual objects together in a totality, it demands that the given objects should *in some way* be homogeneous—

although that this homogeneity must be the extensive magnitude of spatial and/or temporal units will only be demonstrated later—

> So far as thought is assertive, that is, so far as it affirms and denies and thereby delimits, it demands that the given objects should *somehow* combine in themselves being and not-being. So far as thought is about reality, it demands that the given objects should *somehow* offer us an ultimate subject as well as characteristics belonging to that subject. So far as thought is based on reasons or grounds, it demands that the given objects should *somehow* afford us a combination of grounds and consequents. (Paton 1936: i. 34)

And so on. Kant's key idea is that if we can only form judgements in certain ways, then we can only form our concepts of objects in certain ways, ways that allow us to make those kinds of judgements about them, and that Kant's categories are nothing more mysterious than the constraints on more particular concepts that need to be satisfied if we are to be able to make judgements about those objects by means of those concepts.

Paton goes on to argue that Kant's mysterious-sounding conception of the 'transcendental synthesis of imagination' is not a 'deep metaphysical mystery', but is rather nothing more than a 'plain analysis' of the way in which a mind that works in time can apply its logically derived categories to spatio-temporal objects (Paton 1936: i. 36). However, with a directness that he does not always allow himself in his full-fledged commentary, he also criticizes Kant's tendency to suppose that the human mind literally *imposes* its categories on the objects of experience. He is much more hospitable to the idea that Kant's analysis can deliver an account of what conditions objects must satisfy if we are to be able to make judgements about them than he is to Kant's idea that the mind can make its objects satisfy those conditions. For example,

> Granted . . . that the transcendental synthesis of imagination must impose necessary or regular succession upon the given manifold, it might be because of the demand of thought for grounds that we regard the first even in a regular succession as the cause and the second event as the effect. But even so I do not see how the demand of thought could control or determine the imposition of permanence and regular succession by the transcendental synthesis of imagination . . . Above all I can see no ground for believing that the degree in which the real fills time and space is due to a synthesis made by the transcendental imagination in *response* to

the demand of thought that we should be able to affirm and deny and thereby delimit. (Paton 1936: i. 40–1)

Here Paton's criticism of Kant is that the demands of thought make the possibility of experience dependent upon the cooperation of the objects of that experience, but cannot impose their own satisfaction upon those objects. Perhaps this is why in his Aristotelian Society address Paton so plainly labels what in his commentary he calls Kant's *metaphysic* of experience an *analysis* of experience.

Paton's criticism of Kant's transcendental idealism with respect to the categories is thus briefly but forcefully stated. His position with regard to the transcendental ideality of space and time is complicated, and emerges only in the more extensive discussion of the Transcendental Aesthetic in *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*. On the one hand, Paton defends the cogency of Kant's argument from our a priori knowledge to the transcendental ideality of space and time, at least given assumptions about the status of mathematics that it was reasonable for Kant to make in his time. On the other hand, Paton is as hospitable as was Kemp Smith to the Trendelenburg thesis that Kant does not exclude the possibility that things in themselves as well as our representations of them are in some sense spatio-temporal, even though we can have no way of knowing that to be so. At the same time, he thinks Kant was less conflicted than either Caird or Kemp Smith thought about the non-subjective or independent existence of the objects of our mathematical and empirical knowledge, even though we can only positively assert that space and time are the forms in which things appear to us, not forms they have in themselves. Ultimately, what he is most interested in defending is Kant's rejection of Leibniz's conception of space and time as mere systems of relations rather than Kant's rejection of the metaphysics of Newton's conceptions of absolute space and time. Perhaps this reflects the ultimately British bias of Paton's own reception of Kant as the culmination of the Scottish reception.

Paton interprets 'the central principle of Kant's argument' as 'the revolutionary and paradoxical view that we can have *a priori* knowledge of things only in so far as what we know of them is imposed by the nature of our own minds' (Paton 1936: i. 72). In particular, Paton is willing to defend Kant's claim that 'our *a priori* intuitions of space and time . . . cannot give us knowledge of things as they are in themselves', although 'They can . . . give us *a priori* knowledge of things as they must appear to human minds; for things can appear to human minds only if they are given to a sensibility which imposes spatial and temporal form on all the empirical intuitions it receives' (Paton 1936: i. 73). This apparent endorsement of the central tenet of Kant's transcendental idealism insofar as it is derived in the Transcendental Aesthetic seems to be at odds with Paton's scepticism toward a transcendental idealist interpretation of the force of the categories in 'Kant's Analysis of Experience'. Perhaps this tension could be resolved by supposing that what Paton is accepting in *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience* is our imposition of our forms of intuition on our *intuition* and therefore *experience* of objects while what he is rejecting in the lecture is the imposition of our

categories on *things in themselves*. This suggestion might not seem consistent with his rejection in the lecture of the idea that we can impose the categories upon 'the given manifold', which is surely composed of intuitions rather than things in themselves. Be that as it may, Paton's position in the commentary seems to be precisely that in order to explain the necessary truth of our knowledge of the spatio-temporal properties of the objects of our experience and thereby the necessary spatio-temporality of those objects, we must assume that we impose spatio-temporality on the way things appear to us. But at the same time we must assume that there are things that do appear to us in the spatio-temporal form of their appearance to us, and while we have every reason to assume that we impose spatio-temporality on their appearance to us we must simply remain agnostic with regard to whether these independent objects are in some sense spatio-temporal in themselves—in spite of some of Kant's 'stronger statements' to the contrary; that is, his actual denials that things in themselves are spatio-temporal. Paton's interpretation and criticism of transcendental idealism thus combine the position that Kant was always, and unconflictedly, convinced of the independent existence of the objects that appear to us to be spatio-temporal with the criticism that Kant should have remained agnostic whether those things are spatio-temporal in themselves rather than dogmatically denying this.

Paton emphasizes that Kant's primary argument for transcendental idealism in the Transcendental Aesthetic is grounded upon the supposed necessity of our general knowledge about the spatio-temporal character of the objects of our experience and of the mathematics through which we describe the particular structure of space and time. He explicates such necessity in the following terms:

> Space and time are necessary for Kant only in relation to human experience, but by this he means more than that we have never had an experience without them. He means also (1) that we cannot conceive experience without them; (2) that when we consider them in themselves (after eliminating in thought the objects with which they are filled) we can determine their nature through and through; and (3) that in this way we can determine, independently of experience, the spatial and temporal conditions to which all objects of experience must conform. (Paton 1936: i. 154)

He claims that 'If we were living in the eighteenth, or even the nineteenth, century, we should, I think, have little justification for denying these assumptions of Kant's argument', but he concedes that 'the development of modern mathematics, and of modern mathematical theory, casts grave doubt' on Kant's assumptions in regard to geometry. What he means by this is both that the logicization of geometry in modern metamathematics casts doubt on whether it has 'any essential connection with quantity, and *a fortiori* with space' (Paton 1936: i. 155), and also that modern physics raises questions about whether Euclidean geometry, or even any one particular geometry, necessarily applies to space (Paton 1936: i. 162). But even leaving aside these *ex post facto* considerations, Paton tries to confine the claim of Kant's transcendental idealism to a form of epistemic agnosticism, the thesis that while we can

know that our own representations of reality are necessarily spatial and/or temporal, we cannot know that things in themselves are. Paton does not examine and therefore neither endorses nor rejects Kant's argument that if things in themselves were spatio-temporal independently of our representation of them then truths about space and time would perforce be contingent in at least part of their domain, although one passage comes close to suggesting that argument: 'Kant's contention—however unplausible it may seem at first sight—is that if things appeared to us just as they are, we could not legislate for them independently of experience' (Paton 1936: i. 166). His other statements, however, suggest the view that Kant's position is only that we cannot know whether things in themselves are spatio-temporal, not that we can know that they are not: thus he says 'We human beings cannot apprehend things except as spatial and temporal, but we have no reason to believe that the things as they are in themselves are either spatial or temporal; for space and time are imposed on appearances by the nature of our sensibility' (Paton 1936: i. 166), and 'If space and time are due entirely to the nature of our sensibility, it is obvious that we can have no ground for suggesting that they might *also* belong to things as they are in themselves' (Paton 1936: i. 167). Here Paton's interpretation is that Kant's position is simply that we cannot assert that things in themselves are spatial and/or temporal, not that we can deny that they are; and this leaves open Trendelenburg's missing alternative, which is precisely that even though we can have no ground for asserting that space and time might belong to things in themselves as well as to our representations of them, they may nevertheless do so. Paton supposes that Kant's argument cannot exclude this alternative, although he also states that 'If Kant's arguments are sound, the possibility that things-in-themselves might be spatial and temporal is an ungrounded possibility, and one which could serve no useful purpose in our thinking . . . It is also possible that the moon, as a thing-in-itself, is made of green cheese. The supposition that things-in-themselves might be spatial and temporal is of the same order' (Paton 1936: i. 180)—a pragmatic defence of transcendental idealism, if you like. At the same time, Paton also argues that Kant's primary concern was to defend what we might call the mathematics of an absolute space and time, especially 'the essential individuality of space and time', against Leibniz's conception of space and time as a 'logical system of relations' dependent on the objects related (Paton 1936: i. 173), and that it is of less concern to him to exclude Newton's metaphysics—the idea that space and time are things in themselves—than it is to exclude Leibniz's metamathematics—that space and time are mere systems of relations whose properties are determined by objects other than themselves.

While offering this limited defence of transcendental idealism, however, Paton also insists upon the essential consistency of Kant's conception of the relation between appearances and things in themselves. His view is that 'Kant's doctrine is . . . that scientific thought can penetrate beyond our passing sensations to a common and objective world of substances in interaction, but that this world is a world of things as they appear to human minds, and not a world of things as they are in themselves' (Paton 1936: i. 69).

But this is not a division of things into two different kinds, but a distinction between two aspects of things: 'Kant analyses the object of common sense into the thing as it is in itself and as it appears to us, or in other words into the thing-in-itself and the phenomenal object' (Paton 1936: i. 95–6), where the sense of the latter distinction is given by the former rather than vice versa. He further states that Kant 'would seem to regard the thing-in-itself as immediately present to us in all appearances, although its real (as opposed to its apparent) character is to us unknown' (Paton 1936: i. 70). He describes Kant's procedure as one that 'strips' the objects of our knowledge of their primary qualities, just as previous philosophers had stripped them of their secondary qualities (Paton 1936: i. 71), while leaving the independent existence of those objects unquestioned, and for that reason 'The reality of things-in-themselves is not considered by Kant to be in need of proof.' This follows from the fact that for Kant 'Strictly speaking, there are not two things, but only one thing considered in two different ways: the thing as it is in itself and as it appears to us' (Paton 1936: i. 61). Paton certainly anticipates the 'two-aspect' rather than 'two-worlds' interpretation of Henry Allison and others.[17]

Like Kemp Smith, Paton emphasizes that 'mental states' as ordinarily conceived are part of the phenomenal world—'our mental states and physical bodies are all part of one phenomenal world, and are all alike subject to the laws of cause and effect' (Paton 1936: i. 63)—and this means that objects as they appear to us are not to be reduced to mental states in any ordinary sense. Thus Paton sees Kant as confidently escaping the danger of subjective idealism—in Kemp Smith's terminology, Kant is a confident phenomenalist rather than conflicted between phenomenalism and subjectivism. Since Paton's commentary does not extend to the Transcendental Dialectic, he is spared from having to consider one passage where by most accounts Kant does seem to succumb to a subjectivist rather than phenomenalist interpretation of his conception of appearances. This is the fourth Paralogism of Pure Reason as presented in the first edition of the *Critique*, where Kant notoriously says that 'external things—namely, matter in all its forms and alterations—are nothing but mere representations; that is, representations in us, of whose reality we are immediately conscious' (Kant 1998: A 371–2). And having avoided discussion of the apparently subjectivist fourth Paralogism, Paton is also spared having to raise the question of whether the second-edition Refutation of Idealism, which he does discuss because Kant inserts it into the Postulates of Empirical Thought in the Transcendental Analytic, represents a change in Kant's view and a challenge to Paton's own conviction that Kant never sees the need to prove the existence of things in themselves.[18] Paton's irenic interpretation of the irenic Kant, in contrast to the more conflicted Kant of Caird and Kemp Smith, is to this extent assisted by the restricted scope of his commentary.

[17] See Allison 2004.

[18] Of course, whether Kant is trying to prove the existence of things in themselves in the Refutation of Idealism is highly controversial, though I think there is good evidence for it; see Guyer 1987: Part IV.

6.7 Conclusion

While the initial response of the Scots to Kant was that he remained trapped in Hume's subjectivism or 'ideal theory' while offering no advance over Reid in the establishment of the principles of judgement, the remarkable group of scholars from Robert Adamson to H. J. Paton showed that within the confines of transcendental idealism (even if he never succeeded in placing this doctrine itself on a secure footing), Kant made remarkable progress over Hume, reversing the status of Hume's 'impressions' from hopeless building blocks for knowledge to mere abstractions from an already unified experience of self and objects, and also provided a more sophisticated analysis than Reid had done of the sources of the principles of judgement. This remarkable body of work is more than an historical curiosity; all of it deserves to have a continuing place in the discussion of Kant, and it suggests insights that should not be lost in the contemporary practice of epistemology either.

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7

The Scottish Contribution to British Idealism and the Reception of Hegel

David Boucher

It will hardly be denied that the philosophical productions of the younger generation of our University men are more strongly impressed with a German than a native stamp.

Seth 1897a: 2

7.1 Introduction

While it is well known that idealism dominated British philosophy in the latter part of the nineteenth century and up until the First World War, it is equally true to say that the Scots dominated British Idealism, and insofar as it became an international movement it was Scottish philosophers who were at the forefront of exporting it. For some this was a most regrettable rejection of the tradition of Scottish philosophy, and particularly that aspect which in Hume gave credibility to natural beliefs or common sense. Edward Caird, the doyen of Absolute Idealism in Scotland, is accused by G. E. Davie of an extreme unpatriotic reaction to the 'ideals of the old Common Sense school' because of a personal antipathy to the way philosophical chairs in Scotland had been captured in the interests of extreme evangelicalism. The importation of Hegelianism, with a puritan accent, given it by the Englishman T. H. Green, constituted an Anglo-German assault on Scotland, infiltrated through Caird's corruption of the young in inciting them by means of 'a rosie view of life' to revolt against their elders (Davie 1961: 328–31). It is the belief that idealism was at once alien and unpatriotic that may contribute to its almost complete neglect among those devoted to the study of Scottish philosophy.[1]

[1] For other reasons, see the introduction to Boucher 2004.

In this chapter I want to argue that idealism in Scotland was not merely a matter of importing Hegelian ideas from the Continent, and rejecting the strong tradition of Scottish philosophy, against which they were reacting. Scottish Idealists were certainly responsible in large part for introducing Hegel's system into Britain through prodigious translation, commentary, and adaptation. They were, however, never uncritical of Hegel. While for them Hegel provided more satisfactory answers to many of the questions Scottish philosophers had posed, they by no means prostrated themselves before him. Some were more enthusiastic followers than others. J. S. Mackenzie, while critical of Hegel's philosophy of Nature, did not in its essentials see his own theory of the evolution of the cosmos differ from that of Hegel. He did not venture, however, to speculate on how far the German succeeded in specifying the general conditions upon which the intelligible world must rest, but thought it the greatest undertaking in philosophical speculation (Mackenzie 1922–3: 219 and 224). A perceptive reviewer of Andrew Seth's *From Kant to Hegel* made a judgement that may, in different degrees, be applied to almost all of the Scottish Idealists: 'It would, however, be unjust to Mr. Seth to call him an Hegelian: not that he would by any means repudiate that school; but there appears to be none of its definitive doctrines to which he unreservedly adheres' (Reid 1882: 13). We see in the early years of the introduction of Hegel into Scotland a tension between those forces pulling towards one or other of the poles of Berkeley and Hegel that later epitomized late-nineteenth-century Scottish philosophy; that is, the clash between Absolute and Personal Idealism.

From the beginning the Scottish Idealists developed their arguments with reference to their contemporaries and predecessors, for whom they exhibited a healthy respect. They never rejected the likes of Hume, Reid, and Hamilton out of hand, but instead portrayed them as almost persuaded to become Hegelians. For example, Andrew Seth wrote in the second edition of his *Scottish Philosophy* that he interpreted the much maligned Reid 'according to his better self' (Seth 1897a: x). It is a mistake, he argues, to imagine that the British Idealists merely instigated a revival of Kant or Hegel. They certainly learnt much from them, but the result was a novel type of thought developed within the shadow of Hume. In Seth's view, Kant's achievement was to show, *pace* Hume, that no knowledge could arise out of mere impressions, but in doing so he conceded too much to an independent reality, unknown and unknowable (Seth 1882: 7–8). Kant instigated a revolution in what constituted reality, and the path by which it was to be sought. He pointed the way for his successors to seek reality in the system of conceptions constituted by the categories which bind humanity and the world together (Seth 1882: 9). We may say the method of the Scottish Idealists is Kantian, and it uses Hegel to overcome Kant's subjective presuppositions (Seth 1882: 124–5).

For convenience, Hegel's insinuation into Scottish philosophy can be viewed in three phases. The first is characterized by a sense of awe and excitement at the prospect of exploring the relationship between the individual and the external world by transforming the understanding of mind from a passive into an active constituent in

the constitution of an elusive reality. The work of Ferrier and Carlyle may be read in this light. The second phase recognizes the need to make Hegel intelligible by relating him to the development of Scottish and continental philosophy. J. H. Stirling was at the forefront in this regard, along with Hegel's many Scottish translators, and to a lesser extent Robert Flint. And, third, of more importance were the earlier works of Edward Caird, Andrew Seth (later A. Seth Pringle-Pattison), and Henry Jones, Caird's successor at Glasgow. Caird and Jones between them held the premier chair in Moral Philosophy in Scotland for two periods of twenty-eight years, 1866–1922.

It was no easy matter introducing Hegel into an alien philosophical culture. German was itself a difficult language, and Hegel's use of it made the project even more daunting. Few who wrote on him claimed to have understood him fully. This was because Hegel's revolutionary transformation of the philosophical vocabulary was more radical than that of Kant or Fichte. Making Hegel intelligible required acquisition of the German language and a philosophical idiom that stretched the language to its limits. Scotsmen led the way in this respect, and were particularly active in the business of translating Hegel's works (Stirling 1865).[2]

The entrance of Hegel was preceded by the introduction of German literature to the British public during the first quarter of the nineteenth century by, for example, the '*Horae Germanicae*' series in *Blackwood's Magazine* from 1819, De Quincey's articles in the *London Magazine*, and Thomas Carlyle's contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* from 1827 (Ashton 1976: 1–18).

Carlyle did much to promote German literature, and especially Goethe, and at the same time did much to promote himself in exaggerating his own influence in this regard. Goethe invited Carlyle to Germany in the 1820s but, through a combination of poverty and a propensity to keep his heroes at a distance, the visit did not transpire. Carlyle did help his brother Jack visit in 1827, the year after his cousin the Reverend David Aitkin of Minto, a theologian, visited Germany in 1826, meeting Schleiermacher and Hegel.[3] Aitkin was also related to David G. Ritchie, who wrote an introduction and published Aitkin's dairy in the *Scottish Review*, entitled 'Germany in 1826' (Ritchie 1894: 1). Carlyle did not visit Germany until 1852, and then only because it was necessary as a preliminary for his book on Frederick the Great.

Philosophically the Scotsmen William Hamilton and Frederick Ferrier are of more importance. They visited Germany and learnt the language in order to acquaint themselves first hand with the revolutionary ideas to be found there. Hamilton led the way by visiting in 1817 and 1820, immersing himself in Kantian philosophy and incorporating elements into his own, including the idea of the unknowability

[2] The principal translations were: *The Logic of Hegel* (Hegel 1874); *The Philosophy of Mind* (Hegel 1894); *The Philosophy of Art* (Hegel 1886); *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Hegel 1892–6); *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Hegel 1910).

[3] Carlyle writes: 'Mr Aitken has travelled, is wealthy, has a Library, has experience, connexions with the world; a prudent, cultivated man: such an acquaintance might prove beneficial to your cousin, and could hardly by any possibility do him harm' (Carlyle 1840).

of things in themselves. Although he distorted Kant and invoked Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel only as objects of criticism, his constant references to German philosophers served to expose them to a Scottish culture barely aware of their existence. Hamilton's essay of 1829, 'The Philosophy of the Unconditioned', offers us the first philosophical reference to Hegel in English (Hamilton 1853). Indeed, W. R. Sorley (1855–1935), a Scottish Idealist Professor of Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen (1894–1900) and Cambridge (1900–33), acknowledged Hamilton's importance in this respect: 'the traditional circle of English thought was broken, and new ideas were brought within it' (Sorley [1920] 1937: 243). Hamilton tried in his philosophy to reconcile the philosophies of Reid and Kant. Views on the extent to which he succeeded are divergent. His student and admirer Frederick Ferrier (1808–64) ranked him amongst the greatest philosophers, albeit in defending himself against those who wished to undermine his attempt to be appointed to Hamilton's chair, while James Hutcheson Stirling thought him disingenuous and responsible for setting back British philosophy by at least a generation (Ferrier 1856: 15, 16; Stirling 1865: vii). Muirhead regretted that Hamilton had succeeded in turning the positives in Kant into mere negatives: 'Space, time, causality were expressions not of the constructive powers of thought, but of its impotence to grasp the Absolute' (Muirhead 1931: 160).

The credit for the elevation of Hegel above Kant and Schelling must go to James Frederick Ferrier (1808–64), in urging his compatriots to take the trouble to gain a greater understanding of Hegel's revolutionary position. Ferrier visited Germany in 1834 to acquaint himself first hand with the philosophy he described as 'that mighty stream of tendency towards which all modern meditation flows, the great gulf-stream of Absolute Idealism' (cited in Davie 1961: 276).[4] The pilgrimage to Germany, which Hamilton, Aitkin, and Ferrier initiated, gradually became a requirement for aspirant intellectuals. James Hutchison Stirling, Glasgow born and educated, began his career in Wales as a medical doctor, but in 1851, following an inheritance, abandoned medicine to continue his philosophical studies. He first went to France and in 1854 moved to Germany, to study Kant, and chanced upon Hegel's philosophy. In 1857 he returned to Scotland and turned to writing books on philosophy. He became a Foreign Member of the Philosophical Society of Berlin, and his work was widely respected throughout the Continent.

Edward Caird, an admirer of Stirling, went to Dresden in 1865 to improve his German. In 1874 Richard Burdon Haldane studied at Göttingen where, instructed by Herman Lotze, he acquired a deep love for the work of Kant and Fichte. Haldane extolled the virtues of Lotze as a teacher and subsequently influenced both Andrew Seth and John Henry Muirhead in their decisions to visit Göttingen. He visited Göttingen most years until he became Lord Chancellor in 1912, and again when he was out of office. The pilgrimage continued with Henry Jones visiting Germany

[4] Davie sees Ferrier as an extension of the Common Sense school occupying its rationalist end as opposed to the intuitionist middle.

during the summer of his third year of studies at Glasgow, and after his honours graduation in the summer of 1879. A contemporary of Seth and Haldane at Edinburgh, William Ritchie Sorley, later Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge, visited Tübingen and Berlin in two successive summers during the early 1880s.

Hegel seems a most unlikely candidate to enter the hallowed halls of Scottish philosophy, yet he fascinated a generation of Scotsmen, and his followers became the leading philosophical school in Great Britain from the 1870s to the 1920s, despite being notoriously impenetrable to read and understand. Ferrier, in a polemical defence of himself against the charge of importing his ideas from Holland (Spinoza) and Germany (Hegel), protested that he had read most of Hegel's work over and over again, but understood very little, except a few short passages which he admired for their 'depth and insight the breadth of their wisdom, and the loftiness of their tone' (Ferrier 1856: 13). As William Wallace, from Cupar and later Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford and the great translator of Hegel, commented, 'Something, we feel, has undoubtedly been said: but we are at a loss to see what it has been said about' (Wallace 1874: xvi). Hegel made no concessions to the novice. As he commented to the Reverend David Aitkin in 1826, in response to a request to sit in on a few lectures: 'In the first semester you would know nothing about it; in the second semester you would know nothing about it; in the third semester you would begin to see something in it, and in the fourth you might begin to make some progress' (Ritchie 1894: 106–7).

Aitkin wrote in his journal: 'Hegel is a man of great original genius, but not able to express himself well' (Ritchie 1894: 116). Indeed, it was even doubted that James Hutchison Stirling, the author of *The Secret of Hegel*, had understood his subject matter very well. In private correspondence, Bernard Bosanquet says: 'I am convinced that Stirling never understood Hegel' (Muirhead 1935: 52–3).[5]

7.2 Hegelian Intimations

In reaction to what he described as the 'Mechanical Age' Carlyle criticized the empiricism of Dugald Stewart and Thomas Brown, for being a mere preparation for philosophy, and in particular for what was much more adequately addressed by Kant (Carlyle 1896–9: xxvii. 59). In doing so, Carlyle opened Scottish philosophical horizons to German Idealism. Metaphysics from Locke onwards was obsessed with the origins of consciousness and the genetic history of the content of the mind, treating the problems too physically and mechanically. The casualty was the exploration of the mysteries of freedom and the relation of humanity to God, the universe, space, and time. Carlyle, as his letters and journals show, struggled with philosophical systems and method, and was much more comfortable with poetry and literature. His

[5] Bernard Bosanquet, letter to Andrew Seth, 4 January 1886.

knowledge of German philosophy was superficial. He tried to read Kant in 1826, for example, but gave up after about 150 pages. He was, however, much more at home with Fichte (Stein 1935: 807–1026). Thomas Carlyle's somewhat mystical style freely adapted Hegel's thought, rather than projecting an accurate reflection. Even Edward Caird, an admirer of Carlyle, could argue that 'something more thoroughgoing than the literary methods of poetry and prophecy was called for to meet the intellectual demands of the new time' (Muirhead 1931: 146).

Caird valued Carlyle as the first in Britain to promote an awareness of the full significance of the German literary revival, but, more importantly, for showing how poetry and the philosophy of idealism provide support for a declining faith (Jones and Muirhead 1921: 23). It was Carlyle who introduced him to Goethe and German philosophy and taught him that the supreme lesson of religion and philosophy is that in the last resort there is no other reality than the spiritual (Carpenter 1922–3: 190). J. S. Mackenzie takes Carlyle to have opened our eyes to the potential of the world to offer opportunities for goodness and beauty. In the spirit of Hegel he believed that there could be no other greatness than to make a small corner of God's creation more fruitful, more worthy of God, and to enter into his work by making human hearts a little more wise, manly, more blessed, and less accursed (Mackenzie 1922–3: 220). Henry Jones discovered Carlyle independently while a young man at Bangor Normal teacher training college, in Wales, before he studied at Glasgow, and confessed that his admiration 'deepened with the years' (Jones 1922b: 94).

7.2.1 Hamilton, Ferrier, and Campbell Fraser

Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856) made important strides in trying to reconcile Scottish common sense philosophy with the speculative philosophy of Kant, which he read in the original. He was not satisfied with Kant's theory of perception which denied that mind has immediate knowledge of any existence external to itself. Kant, like Hume, believed that the only thing to come out of objects is mere sensations, and sensations are a contingent manifold with no necessity; but unlike Hume he reconstructed an elaborate system which not only parted company with Reid on the question of the reality of our knowledge, but also on what it is we know (Seth 1897a: 148).

Kant's attempted rescue of necessity was to give a central place to mind in contributing to the act of knowing. Knowledge consists in the relation between the knowing subject and the object known. All qualities of the mind and of matter are known to us as relations. We know nothing in itself. We may know the qualities of things, but not their substance. Hamilton, however, believed that Reid's answer to the question was one of the most original contributions that had been made. In Hamilton's view it is possible to have knowledge of external objects in and of themselves, while at the same time conceding that the modifications mediated by thought lead to the relativity of knowing things (Hamilton 1859–60: i. 298). While this appears contradictory, and did not go unnoticed by John Stuart Mill, Hamilton believed that the absolute nature of things revealed themselves to us accidentally. Certain facts of consciousness, similar to fundamental beliefs,

which cannot but be true, reveal the nature of things different from the self. Hamilton contends: 'When I deny the Infinite can by us be *known*, I am far from denying that by us it is, must and ought to be *believed*' (Hamilton 1859–60: ii. 530). In other words, those things he had rejected as Knowledge he reintroduces in the name of Belief.

In departing from Reid he believed that consciousness is not a special faculty, but the general condition of having knowledge, feeling, and will. In perception we are conscious of the object perceived and of the perceiving subject. Consciousness and knowledge are inseparable, and are two sides of the same relation from the point of view of the subject and from the object. Objective consciousness, namely perception, and subjective consciousness, sensations, always coexist (Hamilton 1859–60: ii. 99).

In Seth's view, the real difference between Hegel and Hamilton is that:

> Hamilton blinded by his doctrine of Relativity, still believes in the existence of what is demonstrably unknowable; while Hegel holds it to be at once unknowable and non-existent. An Intelligence, which on account of its inherent difference, is pronounced by Hamilton incompetent to his own abstract Absolute, *is itself* Hegel's Absolute. Intelligence *qua* intelligence, knowledge *qua* knowledge, is, so to speak, a transparent relation—a relation in which, as Aristotle long ago said, the two sides are one. It is a relation, therefore, in which a real identity is reached through plurality or difference. In the act of knowledge, so far forth as there is perfect knowledge, the difference of subject and object is, in the current phrase, transcended or overcome. But this does not mean that it disappears, and that the two sides fall together in a blank or pure identity. Pure identity—Hamilton's Absolute—is coma or annihilation. (Seth 1897a: 190)

Despite his critical stance towards Kant and Schelling, Hamilton gave impetus to introducing their ideas into Scotland. Ferrier had a great personal admiration for Hamilton, but was disappointed that his friend had devoted needless intellectual endeavour to Reid's fruitless arguments. Ferrier was not, however, convinced by Hamilton's arguments for a philosophy of the 'conditioned'. Hamilton maintained that our knowledge of mind and matter is relative. Nothing can be known absolutely, whether it is external or internal to the mind. It is a philosophically nescient doctrine, 'professing relative knowledge, but absolute ignorance' (Watts 1933: 14).

James Frederick Ferrier (1808–64) was the most significant of the Scotsmen to elevate Hegel above Kant and Schelling and in entreating his countrymen to acquire a better understanding of Hegelian philosophy. Ferrier, although regarded as the first of the Scottish Absolute Idealists, thought his own philosophy 'Scottish to the core' (Ferreira 2002: 385). His philosophical position when under the influence of Hamilton at Edinburgh changes on his translation to St Andrews, evident in his *Institutes of Metaphysic* (1854, 2nd edition 1856), of which Hamilton himself disapproved because of its claim to have deduced the one true philosophy. Ferrier was not a committed Hegelian and exhibited a more sceptical and eclectic stance in his philosophy (Ferrier [1854] 1856: 91–2).

He was unable totally to free himself from Scottish common sense philosophy and his relation to it remains a matter of dispute. What is clear is that he developed his

position with reference to it, while opposing the intuitionism associated with Thomas Reid's disciples. 'Dr Reid', Ferrier contended, 'in the higher regions of philosophy, is as helpless as a whale in a field of clover' (Ferrier [1854] 1856: 495). Religious obscurantists, Ferrier thought, could too easily appropriate and distort Reid's position.

Ferrier's positive stance in opposing Reid and William Hamilton was to some extent inspired by Berkeley, but there was much in his subjective idealism he rejected. The importance of Berkeley, for Ferrier, was his rebuttal of all doctrines that assumed an impenetrable reality to which the mind has no access. Berkeley argued, for example:

> It is with natural science that the sceptics seem to triumph: the great stock of arguments they produce, to belittle our faculties and make mankind appear ignorant and low, are drawn principally from the premise that we are incurably blind as to the true and real nature of things. They exaggerate this, and love to enlarge on it. We are miserably made fools of, they say, by our senses, and fobbed off with the outside, the mere appearance, of things. The real essence—the internal qualities and constitution of every little object—is hidden from our view; every drop of water, every grain of sand, contains something that it is beyond the power of human understanding to fathom or comprehend. But it is evident from what I have shown that this complaint is wholly groundless, and that false principles are making us mistrust our senses to such an extent that we think we know nothing of things that in fact we comprehend perfectly. (Berkeley [1710] 1988: §101)

Berkeley, for Ferrier, is not merely a transition between Locke and Hume, but the discoverer of the spiritual nature of reality (Sorley [1920] 1937: 284). Ferrier accuses Reid of ostensibly rejecting Locke, but nevertheless retaining his premises. In embracing the instinctive and irresistible belief in the independent existence of matter, Reid thought he escaped the idealism of Berkeley, and the scepticism of Hume. There was an inescapable need for a deductive system of rational philosophy generating necessary truths that could overcome the division that reason itself created between the mind and its objects (Bradley 1979: 7).

This was, for him, the *reconciliation* of philosophy and common sense (Davie 1961: 299).

Ferrier readily conceded Berkeley's point that any sane philosopher must deny the existence of occult intangibles resistant to all the senses, a world of phantoms behind the universe we see and touch and which can never be brought 'within the sphere or apprehension of the senses' (Ferrier 1883: iii. 423). Ferrier therefore rejected, as all the Scottish Idealists did, the Kantian idea of things in themselves outside our comprehension. He is, however, closer to Berkeley than to Hegel in putting the experiencing self at the centre of his idealism. There must be an intelligence that knows itself as a foundation of knowledge ([1854] 1856: 80).

The common site in which all cognitions meet, and without which no cognitions are possible, is the self; that is, the ego or subject who knows. A person who knows anything must know that he or she knows, and that requires being self-conscious (Cunningham 1933: 28–9). Berkeley's philosophy, in Ferrier's view, needs to be

extended to incorporate the idea that the subject-mind is incarnate in all phenomena, which necessitates beginning with the idea of unity rather than the realist dualism between mind and object. This was one of the fundamental criticisms Hegel directed against Kant. It is true, Ferrier suggests, that all matter depends for its existence on the presence of a real or ideal consciousness, but the implication is not that without mind or thought present there would be '*no-matter*', because the idea of no matter equally depends on the real or ideal presence of consciousness. This is what he calls 'absolute real idealism', that is the 'conciliation of common sense and philosophy' (Ferrier 1883: 314–16). Ferrier also maintains we cannot be ignorant of that which we are unable to know. Ignorance is a defect, and there can be no defect in not knowing that which cannot be known (Ferrier [1854] 1856: 536, and Ferreira 2002: 382–6). Anything that is unknowable or unthinkable is also unreal. In concluding his argument, Ferrier claims that something that exists may be either an object of knowledge or of ignorance. It is neither matter nor mind per se. Instead, that which exists is some-object-plus-subject. An absolute existent, on this argument, is mind indistinguishable from that which it apprehends: 'All absolute existences are contingent *except one*; in other words, there is One, but only one, Absolute Existence which is strictly *necessary*; and that existence is a supreme, and infinite, an everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things' (Ferrier [1854] 1856: 522).

Another interpreter of Berkeley and Locke, Alexander Campbell Fraser (1819–1914), was a student of William Hamilton at Edinburgh University, and succeeded him to the Chair of Logic in 1856. Despite being an admirer of Reid, he was personally influential in encouraging his students, including Andrew Seth, to undertake serious study of Hegel. He was, in fact, an acknowledged expert on Berkeley.[6] His deep faith in an immanent Divine Spirit was possible because of his Berkeleian theism. Campbell Fraser wanted to reconcile J. S. Mill's and Herbert Spencer's emphases on agnostic scientism with the metaphysical and spiritual philosophies of Spinoza and Hegel. He felt he could do this through Berkeley's philosophy.

Berkeley provided for Fraser a nascent theism able to counter contemporary attacks on the spiritual conception of the universe. Although he was drawn towards the scepticism of Hume, he was certain of one thing, as was Ferrier: the reality of the self in self-conscious activity. But unlike Ferrier he rejected Hegel's Absolute Idealism, because it attempted to explain, by abstract reason, the concrete things of sense. Instead, Campbell Fraser began with Berkeley's concrete things of sense, and avoided gravitating towards the empiricist and scientific naturalist tradition, by following Berkeley, and emphasizing the ultimate spirituality of the universe. He was inclined towards Personal Idealism,[7] preferring to use the term 'spiritualism realism' which, in

[6] He authored the book on him in the Blackwood Philosophical Classics series A (Fraser 1881), and also edited Berkeley 1901.

[7] Absolute and Personal Idealism will be discussed later in this chapter.

addition to affirming the spiritual reality of the universe, also affirmed the common sense reality of the world of sense.

Campbell Fraser's argument did not stop at the visible and tangible world of phenomena and scientific laws. His aim was to penetrate more deeply into the spiritual world, on top of which rests physical phenomena, from which we derive scientific significance. What Berkeley teaches us, Campbell Fraser maintains, is 'that the material world has its being and agency in Spirit' (Fraser 1908: 82). It fails to teach us, however, the moral character of the universe. Universal pessimism may be avoided by presupposing that the 'directing Spirit is morally perfect' (Fraser 1908: 84).

7.2.2 The Secret Revealed: Hutchison Stirling and Robert Flint

The modesty with which most Scots declined to profess a deep understanding of Hegel was not shared by James Hutchison Stirling, a gentleman scholar from Glasgow, residing just outside Edinburgh, who claimed to have found the key to unlocking Hegel. Stirling's *The Secret of Hegel* marked a significant moment in Hegel's integration into Scotland. In the book he purports to reverse the trend of representing Hegel to British audiences in an ill-considered and desultory manner. In the *Fortnightly Review* for October 1867 Stirling unkindly ridicules Coleridge and De Quincy for their undeserved reputations of expertise in German Idealism. He particularly condemns Coleridge for his vague misapprehensions and perverse misrepresentations of Kantian philosophy (Stirling 1867: 377–97).

Convinced of the veracity of Hegel's system, Stirling felt compelled to explain and defend it. His *The Secret of Hegel: Being the Hegelian System in Origin, Principle, Form and Matter* included rather terse translations of the *Logic*, with commentary in the style of Carlyle, which made it almost as impenetrable as Hegel himself (Boucher 2004: introduction). T. M. Lindsay remarks: 'undoubtedly, that strange, uncouth, but wonderfully suggestive book had more to do with propagating Hegelianism among us than anything else' (Lindsay 1877: 476). William Wallace indicated that German philosophy in Britain was synonymous with Stirling's name (Wallace 1874: v).

Stirling believed that Hegel's secret was to be found in Kant's idea of a priori categories, supplemented with Hegel's idea of the concrete universal. The Kantian idea that thought was constitutive of things was of immense importance, which was to some extent undermined by the belief that the categories were mere representations of the things in themselves to which the mind has no access. Stirling, following Ferrier, and by implication critical of Kant and William Hamilton, condemns the contention that knowledge consists in certain relations between the knowing subject and the object known, and that all we may know are the relations, nothing in itself. He refers to this as 'wholly effete rubbish . . . There is no such thing anywhere . . . as this *in itself*' (italics in the original). He goes on to argue that at the very instance they insist on knowledge, those who subscribe to such doctrines 'insist also on dream—a dream that stultifies, knowledge into fragments of an unknown inane' (Stirling 1872: 72). This sentiment was shared by all of the Scottish Absolute Idealists. John

Watson (1847–1939), for example, argued that Kant's view was perverse in suggesting that thought actually prevents us from knowing reality, and in denying that the world known by us is identical with reality. Hegel's position is far more satisfactory in contending 'that the known world is for us necessarily a world that exists only because we are thinking beings' (Watson 1912: part I, 289). Watson is not suggesting that everyone knows reality, but that reality embodies thought that is intelligible and capable of being known only by a being who thinks (Watson 1912: part I, 292).

The young Andrew Seth argues against both Kant and Hamilton for perpetrating the idea of the unknown or unknowable as the ultimate reality of the universe, and agrees with J. S. Mill on the absurdity of, on the one hand banishing knowledge of reality by means of reason, and on the other replacing it by a reassertion of reality on grounds of Faith and Belief. It is treacherous, Seth contends, to base religion on ignorance because 'when reason is sapped, we may depend upon it that, in the long-run, men will pass over, not to theological faith, but to complete Agnosticism' (Seth 1897a: 181).

The role of Robert Flint in introducing continental ideas into Britain should not be overlooked. Flint became Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews University in 1864, on the death of James Ferrier. T. H. Green was also a candidate. It has been suggested that Flint was preferred because he was more faithful to the Scottish tradition, but this is not the case. Ferrier was very well respected at St Andrews, and, despite his protestations, he was himself regarded as having 'broken away from the traditional school of thought' (Macmillan 1914: 141). Flint lived near to St Andrews, as minister of Kilconquhar, and was well known to a number of St Andrews professors who entreated him to apply for the vacant Chair of Moral Philosophy. Principal Shairp of the United College was well disposed to him, and despite receiving very strong references on behalf of T. H. Green, wrote from Tübingen, 'we may have enough of even such good things as "Balliol men" ' (Macmillan 1914: 144).

Flint's importance lay in making the English-speaking world aware of unfamiliar continental ideas in the philosophy of history. He did not himself make any original contribution to the philosophy of history, but his significance lies in the dissemination of the ideas of others. R. G. Collingwood, for example, makes mention of him in *The Idea of History*, but thinks his criticisms ill judged because he had not worked out his own position thoroughly enough (Collingwood [1946] 1993: 142–3). Though he is now very little read because the works of the philosophers he discussed became more readily accessible, in their time Flint's books on the philosophy of history were all remarkably well received by readers in Britain and on the Continent. Although not a thoroughgoing idealist, Flint nevertheless had great sympathy with the movement. He argued, for example, that the facts of history and their interpretation are not distinguishable entities. The facts are their interpretation (Flint 1874: 8). Flint was a Scottish disciple of the Italian eighteenth-century thinker Giambattista Vico, the author of *The New Science*. Vico contended that the civil social world was of greater intelligibility than the world of Nature because we *are* the authors of the former,

while God is the author of the latter. Flint himself concurred with this view, arguing, 'Matter is the stage prepared for the drama of the spirit. There is, we may be sure, more significance in the drama than in the stage . . . The truth is known by us only to the extent we have made it' (Flint 1903: 332; cf. Flint 1893: 124). Flint's leaning towards idealism was detected by Stirling, expressed in a letter sent in congratulation to the author on the publication of *Vico*. Stirling remarked that he very much admired the book, especially the epigrammatic expressions in it 'which have so much of Hegel in them' (cited Macmillan 1914: 422). In his book on Vico, Flint's third choice in the Blackwood series (Hobbes was his first and Berkeley his second), he contended: 'The star of Vico shows no sign of paling before those of Comte and Hegel; it rather appears to derive from them additional brightness' (Flint 1891: 3). He meant that Vico may be understood as the precursor of both Comte's positivism and Hegel's idealism. Flint distinguished between the clear exposition of a doctrine and its critical analysis, both of which he regarded as essential.

7.3 The Owl of Minerva Lands

Following in Ferrier's footsteps, the early Seth in *From Kant to Hegel* (1882) and *Scottish Philosophy* (1885), Edward Caird, Henry Jones, and William Wallace in his translation of the lesser *Logic* all served to consolidate and elevate Hegel's position above that of Kant and Schelling in British philosophical life. In 1883 two young Scottish philosophers, Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane, edited a book entitled *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, with a preface by the Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University, Edward Caird. Caird's interpretative essays and his book entitled *Hegel* in Blackwood's Philosophical Classics series built upon the argument of Hutchison Stirling that Kant was the foundation of Hegel's philosophy and that Hegel was the best and true interpreter of Kant. What Caird did was to show how Kant's epistemological Copernican revolution was taken by Hegel and turned into an ontological principle in order to overcome the dualisms that Kant left unresolved, particularly that between Nature and Spirit, which continued to undermine contemporary British philosophy. Caird succinctly sums up Hegel's position: the highest aim of philosophy 'is to reinterpret experience, in the light of a unity which is presupposed in it, but which cannot be made conscious or explicit until the relation of experience to the thinking self is seen—the unity of all things with each other and with the mind that knows them' (Caird 1892: ii. 442).

In the preface to *Essays on Philosophical Criticism*, Caird argued that the authors of the essays agree on the direction in which philosophy may fruitfully be pursued. He maintains that the 'most important contributions to the intellectual life of man, is [*sic*] that which was opened up by Kant, and for the successful prosecution of which no one has done as much as Hegel' (Caird 1883: 2). As Seth put it: 'Hegel is the summing up and most perfect expression of the general movement of thought known as German Idealism' (Seth 1882: 15). Caird goes on to express the attitude of all idealists

to Kant and Hegel. He argues that their work can have no contemporary value unless looked at critically, by raising new questions and attitudes of mind constituting not a dead tradition but a seed of intellectual regeneration. The book was effectively the manifesto of British Idealist philosophy. All the contributors were Scottish, with the exception of Henry Jones, who was a Welshman educated at Glasgow and a disciple of Caird, succeeding to his chair in 1894, after leaving St Andrews. Jones always believed Scotland his spiritual home. The other exception was Bernard Bosanquet, who after the untimely death of David G. Ritchie, was appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews, 1903–8.[8]

7.3.1 The Character of Idealism

What is idealism, and what were the questions to which it gave more satisfactory answers than those of Hume, Reid, and Hamilton in the view of its exponents? In the first place we should not forget the place of Plato in giving inspiration to idealism. In Caird's first publication, 'Plato and Other Companions of Socrates', he argues that some of the fundamental considerations of idealism are to be found in Plato's work. Plato's theory of ideas, Caird suggested, was prescient of idealism. You cannot separate being and knowing, thought and existence; they are a unity, and this leads to the question of whether the individual or the universal is the primary reality. In its modern form, Caird thought, it boils down to what extent the intellect creates the world, by addressing the issue of whether objective reality is attained through the exercise of thought, or through the passive experience of sensations. There is no resolution in Plato. He left us with a partially unresolved dualism between the timeless and static world of universals and the transient concrete changing world experienced by individuals, which rendered Plato's forms or ideas out of touch with the world we know (Caird 1865: 351–84).

In the first place, Absolute Idealism denies the dualism between subject and object, and therefore pronounces meaningless such questions as the relations between mind and external reality—whether from the point of view of Descartes, who believed that the mind conforms to reality, or Kant, who believed that reality conforms to mind—without presupposing an underlying unity between the two. In describing his own philosophy in a letter of 1891, Caird epitomizes the manner in which the idealists viewed experience. He says: 'if I used Spinoza's phrase "looking at things *sub specie aeternitatis*" I would mean looking at them from the point of view of the whole,

[8] In addition to Caird (1835–1908), the contributors were Andrew Seth (1856–1931); R. B. Haldane (1856–1928); Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923); W. R. Sorley (1855–1935); D. G. Ritchie (1853–1903); W. P. Ker (1855–1925); Henry Jones (1852–1922); James Bonar (1852–1941); and T. B. Kilpatrick (1857–1930), who emigrated to Canada. Conspicuous by their absence were the Scotsmen John Watson (1847–1939), who emigrated to Canada and was a protégé of Caird; William Mitchell (1861–1962), who emigrated to Australia; John Henry Muirhead (1855–1940) the biographer, with Henry Jones, of Caird; and J. S. Mackenzie (1860–1935). The English Idealist T. H. Green to whom the book is dedicated had died in 1882. The semi-reclusive F. H. Bradley had just published *Ethical Studies*, but was not a contributor.

i.e. recognising the unity which, whether recognized or not, is always presupposed in my knowing them in distinction from, and in relation to each other' (Jones and Muirhead 1921: 172). The doyen of Scottish Idealism endorses Hegel's aspiration for philosophy whose highest aim 'is to reinterpret experience, in the light of a unity which is presupposed in it, but which cannot be made conscious or explicit until the relation of experience to the thinking self is seen—the unity of all things with each other and with the mind that knows them' (Caird 1892: ii. 442).

On Descartes' understanding, minds make representations of the objects they encounter, and hence give rise to scepticism about whether we can have direct knowledge of the objects that give form to the impressions. Alternatively, Kant tried to overcome the dualism by pursuing the problem from the opposite side. We impose on the external world a form and regularity through the employment of a priori categories. The knowledge we have of the object is mediated by the categories and we cannot have knowledge of things in themselves, only as they are mediated by the mind. Kant has in common with Locke the contention that instead of our ideas connecting us to things, they close them off from us. Kant rejects Locke's belief, however, that the mental images represent, or picture, the nature of the reality of things. Kant agrees with Hume's contention that sensations are impotent to yield connections between ideas and reality. Andrew Seth identifies the common flaw in both Hume and Kant: 'Kant's world is objective as compared with Hume's, in that it is lifted out of the flux of sensation and the accident of association by the presence of rational elements. But these elements (*because* they are not sensation, according to Kant's way of arguing) are merely subjective or mental. So Kant's world is, after all, as little the real world as we desiderate as Hume's; with either we remain agnostics' (Seth 1897a: 152–3).

What was claimed by the idealists was counter-intuitive and radical. All reality, in their view, is in and for consciousness, and anything claimed to be outside of the principle of consciousness was a meaningless expression (Bax 1925: 58). Philosophy, in their view, was the exploration of the conditions, or possibility of knowledge. The Hegelian Absolute was not to be equated with the Kantian contention of things in themselves, but instead with our knowledge of reality; that is, an absolute system purporting to exemplify the rationality of existence by assigning all the elements to their rightful place in the final synthesis. The unity of experience is not as such a proposition to be proved, but instead an inescapable assumption, a colligating hypothesis or absolute assumption, which enables us to move on from the dualisms posited by Descartes, and the various forms of Scottish philosophy, including those with Kantian leanings (Jones 1922a: 95). Absolute Idealists start from the Hegelian principle of unity. The purpose of philosophy is to reconcile what the modern age has divided and fragmented. All aspects of experience must be acknowledged despite the tendency of the times to separate and sever experience, rendering it a disunited series of mere abstractions.

The philosopher looks at each element in experience from the vantage point of the whole. In this respect they take their lead, not only from Hegel, but also from Spinoza.

For Spinoza we do not have knowledge of ourselves first, and then the world through ourselves: 'we know ourselves only in relation to, and distinct from, the world' (Caird 1889: i. 80). Spinoza's principle, *omnis determinatio est negatio* (determination in negation), suggests that all definition and determination is possible only because of positing a negation or unreality in limiting a presupposed positive being. Spinoza maintains that a thing only has being in relation to infinite matter because it is separated from it. Its determination is its non-being, and not its being (Spinoza 2009: book I, prop. 8). In this respect the only thing that is real is the absolutely indeterminate without 'distinction or limit'; everything else is abstraction (Caird 1889: i. 81). Hegel takes the opposite view to this, although for whatever reason, he claims he is in conformity with Spinoza. Hegel maintains: 'The foundation of all determinateness is negation (as Spinoza says, *Omnis determinatio est negatio*)' (Hegel 1884: 147 [91]). In reference to Hegel, Caird suggests, contrary to what is usually believed, that no thought can absolutely exclude its negative; each also contains in itself its own negation, inviting a resolution in a higher thought (Caird 1905: 137).

The implication is that beneath all ostensible oppositions there is a unity capable of facilitating a reconciliation. Idealism has been much maligned, but largely on the basis of naive caricatures. Idealism has no objection to any of the distinctions and oppositions that enter into the theoretical and practical consciousness of mankind, including distinguishing between mind and matter. The necessity of this distinction for natural science is not denied, and the value of scientific endeavour applauded, as long as its conditional conclusions do not intrude, as they have a tendency to do, into other forms of experience, such as art, history, poetry, and philosophy. Idealism denies absolute differences or antagonisms between such dualisms without rendering the distinctions unintelligible. Relations are implied in all distinctions, and ultimately all things comprise a unity. Idealism refuses 'to admit that there is an unintelligible world, a world that cannot be brought in relations to the intelligible' (Caird 1905 : 101).

Absolute Idealism does not deny reality in either the subject or object; instead, its overriding principle is that the real is the rational. What this means is that its various elements comprise a system in which they alone may be understood. As the young Andrew Seth proclaimed: 'Philosophy, as such, is a war against abstractions, against stopping too soon, against treating parts as wholes, against isolating things from their connections. And in this sense, Absolute Idealism certainly does deprive the parts of their supposed independent sustainability' (Seth 1897a: 202–3). Because this unity is such a fundamental presupposition, all consciousness assumes it and therefore it rarely surfaces in ordinary consciousness (Caird 1905: 138).

Implicit in the arguments of the Scottish Absolute Idealists is a philosophy of history in which there is pattern and meaning to human history exhibited in an observable tendency towards greater unity and organization.[9] They acknowledge that thoughts in

[9] There are notable exceptions among the English Idealists, particularly F. H. Bradley, and later R. G. Collingwood and Michael Oakeshott.

all their forms and categories are inextricably linked to each other, and to invoke one or other exclusively for the explanation of experience is inevitably to commit an error (Seth 1883: 81). The early Andrew Seth contended that Absolute Idealism deprives the parts of their purported independence and substantiality. Justifiably so, however, in that each member of the system is real, and holds its reality as part of that system, as a part of the whole, which exists absolutely and in its own right (Seth 1897a: 203).

Thinking is the process by which Spirit, or God, realizes itself, and consequently ideas do not separate subjective and objective, but instead are the differentiations of the one comprehensive unity. Philosophy brings about a reconciliation of ourselves to ourselves and to the world, the attainment of which is an ambitious aspiration requiring the assignment of human life a place in the context of the universe (Caird 1905: 55). Experience as a whole, without reservation or arrest, is the criterion by which to understand each and all of its aspects.

Idealists and neo-idealists understand philosophy to be experience self-critical of itself. We do not begin with a *tabula rasa*. The philosopher's job is to analyse the given in experience. Both Caird and Jones argue that philosophy does not start from sentient or immediate experience, intuition or sceptical *cogito*. Philosophy begins with ordinary experience reflective of itself. It starts with reality and reflects upon it: philosophy is 'the reflective interpretation of human experience, it must accept the laws of experience as its own. Experience is its starting point and whole datum' (Jones 1893b: 162).

To what extent, one may ask, does this differ from the Reidian contention that the principles of common sense simply have to be accepted because the mind operates according congenital principles of belief and cognition, challenged by the ideal systems of philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume?

What Jones and the idealists mean by experience is quite different from Reid's understanding. They do not subscribe to the idea that sensations give rise automatically to belief in external objects. For Reid, to experience the sensation of a smell, for example, causes the belief that an external object has caused the sensation. The belief is not an inference, nor is it rational; it is merely caused by the felt sensation. This is why Reid analyses perception into sensation and belief in the objects that cause the sensation. Sensations signify rather than represent external objects. The process is non-rational and inexplicable. The inaccessibility of reality through the process of reasoning is anathema to the Scottish Idealist.

The starting point of explanation or understanding is not ignorance from which we progress to knowledge, but already an understanding which we then endeavour to understand better. There can be nothing completely independent of at least a rudimentary knowledge of it, because mind and its objects are always and everywhere mutually implicated. Philosophy is the getting to know better something that we already know. Getting to understand something better does not mean getting to know more about it, but coming to understand it differently and more satisfactorily not as isolated determinations, but as parts in a process in which it is distinguished and related within a whole (Collingwood [1933] 1998: 11). In his British Academy lecture of 1903

Caird emphasizes this point: 'We are thus, throughout all our intellectual life, advancing from a confused, imperfectly differentiated, and therefore imperfectly integrated, experience, towards an organic system of knowledge, in which justice shall be done to all the differences and oppositions of appearances, without sacrifice of their essential unity' (Caird 1905: 104–5). The process Caird is describing is more familiar to us as the hermeneutic circle of Dilthey and Gadamer in which no determination is complete, and in which at each stage of the process of understanding further light is shed upon what we had previously understood in a less satisfactory way.

Caird reasserts the essential correlation between mind and its objects, and affirms that this does not entail a denial of the reality of the distinctions and oppositions that enter into the theoretical and practical consciousness of man. The point is that there are no absolute differences and antagonisms. Here, of course, Caird is responding to the charge of monism, the charge which Hegel levelled at Schelling's Absolute—as the night in which all cows are black. For Caird there are no distinctions that are not implicated in relations, because, as we have seen, ultimately there is an underlying unity beyond all differences, and opposition is possible only within a unity, without which to talk of opposition becomes impossible or meaningless. Caird is emphatic: idealism 'must refuse to admit that there is an unintelligible world, a world that cannot be brought in relation to the intelligence' (Caird 1905: 100–1). This, of course, is a crucial point of departure from Kant, Reid, and Hamilton.

The position that both Caird and Jones developed was more of a repudiation of the logical consequences of Berkeley than a response to Reid and Hamilton. The concessions they made, nevertheless, opened an area of ambiguity in the relationship between mind and its objects that neither satisfactorily resolved. Both tried to affirm the possibility of knowledge by refusing to place anything outside of experience, but at the same time they expressed it in terms that appeared, contrary to their commitment to the possibility of knowledge, to affirm its relativity.

The idealists' method is regressive, as opposed to the decompositional method of their Realist opponents. The decompositional method entails taking the given in experience, and breaking it down into its structure and component parts. The regressive method is concerned with the postulates, principles, and presuppositions upon which, or from which, conclusions are generated. It is a method whose roots reach back to ancient Greek geometry. Philosophy for the idealists, because they begin with the principle of unity, necessarily entails being aware of the assumptions that underpin the differentiations into which this unity has fragmented.

7.4 The Challenge to Hegel

For Edward Caird, R. B. Haldane, and Henry Jones, subjective idealism constituted a serious threat to idealism. It was a doctrine that had perverted British philosophy since the time of Berkeley, and had returned to visit revenge (Jones and Muirhead 1921: ch. viii). David Ritchie sounded the alarm in his review of Andrew Seth's

Hegelianism and Personality, a book that many idealists viewed as a betrayal. Ritchie takes Seth to be arguing that the individual alone is real: 'Hegel and the Neo-Kantians are condemned, as Plato is condemned by Aristotle, for making the universal the real' (Ritchie 1888: 257). Such was the ferocity of the Absolutist backlash that Seth complained: 'I am treated as a culprit who ought to know better' (Seth 1889: 116).

Campbell Fraser's reluctance to accept Hegelian Absolutism in favour of embracing personal, or subjective, idealism was decisive in giving impetus to parallel forms of Scottish Idealism. The most important of the Scottish Idealists to express their concern about the implications for the individual of Absolutism was Andrew Seth.[10] Campbell Fraser's emphasis on the finite individual proved to be too alluring to resist. Seth developed a form of Personal Idealism, or Personalism, that did not rely on Berkeley, while at the same time never losing sight of the experiencing self (Barbour 1933: 8–11). The debate between Personalism and Absolutism reached its epitome in 1918 at a meeting of the Aristotelian Society which addressed the question: 'Do Finite Individuals Possess a Substantive or an Adjectival Mode of Being?'[11]

While Absolutists and the Personalists greatly exaggerated their differences, they actually agreed on many issues. Seth was sympathetic to the idea of the modality of experience, and subscribed to the principles of non-contradiction and the coherence theory of truth (Seth 1917: 189). He conceded that the Absolute or God may be equated with the process of attaining truth, emphasizing the notion of becoming and the realization of its end. Finite individuality, for all the idealists, both Personal and Absolutist, did not entail taking the individual in isolation. The individual depends for its content on an objective system of reason. The individual, for Seth, and the idealists in general, is inconceivable without society, and is philosophically organic to a universal life or world. In his view, the individual 'cannot possibly be regarded as self-contained in relation to that life, for such self-containedness would mean sheer emptiness' (Seth 1917: 259; cf. Cunningham 1933: 162–3). The individual has a universal nature within the whole or universe in which souls are made.

The parting of company between the Absolutists and Personalists is the emphasis given to the reality of the individual; that is, 'finite individuality'. In *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* Seth gives an intimation of what was to become central to his whole philosophy. The emphasis he gave to selfhood and the uniqueness of the finite individual differentiated him from the Absolutists. In his contribution he betrays a

[10] Seth, for example, objected to Absolute Idealism's 'unification of consciousness in a single Self'. Seth 1888: 215.

[11] Published as J. H. Wildon Carr, ed., *Life and Finite Individuality: Two Symposia. I. / II* ; *I,* By Bernard Bosanquet, A. S. Pringle-Pattison, G. F. Stout, and Viscount Haldane; Edited for the Aristotelian Society with an introduction by H. Wildon Carr. *II*, By J. S. Haldane, D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, P. Chalmers Mitchell, and L. T. Hobhouse (London : Williams and Norgate, 1918). Aristotelian Society, Supplementary vol. i. Personalism, as it came to be known, was to be taken up by J. M. E. McTaggart and W. R. Sorley at Cambridge, and a group of eight philosophers, including Hastings Rashdall and W. R. Boyce Gibson, in Oxford, who called themselves Personal Idealists, and who in 1902 produced a manifesto equivalent to that which Seth and Haldane had edited almost twenty years before (Sturt 1902).

dissatisfaction with the characterization of individuality and the self by idealists. The self exists only through the world, and the world only through the self. Self and the world are the same reality looked at from different points of view. Seth contends we must never lose sight of the fact that the basic unity, or identity, can only be grasped from the point of view of the subject, or person (Seth 1883: 38). This train of thought continued in his 1885 *Scottish Philosophy*. Hegel's most serious flaw, Seth suggested, was his treatment of man simply as a universal; that is, as a perceptive consciousness. The perceptive consciousness, occupying a universal standpoint, is merely a spectator of things, and absorbed into the universal. Seth regrets that 'a philosophy which goes no further than this in its treatment of the individual, leaves untouched what we may call the individual in the individual—those subjective memories, thoughts, and plans which make each of us a separate soul' (Seth 1897a: 221). The starting point for Personal Idealism is dissatisfaction with the place of the individual personality in the programme of post-Kantian Hegelianism. Leading the revolt against Absolutism he now questioned its metaphysical conclusion in the name of Personalism. Seth contended that: 'The radical error both of Hegelianism and of the allied English doctrine I take to be the identification of the human and the divine self-consciousness, or to put it more broadly, the unification of consciousness in a single Self' (Seth 1888: 215). When he refers to the allied English doctrine, he indicts not only Bernard Bosanquet and F. H. Bradley, but also his fellow Scottish Idealists, among them David Ritchie, John and Edward Caird, William Mitchell, W. P. Kerr, R. B. Haldane, J. S. Mackenzie, John Watson, and the self-exiled Welshman Henry Jones. They were criticized for maintaining that the individual's mode of being is 'adjectival' as opposed to 'substantive' (Sweet 1997: 431–62; cf. Mander 2011: chs 10–11). However important a place self-consciousness may have, the self of which we are conscious seemed to be completely absorbed into the Absolute. Seth admired Bradley for freeing British Idealism from a slavish imitation of Hegel, but was extremely critical of Bradley's vagueness and inability to go beyond the suggestion that all contradictions are resolved in the absolute, and in which all differences are fused and overcome. The question of how the multiplicity of selves and diversity of experience become a unity is avoided in the admission that it is somehow a mystery; we know only that somehow they do (Seth 1897b: 188–9).

Seth argues against Absolutism by contending that the self refuses to admit of other selves, and in this respect it is perfectly impervious. Seth adds, more emphatically, 'I have a centre of my own—a will of my own—which no one shares with me or can share—a centre which I maintain even in my dealings with God Himself' (Seth 1888: 217).

Echoing Berkeley, the individual person, for Seth, is an experienced certainty, foundational of all action and thought.[12] The basic unity, or identity, of reality can

[12] He was nevertheless critical of Berkeley in his *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, responding to Henry Jones's charge of subjectivism. Mander 2011: 362–4.

only be grasped from the point of view of the subject, or person (Seth 1883: 38). The finite individual cannot be negated by the Absolute without denying the reality of finite centres which give the entire superstructure of experience its foundation (Cunningham 1933: 165).

W. R. Sorley was part of the revolt from within against Absolute Idealism. He was largely preoccupied with the relationship between evolution and ethics, and the ethics of naturalism in general, and for him ethics became unintelligible without the notion of finite individuality (Sorley 1885, 1904). He argued that we cannot deny ethical experience; it is embedded in the very fabric of reality, having an existence as a genuine aspect of the Real. A complete account of Reality cannot be achieved without acknowledging the foundational place of ethical experience in the whole. Ethics is at the heart of metaphysics, and in it the 'ought' offers us guidance to what it truly 'is' (Sorley 1918: 6). Value is not contained in Universal abstractions. Instead, value is manifest in concrete individuals, such as things or persons. Only insofar as things are instrumental with respect to persons do they have value. The individual, in Sorley's philosophy, is the sole location for realizing intrinsic value. Admitting individual freedom is concomitant with acknowledging the reality of selves. Sorley argues: 'It is the nature of the self to act and thus, in certain circumstances, to choose or select between possible alternatives. This is neither a freak of unmotivated willing nor an irruption of a pure ego into the realm of time. It is simply the real choice of a real self' (Sorley 1918: 436; Mander 2011: 368–9).

For the Personalist it is inconceivable that worlds of ideas should be unattached to the subjective consciousness at the one end, or to reality at the other. Such worlds must be at once unstable and insubstantial. The floating worlds of ideas must be anchored at both ends to reality; in the first place to the individuals whose thoughts they are, and in the second to the external facts which the thoughts represent. For Personalists this entails dividing philosophy into three distinct activities: psychology, which deals with the thinking person; ontology, which is concerned with the nature of things, including thinkers; and epistemology, whose focus is the relation between thoughts and reality.

Epistemology in the latter part of the nineteenth century was a relatively new branch of philosophy, to deal with questions which had previously been inadequately distinguished from metaphysics and ontology. Hermann Lotze in Germany was the first to demarcate clearly the problems of epistemology. Andrew Seth, a follower of Lotze, defined epistemology in his *Balfour Lectures on Realism* as 'an investigation of knowledge as knowledge, or, in other words, of the relation of knowledge to reality, of the validity of knowledge' (Seth 1933: 164). From the point of view of Personalists, Absolutists had no epistemology, and continued to confuse it with metaphysics and ontology.

For the Absolutists the Personalist attack simply replicated the starting point that Hegel rejected. We must begin, as we saw, by assuming not a duality but an undifferentiated unity, and ask instead why and how it has become differentiated. Hegel most

clearly posed this problem of ontology and transformed the conception of the nature of philosophy for over a hundred years.

Henry Jones defiantly argued that not only did idealism have no epistemology, it had no need of one. The charge that Absolute Idealism had been unable to account for the link between thought and reality because it made the latter the product of the former was simply a misunderstanding of Absolutism. Jones argued that no idealist would deny the distinction between thought and reality, nor maintain that knowledge of a fact or event is that fact or event itself (Jones 1893a: 460–1). 'It is', he said, 'inconsistent with the possibility of knowledge that it should *be* the reality which it represents' (Jones 1895: 273). Jones does not accept the Personalist charge that Absolute Idealism requires the contention that experience is a world, or worlds, of cohering ideas, floating unattached to a knowing mind, or to an external reality. It is the critics themselves who want to maintain the existence of a world of ideas that mediates between psychic states, or indubitable data, and the reality we seek to know. The problem which epistemology sets itself to explain is how we make the transition from our conscious states to the reality of which we are conscious. It is because the problem has been viewed in this way, that is, from a subjectivist starting point, that the critics of Absolutism have been unable to transcend the gulf between thought and reality (Jones 1895: 113 and 368). It was because of this insurmountable gulf which frustrates the 'movement from within outwards, or from ideality to reality' that idealism arose (Jones 1895: 369).

The subjective and objective are not held apart by a world of ideas. They are themselves differentiations of the one all-encompassing unity. Hegel did not need an epistemology, because all activity is ultimately the activity of Spirit conforming to the law of thought. Metaphysic, in consequence, 'is also a Logic, a science, not of the connexions of ideas, but of the operation of mind' (Jones 1893a: 306).

7.5 Science, Spirit, and Religion

To a large extent, the naturalistic evolutionary theorists, in the later part of the nineteenth century, precipitated what is generally perceived to be a Victorian crisis of faith, to which the prevailing philosophies were manifestly impotent to respond. As Andrew Seth pointed out, the first impression given by the Darwinian theory of evolution, with its almost exclusive emphasis on natural selection as an explanatory cause, was a universal levelling-down which implied the victory of materialism in understanding man's place in the cosmos (Seth (Pringle-Pattison) 1917: 81).

Mill's posthumous essays on religion hardly extended any comfort to the religious consciousness, offering such a tentative commitment to faith that it was unable to withstand the slightest challenge. The common sense tradition of which Hamilton and Henry Longueville Mansel were latter-day exponents resulted in the much ridiculed mysticism of Herbert Spencer's unknowable unmoved mover. Idealism purported to offer comfort to the faithful in maintaining that systematic rational thought

may securely rebuild what had been lost. As William Mander contends, there was a common conviction 'that human reason had the power not only to reach the transcendent but to give it sufficient content to ground human hopes' (Mander 2011: 138).

Poets, such as Tennyson and Browning, rejected the vision of nature portrayed by naturalistic evolutionists who diminished the higher conception of humanity by explaining the spiritual in terms of nature, the last in terms of the first. The poets imagined the redemption of suffering in a future spiritual development. God directs evolution towards beneficent ends (Stevenson 1979: 518). For Jones, the poets were as revelatory of the truth of reality as any of the philosophers. In Browning's religious and philosophical temperament Jones saw the idea of evolution as the supreme intellect of God revealing himself as immanent 'in the extreme frontier of His Universe' (Jones 1894: 207). In other words, there was a rejection of Divine Transcendence, a God who stands above and is outside human experience, in favour of the belief that Jesus Christ himself is the manifestation of God in man, not as an isolated presence, but as indicative of the Divine in every man and in every thing. The idealists, then, were exponents of Divine Immanence. God reveals himself in man as more than the mere Creator (Ritchie 1905: 241). God is revealed as Spirit in man, and knows himself in and through the expressions of his children (Jones 1922a: 356–9). Sorley expresses a general view among the Scottish Idealists that moral endeavour is nourished by the conviction that the Divine purpose realizes itself in the moral life, and that 'in all goodness the spirit of God is manifest' (Sorley 1904: 98).

God or Spirit is the unifying principle that enables continuity between the higher and lower forms of naturalism, and provides the unity which tolerates diversity and gives identity to and in difference. The 'ordinary' or 'scientific' view of evolution, associated with Darwin, was not compatible with morality and religion because, as we saw, it attempted to account for the spiritual in terms of the material (Jones 1922a: 98). Nature, when viewed as a dynamic, changing, unified system, may be understood as God returning to himself, and evolution helps us to comprehend nature as the return of the highest to itself: 'The universe is homeward bound' (Jones 1891: 206). Jones argues: 'Evolution suggests a solution of the ultimate dualism of mind and its objects, and contains the promise of boundless help to religious faith' (Jones 1922a: 98). Scottish Idealists completely rejected any attempt by Scottish common sense philosophers and their allies to build religious belief on philosophical scepticism. Seth, like Hutchison Stirling, pointed out the absurdity of adducing our knowledge of an object as proof and guarantee of our ignorance of it (Seth (Pringle-Pattison) 1917: 163). John Watson, one of Caird's finest students, cursorily dismisses Hamilton, and his follower Henry Longueville Mansel, for maintaining that to comprehend the nature of God was to think the unthinkable. They contend that to think is to condition, which entails denying knowledge of the infinite and the Absolute because they are unconditional (Veitch 1882: 176–91). God, or the Absolute, therefore becomes the being about which we can predicate nothing. Watson complains that an Absolute about which we can predicate nothing is for us nothing, and the very idea of an Absolute

vanishes, leaving the only reality as relative (Watson 1912: i. 107). In Sorley's words, they contend that 'what cannot be known can and ought to be believed'. This is only possible by classifying belief as a faculty of cognition, which completely undermines Hamilton's contention that thought excludes the notion of the absolute or infinite because the unknown God is nevertheless represented as somehow the object of consciousness (Sorley [1920] 1937: 247–8). In Watson's view the separation of faith and knowledge destroys the capacity of theology to be the defender of the faith. Theology must purify the traditional creed and elevate it into a science that like other sciences requires no external support (Watson 1912: i. 107).

The rational experience of humanity, for the idealists, is premised on the absolute postulate of the existence of God. In the view of Stirling the central idea, nascent in Kant, was of a universal that determines its own particulars. Hegel went a step further with the insight that the categories saturate subjective experience, while attaining objectivity. In Stirling's view, Hegel believed that the universe is the creature of God's thoughts. In knowing the world we know the thoughts of God (Stirling [1865] 1898: 85).

We should not ignore the natural scientific context in which Hegelianism became established in Great Britain. With the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and its subsequent proliferation in all fields of enquiry as the unifying science underlying all knowledge, the idealists could not afford to ignore its efficacy. William Wallace argued that Hegel's achievement in elucidating the self-development of thought in philosophy was as equally important as Darwin's elucidation of the process of evolution in the organic world (Wallace 1892: 60). Hegelian Idealism, in assuming the unity of experience, was consistent with the naturalistic evolutionists. The natural scientific evolutionary thinking of Darwin, Ritchie contended, assumes like idealism, a monistic metaphysics, the fundamental unity of phenomena (Ritchie 1905: 22). This emphasis upon the unity of Nature and Spirit attracted idealists to evolutionary explanations, but where they parted company was in denying the contention of the likes of Darwin and Spencer that the lower in the evolutionary process explains the higher. Andrew Seth was emphatic: 'Nothing can be more certain than that all philosophical explanation must be explanation of the lower by the higher' (Seth 1887: 89). Modern Idealism, Henry Jones protested, refutes all theories that attribute explanatory power to origins (Jones 1919: 146). In this respect consciousness is the ultimate truth of reality, and requires an anthropomorphic interpretation of nature insofar as 'what constitutes thought constitutes things, and, therefore, that the key to nature is man' (Jones 1891: 210–11).

Absolute and Personal Idealists believe that the Absolute reveals itself in finite centres. It is God's presence in them that makes human beings what they are. Evolution is far from being a denial of religious experience. It enables us to comprehend it all the better. The Divine and the human constitute the inseparable spiritual unity of the world. Christ is incarnate in the world reflecting the unity of God and man. Jones argued: 'religion, in so far as it demands a perfect and absolute being as the object of

worship, is vitally concerned in maintaining the unity of the world. It must assume that matter, in its degree, reveals the same principle as that which, in a higher form, manifests itself in spirit' (Jones 1892: 183). The present and the past, instead of being divided, are united by the bridge that evolution supplies. Evolution is revelatory of the unity in the diversity of humanity in its identification of 'the one spiritual principle which is continuously working in man's life from the changing forms through which it passes in the course of its history' (Caird 1899: i. x, cf. 24–5 and 27).

In all this, man is the servant of God or even his fellow worker. The test of the morally worthwhile existence is the extent to which the individual attempts to do God's work in the world by achieving his or her own potential and contributing to the common good. Social reform and moral development were closely linked with religious self-realization (Richter 1964: 143).

Religion itself could be explained and understood in terms of evolution. Just as we do not know what a seed is until we know what it develops into, religions cannot be understood by looking to their origins. We must not look for an essentialist or common element to all religions, such as the belief in a Divine Being. Some of the greatest religions have done without it. Even if there were a common element, it would be of little use because its manifestations in different religions would be so different and unconnected. We must look for a 'germative' principle, a series of phases through which any living thing passes. Evolution provides the answer. Evolution, Caird says, is 'the most potent instrument for bringing back difference to identity which has ever been put into the hands of science' (Caird 1899: 26 and Jones and Muirhead 1921: 334).

7.6 Conclusion

I have suggested that first through literature, and then philosophy, German ideas slowly became insinuated into Scotland. Throughout this process there is a tension between the idealisms of Berkeley, Kant, and Hegel, all of which were related to the indigenous tradition which had been found wanting. Scotland was at the forefront of acclimatizing Hegel through translation, interpretation, and adaptation. In addition, in taking Lotze's criticisms of Hegel seriously, the likes of Andrew Seth and W. R. Sorely spearheaded the revolt against Absolute Idealism, rendering it, not mortally wounded, but seriously affronted.

The attractiveness of Hegelianism was its radical new starting point of differentiating unity rather than reconciling, or unifying, opposites. Hegel's importance for the Absolutist Scottish Idealist, then, is that he dispenses with the problem of epistemology and provides a metaphysics that is also a logic of the process and development of mind (Boucher 1990). It entailed, however, assigning a precarious place to the individual (finite individuality), in the whole. Personal Idealists reopened the divide that Absolutists believed Hegel had closed, between subjects and objects. Ultimately, it came down to a clash between epistemology and ontology, the former placing the self at the centre of all experience, and demanding an explanation of how the ideas

are anchored to the mind and the world, while the latter begins with the universal and demands an explanation of the process by which it has become differentiated. At the close of this episode Plato's tension between the individual and the universal remained unresolved. Scottish philosophers who subscribed to the idea of a reality that was unknowable undermined the conviction that knowledge of the existence of God was rationally demonstrable. The idea of evolution, for both Absolute and Personal Idealists, offered the prospect of giving a rational explanation of the existence of God. God or Spirit is immanent in the activities of the world, and manifest in finite centres offering comfort to the religious consciousness.

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8

Scottish Philosophy Abroad

Gordon Graham

The expression 'Scottish philosophy' predates the expression 'Scottish Enlightenment', and at one time was more common. The latter has generally come to displace the former, however, and while no doubt important reasons lie behind this preference, the two expressions are not interchangeable. 'Scottish Enlightenment' has significant connotations. To begin with, it directs attention to an intellectual range of enquiry beyond the strictly philosophical, and lays emphasis not just on history, literature, scientific, and social study, but on broader cultural changes as well. Second, it locates this intellectual and cultural activity within a wider international context –'the Enlightenment'—and thereby invites connection and comparison with similar movements of thought in France, Germany, and other parts of continental Europe. Thirdly, it confines attention to a specific, if extended, period of time—broadly speaking, the eighteenth century.

These connotations give the study of the 'Scottish Enlightenment' a focus that has proved valuable and stimulating. Nevertheless, for the purposes of recounting the history and distinctiveness of the Scottish philosophical tradition, this focus can be both confining and distorting. It is undoubtedly true that the intellectuals of eighteenth-century Scotland were innovative across a wide range of subjects. Even so, their investigations and reflections were understood by them to be part of a single intellectual enterprise, one that was unified by a distinctive conception of 'moral philosophy'. And while there were undoubtedly important European connections, such connections, especially with France, were of much longer date. Most importantly, however, though the international impact of the Scottish philosophers did begin in the eighteenth century, it finally came into its own in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the most remarkable manifestations of its influence are in fact to be found beyond Europe—in North America especially, as well as Australia and even Asia.

The purpose of this chapter, and its inclusion in a volume devoted to the nineteenth century, is to recount an important part of the history of Scottish philosophy. Charting its intellectual influence beyond its native land, as well as its development and decline in other parts of the world, is interesting in its own right.

But it will also serve to counter the confining emphases that focus on 'the Scottish Enlightenment' has tended to generate. It is with Europe, however, that the story must begin.

8.1 Scottish Philosophy in Europe

The origins of Scottish philosophy are indeed European, necessarily so since they lie in the medieval period when all intellectual enquiry had an international rather than a national character. 'International' in this context simply meant European. Scotland long boasted an 'auld alliance' with France, and it is with France that the earliest philosophical connections are to be found. In the late thirteenth century John Duns Scotus studied and lectured in Paris and Cologne. In the fifteenth century, the leading figures in the foundation of Scotland's own universities—notably Laurence of Lindores at St Andrews and Hector Boece at Aberdeen—had both studied and taught at the University of Paris. A generation later, when Scotland's universities were firmly established, the French connection was still strong. The logicians John Mair (1467–1550) and George Lokert (1485–1547) moved easily, and surprisingly frequently, between France and the universities of St Andrews and Glasgow.

In the next generation Andrew Melville (1545–1622) went from St Andrews to Paris, and taught at Poitier before moving (for political reasons) to Protestant Geneva, where he held a Chair of Humanity for five years. An enthusiastic advocate of the innovative logic of Peter Ramus, Melville returned to Scotland and instigated university reforms in Glasgow and St Andrews. These prepared the way for the 'new foundation' of the Scottish universities in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Francis Hutcheson was an early beneficiary of one consequent change: namely, the replacement of generalist regents by specialist professors, a change that contributed significantly to philosophical developments within Scotland.

Hutcheson may be said to have inaugurated many of these developments, but he was undoubtedly influenced in this respect by his teacher and predecessor, Gersholm Carmichael, who had also looked to Europe for intellectual stimulus. Carmichael's interest focused on northern Europe rather than France, and in his own philosophical work, both teaching and writing, he drew extensively on the natural law theory of Samuel Pufendorf (1632–94), who in turn had been building on the thought of the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583–1645). It was inevitable, perhaps, that eighteenth-century Netherlands should be regarded as a more obvious intellectual conversation partner for Protestant Scotland than Catholic France, and no doubt this explains why French connections were less marked than previously. What is more striking, however, is the fact that the relationship with Europe became remarkably one-sided.

In a history that looked back to the fifteenth century, philosophical influences generally moved from Europe to Scotland by means of the Scottish universities, as the examples of Mair, Melville, and Carmichael demonstrate. But in the later eighteenth

century, the movement was the other way; philosophers in Europe looked to the works of Scottish philosophers, while philosophers in Scotland were relatively ignorant of debates in Europe. This tends to be overlooked because of the personal experience of Europe that some of the most important figures had. It is well known that Hume, having completed his studies at Edinburgh University (of which he had a poor opinion) went to France, where he undertook the composition of his first major work. *A Treatise of Human Nature* was completed at the Jesuit college of La Flache. Later in life he spent a further period in France as a Secretary at the British Embassy in Paris, where leading socialites and intellectuals heralded him as a celebrated man of letters. Similarly, when Adam Smith resigned from the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow in 1763, he travelled extensively in France and Switzerland as personal tutor to the young Duke of Buccleuch. It was there that he began to write his great work *The Wealth of Nations*, and in the course of his travels he met several intellectual figures whose work interested him, notably Francois Quesnay (1694–1774) and Jacques Turgot (1727–81). A few decades later Dugald Stewart, who occupied the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh for many years, made four extended journeys to France, the third of them to Paris in 1789 at the time of the French Revolution.

These personal journeys, while interesting in themselves, give a somewhat false impression. In the introduction to his *Treatise*, Hume lists some figures that have been important forerunners in the project he is about to engage in. None of them is French, and there is little indication that its having been written in France is of much consequence. Rather, it was Newton and Bacon on whom his method of enquiry was modelled, and Hutcheson and Butler who provided the conception of human nature that animates the book.

Unlike Voltaire, whose thought was transformed by the intellectual circles he found in Britain during his exile, Hume, Smith, and Stewart did not travel to Europe hoping to find new philosophical ideas. On the contrary, it was their innovative works, along with those of other Scottish philosophers, that were providing stimulus to a continental intelligentsia, especially with respect to aesthetics, morals, and politics. It is astonishing, in fact, how many works by Scottish authors were translated, often quite speedily, into both French and German. Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, first published in 1726, had appeared in a French translation by 1749. Hume's *Essays* and *Enquiries* were translated into French soon after their first publication. Within five years of its original publication, Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* appeared in French (and a few years later in German), as did Thomas Reid's *Inquiry*. Hume, Smith, and Reid are the 'big' names (nowadays), but translations appeared in both French and German of works by many other Scottish authors—Lord Kames, Hugh Blair, Alexander Gerard, James Beattie, and George Campbell. Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767) appeared in Germany within a year of its appearance in English. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* by David Fordyce, a regent at Marischal College Aberdeen, first appeared in Robert Dodsley's educational handbook *The Preceptor* in 1748. In 1754

it was posthumously published as a separate textbook, and within three years had been translated into both French and German. Six years after Fordyce's death, he was hailed in Germany as a 'celebrated' author (Fordyce 2003: x).

This remarkable flow of philosophical thought from Scotland to continental Europe was not matched by any similar movement in the other direction. Hume encountered d'Holbach and Diderot, but only when his own reputation was already made, and his philosophical work complete. Reid's *Inquiry* reveals a close familiarity with Descartes, but it nowhere mentions Condillac. The 'physiocrats' undoubtedly influenced Smith, but in his economic theory rather than his moral philosophy. In general, it seems, few continental works of philosophy were translated into English, and continental philosophers received little attention in Scotland until well into the nineteenth century. Indeed, the length of time it took for the Kantian revolution in philosophy to have any impact there is striking (on this, see Chapter 6 in this volume). It is the one-sided nature of this relationship that justifies Michel Malherbe's assertion as a 'fact' that 'Scottish philosophy exercised an ascendancy over Europe from about 1760 to about 1840' (Malherbe 2003: 299).

Why was this? The answer lies in the philosophical doldrums into which both France and Germany (in their different ways) had drifted. In France, Condillac's version of Lockean psychology had come to look exhausted, leaving no clues as to what could replace it. In any case the moral, political, and aesthetic topics that so occupied the Scottish philosophers seemed much more pertinent to the cultural and political changes afoot. In Germany, it was the rationalism of Leibniz, as expounded by Christian Wolff, that ran out of steam, thus leaving a philosophical lacuna which the works of the Scottish philosophers appeared to fill. Kant's famous admission that it was Hume who woke him from his 'dogmatic slumbers', and his almost equally well-known rejection of Hume's Scottish critics, easily leaves the impression that German philosophy in the eighteenth century knew little, and probably cared less, about 'common sense' philosophy. But, thanks to the energy of translators such as Christian Garve (1742–98), Scottish philosophers were well known in Germany before the Kantian revolution took place, and played a constructive and not merely negative role in philosophical discussion there. Of course, as Manfred Kuehn has shown (Kuehn 1987), these works were taken up in different ways, so it cannot be said that their impact was straightforward. Garve's interest was chiefly in the intersection of practical ethics and empirical knowledge, and thereby consonant with some central aspects of the 'science of human nature' that animated the Scottish philosophers. His circle included Johann Nicholaus Tetens (1736–1807), sometimes known as 'the German Hume' because of the similarities between his major work *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwickelung* (1777) and Hume's *Treatise*. Tetens certainly popularized Hume, and influenced Kant. The world of German academic politics may make it rather hard to assess the precise significance of Kant's famous remark in the *Prolegomena*—that any philosophical appeal to common sense should be treated as 'the means by which the most superficial ranter

can safely enter the lists with the most thorough thinker and hold his own' (Kant 1783 [1950]: 7). Still, this remark appears in a reasonably extended consideration of 'common sense', and Kant plainly states his view that it is 'positively painful to see how utterly [Hume's] opponents, Reid, Oswald, Beattie, and lastly Priestley, missed the point of the problem' Hume had formulated (Kant 1783 [1950]: 6), while Tetens and others thought that 'common sense' could be used to underpin some of Hume's insights.[1]

Despite Kant's negative view, Reid was accorded considerable significance by German philosophers into the nineteenth century. Part Three of Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, entitled Modern Philosophy, includes a section headed 'Scottish Philosophy'. Interestingly, it is preceded by a longer section on Hume, placed alongside Berkeley under the umbrella classification 'Idealism and Scepticism'. Hegel makes this separation because he saw (correctly) that 'the Scotch are the foremost of Hume's opponents' and comparable with Kant as 'another opposing force to that of Hume' (Hegel 1896: 375). Clearly Hegel identified 'Scottish Philosophy' with the School of Common Sense, since he expressly devotes subsections to Reid, Beattie, Oswald, and Dugald Stewart 'who is living still, [and] appears to be the last and least significant' (Hegel 1896: 378).[2] Since he also makes mention of Hutcheson and Ferguson, as belonging to this 'school', his knowledge of the corpus of Scottish philosophy was evidently limited.

Hegel's contemporary Schopenhauer (1788–1860), however, had evidently read Reid as well as Thomas Brown, to whom he refers in the revised version of his earliest and foundational philosophical work *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. The reference is not entirely flattering.

> Thomas Brown's book *On the Relation of Cause and Effect* . . . [a]part from its tedious, pedantic and rambling prolixity . . . does not handle its subject badly. [T]his Englishman (!) quite rightly recognized that it is always changes with which the law of causality is concerned, and that every effect is therefore a change. Yet although it cannot possibly have escaped his notice, he will not admit that a cause is likewise a change from which it follows that the whole thing is merely the uninterrupted nexus of changes succeeding one another in time. (Schopenhauer 1974 [1844]: 57)

In contrast to both this highly qualified commendation of Brown and Kant's negative view of 'common sense' philosophers, Schopenhauer is emphatic in his praise of Reid. In the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation* he writes 'Thomas Reid's excellent book, *Inquiry into the Human Mind* . . . is very instructive

[1] This passage seems to reveal that Kant did not know that Reid's great scourge was Priestley.

[2] Hegel's *Lectures*, first published almost a decade after his death, are an amalgam of texts written when he was at the University of Jena (1805–6) and notes added to them over the ensuing twenty-five years. At the time of his death in 1831 he was delivering these lectures for the tenth time at the University of Berlin. Since Stewart died in 1828, this reference must come from an earlier version.

and well worth reading, ten times more so than all the philosophical stuff which has been written since Kant put together' (Schopenhauer 1966: 21).[3]

Scottish influence probably lingered longest in the area of social philosophy. As late as 1867, in *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx makes favourable reference to the *Essay on the History of Civil Society* that Ferguson had published a hundred years earlier—though since he seems to have thought that Ferguson taught Adam Smith, his knowledge of the subject was clearly somewhat imperfect. The dubious quality of some of the translations, in fact, did lead to Ferguson being misinterpreted quite widely, one result of which has been a continuing debate about the true extent of Ferguson's influence on the early history of the social sciences. Something of the same may have been true of Adam Smith. It was German philosophers who first formulated 'das Probleme' of reconciling Adam Smith's appeal to human sympathy in his moral philosophy, with his invocation of an 'invisible hand' that socially coordinates egoistical interests. This 'problem', it can be argued, is largely a manufactured one, and arose only because Smith was substantially misunderstood.

In France, by contrast, it was interest in the Scottish philosophy of perception that lasted longest, and the popularity of Reid and 'Common Sense' received a second powerful stimulus in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Before 1800, interest had largely focused on aesthetic and moral subjects, but in works on the philosophy of mind published in 1802 and 1805, Maine de Biran reveals a significant familiarity with Hume, Reid, and Smith, culminating in 1815 with the publication of his *Comparison of the Three Points of View of Reid, Condillac and Tracy on the Idea of Existence and the Judgment of Exteriority*, a work that included a note on Reid's account of sight. Reid came to still greater prominence in the years immediately following, thanks to Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne, and his most famous student and successor, Victor Cousin, who drew attention to the hitherto little known Maine de Biran. His first teaching position (in 1815) was as Royer-Collard's assistant on his history of philosophy course at the University of Paris—a course that had included the Scottish philosophers since the session of 1811–12. Cousin succeeded Royer-Collard in 1815 and gave twelve lectures on Scottish philosophy in 1819–20. These were published in 1829 under the title *Philosophie écossaise*, and though never translated into English, this may be said to be the occasion on which the expression 'Scottish philosophy' made its first appearance. These lectures, interestingly, expound the major Scottish philosophers from Hutcheson to Ferguson, but do not include Hume. It was Cousin's disciple Theodore Jouffroy who produced a French edition of Reid's *Collected Works* in 1823, twenty years before his collected works appeared in English. It was Jouffroy, too, who was responsible for making Dugald Stewart's philosophical writings more widely available when he published a translation of the *Outlines of Moral Philosophy* in 1827.

[3] My attention was drawn to these references in Schopenhauer by Atanaska Cholakova, to whom I am grateful.

By the end of Stewart's life (1828), his intellectual reputation was European-wide, as evidenced by his election to several learned academies, including the Royal Academy of Berlin and the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. As this suggests, serious interest in the Scottish philosophers extended beyond France and Germany. In Italy, Stewart's work was sufficiently well known for him to be elected a member of the Royal Academy of Naples, and in 1830 the prominent Catholic philosopher Antonio Rosmini published some 'Observations on the systems of Locke, Condillac, Reid and Stewart'. It was in France and Germany that interest was strongest, however, and its subsequent history was significantly different in the two places.

The 'Scottish School of Common Sense' was largely discarded in Germany by the early years of the nineteenth century. This was undoubtedly in large part a result of Kant's blistering attack in the *Prolegomena*, though since he does not seem to have had any first-hand knowledge of Reid, his view seems to have been based on the 'vulgar' common sense of Beattie and Oswald. Reid's *Inquiry* was published in German just one year after Kant's first *Critique*, and the translator clearly saw it, and presented it, as another valuable answer to Hume's scepticism. This comparison of the respective merits of Kant and Reid as critics of Hume emerged as a subject of continuing interest within Scotland, once Kant had become better known. But in Germany, Kant was followed by the succession of thinkers who saw him as having himself bequeathed a problematic philosophical agenda, and whose attention, accordingly, was focused on philosophy in Germany. Chief among these thinkers are Fichte, Schelling, and above all Hegel, in whose works there are fleeting references to Hume, but none to most of the other philosophers whom Garve had assiduously translated. Over the course of the nineteenth century, in fact, the older pattern of Scotland's philosophical relationship to Europe reasserted itself. Beginning with Hamilton, Scottish philosophers increasingly turned to Germany, and German Idealism began to displace Reid and common sense in Scotland also. Whether this amounted to an abandonment of 'the Scottish philosophy' became an issue of considerable debate.

In France, interest in Scottish common sense philosophy arose just as it was declining in Germany. Indeed, thanks to Victor Cousin it reached a remarkable prominence. Having once been suspended from his teaching post for what were perceived to be anti-government sentiments, Cousin eventually became a notable philosophical power in the land when he became Minister of Instruction in 1840—a position that enabled him effectively to control who taught philosophy and what they taught. Indeed, his power in this respect even extended to Scotland; Cousin's negative assessment of J. F. Ferrier was a significant factor in Ferrier's failure to succeed Hamilton in the Chair of Logic at Edinburgh.

Cousin's preferred expression for his philosophical position was the '*juste milieu*', widely known as 'eclecticism'. His principle concern was to reaffirm the necessarily spiritual nature of human beings against the materialistic sensationalism that French philosophy had inherited from Condillac (1715–80), and in support of this endeavour philosophical insights were to be welcomed and employed regardless

of the philosophical system from which they came. Scottish philosophers such as Hutcheson and Reid were especially attractive in this respect, since they appeared to succeed in combining equally strong commitments to empirical science and to religion. Furthermore, eclecticism had a natural affinity with the anti-dogmatic element in Scottish philosophy. The attraction is still further increased when this anti-dogmatism is presented as the best answer to scepticism, as it is in Reid's criticisms of Hume.

On the other hand, the 'pick-and-mix' character of eclecticism both threatens conceptual instability and makes it ultimately intellectually unsatisfying to the systematic mind. The charge of being unphilosophical was brought against Reid, of course, both within and without Scotland, though it can plausibly be argued that Reid's *Inquiry* and *Essays* (like Wittgenstein's *Investigations*) aim to be systematic without espousing or elaborating any 'System'. Cousin's philosophy, in fact, was not as eclectic as it held itself to be; nothing that might be thought to support atheism was included. No doubt it lost much of its prominence with the political changes of 1848, after which Cousin retired from public life. But more important was its inability to sustain the claim that perception, reason, and emotion had, in some sense, equal standing. In the decades that followed, the spiritualism of Maine de Biran, from which Cousin had drawn one element, began to take centre stage, being transformed eventually into the 'vitalism' of Henri Bergson (1859–1941), a name now far better known, and more readily identified with French philosophy than either Royer-Collard or Cousin.

8.2 Scottish Philosophy in North America

The Scottish universities, especially the medical school in Edinburgh, were important models for the colleges emerging in the American colonies in the first half of the eighteenth century. Given the place of philosophy in the curriculum of the Scottish universities, it was inevitable that Scottish philosophy too would be influential. One of the earliest channels of this influence was Francis Allison (1705–79). Allison was an Ulsterman by birth. He may have studied under Francis Hutcheson in Ireland, and certainly did so at the University of Glasgow. At least one historian has held that we should give Alison 'the major credit for introducing the thought of Francis Hutcheson to America' (Sloan 1971: 88), though as a matter of fact, Harvard College Library had a copy of Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Idea of Beauty and Virtue* within ten years of its publication.[4] In 1755 Allison was instrumental in the creation of the College of Philadelphia (subsequently the University of Pennsylvania), aided by William Smith, a Scot who had studied at King's College Aberdeen when Thomas Reid was teaching there. Together they put in place a curriculum that drew heavily on the Scottish university model in which logic, metaphysics, and moral philosophy figured

[4] I owe this fact to Toni Vogel Carey.

prominently. In the same year as the College of Philadelphia was founded, William Small (1734 –75) graduated from Marischal College, Aberdeen, where Thomas Reid had graduated thirty years before. Three years later, Small was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Amongst his students he numbered Thomas Jefferson. Small was an immensely influential figure among his contemporaries; Jefferson always spoke about his teacher with affection and gratitude, though there is little evidence that his own philosophical orientation was much influenced.

Small returned to Britain after just six years in Virginia, and thereafter pursued a medical career. Allison, meanwhile, became a leading figure in the fledgling Presbyterian Church in America. As a result, his influence in the world of education spread well beyond Philadelphia. He was highly regarded by Ezra Stiles, President of Yale, who was himself an honorary graduate of Edinburgh, and his work was known and respected in Harvard. Allison's students included three future signers of the United States Declaration of Independence, as well as the future Secretary of the Continental Congress.

These facts about Allison, Smith, and Small, and their connections in the colonies, are worth recording as a mild corrective to the standard account according to which the principal conduit of Scottish common sense philosophy to America was John Witherspoon (1723–94), its 'first real ambassador', to use Sydney Ahlstrom's phrase (Ahlstrom 1955: 261). At the prompting of Benjamin Rush, Witherspoon was persuaded to leave his position as minister of Paisley in the west of Scotland and accept appointment as President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in succession to Samuel Finley, who retired in 1767. Francis Allison had had hopes of obtaining this position, and though his hopes were not realized, the influence of Scottish philosophy was undiminished by the appointment of Witherspoon. A graduate of Edinburgh where his fellow students included several leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, notably William Robertson, Hugh Blair, and Alexander Carlyle, Witherspoon's transition to America began a connection between Scotland and Princeton that was to stretch over a century and more. It is for this reason that, despite the efforts of Allison, Smith, and Small, historians by 'common consent' have identified Witherspoon as 'the principal carrier of the Scottish philosophy in early America' (Morrison 2005: 62).

It is certainly true that Witherspoon was a much more major figure in the emergence of the religious, educational, and political life of the new Republic than Allison or Small. In addition to being President of the College of New Jersey, he was himself a signer of the Declaration, and first Moderator of the General Assembly of the national Presbyterian Church, whose constitution he wrote. At Princeton he taught moral philosophy to a string of future political office holders and college presidents. The prestige of the college, which had been founded in 1726, the moral philosophy textbook that Witherspoon wrote for his students, and the success of those students, gave the Scottish philosophical tradition substantial influence on the emerging liberal

arts colleges and Protestant seminaries of the United States. As David Hoeveler says, 'Witherspoon's instruction [at Princeton] begins the long ascendency of the Scottish philosophy in the American academic curriculum' (Hoeveler 1981: 218–19). This needs to be qualified by the observation that David Fordyce's *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* was a standard textbook at Harvard some time before Witherspoon reached America, and indeed it can be said more broadly that Scottish philosophy was no less influential in the formation of Harvard's educational programme than Princeton's. William Ellery Channing, for example, was a student there in the late eighteenth century, and went on to be a leading figure in the establishment of Harvard Divinity School in 1816. Its express purpose was to provide for the education of liberal-minded clergy for whom Hutcheson's philosophical programme was admirably suited.

Initially it was Hutcheson who was most influential in Princeton also. Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* was published in 1764, four years before Witherspoon arrived in Princeton. Yet it was Francis Hutcheson's conception of philosophy as 'moral science', not the philosophy of Reid and common sense, with which Witherspoon displaced the idealism of George Berkeley and Jonathan Edwards that had hitherto been dominant in the college. Indeed, Witherspoon seems to have been largely ignorant of Reid's writings; there is no reference to him in the posthumously published version of his lectures to the students at Princeton. These lectures do contain explicit references to Hutcheson, however, and their treatment of the topics they cover is very much in the spirit of Hutcheson—somewhat surprisingly, since Witherspoon owed his appointment (in part) to the fact that he had authored a brilliant satirical attack on the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* of the moderate Church of Scotland clergy who looked to Hutcheson as their inspiration.

Reid came to Princeton (so to speak) primarily thanks to Witherspoon's successor (and son-in-law) Samuel Stanhope Smith (1751–1819). Like Witherspoon, Smith was Professor of Moral Philosophy as well as President, and his corresponding lectures acknowledge the debt he owed to Reid and are replete with references to him. Smith is notable as the first major proponent of the Scottish philosophical tradition to have been born in America. Nor did he ever study in Scotland. He nonetheless proved an enthusiastic and effective proponent of the philosophical tradition that had begun in Scotland with Hutcheson in the early eighteenth century and developed under the influence of Hume and Reid as the century wore on.

Although Smith was culturally an Enlightenment figure, his lectures were not published until the second decade of the nineteenth century. He thus became the first of a generation of native-born college professors and presidents whose knowledge of and enthusiasm for Scottish philosophy gave it a remarkable ascendancy over a period of time that extended far beyond 'the Enlightenment'. Francis Wayland (1796 –1865) was another. An American Baptist, born in New York City and educated at Union College, he studied first medicine and then theology. In 1835, however, he published

his *Elements of Moral Science*, and with his appointment to the presidency of Brown University in Rhode Island the Scottish philosophical tradition gained another important educational foothold. Wayland held the position for twenty-eight years, during which time he greatly strengthened both the discipline and the academic quality of the university. Although a committed Baptist minister, his improvements at Brown included the development of natural science—a combination that was standard fare in the endeavour to unite 'piety and science'.

Francis Bowen (1811–90) graduated from Harvard in 1833. He was a man of remarkably wide-ranging interests in history, economics, and constitutional theory, as well as philosophy. In 1853 he was appointed Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity at Harvard, and in this capacity gave lectures on British philosophy 'From Francis Bacon to William Hamilton', a prospectus that itself reveals his philosophical orientation, though the fact that he sided with Berkeley and Locke, and rejected the eclecticism of Victor Cousin, shows that his attitude to Scottish philosophy was by no means uncritical. His serious interest in it, however, is confirmed by his publication (in 1854) of an American edition of Dugald Stewart's *Philosophy of the Human Mind*.[5]

Another important and substantial figure in the story of Scottish philosophy in America was Noah Porter (1811– 92). Porter graduated from Yale College in 1831. He was ordained as a Congregational minister and served churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts until his election as Professor of Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics at Yale in 1846. In 1868 he published *The Human Intellect*, a work on psychology and the history of philosophy that revealed his considerable sympathy for Scottish common sense. Porter was elevated to the presidency of Yale in 1871, a position he retained until 1886, during which time he published *Elements of Intellectual Science* (1871) and *Elements of Moral Science* (1885). All three books show the continuing influence of Scottish philosophy until late in the nineteenth century. Porter, in fact, records both the deep roots of Scottish philosophy in American intellectual life and the renewal and expansion which interest in it received from Hamilton's essays in the *Edinburgh Review*. Writing in John Veitch's *Memoir* of Hamilton, Porter says:

> Nearly up to the time when the writings of Hamilton began to be read, the English and Scottish writers had been our only teachers from abroad. The German and French metaphysicians were almost unknown and unread . . . The principles recognized and the authorities referred to were derived from the school of Locke and the Scottish metaphysicians. Reid was known familiarly by some of our philosophical teachers. Dugald Stewart had been very generally studied in our leading colleges . . . the lectures of Dr Thomas Brown had passed through several editions . . . It was just beginning to be the fashion with us to study the German language, and many an ardent youth looked forward with eagerness to the time when he should be able to read Kant in the original,

[5] Stewart's book had been widely used long before this. Thomas Jefferson, who had met Dugald Stewart in Paris in 1788, congratulated him some years later on his *Philosophy of the Human Mind* having 'become the text book of most of our colleges and academies'.

or penetrate the secret of Schelling or Hegel . . . There was probably never a time in our history which could more truly be termed a period of fermentation . . . than the time when the articles of Sir William Hamilton began to be read amongst us . . . The article on the Philosophy of Perception attracted attention among all our philosophical students, and established at once the highest reputation for its then unknown author. There were hundreds—teachers and students—who had studied this subject very carefully in Reid, Stewart, and Brown . . . [and] . . . [t]his article became at once a classical treatise on the subject, which it was necessary for every thorough student to read and master. (Porter 1864: 422–4)

Four years after Porter wrote this, Princeton appointed another important exponent of the Scottish philosophical tradition to its presidency: James McCosh (1811–94). McCosh brought a fresh injection of intellectual energy directly from Scotland. Born in Ayrshire, he studied at the University of Glasgow when the spirit of Reid was still dominant, and then at the University of Edinburgh where he attended the lectures of Sir William Hamilton. He was ordained into the established Church of Scotland, and a few years later became a notable figure in the Free Church that broke away in the great Disruption of 1843. Despite the demands this put on his time, he retained his interest in philosophy and continued to work on a major book. The publication of this book—*The Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral*—in 1850 led to his appointment as the founding Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the new Queen's University College, Belfast in the same year. Eighteen years later, exactly a century after Witherspoon, he took up the presidency of the College of New Jersey. During his twenty years in this post, McCosh, like his predecessors, was Professor of Moral Philosophy. In this capacity he published extensively, but he was also an academic reformer of prodigious energy, who laid the foundations for the transformation of Princeton from a regional college to an international university, though the change was not made official until 1896, two years after his death.

In 1874 McCosh published his famous volume *The Scottish Philosophy, Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton*. The importance of this book was that it brought the Scottish philosophical tradition to self-consciousness and identified both its principal exponents and its intellectual trajectory, stretching from Hutcheson to Hamilton. At this time Hamilton could indeed be regarded as its high point, though his standing was greater in North America than in his native Scotland. Not only was there the testimony of Porter's appendix to Veitch's *Memoir*, there was also the publication in 1870 of John Clark Murray's *Outline of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*. At the time of its publication, Murray was teaching philosophy at Queen's University Ontario. Canada had established universities of its own much later than the United States, no doubt because Canada's relationship with Britain never underwent any equivalent revolution.[6] From the start, the Canadian universities were shaped along Scottish lines. Indeed, Peter Ross, author of *The Scot in America* (1896), roundly declared that 'the entire educational

[6] Canada gained a large measure of political independence in 1867 as a confederation of four provinces, but was not fully independent of the British government until 1931.

system of the country, from the primary school to the university is more indebted to the Scottish section of the community than to any other' (quoted in McKillop 1979: 29). McGill University in Montreal was named after James McGill, its first benefactor and a graduate of the University of Glasgow. It began as a medical college, and only added a Faculty of Arts in 1843. Dalhousie College (later University) was founded in 1821 and was explicitly modelled on Edinburgh, though it struggled to survive and did not award its first degrees until 1866. The Queen's University in Kingston Ontario was established by the Church of Scotland in 1841 for the purpose of training ministers. It too was modelled on the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

John Clark Murray was Scottish born, a graduate of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and a student of Sir William Hamilton's. He emigrated to Ontario to take up his post in 1862. When he moved to McGill in 1872 he taught the same curriculum there as he had taught at Queen's, one in which Stewart and Hamilton figured prominently. Scottish philosophy was thus pre-eminent in the Canadian universities. But it was not the texts of the eighteenth century that were taught and studied; it was the Scottish philosophical tradition in its nineteenth-century development. Murray used his *Outline of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* for his students at McGill, as he had at Queen's, because he supposed that it could serve as a philosophy textbook for general use. It was not an historical, but contemporary study of the subject.

In an introductory note to Murray's book, McCosh described Hamilton as 'the greatest metaphysician of his age'. That is a remarkable accolade, yet it disguised a deep dissatisfaction. In company with Murray, and many others, McCosh's admiration for Hamilton was seriously qualified by his belief that Hamilton's concessions to Kant had produced an unhappy hybrid in which, ironically, the tradition's most distinguished defender had discarded its most important elements. The same point, indeed, was explicitly made by John Clark Murray in an essay on 'The Scottish Philosophy' published in *Macmillan's Magazine*. 'All that the admirers of the Scottish Philosophy regarded as its peculiar triumph was, therefore, practically surrendered by its ablest champion' (Murray 1876: 125). The Scottish connection lasted well beyond Murray. R. D. Maclennan, one of Norman Kemp Smith's most distinguished (and devoted) students, was Macdonald Professor of Moral Philosophy at McGill in the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, by making Hamilton the high point of the tradition, Murray and McCosh effectively signalled its passing.

In subsequent articles that he published in the *Princeton Review*, McCosh expressly lamented the fact that within Scotland itself 'the Scottish philosophy' was fast losing its hold, squeezed out between the empirical psychology of John Stuart Mill and Alexander Bain on the one hand, and the high-flown Hegelian Idealism of Edward Caird on the other. At Glasgow and elsewhere, Caird had inspired a coterie of younger philosophers. In Aberdeen, Bain's psychological interests eventually led (in 1896) to the appointment of George Frederick Stout (the editor of *Mind*) to a new lectureship in Comparative Psychology. From there he moved to the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at St Andrews which he held for over thirty years. In an essay published

in 1882 McCosh more or less explicitly abandoned hope that Scotland might continue to promote and develop the philosophical tradition to which it had given birth. In 1885, under the title 'What an American Philosophy should be', he looked to the growing confidence of America's intellectuals to preserve what was best in common sense realism by fashioning it into something recognizably new.

Things turned out rather differently. In the years following McCosh's essay, common sense realism disappeared with remarkable rapidity, to be replaced by the philosophical alternatives of idealism and pragmatism. In 1879 the Concord School of Philosophy began its summer programmes. It ran until 1888, and its lecturers included the exponents of Transcendentalism—Emerson and Thoreau—and, more importantly perhaps, William Torrey Harris, leader of the St Louis Hegelians and founder of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. McCosh was invited to attend one of its sessions to discuss 'the Scottish philosophy'. Unfortunately for him (and for us) he was unable to attend, but subsequently published a long review of the several 'transcendental' directions in which its enthusiasts were travelling—most notably Neoplatonism, 'the Religions', and Hegelianism. In this review he notes that 'the Scottish principle of common-sense satisfied many for a time, but is now forsaken, as supposed to be a mere appeal *ad populum* and not sufficiently profound' (McCosh 1882: 49). McCosh's final judgement was that the Concord School was likely to 'introduce a deeper error than that which it has been brought in to expel'; but whatever the truth of this, the fashion for philosophical idealism quickly excluded any new Realism of the kind for which McCosh had hoped. Moreover, though Harris was an exponent of Hegel, the new idealism took on its own peculiarly American identity at the hands of Josiah Royce (1855–1916). Royce graduated from the University of California in 1875. Thereafter he spent time studying in Germany and was awarded his doctorate in philosophy in 1878 by the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, a newly established institution deliberately created on the German model. In 1882 he was appointed professor at Harvard, and over the next few years came to be regarded as one of America's most eminent philosophers. *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885) and *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892), both based on Harvard lectures, secured his reputation as the leading exponent of a distinctively American version of idealism, one that departed significantly from both Hegel and F. H. Bradley.

Something of the philosophy of common sense did have a truly American descendant. It was not realist, however, but pragmatist. C. S. Peirce, its principal author, consciously drew on what he called 'Common Sensism', but in his development of Pragmatism he ultimately departed from its fundamentals (see Chapter 9). William James, the other major philosopher associated with American pragmatism, makes knowledgeable and admiring references to the Scottish philosophers in his Gifford Lectures on *The Varieties of Religious Experience* which he delivered in Edinburgh in 1903. But he does not evidently draw upon them. And in the lectures on *Pragmatism* which he gave in Boston in 1906, there is no mention of either of Hutcheson or Reid, and just one brief reference to Hume. The lectures themselves are dedicated to John Stuart Mill.

In the space of less than thirty years, then, the Scottish philosophical tradition that had so influenced American intellectual and educational life for a century and a half simply disappeared. Moreover, in the decades that followed it was virtually expunged from America's philosophical memory. Thus the *Oxford Handbook of American Philosophy*, published in 2008, makes only passing reference to Hutcheson, Reid, and Stewart, while Witherspoon, Stanhope Smith, Bowen, Wayland, and Porter are absent from its index. What explains such a total eclipse?

The puzzle is intensified by the fact that the flow of Scottish-educated philosophers to America did not cease abruptly. James Seth was a professor at Brown and then Cornell before returning, in 1898, to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh vacated by his teacher Henry Calderwood. Both Seth and Calderwood published ethics textbooks that were widely used in the USA and Canada. R. M. Wenley, one of the most brilliant of Glasgow's philosophy graduates in the late nineteenth century, was appointed to succeed John Dewey at the University of Michigan in 1894. A. S. Pringle-Pattison, who held the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh, was the philosopher chosen to lecture in the programme of events that marked the official transformation of the College of New Jersey into Princeton University in 1896. Norman Kemp Smith, a graduate of St Andrews, famous for his work on both Kant and Hume, taught philosophy at Princeton before taking up the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh in 1919. Archibald A. Bowman was Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University for thirteen years (1912–25) before returning to the Chair of Logic (and then Moral Philosophy) at Glasgow. Nevertheless, despite this continuing contact, Scottish philosophy disappeared from American philosophical consciousness almost without trace.

Any explanation for this striking reverse must be somewhat tentative, but the development and reception of Scottish philosophy are key. The 'moral science' of Hutcheson, which aimed to root normative judgement on the 'facts' of human nature, broadly conceived, was gradually divided. The traditional concerns of ethics, aesthetics, and politics became more and more the province of 'rhetoric'. This too was an inheritance from the Scottish philosophers of the Enlightenment. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the works of Hugh Blair, George Campbell, and others who wrote on the use of spoken and written language went through many editions, and were used as textbooks in courses across the country. But alongside and largely independent of this interest in 'speech' there ran a much narrower Reidian philosophical agenda which sought to resolve metaphysical and epistemological issues by appeal to common sense. This more sharply focused conception of philosophy seemed to speak more directly to the intellectual and religious context of nineteenth-century America. Describing this context in his contribution to the *Memoir* for Hamilton, Noah Porter says that for several years, 'a very active and earnest controversy had been agitating the entire New England school of theology, which had turned entirely upon the application of certain mooted psychological and philosophical principles to the received evangelical doctrines . . . The discussions of this controversy were conducted

with great earnestness, and excited the minds of all thinking men of all classes to look closely at the foundation principles of all faith and all philosophy' (Porter 1864: 422). This debate involving faith and philosophy was a new development on a much older theme. Many of the colleges of higher education founded by religious denominations were inspired by the possibility and desirability of combining intellectual learning with religious piety. Precisely that aspiration was the subject of Witherspoon's inaugural address as President of the College of New Jersey, entitled 'The Connection and Mutual Influences of Learning and Piety'. Over forty years later, Witherspoon's student, and Stanhope Smith's successor, Ashbel Green, could make pretty much the same subject the theme of his inaugural—'The Promotion of Science in Union with Piety'. By Porter's time, however, philosophical positions allied to atheism had come to greater prominence, thus engendering a strenuous debate about whether the 'unity of science and piety' was possible at all, a debate that was a precursor, of course, to a much later obsession about 'science and religion'.

In an essay published in 1955, the historian Sydney Ahlstrom makes a plausible case for thinking that it is this religious context that explains how a philosophy so discredited in the twentieth century could have played such a hugely influential role in the nineteenth century. The crucial factor, Ahlstrom argued, was to be found in the relation of common sense philosophy to Protestant theology.

> The secret of its success . . . lay in its dualism, epistemological, ontological and cosmological, . . . [which] facilitated an all-out attack on both materialism and idealism . . . [and] . . . made possible a synchronous affirmation of science on the one hand, and an identification of the human intellect and the Divine Mind on the other . . . Scottish philosophers could thus be monotonously consistent in their invocations of Bacon and Newton and at the same time certify those rational processes of man which lead toward natural theology and even contemplative piety and away from relativism and romantic excesses. The Scottish philosophy, in short, was a winning combination; and to American theologians . . . it was an answer to a prayer. (Ahlstrom 1955: 267–8)

Chief among the 'American theologians' were Charles Hodge, Archibald Alexander, and Benjamin Warfield, exponents of the 'Princeton theology' associated with the seminary that had been set up in 1812 alongside, though independent of, the College of New Jersey. For them, the Bible provided the 'data' of a scientific theology, just as empirical observation supplied data for natural science, with Newtonian/Baconian methods applicable to both. And just as the fanciful flights of Humean scepticism could be dismissed by appeal to 'common sense', so could the more fanciful speculations of Darwinism. Plants and animals may certainly have evolved, but common sense as well as biblical teaching tells us that their highly sophisticated adaptation nonetheless implies that the evolutionary process has had divine guidance. In taking this position the Princeton theologians were neither relying on dogmatic fideism nor on the revelations of religious experience such as marked the Great Awakenings. They were in fact Rationalists. Perhaps they relied too heavily (as did others) on the 'vulgar' version of Reid's 'common sense' that Kant had denounced,

the version that unhappily identified 'common sense' with 'conventional opinion' rather than 'Fundamental Laws of Human Belief', the expression Dugald Stewart thought Reid would have been much better using (Stewart 1852: 304). This is confirmed to some extent by McCosh's judgement, in 1882, that the appeal to common sense had come to be seen as a 'mere appeal *ad populum*' and thus 'not sufficiently profound' to count as philosophy. This very complaint had been voiced several decades previously by J. F. Ferrier, against Reid himself and not just his popularizers. The Princeton theologians did not in fact make any uncritical appeal *ad populum*. Their problem, rather, was that the 'scientific' principles which they employed seemed increasingly simplistic and out of date. To scientific Realists like J. S. Mill, biblical texts could never be taken as comparable to empirical evidence, especially in the light of the new discoveries of 'Higher Criticism'. To the idealists, both Scottish and American, philosophy and religion could be combined in a truly 'religious philosophy' only if empiricism, and the materialistic metaphysics that inevitably went with it, were completely abandoned. McCosh, who was a Director of the Seminary as well as President of the College, debated Hodge on the matter of evolution. His was a sophisticated version of Scottish common sense realism, not built on the 'doctrines' of conventional opinion, but relying on a 'method which discovers truths prior in their nature to the induction, and which could not discover them unless they were already there in the mind' (Stewart 1852: 304 n. 14). Yet his own religious loyalties were such that the philosophical sophistication of his version could not rescue it from the general perception that 'the Scottish philosophy' had become the servant of conservative Protestant theology. In the rapidly changing religious and intellectual landscape of America, such a perception virtually guaranteed its demise. Thinkers such as Royce, Emerson, Harris, and James no longer had any inclination to articulate, still less affirm, the tenets of Protestant theology, while evangelical Protestants found conversion experiences compatible with biblical literalism, and therefore in no need of 'scientific' confirmation. By the time of McCosh's death in 1894, 'the Scottish philosophy' was heading for oblivion. One consequence of this was that interest in Hume, who hitherto was widely believed to have been 'answered' by Reid (more effectively than by Kant), began to revive. Selby-Bigge's definitive and enduring edition of the *Treatise* had just appeared in 1888, and though Hume's complete rehabilitation took some time, it was not long before he completely overshadowed Reid, to the point where Hume came to be regarded as the only major figure in the list of Scottish philosophers, and Reid was relegated to a footnote.

One of the people who contributed most to this reversal was Norman Kemp Smith. In the opening years of the twentieth century, Kemp Smith published two articles in the journal *Mind*. Entitled 'The Naturalism of Hume', these reinterpreted Hume as a naturalist rather than a sceptic, and proved to be highly influential in the reassessment of Hume. It was partly on the strength of these articles that Kemp Smith was successful in his application for the Stuart Professorship at Princeton to which he was appointed in 1906. Ironically, in 1914 he was promoted to the McCosh Chair of Philosophy.

8.3 Scottish Philosophy in Australia

Like Canada, Australia was a British possession that did not achieve political independence until the beginning of the twentieth century, only becoming a self-governing Dominion in 1907. One consequence was that, compared with North America and the United States in particular, philosophy came late to Australia, and it was 1850 before there was any appointment of a college teacher of philosophy. Australia's first resident philosopher was a man with the highly unusual name of Barzillai Quaife. Quaife, a Christian minister in Sydney, was appointed Professor of Mental Philosophy and Divinity at a fledgling university—Australian College. The college did not survive, but in the four years that he was professor, Quaife launched a philosophical programme that owed almost everything to Thomas Reid as interpreted by Sir William Hamilton. His lectures were subsequently published as *The Intellectual Sciences*, a title strikingly reminiscent of similar books published by the Scottish philosophers of North America.

The initial connection with Scotland's philosophical tradition—and establishment—proved enduring. Though the fact may have owed as much to chance as to design, it was natural for colonies like Canada and Australia, as they gradually grew in political and educational independence, to turn to British universities for a supply of qualified teachers. In the case of philosophy, one striking difference between England and Scotland in the nineteenth centuries was important. Almost all Scottish philosophers were university trained, and the majority were university based. In England, by contrast, philosophy had no special connection with the universities.[7] Thus Brown, Hamilton, Ferrier, Fraser, Bain, Caird, and Seth all held university posts; Bentham, Mill, and Spencer did not, Sidgwick was an Oxford Fellow only briefly, while Whately, Mansel, and Whewell were not professors of philosophy.[8] It was also true that the four Scottish universities, especially in the second half of the century, were producing many more gifted philosophy graduates than the system could possibly employ. Some of the most gifted, such as D. G. Ritchie, waited a long time to obtain a Scottish chair. Others took the opportunity of employment in the expanding universities of the British Empire.

So it was that Australia, one hundred years later than colonial America, also saw an influx of Scottish philosophers. The University of Sydney was founded in the same year Quaife was appointed—1850—and in his philosophy lectures its first Principal, the Revd John Woolley, though a professed Platonist, also drew on

[7] This was true in the eighteenth century also, and a fact that Adam Smith remarks on in *The Wealth of Nations*. The universities of England, he argues, lost all their finest intellects because of hierarchical preferment in the church. The Church of Scotland, being Presbyterian, had no similar preferment. 'In England . . . the church is continually draining the universities of all their best and ablest members' (Smith 1976: V.i.g).

[8] Whewell was 'Knightbridge Professor of Moral Theology and Casuistical Divinity' at Cambridge. It was only much later that the chair was renamed 'Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy' (and still later simply 'Philosophy').

Hamilton's version of Reid and espoused the method of induction and experiment in metaphysics. In 1881 Australia's second university, the University of Melbourne, appointed Henry Laurie to a lectureship in Logic. Laurie was a Scot and a student of A. C. Fraser at the University of Edinburgh. In 1902, Laurie revealed his abiding interest in Scottish philosophy, and joined the company of McCosh, Clark Murray, and Pringle-Pattison, when he published a retrospective study of *Scottish Philosophy in its National Development*. It was one of the first major works to be published by a philosopher based in Australia. Laurie includes a chapter on J. F. Ferrier to extend the story of Scottish philosophy beyond the era of Hamilton. Interestingly, he sides with Ferrier against Reid, thereby revealing an awareness of the way in which, even within the relatively narrow confines of philosophical psychology, the Scottish philosophical tradition had, in part, transcended the 'School of Common Sense'. Laurie's broader conception of the tradition also led him to include a chapter on 'Aesthetic Theories' which placed Alexander Gerard, Lord Kames, Archibald Alison, and Hugh Blair alongside the more familiar names of Hutcheson, Hume, Reid, Smith, and Stewart. At the same time, his volume, no less than McCosh's, is essentially valedictory. His final chapter, entitled 'Recent Developments', opens with the observation that 'as the years have rolled on, the philosophy of Scotland and that of England have tended more and more to merge into one' (Laurie 1902: 332). By the time he published his book, Laurie had become 'Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy' at the University of Melbourne. The title of his chair shows the continuing influence of Scotland.

In 1874, the University of Adelaide was founded. One of the two foundation chairs was entitled 'English Language and Literature and Mental and Moral Science', and a Presbyterian minister who had been educated at the University of St Andrews was appointed to it. In 1890 the University of Sydney established a professorship with precisely the same title. The first Challis Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy was Francis Anderson, yet another native of Scotland. Born in Glasgow, Anderson also studied there. He was a student of John Veitch, graduated with distinction in philosophy, and subsequently became an assistant to Edward Caird, whose influence seemed to prove more lasting than Veitch's.

Twenty years after its founding, the Adelaide chair was filled by William Mitchell. Sir William Mitchell (as he later became) proved to be an enormously influential figure in the development of Australia's universities, Sydney in particular where he eventually became Vice-Chancellor. A graduate of Edinburgh and (like Laurie) a student of A. C. Fraser, Mitchell ceased to teach English after a time, and brought to the teaching of philosophy increased attention to psychology. His major work *Structure and Growth of the Mind* (1907) might be said to be conceived in the spirit of Alexander Bain—acknowledging the essential separation of psychological and philosophical questions, and construing the first as a necessary preliminary to the second. Yet it was Mitchell who inaugurated a period of twenty years or more during which idealism was dominant in Australia, a period that numbered Boyce Gibson and J. McKellar

Stewart among its most influential exponents. The attractions of idealism were similar to those felt by the Concord School in late-nineteenth-century America—the desirability of a 'religious' philosophy that would provide a spiritual counter to materialism without commitment to the traditional doctrines of Christianity. As the Australian philosopher D. C. Stove put it many years later, 'Nineteenth-century idealism . . . provided an important holding station . . . for that century's vast flood of intellectual refugees from Christianity . . . The problem was how to part with the absurdities of Christianity while keeping cosmic consolation; no one dreamt of parting with the latter as well . . . or at any rate no philosopher did' (quoted in Franklin 2003: 114). This is, perhaps, a somewhat uncharitable reading, but it is true that when Henry Laurie was making the case for the teaching of philosophy in the State of Victoria (in an article for Melbourne's *Victorian Review* of 1881), his principal argument was that serious metaphysical enquiry was a vital *via media* in the cultural clash between uncritical Christianity and dogmatic materialism (Laurie 1881–2: 76–89).

In 1927 another Anderson was appointed to the Challis Chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Sydney. John Anderson was unrelated to Francis Anderson, but he was also a Scot who studied philosophy at the University of Glasgow under the tutelage of Henry Jones and Robert Latta. His elder brother, William Anderson, also a student of Jones, had been appointed Professor of Philosophy at Auckland University College, New Zealand in 1921, retained this position until his death in 1955, and has been described as 'the most dominant figure in New Zealand philosophy'.[9] The same claim can undoubtedly be made for John Anderson and philosophy in Australia.

Anderson graduated MA from Glasgow University in 1917, and was awarded philosophical fellowships for further study. After two years as an as Assistant in Philosophy at the University College, Cardiff, he returned to Scotland, first to the University of Glasgow (1919–20) and then to a Lectureship in Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Edinburgh, where Norman Kemp Smith held the chair. From Edinburgh he went to Sydney, where he remained for the rest of his career and his life.

Mark Weblin has described Anderson as 'one of the brightest stars of Scottish philosophy during the first decades of the twentieth century' (Weblin 2007: 323). If this is true, it is striking that when he went to Australia he abandoned the spirit of Scottish philosophy and turned the subject in quite a different direction. In doing so, he gave Australian philosophy a distinctive stamp of its own for many decades thereafter. Weblin himself notes that 'Anderson appeared to take little interest in Scottish philosophy *per se*' (Weblin 2007: 317), and that in the one year he lectured on Reid, he did so against the background of a kind of Realism that 'must imply the rejection of most of Reid's philosophy' (Weblin 2007: 322). At the heart of this radical move away from the philosophical tradition in which he was educated, was Anderson's complete break with religion, and hence with any attempt at a 'religious' philosophy such as

[9] *The Northern Line*, No. 3, May 2007.

the idealists who preceded him in Australia, especially Francis Anderson and Henry Laurie, had sought. In his lectures and publications, John Anderson was a strict empiricist and a materialist. His philosophical position set the stage for the mind–brain identity theory for which, subsequently, Australian philosophers became renowned. In metaphysics he rejected all conceptions of a First Cause or Ultimate Reality, and in ethics he abandoned any notion of moral 'command' or 'requirement' in favour of the pursuit of good ends based on human needs and desires. 'It is better', he writes, 'to drop the term "right" from ethical theory' (quoted in Grave 1984: 59).

Thus summarized, it is plain how a Scottish-educated philosopher can be said to have brought the influence of the Scottish philosophical tradition to an end in Australia. All its central elements—theism, moral obligation, teleological metaphysics, the distinction between mind and matter—were rejected. The degree to which Anderson made their rejection the marks of philosophy in Australia is a measure of his influence there. Anderson's leaving Scotland for Australia was, John Passmore wrote, 'the greatest single piece of intellectual good fortune our country has ever experienced' (quoted in Grave 1984: 47). The veneration in which Anderson's students held him is reminiscent of the regard that Hamilton's students had for him. Yet, like Hamilton, Anderson left no lasting legacy. His stature in Australia contrasts sharply with his near philosophical neglect in the rest of the world.

The explanation of this contrasting status, within and without Australia, is in part to be explained by the fact that Anderson's avowed atheism and radical political stance attracted adverse reaction from the Australian establishment, to the point where he was attacked in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. He thus attained a public prominence which few philosophers achieve. But perhaps more significant was his personal force as a philosophical teacher. It is his personality rather than his body of philosophical writing that inspired a new and growing generation of Australian philosophers, a generation that no longer needed to look back to Britain for ideas or for fresh personnel.

It is worth observing, though, that even if he rejected the principal elements of the philosophical tradition in which he had been educated, Anderson nevertheless brought an important part of his Scottish cultural inheritance to bear on his role as a teacher. The philosopher Arthur Prior, visiting from New Zealand, recorded his impression of Anderson's intellectual presence.

> As to his 'atheism', there is no doubt about this. But when I first saw the man . . . another observer whispered as he was talking that he was exactly like a Presbyterian clergyman. And so, he is . . . though of a type which is now dying out. The leader of some fairly small dissenting Scottish sect, scorning mere conventional religion, reverencing nothing but his God, dominating his flock and yet honestly appealing for (and sometimes evoking) independence of mind and action. (Quoted in Grave 1984: 66)

Anderson's philosophy, curiously, had something of the same appeal as the most severe forms of Calvinist religion, of which it might be said (as another observer said of Anderson's) that its teachings were notable for their 'utter absence of consolation and uplift'.

If it is true that with John Anderson philosophy in Australia ended its connection with the Scottish philosophical tradition, there is nonetheless a footnote to be added. In 1960 the Australian philosopher S. A. Grave published *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense*. This was the outcome of a doctoral dissertation written at the University of St Andrews. Published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, it was the first substantial study of Thomas Reid to appear in Britain in the twentieth century. From the time of its publication, however, interest in Reid, Common Sense, and the Scottish philosophers began to revive. With this revival, it is not entirely fanciful to claim, Australian philosophy repaid its intellectual debt to Scotland.

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9

Scottish Common Sense and American Pragmatism

Douglas McDermid

I've sent you here by Johnie Simson,
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on;
Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
An' Reid, to common sense appealing.
Philosophers have fought an' wrangled,
An' meikle Greek an' Latin mangled,
Till wi' their logic-jargon tir'd,
An' in the depth of Science mir'd,
To common sense they now appeal,
What wives an' wabsters see an' feel!

Robert Burns[1]

9.1 Introduction

The story of how Scottish philosophy emigrated to America—of when and why it came to the New World, of where it settled, and how it fared—is a long and lively tale, crowded with once-influential characters: Princeton's John Witherspoon and James McCosh, Brown's Francis Wayland, Harvard's Levi Hedge and Francis Bowen, and Yale's Noah Porter, to name only a few.[2] It is, moreover, a tale that promises to tell us a great deal, not merely about the illustrious career of Scottish philosophy, but also about the myriad ways in which the cultural function and ambitions of English-language philosophy, as well as its place within the university, shifted between the mid-eighteenth century and the early twenty-first century.

[1] From 'Epistle to James Tennant at Glenconner', in Mackay (1986: 200–2).

[2] Readers interested in the plot and dramatis personae of this tale may wish to consult Kuklick (2001: ch. 4); Flower and Murphey (1977: chs 4, 5, and 6); and Martin (1961: ch. 1).

Though this tale is fascinating from a number of perspectives, we will not unfold its plot here; and this is not only on account of its length and complexity, or because its conclusion has yet to be written. It is also because the object of this chapter is not to expatiate on Scottish philosophy's impact on American philosophy in general terms, but to explore the relation between Scottish common sense philosophy, as articulated in the seminal writings of Thomas Reid, and American pragmatism, as developed by its first two great exponents, C. S. Peirce and William James. And this, as we shall see, is a rich and complex topic in its own right.

When we examine what Reid, Peirce, and James had to say on the subject of common sense, we find ourselves surrounded by an importunate swarm of questions. How, we cannot help asking, does each of our three sage philosophers understand 'common sense'? What kind and degree of epistemic authority do they ascribe to its multifarious dictates? And how does each thinker understand the relation between common sense, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other? If they grant (as they should) that there are limits to what appeals to common sense can accomplish in philosophy, do they also agree on where those limits are located in logical space, or on how those limits are to be defined? Finally, do any of our philosophers think that our commitment to common sense reveals anything telling about human nature and our place in the scheme of things?

In this chapter I address this intriguing mélange of questions by looking first at Reid (Section 9.2), then at Peirce (Section 9.3), and finally at James (Section 9.4). I conclude with some morals inspired by our findings (Section 9.5), along with a final word of warning.

9.2 Thomas Reid

One way of understanding Thomas Reid's brand of common-sensism is to see it as a reply not to a single form of scepticism, but to no fewer than four: epistemological scepticism, metaphysical scepticism, moral scepticism, and religious scepticism.[3] *Epistemological sceptics* directly target our faith in the basic reliability of our cognitive faculties (perception, memory, reason, and consciousness), cast aspersions on our conviction that we can have knowledge of other minds, scout our belief in Nature's uniformity, or urge that the weight we naturally give to testimony is excessive. *Metaphysical sceptics*, taking a rather different tack, complain that our ordinary conceptual scheme is hopelessly confused or fundamentally inadequate. According to this class of doubting Thomases, certain categories which we are accustomed to take for granted—categories such as substance, selfhood, personal identity, causation, and libertarian free will—can no longer be employed with a clean philosophical

[3] My taxonomy here owes a good deal to Norton (1982: 241–56). For more on the range of Reid's philosophy, see Broadie (2009: ch. 9).

conscience, because there is nothing in reality to which they correspond. *Moral sceptics*, for their part, may doubt whether there exists a distinction between virtue and vice rooted in the nature of things, contend that we cannot act altruistically, deny the possibility of moral knowledge, or assert that what pass for moral judgements are in reality mere expressions of sentiment. Finally, *religious sceptics* plead that none of the chief articles of natural religion or Christian orthodoxy are defensible. As they see it, cosmological and teleological arguments for the existence of God are vitiated by their reliance on dubious metaphysical principles; belief in a future state seems but a wild and pious hope lacking any sound foundation in reason; and testimony in support of miracles can never be reckoned credible, since nothing could be more improbable than a violation of the laws of nature.

To combat this four-pronged sceptical menace—a menace memorably incarnated for many in the person of David Hume—Reid invokes what he calls 'the principles of common sense'. And just what, pray tell, is meant by 'principles of common sense'?[4] For anyone seeking clarification of this curious phrase, the following passage from Reid's first book, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764), is an excellent place to start:

> If there are certain principles, as I think there are, which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them—these are what we call the principles of common sense; and what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd. (1764: 33)

Direct yet dense, this single sentence tells us a great deal about the principles of common sense.[5] In the first place, such principles are propositions 'which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe'. Assent to them, we are thus given to understand, is rooted in human nature itself, as opposed to being derived from the vagaries of experience, education, or custom; and this carries with it the implication that nothing will qualify as a principle of common sense unless assent to it has been virtually universal. In the second place, we are not 'able to give a reason for them': principles of common sense are *first principles*, not the secondary products of inference or argument, and their epistemic status is that of basic or foundational premises which do not admit of any direct proof or demonstration. Third, 'we are under a necessity to take [them] for granted in the common concerns of life': principles of common sense are practically indispensable, and anyone who actually succeeded in doubting them—something Reid thinks cannot be done, since belief in them is irresistible—would soon meet with a rather nasty end, or be locked up for his own protection. Fourth, 'what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd': the denial of a principle of common sense strikes us not merely as false or improbable, but as downright outlandish, preposterous, or fit to be ridiculed.

[4] I have written at greater length about this question in McDermid (1999) and (2010).

[5] Here I am indebted to Wolterstorff's analysis of this passage (2001: 227–31).

When we survey the lists of 'principles of common sense' or 'first principles' set forth in Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785) and *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (1788), we discover that many Reidian principles are propositions which have been targeted by epistemological, metaphysical, or moral sceptics. Here, for example, are a few of Reid's epistemological first principles—principles, that is, which deal with the reliability of our cognitive faculties and with the status of certain assumptions underpinning our ordinary belief-forming practices.

First, then, I hold, as a first principle, the existence of everything of which I am conscious. (1785: 617)

Another first principle I take to be, That those things did really happen which I distinctly remember. (1785: 622)

Another first principle is, That those things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be. (1785: 625)

Another first principle is, That the natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious. (1785: 630)

Another first principle relating to existence is, That there is life and intelligence in our fellowmen with whom we converse. (1785: 633)

Another first principle I take to be, That certain features of the countenance, sounds of the voice, and gestures of the body indicate certain thoughts and dispositions of mind. (1785: 635)

Another first principle appears to me to be, That there is a certain regard due to human testimony in matters of fact, and even to human authority in matters of opinion. (1785: 640)

The last principle of contingent truths I mention, is, That, in the phenomena of nature, what is to be, will probably be like to what has been in similar circumstances. (1785: 641)

As any philosophically minded reader will immediately perceive, these principles may be used to rebut various epistemological scepticisms, including scepticism about any and all of our natural cognitive faculties, scepticism about other minds, and scepticism about induction.

Another batch of Reid's first principles affirms the fundamental soundness of our common sense metaphysical scheme, with its commitments to a substantial self or mind, personal identity, incompatibilist free will, material substance, and universal causation:

Another first principle, I think, is, That the thoughts of which I am conscious, are the thoughts of a being which I call *myself*, my *mind*, my *person*. (1785: 620)

Another first principle is our own personal identity and continued existence, as far back as we remember anything distinctly. (1785: 625)

Another first principle, I think, is, That we have some degree of power over our actions, and the determinations of our will. (1785: 628)

That the qualities which we perceive by our senses must have a subject, which we call body, and that the thoughts we are conscious of must have a subject, which we call mind. (1785: 650)

[T]hat whatever begins to exist, must have a cause which produced it. (1785: 652)

That design, and intelligence in the cause, may be inferred with certainty, from marks or signs of it in the effect. (1785: 660)

Once these propositions are granted self-evident status, we are entitled to disregard the metaphysical sceptic's suggestion that our shared conceptual scheme may be naught but a farrago of ancient nonsense, or a time-honoured but tangled web of illusions.

In addition to first principles in the fields of epistemology and metaphysics, says Reid, '[t]here are also first principles in morals' (1785: 649): unassailable moral axioms whose truth is self-evident to any mature and normally constituted human being.[6] According to Reid, the Golden Rule—'[t]hat we ought not to do to others what we would think unjust or unfair to be done to us in like circumstances' (1785: 649)—is an excellent example of a first principle in morals, for it is 'self-evident to every man who hath a conscience' (1788: 366):

In every case, we ought to act that part towards another, which we would judge to be right in him to act toward us, if we were in his circumstances and he in ours; or, more generally, what we approve in others, that we ought to practise in like circumstances, and what we condemn in others we ought not to do.

If there be any such thing as right and wrong in the conduct of moral agents, it must be the same to all in the same circumstances . . .

As the equity and obligation of this rule of conduct is self-evident to every man who hath a conscience; so it is, of all rules of morality, the most comprehensive, and truly deserves the encomium given it by the highest authority, that *it is the law and the prophets*. (1788: 365–6)

When we review Reid's first principles in epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics, we cannot help but notice something about the way he usually introduces them: instead of saying that a given proposition is *unquestionably* or *without a doubt* a first principle, he merely says that he *thinks, holds*, or *takes* it to be a first principle, or that it *appears to him* to be a first principle. And this deliberate eschewal of dogmatism, this epistemic modesty, is just what one would expect from a conscientious fallibilist who recognizes that our knowledge of first principles must be derived from experience.[7]

Finally, what of common sense and religion? Here things are slightly more complicated. On the one hand, none of the propositions to which religious sceptics take exception—propositions about the existence of God, say, or the immortality of the soul—finds a place in Reid's catalogue of first principles; on the other hand, Reid's catalogue does include metaphysical and epistemological principles which may be used to defend such propositions. The existence of God, for instance, is not listed as a first principle; but we can formulate certain versions of the cosmological and teleological arguments for God's existence using assumptions which are identified as first principles (that is, '[T]hat whatever begins to exist, must have a cause which produced it' (1785: 652) and 'That design, and intelligence in the cause, may be inferred with certainty, from marks or signs of it in the effect' (1785: 660), respectively). Again,

[6] On Reid's approach to ethics, see Lehrer (2010), Graham (2010), and Cuneo (2011).

[7] 'We do not pretend, that those things that are laid down as first principles may not be examined, and that we ought not to have our ears open to what may be pleaded against it' (1785: 40).

a common sense philosopher intent on championing the immortality of the soul is entitled to take it for granted that (*pace* Hume) there exists a substantial mind or self distinct from one's thoughts—'That the thoughts of which I am conscious, are the thoughts of a being which I call *myself*, my *mind*, my *person*' (1785: 620) and 'that the thoughts we are conscious of must have a subject, which we call mind' (1785: 650)—without needing to prove that such a self or mind exists. Similarly, a common sense philosopher eager to rebut Hume's celebrated argument against belief in miracles may simply help herself to another of Reid's first principles—'That there is a certain regard due to human testimony in matters of fact, and even to human authority in matters of opinion' (1785: 640)—with a perfectly clean epistemological conscience.

As our brief survey of Reid's first principles suggests, the gist of his anti-sceptical strategy is easy to grasp: all four forms of scepticism, he thinks, can be rebutted by appealing to the plainest dictates of sound common sense. Very well; but *why* does Reid think this? How, in other words, does he understand the relation between the principles of common sense, on the one hand, and the practice of philosophy, on the other?

Reid's answer is blunt and unequivocal: philosophy, he tells us time and again, must rest upon the principles of common sense, just as a building must rest upon a fixed and solid foundation.

> It is a bold philosophy that rejects, without ceremony, principles which irresistibly govern the belief and the conduct of all mankind in the common concerns of life; and to which the philosopher himself must yield, after he imagines he hath confuted them. Such principles are older, and of more authority, than Philosophy: she rests upon them as her basis, not they upon her. If she could overturn them, she must be buried in their ruins; but all the engines of philosophical subtilty are too weak for this purpose; and the attempt is no less ridiculous, than if a mechanic should contrive an *axis in peritrochio* to remove the earth out of its place; or if a mathematician should pretend to demonstrate, that things equal to the same thing are not equal to each other. (1764: 21)

In saying this, of course, Reid is taking up arms against the tradition of modern thought inaugurated by Descartes, for whom philosophy begins with radical, ravenous, all-encompassing doubt. Common sense, seen from within this formidable tradition, must be presumed guilty until proven innocent; and the modern philosopher, serving simultaneously as police inspector, prosecutor, and judge, proves a most zealous and implacable opponent. None of our ordinary beliefs, no matter how natural or common, receives a free pass from him; damning charges are brought against them all; no assumptions are granted, no alibis allowed; and nothing, we are sternly warned, shall henceforth be taken on trust. Each class of our convictions is now obliged to produce its epistemological passport, or confess that it is really an impostor—a dressed-up prejudice or disguised *idée fixe*—instead of the stuff of which knowledge is made.

But is philosophy fit to sit in judgement on common sense? Contrariwise: philosophy, says Reid, is ultimately answerable to common sense, not common sense

to philosophy: 'Such principles [principles of common sense] are older, and of more authority, than Philosophy: she rests upon them as her basis, not they upon her' (1764: 21). As Reid sees it, the dictates of common sense do not need to be grounded by means of philosophical arguments; and a wise philosopher will be disposed to take our shared first principles for granted, viewing them as brute ineradicable givens that cannot sensibly be gainsaid. In other words, a wise philosopher will appreciate that philosophy, far from being an autonomous or self-sufficient pursuit, can only grow out of common sense; and so he will realize that (*pace* Descartes and Hume) philosophy can flourish only as long as it remains connected to that lowly, tough, life-giving root: 'Philosophy . . . has no other root but the principles of Common Sense; it grows out of them, and draws its nourishment from them. Severed from this root, its honours wither, its sap is dried up, it dies and rots' (1764: 19).

It follows that philosophy cannot controvert the principles of common sense without subverting itself. Suppose, for example, that a sceptical philosopher argues that we do not have good reasons to trust the deliverances of our senses. Faced with such a bold antagonist, Reid has an ingenious rejoinder—to wit, that our sceptic is inconsistent because he is insufficiently sceptical:

I am aware that this belief which I have in perception stands exposed to the strongest batteries of scepticism. But they make no great impression upon it. The sceptic asks me, Why do you believe the existence of the external object which you perceive? This belief, sir, is none of my manufacture; it came from the mint of Nature; it bears her image and superscription; and if it is not right, the fault is not mine: I even took it upon trust and without suspicion. Reason, says the sceptic, is the only judge of truth, and you ought to throw off every opinion and every belief that is not grounded on reason. Why, sir, should I believe the faculty of reason more than that of perception?—they came both out of the same shop, and were made by the same artist; and if he puts one piece of false ware into my hands, what should hinder him in putting another? (1764: 168–9)

It is evident that Reid's sceptic thinks reason trustworthy (since he relies upon it, 'the only judge of truth', to make his case against perception). However, reason, like perception, is one of our natural cognitive faculties; and we are constrained at the outset of our enquiries to put all such faculties (memory, consciousness, perception, reason, and conscience) on a par as far as their basic reliability is concerned. After all, none of them can be reckoned infallible or perfectly reliable; and no faculty can be used to validate itself, since that way lies circularity:

If a man's honesty were called into question, it would be ridiculous to refer it to the man's own word, whether he be honest or not. The same absurdity there is in attempting to prove, by any kind of reasoning, probable or demonstrative, that our reason is not fallacious, since the very point in question is, whether reasoning may be trusted. (1785: 630)

Every kind of reasoning for the veracity of our faculties, amounts to no more than taking their own testimony for their veracity; and this we must do implicitly, until God give us new faculties to sit in judgment upon the old . . . (1785: 631; cf. 1785: 750)

The faculties which nature hath given us, are the only engines we can use to find out the truth. We cannot indeed prove that those faculties are not fallacious, unless God should give us new faculties to sit in judgment upon the old. But we are born under a necessity of trusting them. (1788: 237)

If our sceptic is prepared to credit the deliverances of his reason, then, he should also be prepared to extend the same courtesy to the deliverances of his senses; yet the moment he takes that eminently commonsensical step, he has ceased to be a sceptic about perception. If, on the other hand, our sceptic decides to disavow perception to the bitter end, then consistency requires him to renounce the works of reason along with those of perception. But since renouncing reason is tantamount to abandoning argument and philosophy altogether, it looks very much as if our sceptic can remain a sceptic only by ceasing to be a philosopher. In the end, therefore, a philosopher has only two options: either consistently respect the authority of common sense (and so eschew scepticism), or commit intellectual suicide and fall silent forever.[8]

There is an additional sense in which a philosopher who argues against common sense seems to be at odds with himself. Because first principles are irresistible, we cannot throw them off in practice, no matter how hard or long we try; such commitments, being natural to us, cannot be extirpated from any sane and healthy mind. Indeed, anyone who really doubted whether he existed, say, or whether there were other minds, would not be hailed as a great metaphysician; he would simply be thought mad. Yet our philosophical sceptics, thinks Reid, are but mad north-north-west: whatever they may write or say in the privacy of the study, their speech and their conduct in the marketplace prove that they do not really doubt that they exist, or that there is a material world, or that fire warms, or that water refreshes. Sceptics from Pyrrho to Hume believe all these things and more, notes Reid; and this is because they, like the rest of us, simply cannot help it:

My belief is carried along by perception, as irresistibly as my body by the earth. And the greatest sceptic will find himself in the same condition. He may struggle hard to disbelieve the informations of his senses, as a man does to swim against the torrent: but ah! it is in vain. It is in vain that he strains every nerve, and wrestles with nature, and with every object that strikes upon his senses. For, after all, when his strength is spent in the fruitless attempt, he will be carried down the torrent with the common herd of believers. (1764: 169)

Here the sceptic's humiliating fate—that of being 'carried down the torrent with the common herd of believers'—may be seen as a fitting rebuke to 'the pride of philosophy' (1785: 297): a pride that dares to contradict nature, despises common sense, and dismisses mankind as a herd of credulous fools or 'Yahoos' (1764: 21; cf. 1764: 68). By opposing philosophy to common sense, by doubting first principles instead of acquiescing in them, by refusing to follow nature with serene spontaneous confidence, the philosophical sceptic effectively denies his kinship with the rest of us. So our sceptics,

[8] On Reid's treatment of scepticism, see Wolterstorff (2001: ch. 8); and de Bary (2002).

Reid intimates, are guilty of a kind of hubris; for their unnatural doubts are a form of rebellion, evincing a desire to reject 'the lot of humanity' altogether:

> We cannot give a reason why we believe even our sensations to be real and not fallacious; why we believe what we are conscious of; why we trust any of our natural faculties. We say, it must be so, it cannot be otherwise. This expresses only a strong belief, which is indeed the voice of nature, and which therefore in vain we attempt to resist. But if, in spite of nature, we resolve to go deeper, and not to trust our faculties, without a reason to shew that they cannot be fallacious, I am afraid, that seeking to become wise, and to be as gods, we shall become foolish, and being unsatisfied with the lot of humanity, we shall throw off common sense. (1785: 652)

The final sentence of this passage contains an allusion—'seeking to become wise, and *to be as gods*'—whose significance in the present context would not have been lost on Reid's Calvinist contemporaries. They would have heard in these few words an echo of an argument made in Eden, when the serpent tempted Eve with specious reasoning, and a flattering fallacy led to a Fall.[9] And they would have immediately seen what Reid was driving at: that underlying the sceptic's false move in epistemology—that of demanding proof where proof is neither necessary nor possible—is a proud and self-enfeebling refusal to trust God, 'the Author of our being' (1788: 304). Determined to be wholly self-sufficient and autonomous, the sceptical philosopher is discomfited by his dependence upon a nature that is his and yet not his—a nature by which he is ruled, but which is not of his own making—and so he seeks to transcend it in thought. Instead of acknowledging that there are certain intuitive principles which 'the constitution of our nature leads us to believe . . . without being able to give a reason for them' (1764: 33), our sceptic, 'seeking to become wise', reserves the right to reject them unless they can be established by his reason, 'the only judge of truth' (1764: 169); and he 'wrestles with nature' (1764: 169) in a vain attempt to throw off such involuntary and demeaning (to him) commitments, though no one can make his way in this world without their aid. Hence the philosophical sceptic is divided against himself; and this deplorable loss of original integrity, this deep cleft within his being, stems from an unlawful and futile desire to silence 'the voice of nature'.

As we can see, Reid encourages his readers to look at radical scepticism not only through the lens of philosophy, but also through the mediums of religion and theology. And the moral he invites us to draw is hard to miss: radical scepticism, when seen through the window of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, wears the appearance of impiety, foolish pride, and presumption. Of course, none of this amounts to a philosophical *refutation* of scepticism; but there is no reason to think that it was meant as such. Rather, it can be understood as a *diagnosis* or *interpretation* of scepticism's genesis which is available to a reader already within that religious tradition—available,

[9] 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3: 4–5).

in other words, to a reader 'who is persuaded that he is the workmanship of God, and that it is a part of his constitution to believe his senses' (1785: 294). Construed in this way, it seems reasonable enough: for someone who conceives of first principles as 'the gift of Heaven' (1785: 297) or 'the inspiration of the Almighty' (1764: 215)—and this is how Reid describes them—there can be no question of rejecting or contesting them. Such unconquerable convictions are gifts to be accepted, not with idle doubts and murmurs, but with humble trust and hope; they are boons to be viewed, not as objects of suspicion, but as occasions for gratitude; and their practical indispensability and irresistibility may be taken as proof that (*pace* Hume) the great guide of human life is not custom, but a species of grace.

Accepting first principles in this pious spirit—with trust, hope, and gratitude—means accepting a certain picture of ourselves as creatures whose true good lies in a confident and wholehearted submission to the laws of the constitution which the benevolent 'Author of our being' has seen fit to give us. This broadly Judaeo-Christian picture of human nature informs much of Reid's writing; and his allegiance to it is proclaimed on the title pages of his three major works, whose epigraphs all stress our indebtedness to a sovereign and provident God. Drawn from the Book of Job, the epigraphs to *The Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* and the *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*—'The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding' (Job 32: 8) and 'Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?' (Job 38: 36), respectively—indicate the extent of our debts in the domain of epistemology; and the *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* begins with a verse from the Book of Micah—'He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good' (Micah 6: 8)—which does the same for the realm of ethics. From this we may draw two conclusions: first, that Reid's philosophy, like that of Hume, is allied with a vivid picture of human nature; and second, that Reid's picture, unlike Hume's, is meant to be consonant with the basic tenets of Christianity.[10]

What do we discover, then, when we study the curious case of 'Reid, to common sense appealing'? Not (as Burns imagines) a dull, crude, and desperate appeal to '[w]hat wives an' wabsters see an' feel', but a philosophy full of subtlety and sane ambition. For what, we may ask, is it which Reid ultimately hopes to achieve? Nothing less than this: to establish a sceptic-proof scheme in which ordinary perception, science, morality, and religion are understood not as enemies or rivals, but as different branches of a single tree—a tree whose ancient roots nourish and sustain human nature. Suspicious of dramatic one-sidedness and tidy oversimplification, such a philosophy aspires to avoid the extremes that have tempted defiant sceptics, on the one hand, and complacent dogmatists, on the other.[11] It is committed to acknowledging

[10] On the relation between Christianity and common sense in Reid's philosophy, see Wolterstorff (2001: ch. X) (on so-called 'Reidian piety' and trust) and Harris (2007).

[11] '[L]et us remember how common the folly is, of going from one faulty extreme to another' (1785: 609; cf. 1788: 275).

the authority of our faculties without making them the measure of all things; it is pleased to credit conscience no less than perception; it welcomes religion while shunning superstition and enthusiasm; and it is liberal and large enough to accommodate both Newton's *Principia* and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. In addition, it proclaims that Providence has placed us somewhere between angels and brutes in the great chain of being; that God evidently intends human beings to lead a life devoted to prudent and dutiful action, as opposed to one filled with bold speculations or base gratifications; and—last but not least—that to repine at our God-given condition is unnatural and impious, not to mention self-defeating.

9.3 C. S. Peirce

If asked to name an outstanding American philosopher of the nineteenth century whose works testify to the enduring relevance of the Scottish philosophical tradition, many scholars would immediately think of Charles Sanders Peirce—and not only because of his great enthusiasm for Duns Scotus or because of his judicious borrowings from Alexander Bain. A warm admirer of 'that subtle but well-balanced intellect, Thomas Reid' (Peirce 1931–58: v. 444; cf. viii. 123), Peirce was determined to reinvigorate the tradition of common sense philosophy; and his own contribution to that tradition—'Critical Common-sensism' (v. 439)—is explicitly presented as 'a variety of the Philosophy of Common Sense' (v. 439; cf. viii. 208) meant to correct 'errors . . . in the Scotch doctrine of common sense' (viii. 208). But what, exactly, *is* Critical Common-sensism?

Here is how Peirce formulates the most fundamental thesis of Critical Common-sensism in his late article 'Issues of Pragmaticism' (1905):

> Critical Common-sensism admits that there not only are indubitable propositions but also that there are indubitable inferences. In one sense, anything evident is indubitable; but the propositions and inferences which Critical Common-sensism holds to be original, in the sense one cannot 'go behind' them (as the lawyers say), are indubitable in the sense of being acritical. (Peirce 1931–58: v. 440)

What does it mean to say that there are certain propositions, as well as certain inferences, which are 'indubitable in the sense of being acritical' (v. 440)? Simply this: that said propositions and inferences are exempt from what Peirce calls 'criticism'. As for what is meant here by 'criticism', Peirce's answer seems straightforward enough:

> I here use the word 'criticize' in the philosophical sense. Criticism proper, literary criticism, does not necessarily approve or disapprove. (ii. 144)
>
> Now I say that taking the word 'criticize' in the sense it bears in philosophy, that of apportioning praise and blame . . . (v. 55)

When employed in the philosophical sense (as opposed to its literary one), the term 'criticism' refers to a special evaluative practice: that of praising and blaming, of

censuring or celebrating, of holding a person responsible or accountable, of approving or disapproving of conduct depending on whether it is regulated by appropriate standards or ideals. Criticism in this sense, we might say, is directed towards actions; and since deliberate thinking is a species of action, 'the control of thinking with a view to its conformity to a standard or ideal is a special case of the control of action to make it conform to a standard' (i. 573). Accordingly, to criticize the products of our thinking—our beliefs and our inferences—is to pass judgement on them from a logical point of view: to assess them as logically good or bad, as sound or unsound, as deserving of praise or blame. Does this mean that absolutely *all* beliefs and inferences are fit and proper subjects of criticism? By no means, avers Peirce: criticism has its limits. But what are those limits, and how are they to be defined?

According to Peirce, criticism must be reckoned idle or pointless unless it can make a difference to our conduct; and it cannot make any such difference—cannot induce us to change how or what we shall think—unless the operation or process criticized is one over which we can exercise a measure of control. For what we can never control, we can never correct; and what we cannot help doing, we cannot make ourselves do differently. Criticism, being implicitly prescriptive, must be Janus-faced; for it looks forward as well as backward, concerning itself not only with the status of past performances but also with the prospect of future efforts. Indeed, 'the only respectable kind' of approval or disapproval, according to Peirce, is 'that which will bear fruit in the future' (i. 597; cf. v. 55).

From this it follows that what lies utterly beyond our control cannot be subject to criticism: '[I]t is perfectly idle to criticize anything over which you can exercise no sort of control' (v. 55; cf. ii. 26, ii. 144, v. 108, v. 114, viii. 191). And this simple dictum has important consequences for epistemology. For it implies that *if* there are intellectual commitments over which we can exercise absolutely no control—as would be the case if there were indubitable beliefs or inferences which are not deliberate, voluntary, or conscious—then those commitments will be immune or exempt from criticism: 'To criticize as logically sound or unsound an operation of thought that cannot be controlled is not less ridiculous than it would be to pronounce the growth of your hair to be morally good or bad' (v. 109; cf. v. 55, v. 130, v. 212). Now, Peirce adds, it just so happens that there are such indubitable and irresistible commitments: instinctive beliefs and inferences which are 'original, in the sense that one cannot "go behind" them' (v. 440).[12] Consequently, any philosopher who *condemns* or *blames* us for holding such beliefs or for making such inferences is either seriously mistaken about the facts or grossly ignorant of the limits of criticism; and this means that any sceptical scold who brusquely reproaches us, saying that we *ought not* to accept such indubitable commitments, can safely be ignored. Because our instinctive commitments,

[12] That fire burns (v. 499), that incest is wrong (v. 445, vi. 570), that there is order or uniformity in Nature (v. 507; vi. 496): all these are acritical indubitables, according to Peirce; and so, too, are our ordinary perceptual judgements (v. 442; cf. v.116, v. 157, v. 181). On the subject of acritical inferences, see v. 541.

being unavoidable and unreasoned givens, are not 'accepted' (v. 516, v. 523), it would be absurd to accuse us of irresponsible credulity here, just as it would be ludicrous to credit us with uncommon powers of insight or deliberation. When it comes to the acritically indubitable, we do not make up our minds; our minds are made up for us. And where we have absolutely no choice—where we cannot help thinking in a certain way—we cannot be blamed or praised, admonished or complimented:

> [T]here is nothing to be said against our thinking in a certain way, in subconscious thought, when we cannot do otherwise. (ii. 47)
>
> It appears, then, that *Logica utens* consisting in self-control, the distinction of logical goodness and badness must begin where control of the processes of cognition begins; and any object that antecedes the distinction, if it has to be named either good or bad, must be named *good*. For since no fault can be found with it, it must be taken at its own valuation. (v. 114)
>
> Now that which you do not at all doubt, you must and do regard as infallible, absolute truth. (v. 416)
>
> What you cannot help in the least believing is not, justly speaking, wrong belief. In other words, for you it is the absolute truth. (v. 419)
>
> If you absolutely cannot doubt a proposition—cannot bring yourself, upon deliberation, to entertain the least suspicion of the truth of it, it is plain that there is no room to desire anything more. (vi. 498)
>
> For what one does not doubt cannot be rendered more satisfactory than it already is. (vi. 498)
>
> Just as long as we cannot help adopting a mode of thought, so long it must be thoroughly accepted as true. Any doubt of it is idle make-believe and irredeemable paper. (viii. 191)

Two arguments from self-control, one of which is significantly more modest in its aspirations than the other, emerge from such passages. The first, purely exculpatory argument—that we cannot be blamed for believing what we absolutely cannot help believing—should be familiar to us by now;[13] and it is quite easy to spot in the passages just cited. The second, vindicatory argument—that what we cannot help thinking ought to be taken at face value (that is, taken as true in the case of beliefs, as truth-preserving in the case of inferences) as long as we truly cannot help thinking it—is much less familiar; it is surely more controversial. Provided, however, we agree with Peirce that truth ought to be conceived of as 'a state of belief unassailable by doubt' (vi. 416)—provided, that is, we are persuaded that there is ultimately no practical difference between 'the truth' and 'the opinion which we are fated to embrace at the end of inquiry'[14]—should we not also agree that there is a presumption in favour of the truth of those beliefs which we have hitherto been unable to doubt? If we grant that, defending our common sense convictions becomes a rather straightforward matter: once we have identified a genuinely indubitable belief, 'there is no room to desire anything more' (vi. 498).

[13] Recall Reid's words: 'This belief, sir, is none of my manufacture; it came from the mint of Nature; it bears her image and superscription; and if it is not right, *the fault is not mine*: I even took it upon trust and without suspicion' (1764: 169; emphasis mine).

[14] On Peirce's understanding of truth, see Misak (2004a).

Very well, you might say; but how are we to identify or recognize indubitable beliefs? Since not everything that *seems* indubitable to us at first turns out to be indubitable—since, in other words, fool's gold abounds in philosophy as well as in Nature—Peirce wisely counsels Critical Common-sensists to proceed with great caution and patience when examining the credentials of would-be indubitables.[15] Like seasoned prospectors, we must never forget that all that glitters is not gold; and, just as much glittering dust must be sifted before we know that we have struck gold, apparent indubitables must be put to the test before we can certify them as indubitable:

> The Critical Common-sensist . . . is not content to ask himself whether he does doubt, but he invents a plan for attaining to doubt, elaborates it in detail, and then puts it into practice, although this may involve a solid month of hard work; and it is only after having gone through such an examination that he will pronounce a belief to be indubitable. Moreover, he fully acknowledges that even then it may be that some of his indubitable beliefs may be proved false. (vi. 451; cf. vi. 514)

As the last sentence of this passage makes abundantly clear, Peirce denies that common sense propositions are absolutely certain (v. 514, v. 523, v. 541). At first blush, we may find this denial puzzlingly paradoxical: how can Peirce deny that such propositions are certain, given his earlier characterization of them as indubitable?[16] But a moment's reflection suffices to show that these two claims only appear inconsistent. For to say, with Peirce, that the propositions in question are indubitable is to say (roughly) that we cannot help believing them; it does not mean that the truth of such beliefs is absolutely guaranteed, that they are error-proof, or that they are permanently immune from revision. However, to say that a given proposition is certain *is* tantamount to saying (roughly) that its truth is absolutely guaranteed, that it is error-proof, or that it is permanently immune from revision. Hence the supposed conflict between Peirce's common-sensism, on the one hand, and his commitment to 'contrite fallibilism' (i. 14), on the other, turns out to be more apparent than real.

Readers looking for evidence of the systematic character of Peirce's philosophy should note that his case for contrite fallibilism, like his case for common-sensism, derives support from his distinctive understanding of truth.[17] For if the truth is represented by the opinion which a community of competent enquirers would reach at the end of enquiry (v. 311, v. 407, v. 416, v. 495, v. 553, v. 564, v. 565), then we cannot know with certainty that a given opinion is true unless we can be absolutely sure that our investigations are at an end. But how, the Peircean will ask us, could we ever be fully confident of that? After all, the history of science is full of now-exploded theories once proudly touted as the Truth. Besides, the point of calling an opinion certain is to

[15] This, as Hookway (1985: 230–1) points out, is one of the things that makes Critical Common-sensism *critical*.

[16] Misak (2004a: 52, 2004b: 14) poses a similar question.

[17] On the ways in which common-sensism, fallibilism, and Peirce's understanding of truth interlock, see Misak (2004a: 50–5; 2004b: 13–14).

declare it off limits once and for all, to place it permanently beyond the possibility of revision or improvement; but this is tantamount to 'blocking the road of inquiry'—and *that*, for devout Peirceans, is the only mortal sin:

Upon this first, and in one sense this sole, rule of reason, that in order to learn you must desire to learn, and in so desiring not be satisfied with what you already incline to think, there follows one corollary which deserves to be inscribed upon every wall of the city of philosophy: Do not block the way of inquiry. (i. 135)

[T]o set up a philosophy which barricades the road of further advance toward the truth is the one unpardonable offence in reasoning, as it is also the one to which metaphysicians have in all ages shown themselves the most addicted. (i. 136)

According to Peirce, this philosophical sin comes in many forms, one of which is the vice of dogmatism or 'absolute assertion' (i. 137):

That we can be sure of nothing in science is an ancient truth. The Academy taught it. Yet science has been infested with overconfident assertion, especially on the part of the third-rate and fourth-rate men, who have been more concerned with teaching than with learning, at all times. No doubt some of the geometries still teach as a self-evident truth the proposition that if two straight lines in one plane meet a third straight line so as to make the sum of the internal angles on one side less than two right angles those two lines will meet on that side if sufficiently prolonged. Euclid, whose logic was more careful, only reckoned this proposition as a *Postulate*, or arbitrary hypothesis. Yet even he places among his axioms the proposition that a part is less than its whole, and falls into several conflicts with our modern geometry in consequence. But why need we stop to consider cases where some subtilty of thought is required to see that the assertion is not warranted when every book which applies philosophy to the conduct of life lays down as positive certainty propositions which it is quite as easy to doubt as to believe? (i. 137)

Because of the constraint which Peirce's fallibilism imposes on his common-sensism, his vindicatory argument from self-control does not aim—indeed, it cannot aim—at showing that acritically indubitable beliefs are certain. How, then, can that argument help us transcend Cartesian scepticism? Not by giving the certainty-obsessed sceptic what he demands, obviously, but by questioning certain basic assumptions upon which the sceptic's demand depends. For if there is a presumption in favour of the truth of those beliefs which we have hitherto been unable to doubt—and this is the vindicatory argument's conclusion—then a philosopher who wishes to question our instinctive beliefs must accept that the burden of proof falls squarely on his sceptical shoulders. And if this epistemological moral is correct—if philosophical doubts stand in greater need of justification than our ordinary common sense convictions—then Descartes, 'the father of modern philosophy' (v. 264), has led us all astray: philosophy cannot begin with the indiscriminate, artificial, and supposedly purifying doubt of *Meditation I.* Whether we are philosophers or non-philosophers, we must begin by trusting our most entrenched pre-philosophical beliefs; and we must not cavil at 'what we do not doubt in our hearts':

We cannot begin with complete doubt. We must begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy. These prejudices are not to be dispelled

by a maxim, for they are things which it does not occur to us *can* be questioned. Hence this initial scepticism will be a mere self-deception, and not real doubt; and no one who follows the Cartesian method will ever be satisfied until he has formally recovered all those beliefs which in form he has given up. It is, therefore, as useless a preliminary as going to the North Pole would be to get to Constantinople by coming down regularly upon a meridian. A person may, it is true, in the course of his studies, find reason to doubt what he began by believing; but in that case he doubts because he has a positive reason for it, and not on account of the Cartesian maxim. Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts. (v. 265)

Like Reid before him, Peirce denies that we can sit in judgement on our current beliefs from some God's-eye point of view wholly external to our ordinary practices of belief-formation and inference; the best we can do, as Peirce says, is 'begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy'. Instead of beginning anew from some mythically pristine and presuppositionless starting point, we must set out from our shared and shopworn conceptual scheme; and instead of wiping the slate of our minds clean with the help of a recondite philosophical theory (be it rationalist or empiricist), we are obliged to regard the familiar rudiments of our worldview as warranted by default, as innocent until proven guilty, as reasonable until we are given some positive reason to doubt them:

Philosophers of very diverse stripes propose that philosophy shall take its start from one or another state of mind in which no man, least of all a beginner in philosophy, actually is. One proposes that you shall begin by doubting everything, and says that there is only one thing that you cannot doubt, as if doubting were 'as easy as lying.' Another proposes that we should begin by observing 'the first impressions of sense', forgetting that our very percepts are the result of cognitive elaboration. But in truth, there is but one state of mind from which you can 'set out', namely, the very state of mind in which you actually find yourself at the time you do 'set out'—a state in which you are laden with an immense mass of cognition already formed, of which you cannot divest yourself if you would; and who knows whether, if you could, you would not have made all knowledge impossible for yourself? Do you call it *doubting* to write down on a piece of paper that you doubt? If so, doubt has nothing to do with any serious business. But do not make-believe; if pedantry has not eaten all the reality out of you, recognize, as you must, that there is much that you do not doubt, in the least. (v. 416)

Sceptical doubts, according to Peirce, are merely feigned or 'paper doubts' (v. 515; cf. ii. 192, ii. 196, v. 451, vi. 499, viii. 191). For real doubt is the privation of belief (v. 417; v. 370–3), and beliefs are essentially habits or rules for action (v. 397; cf. v. 400);[18] yet the Cartesian sceptic acts as we all do in the pursuits of common life. Because the sceptic's basic habits or instincts appear to be exactly the same as ours—and because what matters is 'the belief that men *betray* and not that which they *parade*' (v. 444)—we can

[18] Acknowledging the influence of Alexander Bain, Peirce observes that 'pragmatism is scarce more than a corollary' from Bain's definition of belief as 'that upon which a man is prepared to act' (v. 12).

only conclude that he, too, is a believer in our humble creed of common sense, and that he does not doubt his instinctive or acritical convictions any more than the rest of us do.

Although the Critical Common-sensist agrees with the Scottish common sense philosopher that our acritical beliefs are natural in the sense of being instinctive, only the Critical Common-sensist infers from this that such beliefs are not *absolutely* indubitable (that is, that they are indubitable only under certain conditions). And why does the Peircean common sense philosopher draw this novel conclusion? His justification for it depends upon a claim about the progress of modern science:

> The Scotch philosophers recognized that the original beliefs, and the same thing is at least equally true of the acritical inferences, were of the general nature of instincts. But little as we know about instincts, even now, we are much better acquainted with them than were the men of the eighteenth century. (v. 445)

Thanks to the 'modern recognition of evolution' (v. 513), we now understand the nature of instincts much better than Reid did; and one of the things we have learned, says Peirce, is that our natural instincts can be relied upon unquestioningly only under certain conditions—namely, those of 'a primitive mode of life' (v. 445; cf. v. 511). However, if this theory about the nature of instincts is correct, and if our acritical commitments are indeed 'of the general nature of instincts', it follows that such commitments are not indubitable *simpliciter*, but indubitable only in relation to conditions similar to those under which our prehistoric ancestors lived: '[T]he original beliefs only remain indubitable in their application to affairs that resemble those of a primitive mode of life' (v. 445). But *we* are no longer fated to live out our lives under those primitive conditions, Peirce maintains, because modern science has opened up a brave new world for us:

> Modern science, with its microscopes and telescopes, with its chemistry and electricity, and with its entirely new appliances of life, has put us into quite another world; almost as much so as if it had transported our race to another planet. Some of the old beliefs have no application except in extended senses, and in such extended senses they are sometimes dubitable and subject to just criticism. (v. 513; cf. v. 445)

Accordingly, Critical Common-sensists are acutely aware of 'the limitations of indubitability and the consequent limitations of the jurisdiction of original belief' (v. 445); and they acknowledge that there is a sphere or domain, distinct from that of 'affairs that resemble those of a primitive mode of life' (v. 445), in which our instinctive convictions are no longer indubitable or beyond question:

> [The Critical Common-sensist] opines that the indubitable beliefs refer to a somewhat primitive mode of life, and that, while they never become dubitable in so far as our mode of life remains that of somewhat primitive man, yet as we develop *degrees of self-control* unknown to that man, occasions of action arise in relation to which the original beliefs, if stretched to cover them, have no sufficient authority. In other words, we outgrow the applicability of

instinct—not altogether, by any manner of means, but in our highest activities. The famous Scotch philosophers lived and died out before this could be duly appreciated. (v. 511)

According to Peirce, there is another important truth about our common sense commitments which 'the famous Scotch philosophers' of the pre-Darwinian era failed to recognize: namely, that the catalogue of 'original beliefs' or 'first principles' is not *absolutely* fixed, final, unchanging, or uniform:

I do not remember that any of the old Scotch philosophers ever undertook to draw up a complete list of the original beliefs, but they certainly thought it a feasible thing, and that the list would hold good for the minds of all men from Adam down. For in those days Adam was an undoubted historical personage. Before any waft of the air of evolution had reached those coasts how could they think otherwise? (v. 444)

As Peirce tells us in an autobiographical aside, he once regarded the very idea of a fixed list of original beliefs accepted by all human beings as hopelessly old-fashioned and at odds with 'the new ideas' (v. 444). Eschewing 'the theory of a fixed list, the same for all men' (v. 509), he found himself drawn to a version of common-sensism more in tune with the change-besotted spirit of the age—a version which maintained 'that there is no definite and fixed collection of opinions that are indubitable, but that criticism gradually pushes back each individual's indubitables, modifying the list, yet still leaving him beliefs indubitable at the time being' (v. 509). However, Peirce eventually abandoned this heterodox opinion (v. 509; cf. v. 444). Why? Because the available empirical evidence was against it:

The reason I have of late given up that opinion, attractive as I find it, is that the facts of my experience accord better with the theory of a fixed list, the same for all men. (v. 509)

When I first wrote, we were hardly orientated in the new ideas, and my impression was that the indubitable propositions changed with a thinking man from year to year. I made some studies preparatory to an investigation of the rapidity of these changes, but the matter was neglected, and it has been only during the last two years that I have completed a provisional inquiry which shows me that the changes are so slight from generation to generation, though not imperceptible even in that short period, that I thought to own my adhesion, under inevitable modification, to the opinion of that subtle but well-balanced intellect, Thomas Reid, in the matter of Common Sense . . . (v. 444)

So Reid and his congeners were much more right than wrong: our catalogue of original beliefs, though not carved in Aberdeen granite, actually changes remarkably little over time. Because of this, it seems most reasonable to regard the old-fashioned thesis—namely that there exists a fixed list of commitments common to all human beings 'from Adam down'—not as true *simpliciter*, but as approximately true: 'I do not suppose that it [the list] is absolutely fixed . . . but that it is so nearly so, that for ordinary purposes it may be taken as quite so' (v. 509). In other words, Critical Common-sensism maintains that 'there are indubitable beliefs which vary a little and but a little under varying circumstances and in varying ages' (v. 499). And these

beliefs, adds the Critical Common-sensist (but not, notes Peirce, the old Scotch philosophers), are typically quite *vague* (v. 446, v. 498, v. 505, vi. 499, viii. 208).[19]

Although Peirce tends to play up the differences between his Critical Common-sensism and the doctrines of the Scottish School of Common Sense, this must not blind us to the fact that his criticisms of 'the old Scotch philosophers' are by and large those of a very friendly critic: that is to say, a critic whose deepest sympathies lie with the philosophers he criticizes, and whose aim is not to demolish the intellectual edifice they erected, but to renovate and refurbish it. For it is perfectly plain that Peirce thinks of himself as building upon the solid foundation laid by Reid and his Scottish epigoni, preserving what he regards as their insights, correcting what he takes to be their mistakes, completing what he thinks they left unfinished, and restating the gist of their doctrine of common sense in terms that take account of subsequent developments in both science and philosophy. Of course, whether Peirce succeeded in all this—that is, whether Critical Common-sensism represents a significant advance on the doctrines of his Scottish predecessors—is another question entirely; and here we must be prepared to encounter boosters as well as doubters. What cannot be doubted, however, is that Peirce saw himself as a grateful heir of 'that subtle but well-balanced intellect, Thomas Reid' (v. 444).

9.4 William James

While William James was certainly not common sense's nemesis,[20] he was nowhere near as friendly a critic of the Scottish school as Peirce; indeed, it is debatable whether James's criticisms can be characterized as friendly at all. Additional interpretative difficulties are created by the fact that James develops his views on common sense without explicit reference to Reid or his disciples, leaving us to connect the historical and philosophical dots for ourselves. However, readers who make the necessary effort will not regret it; for James's position contains much that is provocative and ingenious.

[19] On why the vagueness of the acritically indubitable matters, see Hookway (1985: 231).

[20] Nor did James disparage Scottish philosophy—quite the contrary. In the first of his famous Gifford Lectures, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902), James describes Edinburgh, the Athens of the North, as 'soil . . . sacred to the American imagination' (1902: 23); and he evoked that city's glorious past in a way that blended autobiography with a potted history of Scottish philosophy in the nineteenth century: 'The glories of the philosophic chair of this university were deeply impressed on my imagination in boyhood. Professor Fraser's *Essays in Philosophy*, then just published, was the first philosophic book I ever looked into, and I well remember the awestruck feeling I received from the account of Sir William Hamilton's classroom therein contained. Hamilton's own lectures were the first philosophic writings I ever forced myself to study, and after that I was immersed in Dugald Stewart and Thomas Brown. Such juvenile emotions of reverence never get outgrown; and I confess that to find my humble self promoted from my native wilderness to be actually for the time an official here, and transmuted into a colleague of these illustrious names, carries with it a sense of dreamland quite as much as of reality' (1902: 23).

According to James, there are two quite different senses of common sense which we must distinguish immediately, lest we court confusion. To credit a man with common sense in the first, non-technical sense—the sense we all have in mind in our ordinary 'practical talk' (1907: 79)—is simply to praise 'his good judgment, his freedom from excentricity, his *gumption*' (1907: 79). In the mouths of plain-speaking non-philosophers, then, the word 'common sense' means little more than practical sagacity or prudence, canniness or savvy, shrewdness or mother wit. In the golden mouths of metaphysicians, however, the term usually means something quite different. For when philosophers say that a man possesses common sense, James observes, what they have in mind is not a man's laudable Yankee-like gumption but 'his use of certain intellectual forms or categories of thought' (1907: 79). To speak of common sense in philosophy, therefore, is to speak of our commitment to a shared system of categories by means of which we interpret our experiences. And just what are these commonplace categories, these shared forms of thought, these ubiquitous conceptions? In 'Humanism and Truth' (1904), James declares that any adequate list of them must include the following:

> The notions of one Time and of one Space as single continuous receptacles; the distinction between thoughts and things, matter and mind; between permanent subjects and changing attributes; the conception of classes with sub-classes within them; the separation of fortuitous from regularly caused connections . . . (1909: 62)

In *Pragmatism* (1907), the same set of categories reappears, with only a few minor changes in phraseology and sequence: 'Thing; The same or different; Kinds; Minds; Bodies; One Time; One Space; Subjects and attributes; Causal influences; The fancied; The real' (1907: 80). It is by means of such ideas, claims James, that order has been 'woven out of the everlasting weather of our perceptions' (1907: 80). Taken as an ensemble or integrated set, such categories constitute the 'natural mother tongue of thought' (1907: 83); and we will not understand what experience has to tell us unless we can translate the barbaric yawp of sensation into that ancient and familiar idiom.

Implicit in the picture which James describes is a version of the dualism of scheme and content, in which raw sensory data (the content) must be interpreted, organized, or processed by a system of concepts or intellectual forms (the scheme).[21] On the one hand, James seems to say, there looms the initially formless flux of unstructured experience; on the other, there patiently waits a scheme of categories, without which such experience must remain 'one great blooming, buzzing confusion' (1890: i. 488) or 'a mere motley' (1907: 70):

> All our conceptions are what the Germans call *Denkmittel*, means by which we handle facts by thinking them. Experience merely as such doesn't come ticketed and labelled, we have first to discover what it is. Kant speaks of it as being in its first intention a *gewühl der erscheinungen*, a *rhapsodie der wahrnemungen*, a mere motley which we have to unify by our wits. What we usually do is first to frame some system of concepts mentally classified, serialized,

[21] On the dualism of scheme and content, see Davidson (1974).

or connected in some intellectual way, and then to use this as a tally by which we 'keep tab' on the impressions that present themselves. When each is referred to some possible place in the conceptual system, it is thereby 'understood'. (1907: 79)

Here James signals his sympathy with the drift of Kant's celebrated dictum that intuitions without concepts are blind. In James's view, it is only when we impose concepts on our raw and unfiltered sense impressions—only when we 'rationalize' them (1907: 79)—that chaos and confusion give way to order and understanding. And it is absolutely imperative that we secure a generous measure of such order and understanding for ourselves. Why? Because unless we can make *some* sense of our experience, we shall get lost in the baffling labyrinth of pure sensation, wandering without Ariadne's saving thread. Expressed a bit more prosaically, the nub of James's refreshingly down-to-earth argument is that we cannot survive, let alone thrive, unless we can come up with a system of concepts capable of imparting order to our experience. For stern Mother Nature, red in tooth and claw, has decreed that no creature for whom all things are unmeaning shall be suffered to remain long in her kingdom.

In other words, Kant's dictum must be reinterpreted in light of Darwin: finding a satisfactory way of interpreting and organizing the 'blooming, buzzing confusion' given in immediate experience is no idle pastime for professors, but an urgent and natural necessity. Hence our ordinary categories serve a primarily practical, as opposed to theoretical, function; and we are encouraged to think of our conceptual equipment as tools or instruments, and not as 'revelations or gnostic answers to some divinely instituted world-enigma' (1907: 87; cf. 28). The items in our conceptual repertoire, like our tools in our toolbox, are to be judged by their utility and power, by their consequences or fruits, by the practical difference they make; in a word, by how well they *work*. From this it follows that the standard by which conceptual schemes are ultimately to be assessed is not that of pictorial accuracy—namely whether they correspond to the true nature of things, or mirror the intrinsic structure of reality. Instead of asking, 'Do our categories do justice to Nature?' or 'Do our thoughts reflect the way the world is?', we should start asking, 'Does it really pay to think in these terms, to employ these categories?' or 'Do our concepts truly serve or satisfy our interests, needs, and purposes?' The intended moral is plain: philosophers must make their peace with the idea that coping with reality fruitfully, as opposed to copying it scrupulously, is the ultimate end of thought and conception.

Once all this has been grasped and granted, James supposes, no fair-minded modern philosopher will dare look askance at our common sense conceptions. Whatever we may say about common sense's shortcomings and limitations—and we shall return to that sensitive topic in a moment—it cannot be denied that its categories work remarkably well for 'all utilitarian practical purposes' (1907: 83). Indeed, they do exactly what we ask of them, furnishing us with a version of the world in which we can get our bearings and feel at home:

In practice, the common sense *denkmittel* are uniformly victorious . . . With these categories in our hand, we make our plans and plot together, and connect all the remoter parts of our

experience with what lies before our eyes. Our later and more critical philosophies are mere fads and fancies compared with this natural mother tongue of thought.

Common sense appears thus as a perfectly definite stage in our understanding of things, a stage which satisfies in an extraordinarily successful way the purposes for which we think . . . At this stage all non-European men without exception have remained. It suffices for all the necessary practical ends of life; and, among our race even, it is only the highly sophisticated specimens, the minds debauched by learning, as Berkeley calls them, who have ever even suspected common sense of not being absolutely true. (1907: 83)

Substance and attributes, causes and effects, thoughts and things, minds and bodies, one Time and one Space, kinds and sameness of kinds: we find it so natural and so useful to think through all these categories that we can hardly imagine what it would be like to think without them:

They proved of such sovereign use as *denkmittel* that they are now part of the very structure of our mind. We cannot play fast and loose with them. No experience can upset them. On the contrary, they apperceive every experience and assign it to its place.

To what effect? That we may the better foresee the course of our experience, communicate with each other, and steer our lives by rule. Also that we may have a cleaner, clearer, more inclusive mental view. (1909: 62–3)

Because we find our common sense way of construing experience deeply congenial and natural, we may be tempted to conjecture that its categories were somehow built into the human mind or implanted in our constitution from the very beginning (as in Reid). Not so, avows James, who allows only that such forms of thought 'are *now* part of the very structure of our mind' (1907: 62; emphasis mine). His own pet hypothesis, he confesses, is that such categories are not innate, but invented; not preordained, but contingent; not inescapable laws of thought, but bona fide discoveries: '[O]ur fundamental ways of thinking about things are discoveries of exceedingly remote prehistoric ancestors, which have been able to preserve themselves throughout the experience of all subsequent time' (1907: 79). Common sense conceptions, according to James, are not (*pace* Reid) the immediate and ready-made gifts of Nature or Providence; they are artefacts or human creations, just like the wheel or the axe; and there was nothing inevitable about their genesis, nothing ineluctable about their spread.

Far from being a fixed and timeless given, then, our common sense worldview is actually a creative achievement; as such, it has a history, albeit a rather obscure one. As James says, our most fundamental categories—the very categories each of us now takes completely for granted—'were once definite conquests made at historic dates by our ancestors in their attempts to get the chaos of their crude individual experiences into a more shareable and manageable form' (1909: 62); and '[t]here is not a category, among those enumerated, which we may not imagine the use to have thus originated historically and only gradually spread' (1907: 81). In other words, what we are now accustomed to call common sense consists of modes of thought that were discovered

or invented long ago by anonymous 'prehistoric geniuses' (1907: 83); and the modes of thought in question caught on gradually, and eventually triumphed, because they proved so useful and fruitful in practice. And it is precisely for this reason—that is, because these modes of thought have paid their way for millennia, not because our constitution has forced them on us willy-nilly from time immemorial—that we remain committed to them.

From what we have seen so far, it is evident that James is no cultured despiser of common sense. That our common sense modes of thought are practically indispensable; that we would be utterly lost without them; that they are not arbitrary parochial prejudices, but presuppositions to which we are all happily wedded; that we find it perfectly natural to take them for granted; that the structure of ordinary language reflects our commitment to them; that they cannot, in a sense, be improved upon or displaced: all of this, and more, James is prepared to concede without the slightest hesitation. Nevertheless, he insists that common sense has its limitations and shortcomings; and these, as we shall now see, are far from trivial.

As long as we employ common sense categories practically, employing them as tools or instruments for coping with experience, everything goes swimmingly. Such categories are 'our ways of escaping bewilderment in the midst of sensation's irremediable flow' (1907: 85); and they can be counted on to untangle what is twisted in the skein of our experience. Suppose, however, that we step back for just a moment and inspect our tools from a disengaged perspective: not from the standpoint of our everyday practice, that is, but from a logical or speculative point of view. What happens then?

It is at this point, observes James, that things get vastly more complicated—and, not coincidentally, more philosophically interesting. Our predicament is epitomized by a well-known remark of St Augustine's from the *Confessions*: 'What is Time? I know so long as no one asks me'; and although James does not cite Augustine's pregnant quip in this context, his sympathy with its spirit is apparent. As James sees it, each of us knows how to use our categories practically, to wield them as weapons by which the Proteus of experience is tamed and subdued; but a little reflection is sufficient to discover that our intellectual grasp of those categories—our understanding of their content—is unsure, awkward, even feeble. Indeed, we might say—echoing Augustine—that we know what they mean *as long as no one asks us*; for as soon as we grapple with purely speculative questions about their content—questions about the very nature of time, say, or substance, or causation, or selfhood—we find puzzles, paradoxes, and antinomies piling up thick and fast:

We assume for certain purposes one 'objective' Time that *aequabiliter fluit*, but we don't livingly believe in or realize any such equally-flowing time. 'Space' is a less vague notion; but 'things', what are they? Is a constellation properly a thing? or an army? or is an *ens rationis* such as space or justice a thing? Is a knife whose handle and blade are changed the 'same'?

Is the 'changeling', whom Locke so seriously discusses, of the human 'kind'? Is 'telepathy' a 'fancy' or a 'fact'? The moment you pass beyond the practical use of these categories (a use usually suggested sufficiently by the circumstances of the special case) to a merely curious or speculative way of thinking, you find it impossible to say within just what limits of fact any one of them shall apply. (1907: 84)

Hence common sense, as James understands it, seems both vulnerable and unassailable. It is unassailable, because we are unable in practice to discard those venerable modes of thought which have served us faithfully for ages; and the imperious demand that we do so—that we spurn common sense in everyday life, or grow mute in thought's mother tongue—strikes us as preposterous: 'Criticise them as you may, they [common sense categories] persist; and we fly back to them the moment critical pressure is relaxed' (1907: 82). Take, for instance, our idea of 'real things' existing independently of our perceptions. Let a thousand critics strive against that idea with all their might; let metaphysical and epistemological sceptics devote themselves wholeheartedly to its destruction; let them command a veritable army of objections, full of iron and fire, determined to eradicate it. No matter how bloodied and bruised we may be by the end of this battle of wits, we shall still find ourselves employing the time-honoured idea of 'permanently existing things' come tomorrow morning; for if the sceptical arguments of our critics admit of no answer, they also produce no conviction:

The greatest common-sense achievement, after the discovery of one Time and one Space, is probably the concept of permanently existing things . . . However a Berkeley, a Mill, or a Cornelius may criticise it, it *works*; and in practical life we never think of 'going back' upon it, or reading our incoming experiences in any other terms. We may, indeed, speculatively imagine a state of 'pure' experience before the hypothesis of permanent objects behind its flux had been framed; and we can play with the idea that some primeval genius might have struck into a different hypothesis. But we cannot positively imagine today what the different hypothesis could have been, for the category of trans-perceptual reality is now one of the foundations of our life. Our thoughts must still employ it if they are to possess reasonableness and truth. (1909: 63–4; cf. 1907: 80)

Common sense's vice-like grip on ordinary thinking thus appears absolutely unshakeable, and its sovereignty over the kingdom of everyday practice remains undisputed. Indeed, its adaptive habits of thought have become the very 'foundations of our life'; and if we are candid, we will admit that abandoning them is out of the question. In a sense, therefore, common sense *needs* no defence; potent and inexpugnable, it is plainly here to stay.

This, however, is only one side of the coin, and we must not ignore the other. Although our common sense worldview seems invincible in practice, says James, it seems vulnerable from a theoretical or speculative standpoint. The credibility of our common sense metaphysic has suffered greatly in recent centuries, we are told, thanks in large part to the thought of a few ingenious souls—'the minds debauched

by learning' (1907: 83; cf. 87)—who have seen through its august and imposing façade. To be more precise, James's contention is that modern philosophy *and* modern science have effectively 'burst the bounds of common sense' (1907: 84). And just how, one asks, have they managed to wreak such havoc?

Modern philosophers, for their part, have shown that many of our ordinary metaphysical concepts simply cannot withstand logical scrutiny. Anyone looking for examples of such sensational metaphysical exposés need only recall Berkeley's critique of material substance or Hume's deconstructions of causation and selfhood, all of which warmed the cockles of James's fiercely empiricist heart (1907: 44–5; cf. 1902: 368).[22] Two meta-philosophical morals are thought to find support in such tales: first, that philosophers must take care not to mistake mind-forged tools for eternal verities; second, that any system which treats the handy conceits of common sense as sacrosanct seems destined to fall from grace sooner or later. For what, asks James, has happened to Aristotelian scholasticism, 'common sense's college-trained younger sister' (1907: 86; cf. 1909: 44), which sought 'to eternalize the common-sense categories by treating them very technically and articulately' (1907: 84)? That remarkable citadel of intellect, long revered and thought impregnable, is now widely viewed as a picturesque ruin; and yet if scholasticism—a philosophical outlook rightly renowned for its caution, rigour, and sophistication—can totter and fall in this way, why should we not think that the very same fate awaits other ambitious exercises in descriptive metaphysics?[23]

The progress of modern science, too, has undermined the authority of our shared and inherited worldview: 'With science *naïf* realism ceases: "Secondary" qualities become unreal; primary ones alone remain' (1907: 84; cf. 85–6). The forbiddingly abstract and austere world described by modern physics—'an invisible world of points and curves, and mathematical equations' (1907: 86; cf. 84)—seems infinitely remote from that concrete world of uncouth phenomena, so full of colour and flavour and fragrance, with which our everyday experience overflows. Faced with the dramatic contrast between these two worlds, many have been tempted to conclude that common sense stands to science as shadow to substance, as surface to depths, or as illusion to truth. The basic thought here is by no means new, as James acknowledges (1907: 83, 87): the idea that reality is limned by science, not by common sense, can be traced back at least to Democritus. 'By convention bitter, by convention sweet: in reality atoms and the void': thus spake atomism's laughing prophet; and his modern disciples have followed suit, pleading that the queer entities posited by science,

[22] The tension between James's empiricism and our common sense conceptions is explored by Gale (2004).

[23] On the distinction between descriptive metaphysics and revisionary metaphysics, see Strawson (1959: 8–11).

being hidden behind the curtain of appearances, can be used to explain—or explain away—the entities countenanced by common sense:

As common sense interpolates her constant 'things' between our intermittent sensations, so science *extra*polates her world of 'primary' qualities, her atoms, her ether, her magnetic fields, and the like, beyond the common sense world. The 'things' are now invisible impalpable things; and the old visible common-sense things are supposed to result from the mixture of these invisibles. Or else the whole *naïf* conception of thing gets superseded, and a thing's name is interpreted as denoting only the law of *regel der verbindung* by which certain of our sensations habitually succeed or coexist. (1907: 84)

Compared with the highly complex yet elegant portrait of Nature painted by science, our common sense worldview may seem a most crude and execrable sketch—a veritable caricature of the world, in fact. If we are impressed by this thought, we may soon find ourselves reconciled to the conclusion that our common sense conceptual scheme, interpreted realistically as a theory or model of things, must be grossly inadequate: 'The common-sense categories one and all cease to represent anything in the way of being' (1907: 84–5).

It must not be thought, however, that evidence of modern science's superiority to old-fashioned common sense is found only on the high and airless peaks of theory. In addition to changing the way we think about Nature, notes James, science has also dramatically increased our power over her; and the prudent exercise of such power has undoubtedly contributed to 'the betterment of man's estate', just as Bacon boldly foretold. Thanks to recent developments in physics, chemistry, and biology, we are able to perform works that truly are the stuff of magicians' dreams—dreams in which Nature, once a ruthless tyrant, now obeys us like a cringing slave:

But the scientific tendency in critical thought, tho' inspired at first by purely intellectual motives, has opened an entirely unexpected range of practical utilities to our astonished view. Galileo gave us accurate clocks and accurate artillery-practice; the chemists flood us with new medicines and dye-stuffs; Ampère and Faraday have endowed us with the New York subway and with Marconi telegrams . . . The scope of practical control of nature newly put into our hand by scientific ways of thinking vastly exceeds the scope of the old control grounded on common sense. (1907: 85)

There can be no doubt about it, says James: modern science has shown itself to be practically useful in ways that common sense simply is not. As for modern philosophy, it seems destined to finish a distant third in this particular contest:

The philosophic stage of criticism, much more thorough in its negations than the scientific stage, so far gives us no new range of practical power. Locke, Hume, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, have all been utterly sterile, so far as shedding any light on the details of nature goes, and I can think of no invention of discovery that can be directly traced to anything in their peculiar thought . . . The satisfactions they yield to their disciples are intellectual, not practical; and even then we have to confess that there is a large minus-side to the account. (1907: 85)

Yet science does not walk away with all the glittering prizes, as its most philosophically naive boosters triumphantly conclude. For when we listen to what philosophy has to say about the status of scientific theories, what do we hear? According to James, the chorus comes through loud and clear: recent philosophy of science has done unto science what both science and philosophy did unto common sense—namely prevent us from thinking of its scheme as a literal transcript of reality, or as an immaculate mirror that reproduces Nature's occult structure. Inspired in part by the pioneering work of Pierre Duhem and Ernst Mach, James insists that scientific theories, far from being representations of the world's inner nature or true being, are best seen as tools or instruments for predicting events at the observational level. But if we go along with this—if we grant that science is not mimetic and that its peculiar posits are not copies of anything—then we seem compelled to confess that the exotic 'things' of which modern science speaks are no more real or 'true' than the humdrum 'things' of antique common sense:

> But now if the new kinds of scientific 'thing', the corpuscular and etheric world, were essentially more 'true', why should they have excited so much opposition within the body of science itself? Scientific logicians are saying on every hand that these entities and their determinations, however definitely conceived, should not be held for literally real. It is *as if* they existed; but in reality they are like coordinates or logarithms, only artificial short-cuts for taking us from one part to another of experience's flux. We can cipher fruitfully with them; they serve us wonderfully; but we must not be their dupes. (1907: 86; cf. 30)

Science, philosophy, common sense: these, according to James, are the three main 'stages' or 'levels' of human thought (1907: 85), the oldest and most widely diffused of which is common sense. Now it may well be asked: Which of this trio is the truest? Which, in short, is fit to pronounce the Last Word about the universe? From the perspective of Jamesian pragmatism, there is, and there can be, no answer to this question:

> There is no *ringing* conclusion possible when we compare these types of thinking, with a view to telling which is the more absolutely true. Their naturalness, their intellectual economy, their fruitfulness for practice, all start up as distinct tests of their veracity, and as a result we get confused. Common sense is *better* for one sphere of life, science for another, philosophic criticism for a third; but whether either be truer absolutely, Heaven only knows. (1907: 86; cf. 87)

Each type of thinking thus serves some of our interests, concludes James, but no way of thinking serves them all; every stage of thought yields certain vital satisfactions, yet none proves entirely satisfactory. In short, each level is good for something—'each [is] so splendid for certain purposes' (1907: 87)—but none is good for everything: 'all . . . leave some dissatisfaction' (1907: 87). None of our three stages of thought is entitled to claim absolute supremacy, therefore, just as none deserves to be dismissed as hopelessly passé or obsolete.

The good news, then, is that common sense has survived. But at what cost? For our common sense commitments, it is plain, have lost their absolutely foundational and privileged status. No longer brute givens providentially implanted in our constitution, the dictates of common sense have become mind-made instruments and tools; and their validity, from being self-evident, can now be established only by reference to an external standard (that is, whether they actually pay their way or help us cope with experience). Accepting Jamesian pragmatism, therefore, means rejecting the *meta-philosophy* of common sense, according to which the dictates of common sense are 'first principles': that is, self-evident or natural givens whose authority is underived, intrinsic, or intuitive. Hence if Jamesian pragmatism is (as James himself cheerfully avows) just 'a new name for some old ways of thinking', then some of those 'old ways of thinking' are inimical to the classical common-sensism embraced by Reid and Peirce.

9.5 Conclusions, with a Word of Warning

From all that we have seen and pondered, what may we conclude? Three things, or so I think.

In the first place, it should be clear that Peirce's Critical Common-sensism resembles Reid's common sense epistemology in several noteworthy respects. (1) Both Reid and Peirce firmly deny that philosophy ought to begin with a purgative of global doubt; and each denies that philosophy can judge our beliefs and practices from a standpoint wholly external to them. (2) Both insist that there are self-evident and commonplace beliefs which are natural, instinctive, and irresistible. (3) Both maintain that sceptics who demand a reason for our instinctive beliefs are fundamentally mistaken about where the burden of proof lies. (4) Each accuses sceptics who profess to doubt our natural beliefs of being disingenuous and/or deeply confused. (5) Both are staunch fallibilists who reject scepticism without succumbing to dogmatism. (6) both are fallibilists not only about first-order beliefs, but also about higher-level beliefs concerning which first-order beliefs qualify as 'original beliefs' or 'first principles'. In the second place, it should also be quite clear that there is no such thing as '*the* pragmatist understanding of common sense'.[24] For when we juxtapose what Peirce and James have to say on the subject of common sense, we find some significant and eye-catching differences. (1) Unlike James, Peirce develops his views through a very friendly and fruitful dialogue with Reid and the Scottish common sense tradition. (2) According to Peirce, the deliverances of common sense are self-evident or ultimate; according to James, their authority is derived or secondary. (3) According to Peirce, our ordinary common sense commitments are instinctive and involuntary givens; according to James, they are bold

[24] On the diversity within pragmatism, see McDermid (2006).

and fortuitous creations with a history. (4) Only Peirce's vindication of common sense depends crucially upon the claim that some of our beliefs and inferences are 'acritical' and thus beyond praise or blame from a logical point of view. (5) Again, only Peirce's reflections on common sense are shaped significantly by his desire to confront Cartesian-style epistemological scepticism, and to expose the assumptions underlying its method of doubt as profoundly misguided. (6) Finally, when Peirce speaks of common sense, what he has in mind is a set of *beliefs* and *inferences* over which we have absolutely no control; when James speaks of common sense, what he has in mind is a scheme of *concepts* or *categories* with which we are accustomed to organize our experience.

It would be misleading, however, to focus exclusively on what divides Peirce and James; and this brings me to my third and final point: namely, that there are several things which Reid says about common sense—about its privileged epistemic status, about the content of its dictates, about its vindication, and about its deeper significance—from which both Peirce and James clearly distance themselves, albeit not always for the same reasons. (1) Both Peirce and James, we have learned, diminish the authority of common sense commitments by *relativizing* it; that is to say, by depicting its dictates as authoritative only under certain conditions or as valid within a certain domain. (2) Both philosophers also have reservations about the idea that there is, or has always been, one absolutely fixed and uniform scheme of common sense commitments. (3) Both Peirce and James seek to justify our faith in common sense by drawing on a number of extra-Reidian assumptions—assumptions about the meaning of truth, the aims of enquiry and thought, the function of concepts, and the nature of belief and doubt. In addition, (4) both Peirce and James are disposed to look at our common sense commitments, not through the lens of Holy Writ (as in Reid), but through the lens of *The Origin of Species*; and, perhaps not coincidentally, (5) both philosophers refrain from espousing Reid's providential naturalism—the view that our cognitive faculties and our natural constitution have been designed by a benevolent God, who has placed us in a world for which our faculties and constitution are well suited—in their writings on common sense.[25]

In order to put our findings in historical perspective, a final word of warning seems in order. Our subject in this chapter, it must be remembered, has not been the story of Scottish philosophy in America, but one of that story's most dramatic chapters; and this means that it is a part which belongs to more than one remarkable whole. For the United States is only one of the far-flung lands in which Scottish common sense has flourished; and it should go without saying that there is much more to American philosophy than pragmatism, just as there is much more to Scottish philosophy than 'Reid, to common sense appealing'.[26]

[25] On the term 'providential naturalism', see Norton (1982: 19, 171, 190–1). It should not be forgotten, however, that Peirce and James were theists.

[26] Cf. Graham (2009) and Broadie (2009).

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10

George Davie and the Democratic Intellect

*Lindsay Paterson**

10.1 Introduction

George Davie's influence on Scottish debate in the half-century since he published his best-known book, *The Democratic Intellect*, in 1961 has been immense. He is one of the handful of academic writers who have shaped how Scotland came to see itself during a journey from fairly contented immersion in the British Union to the acquisition of a newly democratic political autonomy with the creation of the Scottish parliament at the very end of the twentieth century. His writing and teaching contributed to that outcome insofar as they helped to establish the sense of a distinctive Scottish cultural past, one where a defining feature of Scottish identity was argument with England and affinity with other parts of Europe. The very title of his book added, moreover, to the late twentieth-century view of Scottish nationality as intrinsically democratic, and of Scottish education as essentially broad ranging. Few philosophers anywhere at any time, and none in Scotland since the eighteenth century, have had anything like this level of impact.

His central intellectual concerns are with questions of social order and good government that are significant far more generally than merely to Scotland:

> The words 'democratic intellect' offer a twentieth-century formulation of an old problem. Does the control of a group . . . belong, as of right, to the few (the experts) exclusively, and not at all to the ignorant many? Or are the many entitled to share the control, because the limited knowledge of the many, when it is pooled and critically restated through mutual discussion, provides a lay consensus capable of revealing certain of the limitations of interest in the experts' point of view? Or thirdly it may be held that this consensus knowledge of the many entitles them to have full control, excluding the experts. (Davie 1986: 262)

His entire oeuvre is about these issues, and bears repeated re-examination, even if, in the end, his answers—essentially favouring the middle of the three options indicated here—are somewhat unconvincing. That he wrote and taught about such matters was

* I am grateful to the editor for comments on a draft, and to Dr James MacAllister for pointing me towards literature on Ferrier.

itself sufficient to ensure that Scottish intellectual culture remained engaged with universal and permanent concerns, helping thereby to ensure that Scotland's growing political autonomy would be accompanied by a broadening of the country's cultural outlook.

In addressing these large questions of social purpose, Davie may also be of rather more interest to social theorists than to most philosophers, although his doing so places him firmly in the mainstream of a European philosophical style that he admires and seeks to emulate, a tradition, say, of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Bourdieu, 'in a fashion', as he says about the Scottish tradition, 'perhaps foreign to the Anglo-American world, combin[ing] metaphysical intellectualism of an anti-empirical sort with a certain measure of democratic sympathies' (Davie 1961: xiv). This chapter is written, not by a philosopher, but by a sociologist, and so by an amateur in the fields that Davie professes; but that may be excused by this point that it is to the dominant concerns of social science that his scholarship makes its main appeal. He thus belonged to a somewhat archaic philosophical world, predating the emergence of the distinct social sciences, and his style may be summed up by a comment on that world by Gladys Bryson (1932: 19):

> To be a moral philosopher was to be an analyst and interpreter of the current *mores*, and at the same time a protagonist of new relationships thought by the philosopher to be more highly ethical and advantageous.

10.2 University Traditions

Davie's best-known contribution to debate is his account of Scottish university history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. So we start with that, not because he was in any sense mainly a social scientist or historian—and, as we shall see later, there are grave empirical lacunae in his accounts—but because his grounding of intellectual concerns in institutional developments was characteristic of his mode of understanding.

The story is best described as threnetic, Davie's recurrent tone. It attributes origins to the Reformation, although with a pre-sixteenth-century history that is offered as evidence of cultural continuity: thus the sixteenth-century civic humanist George Buchanan is invoked as seeking to show that the glories of the Renaissance were not lost to Protestant Scotland (Davie 1961: 203–21). The core educational and cultural value of the reforms was their abstract and generalizing inclination, giving to the universities an inspiration that found its eventual flowering two centuries later in the Enlightenment (Davie 1961: xi–xx, 3–25). This education was general in two senses: sociological and mental. It was intended for the whole of society, according to Davie, even when only small minorities benefited directly: supremely, the educated minister would bring to the benefit of his entire congregation the rational wisdom that he had gained from his studies, and his listeners' high standards of literacy—which, in the

Reformation scheme, they had acquired in the system of parish schools—would enable them not only to understand him but also, through engaging him in debate, hold him to account. That democratic intellectualism could work, however, only because the learning was general also in an epistemological sense, having philosophy at its core. Philosophy provided the common language that enabled the dialogue to take place: in the Scottish tradition, general education sought to instil in its students a familiarity with abstract reasoning even at the expense of detailed knowledge.

We shall return to the nature of this intellectual tradition, and in particular to whether it was truly philosophy that the students learnt, rather than a glib rhetoric, but the main point here is how Davie deploys its features in his account of developments in the universities in the nineteenth century—the crucial testing time, he argued, for the whole national culture (Davie 1961: 26–102). Three official commissions investigated the Scottish universities, in 1826, 1858, and 1876. Davie portrays each as having been inspired by the Anglocentric UK state that established them, each as having provided a public forum for great national debates about the nature of Scotland itself, not only about narrow university concerns, and each as having resulted in a compromise in which what he calls the patriotic forces restrained the allegedly Anglicizing tendencies of most of the commissioners, but in each of which—especially the last—the ultimate effect was the erosion of the national university tradition.

The first commission began to hear a definition of the educational debate that made no sense in Scottish terms, as between liberal education on the model of Oxford and Cambridge and a utilitarian education that would fit people for work in the burgeoning industrial economy. This dichotomy between a social elite of classical scholars and a barely educated populace was, Davie argued, utterly alien to the intellectual democracy of Protestant Scotland, where the elite was cultural, not social—a matter of trained minds rather than of privileged status—and the mass of society, even where impoverished and materially powerless, still was expected to engage with the great questions debated each week from the pulpit. On the whole, this first commission was baulked in what Davie describes as its intention of undermining the Scottish tradition, and so the abstract and philosophizing bent could continue into the mid-century and could influence Scotland's great contributions to Victorian science. Thus, anticipating an argument explored more fully below—and without yet concluding anything about the effect of such a curriculum on the average student—the epistemology of the most distinguished of Scottish physicists, James Clerk Maxwell, rested on the role which geometry might play as the intermediate term between the natural world which we seek to explain and the abstract mathematical categories through which we try to explain it.

By the mid-century, however—to take Davie's story forward—it was becoming clear even to the patriotic party that the Scottish universities did need to modernize, because they had to engage with scientific specialisms that were beginning to flourish in England and were already well developed in the research universities of

the German states. So two models were before the 1858 commission. One was that of Oxford and Cambridge, in the process of being modernized by mid-century renovations, in which the universities sought quite ruthlessly to specialize, and to select only the most able (and wealthiest) of students even to have the opportunity to take part. The other was from the German universities, shaped by the ideas of the early nineteenth-century Prussian Minister of Education William von Humboldt, in which undergraduate programmes would be supplemented by specialist research institutes. The strongest exponent of the German model for Scotland was John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek in Edinburgh in the mid-century, and this was adapted to Scottish conditions by James Lorimer, Professor of Law there, who cast the problem as being that of how to educate elites. Lorimer sought, unsuccessfully, to obtain state funding to set up specialist chairs in science to which would be attached postgraduate research training. Davie argued that this Germanic approach was more consistent with Scottish traditions because recruitment would still be from the broad undergraduate programmes that had come to define the Scottish universities. He also preferred Lorimer's casting of the problem, because, Davie argued, it avoided the reductive utilitarianism of English reformers and their Scottish allies such as Henry Brougham, setting up the University of London and the English provincial universities for what Davie interprets as merely practical ends; this, he argued further, was the necessary but regrettable corollary of the concentration into Oxford and Cambridge of liberal education.

The debates were focused on the proceedings of the 1858 and 1876 commissions. The first of these reached a compromise, proposing honours degrees as a supplement to the standard Arts degree, but only in the sense of specialist courses to be followed after the general foundations had been covered; and so, although severely weaker than Lorimer's ideas, these were not inconsistent with the Humboldtian model. So the crucial decisions, with the most lasting consequences, were taken in 1876, where the direction was firmly towards the English model. There was to be an entrance examination, so that university courses could start at a higher level than had been customary. That, argues Davie, raised the age of entry and reduced the chances of entry by pupils from poor families. There were to be full honours degrees, not merely honours courses added in a final year; the former Arts degree was renamed the ordinary degree, to run alongside the honours system rather than being absorbed as its propaedeutic initial phase. In particular, therefore, the requirement that a student cover a broad range of liberal subjects before specializing in honours was ended; and, even for the ordinary degree, the central importance of philosophy was abolished. Consistently with these curricular changes, there was also to be scope (and public money) available for specialist lecturing appointments in the sciences.

Most of these ideas were included in the resulting legislation, the 1889 Universities (Scotland) Act, which became the foundation of the Scottish universities throughout the twentieth century. Davie was correct then in this at least, that the outcomes of these debates have been of great importance. They mattered too in their implications

for secondary schools, even more significant in a numerical sense than the universities until the expansion of university education that started in the 1980s. The entrance examination was quite swiftly superseded by the new Leaving Certificate, inaugurated in 1888 as the means by which the governing Scotch (later Scottish) Education Department would monitor the standards of the new secondary schools. We assess the significance of this later, but the key point here is that the secondary expansion and the university reforms shifted to the schools the responsibility of providing broad educational foundations for those students destined to enter the professions.

These controversies over the changes did not go away, and remained as a current of minority critique until Davie's own writing in the early 1960s. One significant antecedent contribution to his was by Professor Herbert Grierson, who held the Chair of English in Aberdeen from 1894 to 1915 and in Edinburgh from 1915 to 1935. His regret at the passing of the pre-1889 system—the removal of a fixed core of learning, the greater docility of students who no longer were interrogated in class by the professor, the strong focus on passing examinations in order to enter a career—was part of the same milieu of 1930s debate as provided the title of Davie's own work. Walter Elliot, Conservative politician, coined the phrase 'democratic intellectualism' in an autobiographical essay in 1932, defining it thus (Elliot 1932: 64):

> it is a heritage wherein discipline is rigidly and ruthlessly enforced, but where criticism and attack are unflinching, continuous, and salt with a bitter and jealous humour. It is a heritage wherein intellect, speech and, above all, argument are the passports to the highest eminence in the land.

Nevertheless, this placing of Davie—as he does himself, sometimes—in a pedigree that goes back to the contemporary critics of the 1876–89 reforms is not entirely accurate, because as his writing on Scottish educational history developed over time, so too did his interpretation (but unacknowledged by him). In his 1986 book he correctly notes that philosophy regained its central place from 1927, and also that, despite the option of honours, a very large majority of students took the ordinary degree until well beyond the middle of the twentieth century. He states the significance for Scottish culture in a manner that is not really consistent with Grierson's pessimism, or with his own in 1961:

> this restoration of philosophy to its privileged position as the pivot of a structured course provided the institutional background . . . for the renaissance of the twenties, the intellectual achievements of which . . . are increasingly earning for themselves the respect of the rest of the world. (Davie 1986: preface)

Thus having, in 1961, with Grierson, dated the demise of the Scottish tradition to 1889, Davie resurrected it in 1986 and pulled its crisis forward to his own times. That later decline happened, he argues, not as the consequence of any particular administrative act (such as the 1889 legislation) but slowly, as a result of intellectual fashion which, he believes, is best represented again as Anglicizing. Philosophy gradually ceased to be

the core subject, following Bertrand Russell, and following also the resulting Oxford and Cambridge fashions of seeing it as no more than the 'handmaiden' of the sciences, clarifying technical problems of logic rather than addressing the great issues of epistemology or ontology (Davie 1986: 164).

Davie's story of the twentieth century has another serious contradiction—a sociological one. Having argued that the 1889 reforms would restrict access in a social sense (because, he argued, only wealthier students could afford the lengthy secondary schooling that would be required to gain the Leaving Certificate), he then adduced no empirical evidence that might relate to the matter (evidence which we discuss in due course), and yet, in a short essay published in 1990, he returned to discussing the nature of Scottish educational democracy on the presumption that it had become more (not less) firmly grounded in the meantime, and was under threat only as he wrote. He argued there that educational standards would be destroyed if the whims of consumers—whether parents or students—took precedence over the judgements of expert teachers well versed in a tradition. 'What the Scots are aiming at', he feared, 'is democracy without intellect.'

10.3 Scottish Intellectual Culture in the Nineteenth Century

Although the educational story is the form in which Davie's ideas are best known, in fact his interests are not specifically educational at all, except in the sense that he saw the university as the forum in which debates about culture did and should take place. The universities in the early nineteenth century were the places where philosophical systems were discussed and refined, starting with the legacy of the debates of the Enlightenment. 'There is', wrote Thomas Reid in 1785, 'a certain degree of [common sense] which is necessary to our being subjects of law and government, capable of managing our own affairs, and answerable for our conduct towards others' (Reid 1969 [1785]: VI, ii). It would not be inaccurate to say that Davie's whole interest is taken up with what this might mean, what its consequences are for how we think, and what implications it has for the ordering of society.

The starting point, then, was Scottish thinkers' scepticism at that time that there is any 'radical short-cut to a material utopia', because the economic upheaval that was generating vast new wealth was leading also to wider inequality and a new alienation of people from their work and their society (Davie 1991: 57). The characteristic response of radical politics in England and of their allies in Scotland was to seek material improvement. English radicals such as F. D. Maurice and John Stuart Mill were hostile to what they saw as the conservative caution of Scottish thinkers. Davie links them in philosophical style (if not in theology or practical politics) to Scottish campaigners for social reform, such as Thomas Chalmers of the new Free Church after 1843, who hoped that traditional moral philosophy could be redirected

to serving social reform. Davie argued that the radicals were mistaken in the sense that the social crisis was so deep that a merely material response was inadequate:

> a polity which postpones the spiritual or cultural problems of society in favour of an unrestricted material advance based on intensive specialisation produces the dangerous consequences of an intellectual atomisation of society. (Davie 1991: 57–8)

The response of Scottish thinkers in whom Davie is most interested was then to imagine new forms of social communication modelled on the religious inheritance: 'the minister's theological supervision of the congregation was checked and balanced by the congregation's common-sense scrutiny of the minister', resting upon 'the conscious intellectual rapport between the members of a given society' (Davie 1991: 59, 65). Whereas this would be a counter to the 'atomistic empiricism of English radicals', it would also, however, counter the 'new metaphysical mysticism from Germany', because well grounded in the practice of Presbyterian democracy with its understanding of human fallibility (Davie 1991: 72): Davie castigates the excessively material understanding of the problems as 'eupeptic social optimism' (from the English radicals) and 'optimistic panlogicism' (from the Germans) (Davie 1961: 265, 269). He saw in the practices of the common sense thinkers the possibility of meliorism, and—although admiring Carlyle's analysis of alienation (something to which we return)—was unconvinced by his pessimism. The Scottish nineteenth-century thinker most admired by Davie was James Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews, for whom the path to a practicable as well as intellectually respectable response to social problems was the reform of institutions, especially the universities (Davie 2003). It was this instantiation of philosophical ideas in a curriculum and its characteristic institutions that attracted Davie to educational debates.

The problem was even deeper than that, however, because it involved the relationship between epistemology and moral philosophy. Ferrier resisted specialization in the academy because, in Davie's paraphrase, it was 'driving a wedge between intellectual philosophy and moral philosophy' (Davie 1991: 76). Common sense was not only something that united people; it also was, for the individual, 'a kind of sixth sense which teaches us things about ourselves incapable of being directly given to us in our ordinary self-observation' (Davie 1986: 259). It was through this 'inter-sensorial' sense that we might communicate with others 'inter-subjectively' (Davie 1986: 189). Thus, according to Davie,

> common sense, in its meaning as knowledge which results from the pooling of information received through one's different senses . . . is stretched in its significance so as to mean common sense achievable through mutual communication with somebody else. (Davie 1986: 259)

Ferrier's interest here was in the implications which this had for the newly emerging scientific disciplines. The basis of experimental work in science is comparison, reaching, it is hoped, some holistic judgement that may then be communicated to other people. Davie argued that this anticipated the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and

Sartre: 'the key to self-experience is the peculiar experience of appropriating one's own body in the sense of correlating one's own sense organs' (Davie 1967: 189). The Scottish tradition in science was thus humanistic, both in the fairly trite sense that it was generally concerned with applications for social benefit but also in what, for Davie, was the more intellectually interesting question of the relationship between experiment and mathematical theory. 'Modern scientific procedure', Davie said, paraphrasing J. D. Forbes, Professor of Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh (1833–59), 'was shown to involve an endless struggle to maintain a golden mean between opposite temptations, the one practical, the other *a priori*' (Davie 1961: 183). The supreme scientific exponent of this was James Clerk Maxwell, restlessly moving between mathematics and experiment:

> just as at . . . one extreme the clarity of a completely mathematical approach inevitably involved [a] narrowness or barrenness, so too at the other extreme the wide suggestive view of things which a preference for purely physical description gave was inseparable . . . from a certain ambiguity. (Davie 1961: 195)

One of the means by which the two approaches might be united was geometry, the typically Scottish understanding of mathematics at that time. Davie cites the philosopher William Hamilton as having shaped scientific thinking in this direction, most notably through his having taught the young Maxwell: the pictures of geometry, Hamilton argued, united the theoretical and the empirical in a manner that a purely algebraic approach could not. According to Hamilton, 'geometry [Davie said] . . . connected up with the other principal disciplines in a way that the more specialized techniques of algebra did not' (Davie 1961: 127–8). The mathematical shift that was being resisted here was from Euclidean to Cartesian geometry, from reasoning directly with shapes to reasoning using algebraic representations of them. Euclidean geometry, in Hamilton's writing, retained an interest in philosophical principles because it was grounded in the conceptual categories through which we experience the world (Davie 1961: 155). Its usefulness to science came from the same source.

If the scientific applications of the common sense theories of knowledge were one important new strand in the tradition, the moral philosophy was developed, according to Davie, in Scottish humanism, the understanding of Latin and Greek. The Scots argued, he says, that these studies were the means by which the civility of the Reformation and the Enlightenment might be modernized for a new age, bringing to the new professions a humane understanding of social leadership just as a socially responsible understanding of science would shape their technical competence. The attributes of a liberal education were, in the words of John Henry Newman slightly misquoted by Davie from the historian L. J. Saunders, 'freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom' (Davie 1961: 203; Saunders 1950: 358–9; Davie substituted 'equilibrium' for the second term). So the immediate purpose was to recover the Reformation tradition as against the fundamentalism of the evangelicals, especially through the study of George Buchanan. This became a literary tradition, and then

diverged in two. One route was the means by which the study of English literature came to lie at the heart of liberal education in the twentieth century; we return to this later. The other was a growing interest in the vernacular:

> those scholars who did most to preserve the prestige of Buchanan as a classic text for Latin classes in Scotland were also the same men who did most to encourage the idea of the Scottish tongue as being as suitable a vehicle for classic poetry as any other modern language. (Davie 1961: 214)

What is more, whereas, Davie argues, the Latin specialists of Oxford were immersed in philological erudition, 'their Northern counterparts were animated with the purpose of elevating public taste and impressing on the nation at large a respect for classical restraint' (Davie 1961: 223). He quotes Blackie in this spirit: 'we demand a scholarship with a large human soul and a pregnant social significance'; Davie judges that this 'could be the basis of a Scottish intellectual renaissance' (Davie 1961: 239).

The problem for the Scottish tradition, however—according to Davie—was that common sense took an ultimately disastrous new turn following the Disruption of 1843, in which about four out of ten ministers and congregations seceded from the Church of Scotland in protest at the interference in self-governing presbyteries by local landowners (Brown 1997: 25–8). Davie suggests that common sense then became, in the hands of the evangelicals in this new Free Church, a defence of unexaminable intuition rather than the rational basis of a new social order. Ferrier continued to argue, in Davie's words, that the purpose of philosophy was to refine common sense, responding with critical scepticism to the proposition that 'the cognitive capacities of the plain, untutored person are based on mysterious, inexplicable intuitions' (Davie 1961: 288; see also Davie 2001: 212–35 and Keefe 2007: 172–3). But his voice did not really prevail, and so Scottish culture was, Davie claims, 'provincialized' (Davie 1961: 287), a decline found most notably in a series of disputes over appointments to chairs of philosophy which Davie depicts as having mostly fallen to dull evangelicals because of the political influence of the seceders. If the Scottish intellectual tradition remained alive, it was no longer in philosophy but rather in the interpretations which the scientists made of it.

Davie cannot fail to regret this, intellectually honest as he is in his judgement on the consequences of what he perceives to have happened to Scottish philosophy, and yet he also does not allow himself to follow Ferrier in his next move, close to the Oxford idealist philosophy of Benjamin Jowett, T. H. Green, and, by the end of the century, Henry Jones. Davie seeks to understand this affinity only as an escape from the 'self-absorbed . . . fanatical animosities of the prolonged Disruption struggle' (Davie 1961: 319), even though Ferrier insisted that his philosophy remained true to the Scottish tradition. We return later to consider the relationship between the Scottish tradition and these thinkers, and also to consider more generally whether Davie's perception of catastrophic collapse is accurate—but for the time being the main conclusion is that Davie's analysis of the dilemma of the universities in the

middle of the nineteenth century is in many respects a general version of his specific concerns with the decline of Scottish philosophy, both of them assailed from outside by Anglicizing pressures and fundamentalist religion, and both ultimately failing to renovate themselves in keeping with their traditions.

10.4 Scottish Intellectual Culture in the Twentieth Century

The outcome of the late-nineteenth-century debates for Scottish education as a whole was, according to Davie, a new version of the same polarization as had been running since the 1820s. Utilitarianism was now the property of the state, in the Scottish Education Department (SED). Against it were ranged the universities, still with a commitment to general ideas and to disinterested but socially useful philosophy.

The immediate focus was the conflict over the place of philosophy in the undergraduate curriculum, and Davie analyses the debates about this in the 1920s to telling effect in his account of the social and epistemological problems facing Scottish philosophy, and indeed philosophical debate more generally (Davie 1986: 27–37). On the one hand, the SED had two aims. One was to make the universities into training grounds for the expanding class of professionals, by developing the Leaving Certificate as the main goal of able pupils in secondary school and by redesigning the university curriculum to direct it more strongly towards professional careers. Davie describes the implicit rationale as being dominated by 'the utility-oriented sciences of observation' (Davie 1986: 32). Insofar as the SED wanted to widen the social base of recruitment to the professions, the move was also one of social engineering, with, he believed, several dire consequences. Widening access to the universities resulted in a fall in the intellectual calibre of those who were admitted, according to doubts expressed in an article in 1927 by Kennedy Stewart which Davie finds plausible (Davie 1986: 9): Stewart had claimed that admitting students with what he called 'second-rate minds' had led to universities 'completely eliminating [from the curriculum] the cultural development in which lies the true value of a university education' (Stewart 1927: 201–2). Popularizing knowledge, Davie agrees—'anti-elitist . . . mathematics for the million' (Lancelot Hogben's somewhat later (1936) coinage)—was to threaten to dilute it (Davie 1986: 33). Most damaging of all to the Scottish tradition, however, was the invasion of the university education departments by 'technicians of intelligence measurement' (Davie 1986: 48) following the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey—people such as Alexander Darroch (Professor of Education at Edinburgh from 1903) and then his successor Godfrey Thomson from 1925 to 1951.

Dewey, says Davie, interpreted education as a two-way dialogue between equals, not as wisdom bringing enlightenment to ignorance (Davie 1986: 66, 80). Davie objects to Dewey's relegation of philosophy to be merely another specialism. In practice in Scotland, Darroch was firmly opposed to the inclusion of theoretical

knowledge in the school curriculum, except perhaps for a highly select few. This preference for the 'hand and the heart' over the 'head' was anathema to those who interpreted the Scottish tradition in the way that Davie does. The culmination so far as educational policy was concerned was the mass use of intelligence tests to allocate children to secondary-school courses. As well as its allegedly deleterious effects on the openness of the school system, widespread reliance on testing also, according to Davie, separated teachers from the humanizing influence of the universities, because it tied them to the technically-minded training colleges (Davie 1986: 48).

This educational philosophy, according to Davie, was particularly inimical to the Scottish understanding of common sense because it derived from Thorndike's apparent empirical refutation of faculty psychology—the highly influential nineteenth-century belief that the mind had various facets, each of which could be trained by a variety of means so that skills developed in one subject might thereby transfer to another (Tomlinson 1997). Thus, for instance, the logical rigour required to understand Latin grammar might contribute towards the student's understanding of algebra. This has clear analogies with the common sense epistemology, and so when Thorndike's experiments (in the 1920s) seemed to show only very limited transfer of this kind, the effect on educational philosophy was not only profound but also, in Scotland, specifically inimical to the dominant tradition. The purpose of the academic study of education was henceforth to be no more than the experimental investigation of particular features of children's learning or of particular teaching techniques, not the broad-ranging enquiry that had been favoured by Simon Laurie (first holder of the Chair of Education at Edinburgh University 1876–1903) and the philosophers who preceded him. The ally of Darroch and Thomson in this was John Struthers, secretary of the Scottish Education Department and main architect of the school reforms. He resisted all attempts by the universities to take over the professional part of the education of teachers, concentrating that work in the teacher-training centres for which the SED had acquired responsibility from the churches between the first and third decades of the century.

The opposition to this official and international movement came from philosophers, classicists, and the wider public debate led by the poet C. M. Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid). The most notable exponent of generalism against the vocationalism of the SED was John Burnet, Professor of Greek at St Andrews. He noted that in other countries—such as Germany, France, the USA, and Australia—social elites were trained for social leadership through the classics, mathematics, and philosophy. This was even true of England, although still only for the highly selective route through the public schools and Oxford or Cambridge. Burnet argued that Thorndike's experiments were simply irrelevant to this: they may have shown that simple mechanical skills could not be transferred in the way that had been supposed, but they had nothing to say about the ethical and intellectual refinement which this broad education might inculcate. Davie explains sympathetically Burnet's proposals for reform of the university arts curriculum, its being analogous to the ideas which James Lorimer had

put forward seven decades previously: there should be a foundation of general liberal studies followed by specialism. Davie also endorses Burnet's critique of the school Leaving Certificate as (in Davie's words) 'kill[ing] off the philosophical spirit before ever students have seen the inside of a philosophy class' (Davie 1986: 24).

Arguing in similar vein—although less closely involved with policy debates than Burnet—was Norman Kemp Smith, Professor of Philosophy at Edinburgh from 1919 to 1945 and Davie's own tutor there in the 1930s. Though a firm believer in social reform—and a contributor to adult education through the Workers' Educational Association—he was far more pessimistic about its prospects than the twentieth-century socialist heirs to Mills and Maurice. The reality of original sin, the impossibility of human perfection, and the belief that 'knowledge begins in a sort of illusion and develops in the course of critical struggle against illusions' (as Davie put it (Davie 1986: 50)) induced him to what Davie judges to be an alliance with Burnet in resisting the SED's social engineering. The Scottish universities could be remodelled on North American lines, Kemp Smith argued, training professionals in ethical understanding.

Davie's main point about Burnet and Kemp Smith was then that their positions were more than merely resistance to change. They had ideas by which the universities could be modernized for the new social world of professional dominance (a sociological point to which we return) and in which the old traditions of ethical and epistemological enquiry could remain at the heart of the professional education that they offered. Davie gives close attention to the thinking of John Anderson, who was somewhat remote from these Scottish policy debates, if only because most of his career was spent in Australia, though he had lectured at Glasgow University (1919–20) and Edinburgh University (1920–7), where he was a colleague of Kemp Smith (Broadie 2009: 333). Anderson asserted the value of a literary and philosophical education against utilitarianism, and was sceptical of Dewey's version of democracy. Education, against Dewey, was not a two-way dialogue between teacher and pupil but a process in which the teacher's wisdom, judgement, and expertise are made available to the pupil in critical debate (Davie 1986: 66). Anderson takes from Matthew Arnold the belief that the new sciences of nature and of human beings, far from displacing literature and philosophy, actually give them new work to do, 'in the sense', as Davie puts it, 'of calling attention to . . . the aberrations and blind spots afflicting our experimental science . . . over-preoccupied with . . . economic growth' (Davie 1986: 68). In Anderson's words:

> there is no mathematical truth, any more than there is an Athenian truth. Fields of study are not cut off from one another but mingle just as people do. (Anderson 1980: 78)

Anderson also dealt with the social role of professionals and with the place of the universities in their education, and Davie's own position is closely related to it. It is defined against what Davie describes as the Deweyite claim that 'the notion of "democratic intellectualism" either means absolute egalitarianism or means nothing'

(Davie 1986: 80). Professional leadership entailed a necessary elitism of intellect and of ethical capacity. There had to be a diffusion of understanding throughout society if the elites were to be able to govern well—just as the congregation of the old Presbyterian churches had to be educated—but the responsibility for leadership was not widely shared.

That role of professional leadership, as explained by Anderson, is also interpreted by Davie as an essentially educational one. It had to take responsibility for educating society in criticism—now not only in exercising linguistic and aesthetic judgement, but also in relation to science—and in seeing how philosophy might make connections among the domains of knowledge. Dewey's bland optimism, according to Davie, leads to the false supposition that learning might be reinvigorated by mere cooperation on applied 'projects' among students and between them and their teacher. This is not without merit, perhaps, and is understandable as a response to 'the segregation of the leisure class and the labouring class' and to 'desiccated texts' (Davie 1986: 88). But, says Davie, it is not enough to pretend in this way that cultural conflict might be overcome, because it lacks any means by which cultural standards might be maintained, criticized, or restored: 'you cannot make personal development and social efficiency synonymous instead of antagonistic by a mere demand.' In particular, therefore, Davie follows Anderson in asserting the value of the classics as a source of permanent critical judgement, transcending all particular crises and rising above the far too pragmatic responses of Dewey's project-work. Dewey, Davie also notes, might not disagree (Davie 1986: 94), but he was a confused thinker, and the enormous influence he has had on teaching methods throughout the world in the twentieth century has ended up, in much less subtle minds than his, as a philistine mess rather than as a complex interaction of practice with history.

It is hardly surprising that Davie should find these ideas in a philosopher, even though one mostly writing at a great distance from Scotland, but the resonance closer to home in the work of C. M. Grieve is a mark of Davie's—and, he would say, the whole culture's—broad social base beyond the academy. Grieve's most influential contribution explicitly on education was made in the 1920s, when he contributed lengthy and scholarly essays to the journal of the schoolteachers' professional association, the Educational Institute of Scotland. But, as with Davie himself, the interest in education was almost incidental to a larger programme of cultural criticism. In this context, Grieve's hostility to English culture—and his attempt to rediscover a Scottish literary tradition defined against it—are to be interpreted as the latest instance in something much larger, put by Davie in this way:

> from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century the universities and the educated classes of Scotland had been more or less continuously involved in a series of intellectual engagements in which they had been seeking to uphold the anti-utilitarian values of a common-sense philosophy against the increasingly confident assaults of the greatest happiness principle as put forward by the protagonists of radical reform. (Davie 1986: 123–4)

There was indeed a tension between common sense and science, with all its conceptual as well as technical difficulties. Grieve took from the poet John Davidson the view that poetry might be better able than philosophy at resolving this, for example by embodying the distinction between objective sight—clear, rational, pragmatically useful, but somewhat inadequate—and what Grieve called in Scots the 'keethin sicht' by which we inadvertently grasp something of the essence of things (Davie 1986: 105, 108). Davie says this is the same distinction as was drawn by Hume,

> between the unproblematic way things present themselves as objective and independent of us before we have begun to reflect on the perceptive relation we have with them, and the problematic subjective character of mere appearance which the same things present to us as soon as reflection begins to show how we perceive. (Davie 1986: 106)

Thus Davie argues that poetry—when interpreted as part of a continuing tradition that might educate our sensibilities to read these allusions in a particular way—is a means by which the deep and difficult insights of the scientists might be made available to a wider understanding.

The problem with philosophy in the Scottish universities, however, was that it did gradually retreat to the margins in the ways that Davie traced. Its place was taken by the human sciences, notably psychology, cognitive science, linguistics, and history, which 'showed themselves in some sort competent to take upon themselves the responsibility for the metaphysical and transcendental questions which had formerly been the field of philosophy'. Davie cites two prominent illustrations. One is the 'philosophical economics' developed in the Department of Political Economy at Glasgow University (Davie 1986: 177–8), applying to current conditions the Enlightenment ideas of Hume, Smith, and the economist James Steuart. The other was in the emergence of artificial intelligence at Edinburgh University which raised the same kinds of epistemological questions as were asked in nineteenth-century Scotland; Davie paraphrases one of the pioneers in this field, Kenneth Craik, as speculating about 'the kind of experience which the eye would have to undergo in order to be able to make the common-sense distinction between inseparables like colour and shape', by which he means properties that in fact never do appear apart even though they are conceptually distinct (Davie 1986: 169).

The practical implications, through education, remained, however, unresolved by Davie. If the professions now dominated society and policy making, then they had a social role of leadership. Davie's instinct is still to interpret this role as entailing a relationship of mutual criticism with society, 'a "social" conception of knowledge' (Davie 1986: 228), analogous still to Buchanan's defence of Presbyterianism or Hume's expectation that the rise of a widespread understanding of economics would enable society to hold government to account. It is also analogous, Davie further points out, to Hegel's desire to move from the hierarchy of Plato's city-state to 'a reciprocal scheme' (Davie 1986: 226). This might be facilitated, moreover, where rulers and ruled share 'spiritual factors' which, Davie said in an essay on James Steuart, 'count just as decisively in the

formation of national character as do economic factors' (Davie 1967: 294). The problem with Davie's account, however, is in knowing how an inkling of understanding as achieved through, say, the study of poetry could ever be an adequate basis on which to engage in critical dialogue with an expert scientist. Nor is it adequate to suggest that all that the non-expert needs is an understanding of some vaguely defined 'sixth sense' as a means of understanding the information being supplied by the other five, or to say that 'causality' in human affairs may be interpreted as 'mutual knowledge', as if we might explain human events merely by comparing lots of people's perspectives on them: Davie is too ready to attribute definite understanding to the implicit common values of shared spiritual belonging:

> the message conveyed by our behaviour entirely escapes us and is only brought home to us by our recognising the other as a mirror in which our lack of consideration for others is read in the other's reproving glances. (Davie 2001: 7)

'Glances' are just too inscrutable to work here. Some kinds of explanation entail a level of technical expertise—say of statistical method or of physiology or of genetics or of economics—that Davie never gets to grips with in detail, and yet it is in the detail that the real barriers between expert and lay understandings are found. We return to this point later, but what needs to be added here is that there is nothing peculiarly Scottish about this dilemma, nor specific to the Scottish intellectual traditions in the ways which Davie offers for resolving it. In response to his tendency to insist on a uniquely Scottish approach, we might read Anderson's injunction backwards: there is no Athenian truth any more than there is a mathematical truth. These dilemmas of expertise and society prevail everywhere.

10.5 Davie's Significance

Evaluations of Davie's contribution cannot be definitive, because it is so complex, so irreducible to any simple system, so—it has to be said—full of contradictions. Indeed, it is also so multifaceted that no one commentator is likely to have the expertise to assess it as a whole, and this one is no exception to these limitations; in particular, no attempt is made here to assess his work on metaphysics except insofar as it impinges on the great social debates about the place of expertise and its relationship to lay opinion. So this discussion is organized under three headings that interest this author, each relating, in other words, to Davie's commentary on social change. Does Davie give us new insights into the social role of the professions, especially in the twentieth century? How true is his analysis of Scottish educational reform (his best-known contribution)? And does his analysis of the nature of the state really demonstrate a distinctive Scottish approach either in theory or in political practice?

On the professions, before we may evaluate Davie's work, we first have to ask why they have come to such prominence and why a serious philosopher such as Davie should give them such attention. The most obvious answer is that society came to

need much deeper and more systematic expertise than hitherto, and that the various branches of science and social science grew to provide that. The professional society (as the historian Harold Perkin (1989) calls it) is then the ultimate outcome of the scientific revolution which triumphed in the developed world from the late eighteenth century onwards.

Nevertheless, true though this is, the important extra ingredient is power. Professions not only grew in number and variety; they also gained unprecedented access to the state, even to the extent that the whole nature of politics changed to one where technical expertise and competence became the chief criteria of political legitimacy. So there were more doctors, scientists, planners, economists, lawyers, teachers, and social workers, but the key point was not their sheer number but their shaping role in debating the legislation, regulations, and standards that governed their own practice: thus when government wants to modify, say, education or health, it is to teachers and doctors that it turns for advice on what to do; and that is because politicians and the general cadre of senior civil servants, whatever their political acuity, simply lack that technical knowledge and judgement.

Poggi (1978) calls this system the technocratic state, and in that term are contained some of the problems that Davie identifies—the Saint-Simonian aspiration that government might move from ruling over people to neutrally administering mere things. It was hoped across the democratic world that science (broadly defined) could solve the five giant evils which the Beveridge Report in Britain in 1942 identified in its argument for state welfare: ignorance, want, disease, squalor, and idleness. The point for Davie, however, as for many other strands of political critique in the twentieth century, is the reassertion of ethics (see also Marquand and Seldon 1996). Thus, from the political right, there was the eventually influential writing of Friedrich von Hayek, arguing in 1944 that the problem with the overweening welfare state was the powers that it transferred to technical experts away from the contested realm of politics. Large segments of the political centre and left were agents in this transfer, and so, at first, doubts from these point of view were not widely voiced, but there was always a minority current of unease—from anarchists and other sceptics of centralization—and the most notable flourishing of leftist scepticism of professional power came in the 1960s. Indeed, Davie's 1961 book in many respects slightly anticipates or adds depth and richness to internationally much better-known critiques of the power of specialism, such as those by Herbert Marcuse or C. P. Snow.

Davie's searching for a plausible ethical foundation of professionalism is, then, directed at one of the central political problems of the twentieth century. In many respects, moreover, this is the dominant thrust of his work. That is true of his educational discussions (to which we turn next). It is true of his analysis of expertise, and how we might find a means by which it can be exercised as required without challenge to its technical competence when needed, but still subject to well-informed social scrutiny by a properly educated society. And it is true of his analysis of the state, to which we turn subsequently. Each of these is rooted in his understanding of the Scottish

common sense tradition, and it is from these essentially Calvinist roots that his position gains its distinctiveness. Most evidently, his position is inescapably ethical, never for a moment imagining that expertise should be justified merely in its own terms. To assert the right even to practise a profession requires more than insisting on technical superiority over the client. The profession has to explain itself through recognizing that its own standards of judgement are ultimately social and so require the mutual self-criticism of the community's shared sense. Even more profoundly, the scientific evidence on which technical expertise bases its authority requires for its assessment the 'common sense' internal to the individual observer which transcends the fragmented data presented to our separate senses. That internal transcendent sense then, in turn, is the means by which varied witnesses might interpret raw data—the means by which mere data become scientific facts shared among different observers.

For example (although Davie tends not to give specific scientific examples), the reason why scientific papers describe their data and methods in such detail is that there has emerged a canon of principles by which the trained scientist has learnt how to discriminate between good and bad science. By making explicit the ways in which the collection and analysis of each particular body of data has adhered to these principles, the authors of that particular study make their results available in the common language of the branch of science in which the work is situated. Davie would add that the language of method cannot itself be merely observational: it has to draw upon ordinary language, or at least on that refined by philosophical analysis. Thus, for instance, the rules by which statistical calculations are carried out, and their epistemological significance assessed, are meta-statistical, invoking such ideas as long-run relative frequency or subjective probability that are not themselves intrinsically technical (Hacking 1990). This is what Davie means when he interprets Hegel as saying that 'self-recognition is inseparable from mutual recognition' (Davie 1986: 214): only through shared method can we recognize the data that we have collected.

That is valuable, but is not in itself unique to Davie or to the Scottish tradition. What he and it then add is democratic pessimism or, perhaps better put, realism. The point about the Presbyterian analogy, after all, is that the minister, though scrutinized by the laity, remained in authority. Common sense does not require the professions to abdicate their social leadership, and in fact Davie is, as we saw, deeply doubtful about the 'eupeptic social optimism' of simplistic radicals of any period. Society, he generally seems to conclude, is too steeped in sin to evade the need for enlightened leaders, for professionals with both wisdom and technical competence. In the end, the common sense tradition is about self-regulation, about the experts' taking into themselves the criteria of judgement that are shared across a civil society. It is not about populist democracy intruding on the professional scope.

This much might be agreed. The problem, however, is that Davie seems to have been rather strikingly ill informed about the actual way in which Scotland (and by extension other places) changed into a professional society and trained the necessary experts. This brings us to the second topic by which we seek to assess Davie's

significance here. Since his account of educational change has been so central to his reputation and influence, the gap is rather serious.

A better understanding of Scottish education between the late nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries than in Davie's account is as its being adapted to creating the new professional class of the emerging mass democracy (Anderson 1983, 1995; McPherson 1992; Paterson 2003, 2004, 2011). The old universities may have been well suited to training ministers and teachers, but—just as James Lorimer, in particular, appreciated—they did not have the capacity to meet the need for much larger numbers of specialists of more diverse kinds. They could see this not only by looking to Germany but also by noticing something to which Davie gives almost no attention at all: the new civic universities in England, meeting practical needs in their local societies with science and other types of applied knowledge. These universities themselves often drew upon Scottish models, especially because the Scottish universities had provided the main inspiration for the curriculum at the new University of London in 1828 (Anderson 2006: 27). Oxford and Cambridge were becoming no more than a distinguished niche in the English system.

A route to modernization of the kind favoured by Lorimer—postgraduate research institutes on top of broad, general first degrees—may well have been feasible, because that is how the North American systems did develop, often indeed under the influence of people educated in Scotland (Bryson 1932; Rothblatt 2007; Sloan 1971). But it was not the only route, and not the only lesson to be learnt from the rest of Europe. Seeing the success of secondary schools elsewhere—notably in Germany and France—it is hardly surprising that government in the various parts of Britain chose that means. This was not Anglicizing—not a 'secondary school system on the English model', as Davie calls it (1961: 94)—but in fact a European trend (Anderson 1985). The first British instance was not in England at all, but in Wales, with the Intermediate Schools Act of 1889, a pioneering development of which Davie seems unaware.

Therefore what emerged in Scotland between the 1890s and the eve of the Second World War was, in effect, something like Lorimer's recommendation, but not all contained within the walls of institutions called universities. The secondary schools were expanded greatly in number, from about fifty to about 250. Most of the extra ones were the direct heirs to those old parish schools that formerly sent pupils straight to university: the relabelling as secondaries, and—more importantly—the systematic upgrading of their courses, have confused much later commentary, including Davie's, into supposing that the old parish-school foundations of university entry had been destroyed. These 200 new secondary schools were more widely dispersed geographically than the fifty old ones, and were generally in areas populated by people in the skilled working class and lower middle class. Thus the greatest impact was in the Highlands and Islands, the industrial parts of west-central Scotland, and the rural north-east (where the parish-school tradition had been strongest and so provided the firmest base on which to build). The dispersion, and the fact that the new schools did not charge fees, enabled them to serve wider social groups than the old secondary

schools. Systematic sociological evidence on this is not available until slightly later, in the early 1950s, but it does confirm the expectations: the social-class distribution of pupils in the new schools was then almost exactly representative of the distribution of the secondary pupil population as a whole (Paterson et al. 2010, 2011).

The increased need for professionals required this newly expanded system so as to enable much wider recruitment into it. The result was, not a narrowing of opportunity in a sociological sense, but its significant widening, even at university level. Opportunities for able working-class children to enter university were greater in the 1930s than in the late nineteenth century. Opportunities for Catholics grew to equal those of the majority for the first time, the state agreeing to provide a new system of Catholic secondaries as part of this expansion. Above all in a numerical sense, opportunities for girls were unprecedented. By the 1930s, girls had approximately the same opportunities to enter secondary courses as boys, and made up 25–30 per cent of students entering university.

The main instrumental purpose of these school courses was to prepare able students for the Leaving Certificate, the curriculum for which provided a broad, liberal education, founded on English, Latin, French, mathematics, and the sciences. At its best, this was as stimulating and culturally well informed as the early years of the old undergraduate programme had been. In English (which was taken by all candidates for the Leaving Certificate), there was the core of moral philosophy, teaching young minds to reflect through imaginative literature on precisely those human dilemmas in which the common sense tradition had been interested. Latin did not vanish, being taken by around half of candidates, and it continued to be justified on the grounds that it gave access to perennial ideas. French was displacing it, but with no evidence that faculty psychology was discredited at this level despite Thorndike and his Scottish followers: the belief that studying a language was an admirable form of mental training remained entrenched. The same was true of mathematics and science, and in the best schools the equipment of good laboratories by the 1920s enabled a diffusion of experimental technique in a manner that T. H. Huxley would have admired in his pioneering advocacy half a century earlier (but this continued to be the one area of the curriculum where girls had not benefited to the same extent as boys).

The more elevated purpose of all this was to provide that foundation of liberal education which, it was widely agreed, was needed for the new professional class. This was something that even some of Davie's most admired exponents of the old tradition—such as John Burnet and Herbert Grierson—appreciated. In particular, it prepared schoolteachers themselves with a foundation of intellectualism and ethics that in turn was passed on to those generations which in due course became the Scottish leadership class in the three or four decades after the Second World War: the new secondary schools, feeding into modernized university courses, shaped the Scotland that produced the post-1960s renaissance of which Davie himself was a part. We can take the whole history of how people were recruited into these positions of professional

leadership between, say, the 1920s and the 1950s as vindicating Burnet's critique of Thorndike, or indeed Ferrier's view that a moral consciousness had to be educated (Keefe 2007; Mayo 2007). In the words of the Scottish Education Department's advice in 1952 on teaching English literature, 'the main aim . . . is not so much the imparting of information as the inculcation of a liberal culture' (SED 1952: 24). The 'technicians of intelligence testing' were part of this, because the attempt to assess children's educational potential in a fair way was intended to ensure that standards would not slip in a much widened system—intended, that is, to pick out those, from all social classes, who truly had the capacity to benefit from a full liberal education. That the attempt turned out not to be as unbiased as its progenitors hoped is not the point: what matters in this debate is that the sharp line drawn by Davie and others between them and the heirs to the Scottish liberal tradition is anachronistic.

Nevertheless, despite this argument against Davie based on the expansion of secondary schooling, his case concerning the weakening of philosophy remains cogent. It is undoubtedly true that formal philosophical study was not part of the new curriculum in the secondary schools, in contrast to the old undergraduate curriculum. Imaginative literature, however philosophically informed, is not philosophy, and so even if Davie himself did not systematically address the social and intellectual character of the new secondary schooling of the early part of the twentieth century, the absence of any explicitly philosophical study in it may be taken to support his contention that a national tradition came to an end. Indeed, in one of the few passages where he considers the question of the rise to prominence of literary studies, he does, with John Anderson, draw a distinction:

> literature in some sense is concerned with criticising our existing hypotheses and propounding alternative hypotheses, whereas science and philosophy are concerned in their different ways with following up the hypotheses which may have been suggested by literature in order to determine how far they are true. (Davie 1986: 84)

Insofar as philosophy indisputably was absent, Davie then has a point, and—as R. D. Anderson (1983: 343) notes—thereby was lost a 'an educational ethos that was unique to Scotland'. That is perhaps an especially serious omission in a period when philosophy was included in the curriculum of the senior secondary school in other European countries, most famously in France but also to some extent in Germany and Spain (Anderson 2004).

On the other hand, there is overlap between literary and philosophical studies. Davie notes those currents of thought in Scotland in the early twentieth century which debated literature in a philosophical manner. He even acknowledges that there was a variety of antagonistic positions within these debates, so that people with whom he generally sympathizes intellectually sometimes expressed views with which he disagrees. Thus he says that several of the leading professors of English in the Scottish universities between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1930s taught 'literature as a critique of life', and thus 'produced in their students a genuine awareness of the

necessary role of imagination and invention' (Davie 1986: 44). He includes in this development of the Scottish tradition of relating literature to moral questions not only Herbert Gierson but also David Masson (Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in Edinburgh 1865–95), George Saintsbury (successor to Masson and predecessor to Gierson 1895–1915), and Walter Raleigh (Professor of English Language and Literature in Glasgow 1900–4). However, he also says that these thinkers too readily dismissed the importance of science, unlike not only John Anderson but also John Burnet and C. M. Grieve. In this critique of purely literary studies, Davie thus would appear to acknowledge science as providing some of the empirical grounding that philosophy of the common sense tradition could offer, but does not then assess whether the new prominence of science in the Leaving Certificate might fill some of the absence caused by there being no courses explicitly in philosophy.

In other words, despite the weakening of the educational position of philosophy, it might be argued that the mid-twentieth-century way of educating professionals achieved more of the aims which Davie associates with the Scottish tradition than anything that actually happened a century earlier, even though the means to these ends were different. This may be said on two grounds—that the past was not as splendid as Davie seemed to suppose, and that Scottish intellectual decline was by no means as incontrovertibly a fact as Davie would have us think. On the one hand, the reality of the university education experienced by the typical student at a Scottish university before the reforms brought about by the 1889 Act was of uneven quality, and was in some part superficial and elementary. It is impossible to know how widespread the problem was, but that it was believed to be real and persistent is evidenced by its being the main concern of all three of the commissions of inquiry into the Scottish universities, and was thus an unending source of weakness in the patriotic party's case. The man whom Davie presents as Lorimer's greatest antagonist, John Campbell Shairp—Professor of Humanity at St Andrews 1861–8, and Principal of the United College there 1868–85—complained that Scottish students could 'write plausibly on almost any subject in a fluent, semi-metaphysical, semi-rhetorical way', but lacked 'accuracy of scholarship' and 'deft historical knowledge' (the quotation is given by Anderson (1983: 61)). More specifically, many of the philosophy courses seem to have been not so much even general accounts of the subject as part of the vocational preparation of ministers of religion, a role to which the devoutly Christian common sense adherents were well suited. As Anderson (1983: 32) puts it:

> lectures allowed talented professors to establish a unique hold through the force of their personality, and were often a sort of lay preaching. The success of the lecture format, indeed, owed much to the familiarity of the Scots with sermons.

Whether the ministers, upon qualifying, took any of the character of the university lecturing back into the pulpit would require a close study of their sermons with a view to identifying features of their rhetorical style that might have arisen from their university studies. That analysis remains to be done, but it seems very likely that, as

the importance of divinity even for the arts faculties of the universities declined in the twentieth century, and as the role of the universities in professional training grew, an attention to technical expertise rather than rhetorical flourish generally raised the quality of the intellectual training that they provided.

The very sociological virtue of the mid-nineteenth-century universities, in other words—their being, in the words of the Senate of Edinburgh University in its response to the report of the 1826 Commission, 'rather a great metropolitan school than a university' (Anderson 1983: 47)—was the source of their intellectual unevenness, and it was only when the secondary-school role was taken on by institutions designed for the purpose that the universities could afford to expect rigorous standards. (Indeed, it was only when they once again were educating a large segment of the secondary-school population, at the end of the twentieth century, that these intellectual gains were once more brought into question.)

Yet the increasingly practical nature of the nineteenth-century teaching could also be a virtue, as the universities began to respond to the needs of the new society that had emerged with industrialism. This style of applied philosophy long anticipated some of the concerns with applying ideas that Davie praises in Burnet and Grieve against the purely literary way of approaching moral questions which, he alleged, was adopted by Grierson and others. The resulting combination of imagination and rigorous ideas is summed up in a comment by Hugh Miller—geologist and eloquent journalist in the evangelical cause—on Thomas Chalmers, who, as well as being leader of the Disruption, was also Professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews (1823–8) and Professor of Theology at Edinburgh (1828–43): 'I had long been struck by that union which his intellect exhibited of a comprehensive philosophy with a true poetic faculty' (Miller 1893: 556–7). Miller's being outside the academic world—and never having attended university—afforded him an insight into what gave the lecturing, preaching, and writing of a man such as Chalmers its charismatic effect. The same might have been said by many of the people who were taught directly by the mid-nineteenth-century Scottish philosophers but who did not themselves enter that discipline. It was perhaps this aspect of the Scottish tradition that most powerfully persisted, because it left a legacy far beyond philosophy itself.

Thus, in requiring attention to the training of people who were not professional philosophers, there was no simple process of intellectual decline, despite Davie's claims. Ferrier was not the end, nor alone. The Disruption did not lead to a flood of evangelicals, although it did produce some such as MacDougall in his triumph over Ferrier, and indeed the example of Chalmers (and of Miller) shows that being an evangelical in mid-nineteenth-century Scotland was not at all inconsistent with intellectual distinction. There were many distinguished philosophers in the Scottish universities in the second half of the nineteenth century who were also, in the Scottish manner, influential in other fields. Broadie (2009: 301–23) notes four main kinds of example, each firmly within the Scottish tradition. There was, first, a continuation of Hume's empiricism in the philosophy of James Mill and of Alexander Bain, the latter

pointing directly to twentieth-century psychology. The second is in the development of the natural sciences, as we have noted. James Clerk Maxwell, Lord Kelvin, and P. G. Tait were philosophers as well as natural philosophers, conscious of the metaphysical debt which their physical explorations owed to the Scottish intellectual context. The third is in what Broadie calls 'religious and social anthropology', pioneering works by James Frazer and William Robertson Smith being of European significance. The fourth way in which the Scottish tradition was continued is the most directly in contradiction to Davie's claims. The late nineteenth-century Scottish interest in German thinkers—in Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel—remained always aware of Hume and Reid, for example in Andrew Seth; but since this relates to theories of the state, we return to it again later.

Not only may these late nineteenth-century developments be interpreted as common sense by different means. They also brought Scotland into the mainstream of European thinking and practice. Considered properly, the philosophy behind the development of nineteenth-century Scottish education is not as peculiarly Scottish as Davie and others (such as Grieve) supposed, and thus the convergence of it with British or wider European developments in the twentieth century is not really a betrayal of an indigenous tradition. The 'democratic intellect' is recognizably one instance of the programme of democratizing high culture that owed its origins to Matthew Arnold, was taken forward by T. S. Eliot and the Leavises, and reached its full and diverse apogee in the middle of the twentieth century, by which time it had both conservative (Michael Oakeshott 1989) and socialist (Raymond Williams 1958, 1961) exponents. Scotland was part of this—quite a distinguished part both in theory (with the likes of Grierson and John Anderson) and in practice (as a new generation of English radicals came north to study how to emulate Scottish secondary schools); but it was by no means alone, and was certainly not the educational desert that critics at the time feared and that Davie's own writings have taught recent generations inaccurately to believe. The Scottish democratic intellect shared a great deal in common with the *culture générale* of the French lycées and the *Bildung* of the Germanic gymnasia; it also had far more in common with English liberal education than Davie and his followers have ever been willing to acknowledge. As Wright (1979: 96) has put it, 'the aim of both the English and Scottish systems of university education [in the nineteenth century] was . . . exactly the same, to produce a man who could think and express himself clearly.'

Davie himself was too good a thinker not to revise his early views when he came across new evidence, but it has to be said in this connection, too, that he rarely acknowledged the resulting contradictions. Not only, as we have seen, did he date the crisis of the Scottish tradition to two distinct eras—the 1890s and the 1920s; he also predated it to the mid-nineteenth century in his account of Ferrier as the end of a line (Davie 2003) and also post-dated it to the last quarter of the twentieth century (Davie 1990). Thus we should perhaps not be surprised to find that in 1986 his words on the secondary-school examination system up to the 1950s somewhat contradict

his castigation of it earlier: he referred to 'the fundamental prop of liberal values in the Scottish Leaving Certificate scheme—the entrenched position of English literature as something everybody had to take' (Davie 1986: 167).

Davie's confusion here is reflected further in his ambivalence about the universities themselves. Insofar as they stood for liberal as against utilitarian education, he is unreservedly on their side in their disputes with the Scottish Education Department in the early years of the century. However, because their response was to ally themselves politically with the UK state through the University Grants Committee, the basis was laid for their becoming less distinctively Scottish as academic careers became British and then global (Davie 1986: 164; see also Anderson 1987). This might be regarded as no more than an ironic outcome were it not that the contradiction also appears at the core of Davie's treatment of the universities even in the 1920s. On the one hand, his rejection of the alleged utilitarianism of the Scottish Education Department led to his sympathizing with the Edinburgh Professor of Mathematics, E. T. Whittaker, who tried to ensure that the universities continued to pursue disinterested liberal studies. Whittaker was opposed in this argument by another mathematician, George Gibson of Glasgow, who was close to the Education Department in wanting students to acquire useful knowledge; and Davie's common sense instincts for a 'truly democratic education' (Davie 1986: 33) led him to have some sympathy with that position too.

The problem in general with Davie's treating the Scottish educational tradition as self-contained is that he never did see that it might achieve its most emphatic endorsement precisely through its integration in much wider currents of thought. Some of the theoretical analysis of the common sense philosophers, for example, now finds empirical grounding in research in psychology, linguistics, and aesthetics. Thus an instinct to sociability and to participation in cultural traditions has been found through research on infants by Colwyn Trevarthen (2002), who, based at Edinburgh, does relate it directly to Scottish thought; in particular, John Macmurray. The evidence for an innate aesthetic sense—much as Francis Hutcheson proposed—has been eloquently summarized by Dennis Dutton (2009), and an innate understanding of the natural world embodied in our language is presented as Kantian by Steven Pinker, but in terms that could equally well have come from Ferrier: 'Kant's version of nativism, with abstract organising frameworks but not actual knowledge built into the mind, is the version that is most viable today' (Pinker 2007: 160). Enduring standards of outstanding human accomplishment have been detected empirically by Murray (2003). Whether or not explicitly acknowledged as having Scottish roots, these ideas show the confluence of all national traditions of rational thought, an aspiration to universality that the Scottish thinkers of the Enlightenment—and indeed Reformation—would have welcomed.

The final area for assessment is Davie's ideas about the nature and training of the leadership class in a democracy. This overlaps with the consideration of professions and their education, but ranges more widely, and also, in a sense, might be described

as a typically Scottish absence in Davie's writing. One of the well-known features of Scotland's odd constitutional position between the Union of 1707 and the creation of the Scottish parliament at the end of the twentieth century was that it had many of the trappings of a state but was not in fact a state (Cameron 2010; Fry 1987; Harvie 1981; Hutchison 1986; McCrone 1992; Paterson 1994). In some respects, indeed, it had more autonomy even than the constituent parts of formal federations, insofar, for instance, as it had an almost fully independent legal system and had a system of education that was, in principle, wholly separate from that in the rest of the UK. Because this old autonomy rested on the institutions of civil society in their relationship with the state, and thus depended crucially in the twentieth century on the professionals who staffed both, the question of Scottish identity—as explored searchingly by Davie—is readily but misleadingly reduced to the problem of professional identity. It is too easy, for example, to discuss the politics of university reform in the 1920s as if it were a matter only of the universities themselves and of the civil-service staff in the Scottish Education Department. Assuming that that is all there was in Scottish decision-making is to ignore the intimate links between professional identity and the nature of the state or of statecraft.

Yet several of the most interesting thinkers whom Davie discusses, and much of the self-image of the professionals whose education and social practice he analyses, had much grander aspirations than posterity has given them credit for. It has been common since the 1960s to claim that Scotland in the Union was provincial in its mentality—a view that received its sharpest impetus from Tom Nairn, a writer as influential as Davie on Scottish views about itself in the late twentieth century. That this is inaccurate may be observed most clearly in Ferrier's direction of travel following the disputes over religion in the middle of the nineteenth century. As we have seen Davie noting, he moved close to the Hegelianism of what has often been called (including by Davie (1961: 305)) 'Jowett's Oxford', and thus was part of a nascent intellectual movement that became the pervasive social philosophy of the British welfare state. The intellectual pedigree was from Jowett through Green to what Bogdanor (2006) has called 'the mandarin culture', the sense of practical ethical responsibility that linked the power of the state with the daily social activism of ordinary professional workers throughout the land. This was sufficiently vague as to unite Fabian socialists, moderate conservatives (as in the so-called middle opinion of the 1930s), and liberal intellectuals, such as Keynes and Beveridge. Its last great flourishing was in the Robbins report on higher education in 1963, arguing that the purpose of a university was 'the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship'.

That is well documented, and is usually told as a British story, or, in Scotland—including by Davie—as an intrinsically English one, the fallacious impression, as Bernard Mayo (2007: 160) put it in his inaugural lecture at St Andrews in 1967, 'that Scottish philosophy was simply taken over by Oxford philosophy'. Yet this new idealist tradition drew upon Scottish ideas from the likes of Ferrier and later Edward Caird and Henry Jones (both Professors of Philosophy in Glasgow). It also entered

the Scottish universities through the new discipline of history (Anderson 2010). Consider, for example, the views of Ferrier and of Jones concerning the relationship of human agency to social tradition. Davie (2003), in his fullest account of Ferrier's ideas, cites with approval what he calls Ferrier's 'kind of Tory philosophy' which, being rooted in traditions and in their shaping of human instincts, is, says Davie, more realistic than the view that we understand other people only through applying universal reason to our observations of them. Reason simply does not have either the emotional or the existential force to allow us to transcend the empirical details. Thus, in Ferrier's explanation (from 1861) quoted by Davie (2003: 56):

> Man's morality is rooted in his innermost nature. It grows necessarily out of his very reason, but it is certainly moulded into what it is by the form and pressure of the society in which he lives . . . Example, education, traditional usages, prescriptive customs, the approbation and disapprobation of our fellow-men, all these . . . exert such a potent influence on each of us . . . as to render it in the highest degree difficult to determine accurately what are the native or primary, and what the acquired or secondary elements in our moral constitution. (Ferrier 1866: 505–6)

There are differences of emphasis here, but not significantly of substance, from Henry Jones's 1909 view:

> Tradition and reason are elements which interpenetrate and can not be sundered without being destroyed . . . If man did not at first accept the beliefs and customs of his people; if he were not for a considerable part of his life docile, assimilating and uncritical of the rational habitudes of his time, receiving his nutriment prepared, simplified and made innocent from the larger life of the social organism . . . reason could not be fostered within him. (Jones 1909: 54)

Boucher and Vincent (2000: 159–60), quoting part of this, point out that 'the essence of his argument is that the tradition of a society embodies the accumulated wisdom of Reason'. The individual is thus both autonomous and also the expression of the society's ideals: 'the best achievement of the wisest men is but to apprehend the meaning of their time and adopt its deeper purposes' (Jones 1909: 42). Critics of society may believe themselves to be radical outsiders, but—in the same spirit as Ferrier—Jones argued that 'they are not aware that they have got their objections to society within society, and that no man can rise above his age except by means of it' (Jones 1909: 62). Jones's view on these matters comes via F. H. Bradley from Green, in which the community (in the words of Boucher and Vincent (2000: 74)) 'represents what Hegel called "objective mind" '.

If there is a difference between Ferrier and Jones here it is in what Broadie (2009: 345–6) draws from a Scottish philosopher of the generation following Jones, C. A. Campbell, who was taught by Jones and also studied at Oxford. Campbell resisted the claim that moral choices are determined by the universal reason of tradition, in which our acts are merely the next in a causal chain started long before us, and held that free agents are able to initiate (in Broadie's words) 'brand-new causal series'. That distinction does

take the Scottish line of thought away from the more extreme forms of cultural determinism that risk arising from a veneration of common sense (a risk resisted, as we have noted, by Ferrier, with Davie's approval). The development is then towards the thought of John Anderson and the interest in human relationships found in John Macmurray (a Scottish thinker to whom Davie gives surprisingly little attention). Nevertheless, we might add that so too did the later development of the English philosophical tradition. Thus Michael Oakeshott, for whom tradition is indeed paramount (O'Hear 1992), characterized education as a conversation (even an argument) between the generations, not at all as the determining power that one reading of Jones's analysis might imply it to be. A tradition for Oakeshott is a body of meaning to which we are committed by belonging to the tradition, but that might well include rational critique of these meanings. Jones, too, insisted that traditions are themselves the product of autonomous reason, not merely absorbed but also renovated:

> great and powerful as a people's tradition is, it has been built up, like coral islands amidst the deep, from the many little reasons and insignificant purposes of insignificant men. There is no customary opinion which was not once a bold conception, and no habit which was not at one time a venturous enterprise. Reason built tradition, and reason alone receives and transmits it. (Jones 1909: 50)

Moreover, in any case, Green himself was preoccupied with moral choice in a very practical way, which is why he did have such an influence on later practical politics in the twentieth century: for example, he served for many years as an ordinary elected member of Oxford Town Council. Campbell insisted on the importance for his philosophy of the Germanic influence through Oxford, and saw himself as arguing within it. Davie (1986: 177) castigates this merely as 'apathy towards the distinctive [Scottish] tradition'.

We might then distinguish between the philosophical problems that Green and his successors discussed and the solutions they offered. Even if the latter were different from the answers given by Scottish thinkers, the areas of concern were shared and so there was bound to be mutual influence. We might invoke a comment that Davie makes on Ferrier's response to Thomas Reid:

> Common sense sets the problem of philosophy; so far, Reid is right. Reid at once goes wrong in suggesting that common sense not merely poses the problem but also gives the answer. (Davie 2003: 24)

If, because of this sharing of problems, we should view Ferrier as in the same tradition as Reid, so too must we see him and his Scottish Idealist successors as struggling with the same problems of philosophy applied to practical politics as the Oxford thinkers who taught them and whom they in turn influenced. Henry Jones would have concurred with that comment from Davie, because he had written that

> Philosophy is, indeed, an attempt at coherent thought, it employs argument and aims at proof. But it seeks these where common sense seeks them, seeking them with somewhat greater

persistency . . . [Philosophy] examines the presuppositions which ordinary thought lets pass. (Jones 1909: 155)

The importance of the influence on applied social thought then takes us away from debates among philosophers to the ideas that actually pervaded the state and the professions in the twentieth century. Whatever the precise origins and development of the current deriving from Green, it was as fully a part of Scottish thinking about the professions as it was of any other part of Britain. Davie's attempt to distinguish sharply between the educational practice of authentic Scottish thought and that of Caird and Jones does not bear close scrutiny (Graham 2009). His evidence against Caird, for instance, is that he favoured specialism over general education. But that may be better interpreted as an understanding that the emerging professional society required specialists, and Caird's larger concern—learnt from that Oxford school, but not at all inconsistently with Ferrier or Reid—was how to retain a unifying social ethic despite that.

This failure by Davie to see that Scottish social thought has absorbed English influences and has, in turn, exercised influence also leads him into misleading errors in his understanding of the Scottish branches of the state. It was through philosophies such as those of Ferrier, Green, and Jones that professional identity came to be the defining ethic of the twentieth-century welfare state. Davie sees the Scottish Education Department, for instance, as having been relentlessly utilitarian, philistine, and mundanely concerned with the training of ordinary schoolteachers rather than with higher intellectual purposes. He thus misses not only the actual record of the Department in creating the system of secondary schools, but also its implicit philosophy, the meritocratic liberalism that runs through its reforms in the first half of the twentieth century, and the belief that state involvement in the lives of its citizens was through precisely those details of professional leadership in which Scottish autonomy consisted. It was a highly competitive tradition, and was as concerned with sifting as with providing opportunity, but by these early years of the twentieth century it had learnt from its first civil-service head, Sir Henry Craik, that the state had a role to play in educating society, a position that was in the mainstream of the idealist philosophy (Boucher and Vincent 2000: 196; Craik 1914).

The link between practical ethics and a theory of the state was well expressed in 1914 by W. L. Mackenzie, the statutory medical member of the Scottish Local Government Board (the post that, in more recent times, became Chief Medical Officer for Scotland):

the State is simply the name for all the institutions and mechanisms necessary to enable the citizen to realise the life of the family. If we keep steadily to that point of view, the State . . . will become . . . the higher plane of organisation on which the inner purposes of the family can alone be realised. (Quoted by Levitt 1988: xliii)

This might as readily have been written by Henry Jones, for whom 'the State [is] . . . the means of the freedom of its members' (Jones 1909: 100). It also might have come

straight from the Scottish common sense tradition, what Seligman (1992: 33) calls the 'Scottish moralists':

> what the idea of civil society meant to the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment was . . . primarily a realm of solidarity held together by the force of moral sentiments and natural affections.

Democracy guided by wise professionals deriving from the state their right to lead civil society was, everywhere, an outcome of the nineteenth-century debates about social organization. The Scottish contribution to that discussion was not inconsiderable, as Davie notes, but it was also not so distinctive as to warrant his distinction between it and Oxford. In practice, both common sense and Hegelian Idealism led to applied principles of the kind held by thousands of officials such as Mackenzie.

10.6 Conclusions

We may, then, say that Davie has a tendency to posit a utopian encounter between the wise ruler and the ruled in which a rational dialogue enables the principles of social organization to be refined by debate. His philosophy of government might have been more realistically attuned to the true difficulties of rule if his engagement had been not only with the Common Sense school but also with less sanguine strands of Scottish social thought. In particular, in the light of his otherwise eclectic erudition on the history of Scottish ideas, his scant attention to Thomas Carlyle and Alasdair MacIntyre is rather puzzling, and has denied him an opportunity to assess two systematically pessimistic Scottish accounts of democracy and ethics. Carlyle, recognizing that democracy was inevitable, could not help being appalled, because he could not believe, with the more optimistic Matthew Arnold of the next generation, that education could ever create such a civic spirit amongst the electorate as to guarantee wisdom in those who were chosen to rule. Democracy in the sense of mechanical 'head counting' was based on a false premise of equal capacity: 'of all the "rights of man", this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, held in the true course by him, is the indisputablest' (Carlyle 1840: 52). In the first of his *Latter Day Pamphlets* in 1850 he wrote:

> it is the everlasting privilege of the foolish to be governed by the wise; to be guided in the right path by those who know it better than they. This is the first 'right of man'; compared with which all other rights are as nothing—mere superfluities, corollaries which will follow of their own accord out of this; if they be not contradictions to this, and less than nothing. (Carlyle 1850)

Carlyle could offer to Davie's analysis an understanding of the Scottish roots of John Anderson's similar pessimism (which Davie does not acknowledge):

> We either have an education which is 'universal' in the sense of developing general standards of judgement but is not 'universal' in the sense of being for everyone; or else we have a general education in which standards are lost . . . I should argue that utilitarianism is one of the outlooks preparing the way for such degeneration. (Anderson 1980: 117)

Alasdair MacIntyre, a century after Carlyle and a generation after Anderson, saw a broken ethical tradition, not merely in Scotland (as Davie did) but across European culture, and sought salvation in 'local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are certainly upon us' (MacIntyre 1981: 263). He had something of the same interest in the moral significance of tradition for politics as is found in the Common Sense school but also in the thought deriving from Green and Jones: 'an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present' (MacIntyre 1981: 223). He remained, therefore, somewhat more optimistic than Carlyle, with his contemptuous dismissal of the possibility of universal enlightenment, and so was offering in a sense a response to Carlyle of the kind proposed by Raymond Williams: to respond, not to the contempt, but to 'the governing seriousness of a living effort, against which every cynicism, every kind of half-belief, every satisfaction in indifference, may be seen and placed, in an ultimate human contrast' (Williams 1958: 98). Williams, it may be added, is as firmly in that tradition of liberal radicalism which Davie despises as he is the heir to Carlyle and Arnold.

Davie's attempt to resurrect the relationship between Presbyterian minister and congregation is congruent both with Carlyle in his emphasis on leadership (a secular ministry) and with MacIntyre in his ideal of a remoralized community (a secular congregation), but he misses them both. Davie therefore responds to neither Carlyle's deep pessimism, even misanthropy, nor MacIntyre's despair that there is any universally effective response to the rule of the new barbarians. Castigating English radicals and their Scottish allies as vacuously optimistic, and resorting to the realism of the Scottish common sense tradition as an antidote, Davie yet ends up affirming a sort of American town-hall version of democracy as a mechanical distillation of common sense.

Nevertheless, there remains through Ferrier something of the Calvinist apprehension of human fallibility, and remembering this is perhaps Davie's unique contribution to developing the Scottish philosophical tradition into a twentieth-century understanding of politics and the state. Reflecting Ferrier's comments on others' judgements on our actions—and noting the echoes of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*—Davie detects an interest in the social significance of proper behaviour stretching back through the Enlightenment to the Reformation, and concludes from it that

> what teaches us self-control is our experience of the others' approbation or disapprobation of certain basic aspects of our behaviour which are unknown to us in their outward manifestation. (Davie 2003: 6)

Keefe (2007: 178), too, describes Ferrier as pointing out that 'morality involves the suppression of a person's natural passions', but also, following Mayo (2007: 163), notes Ferrier's subtle understanding of the nature of power: 'control can be exercised by the accelerator as well as by the brake'. In a political context, that might

be another way of phrasing the ethics of the welfare state—the ideal of using the expertise of professionals embedded in powerful institutions actively to shape the morality of society, in the manner, for instance, in which the UK National Health Service embodies an ethic of care as well as serving the instrumental goals of curing disease (Sykes 1997). If human evil is unavoidable, then social institutions may be needed to enforce what Hall (1995: 26) calls 'moderated hypocrisy'—an idea he takes from the Enlightenment Scots. Davie's reworking of Ferrier is thus a lucid demonstration of the relevance of the Scottish tradition to perennial political dilemmas.

How to place expertise at the service of society, how to ensure wisdom in those who govern, how to moderate their tendencies to excess, and how to reconcile their power with the apathy and limited knowledge of the many: these are still the central problems of democracy. Scotland has made many intellectual contributions to their debate, more varied and more ambivalent than Davie allows. It may be, in the end, that something like his common sense pragmatism is the best way of reconciling their divergent tendencies. That needs, however, something better than Davie's dismissal of the radical political tradition as utilitarian and crassly optimistic. It needs a recognition that, if Scottish thought is part of the European mainstream, as Davie firmly believes, then it will have been worthily influenced by England as well as by more fashionable places. Most controversially of all to late twentieth-century Scottish sensibilities, it demands a searching engagement, wholly absent from Davie, with that important strand in the Scottish tradition that is, with Carlyle, deeply sceptical of democracy.

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11

John Macmurray as a Scottish Philosopher

The Role of the University and the Means to Live Well

Esther McIntosh

11.1 Introduction

John Macmurray (1891–1976) was born into a Scottish Calvinist family. After a school education in Aberdeen, he studied Classics and Geology at Glasgow University, where the focus was on Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. Upon his graduation in 1913 Macmurray moved to Oxford, having obtained a place to study Greats at Balliol College, where he was tutored by A. D. Lindsay, a former student of Edward Caird (see Costello 2002: 58–9). Although Macmurray's studies were interrupted by the First World War, he subsequently completed the course and embarked on his philosophical career, staying in Balliol as John Locke Scholar in Mental Philosophy. Over the next ten years Macmurray obtained a succession of posts in the University of Manchester, the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, and a second post at Balliol College, Oxford, before he settled for sixteen years as Grote Professor of Mind and Logic at University College London (preceding A. J. Ayer and the turn to linguistic philosophy). During his time in London, Macmurray's engagement in left-wing politics brought him into contact with John Middleton Murry and Karl Polanyi (Costello 2002: 240–4). It was not until 1944 that Macmurray returned to Scotland to take up the post of Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh (succeeding A. E. Taylor to work alongside Norman Kemp Smith), where he remained until his retirement in 1958 and became personally acquainted with Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber (Costello 2002: 322).

Between the 1920s and the 1970s, Macmurray published a fairly large number of articles and monographs, the majority appearing in print between 1930 and 1960. During the 1930s he also gave a number of popular radio broadcasts, with the

intention of expressing philosophy in terms that the general public could comprehend, on the grounds that philosophy is borne out of 'common human experience' (Macmurray 1932: 68). Of more academic interest, however, are the Gifford Lectures that Macmurray was invited to deliver at Glasgow University in 1953 and 1954. These lectures, originally entitled 'The Form of the Personal' and published a few years later as the two volumes *The Self as Agent* (1957) and *Persons in Relation* (1961), are Macmurray's best-known works (and have been reissued several times, most recently in 1995).

11.2 The Function of Education

From this brief biography we can see that Macmurray spent most of his philosophical career in England; nevertheless, he maintained a pride in his Scottishness and a belief that his formative years in Scotland had imbued in him a Scottish mindset that was distinct from that of his English contemporaries (Costello 2002: 104–5). However, in the midst of the Second World War, Macmurray is clear that nationalism is dangerous, since it breeds exclusivity and a lack of tolerance (1941a: 471–2). Instead, he praises the Commonwealth insofar as it has produced political cohesion across diverse nations, stating: 'By fostering the differences of national culture and combining them, we enrich the common life' (1941a: 472). In fact, it is perhaps Macmurray's concern to produce a philosophy that enriches life that links him most closely with the Scottish philosophical tradition that precedes him.

Historically, philosophy was an integral part of the curriculum in Scottish universities for several hundred years (see Graham 2007). In addition, in contrast with English universities, as Walker explains, higher education in Scotland was democratic rather than elitist, formed on a principle of offering a generalist rather than (or at least before) a specialist education, in which philosophy had a central role (1994: ch. 2). At the root of the compulsory study of philosophy in Scottish universities was a respect for intellectual enquiry as a means to living life well: the study of philosophy was seen as a means to improving character by increasing wisdom, producing reflective and virtuous citizens.

In fact, as Hamilton and Turner explain, Edward Caird and A. D. Lindsay, who tutored Macmurray, modernized adult education on the basis of their belief that admirable citizens require a good higher education (2006: 195–209). In accordance with the inference that universities can improve the welfare of society, Caird and Lindsay held that adult education should be democratic—open to all regardless of financial capacity—and that non-vocational education (which includes the study of philosophy) should be state funded.

Moreover, Macmurray holds on to this notion of the university against a rising tide of university expansion and increasing specialization. He maintains that 'A university is primarily a centre of cultural life and cultural progress' (1944a: 278).

Consequently, he contends that a university education is distinct from school education in that it combines education with an application of knowledge in service to the community, by means of which culture is sustained and developed. Hence, he insists that a university 'must be a place where knowledge is *unified*, and not merely a common house for disjointed specialisms' (1944a: 279, emphasis in original). In other words, Macmurray holds that specialization without a broader knowledge base creates an imbalance; a university should 'combine a balanced general education with specialized training in some particular department of study' (1944a: 283). To prevent such an imbalance, according to Macmurray, universities must, in addition to teaching undergraduate students, maintain an active presence within the society in which they exist and increase knowledge through research. For Macmurray, these three aspects of a university's function are inseparable and grounded 'in the perennial needs of human nature and human society' (1944a: 284).

Macmurray's emphasis on the cultural significance of universities is both in keeping with that of the Glasgow idealists who influenced him and borne out in his written and practical work in the field of education. Although Macmurray's collection of papers on education remained unpublished, his work in promoting accessible and holistic education is well attested. During the 1940s Macmurray, together with Kenneth Barnes, founded the Wennington School in Lancashire. Based on the belief that play is a significant tool in a child's formal education, the school survived on limited finances for over thirty years and was commended for its results (see Costello 2002: 196 and 374). In addition, during his time in Edinburgh Macmurray campaigned successfully, on behalf of mature students, to reopen their college, Newbattle Abbey, and he was instrumental in establishing Britain's first university courses for nurses (Costello 2002: 347).

11.3 From Idealism to Agency

At the heart of Macmurray's approach to education is both his connection with the Glasgow idealists and his critique of idealism. Writing for the fortieth anniversary of the publication *British Weekly*, Macmurray acknowledges that British thought has been 'overborne by the impulse of . . . German Romanticism' (1926: 164). In particular, he notes that this is 'represented on its philosophical side by Caird's great work on the *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, and by the foundation of the Oxford School of Idealism under the leadership of T. H. Green' (1926: 165). Macmurray was clearly familiar with Caird's work, and his own work returns to Kant repeatedly. However, Macmurray is equally aware of the limitations of philosophical idealism and claims that it

> raises afresh the problem of Personality, but at a new level—a level where philosophy feels the need of setting the religious, the scientific, the artistic, and the practical and social activities of the human spirit side by side on a common level of validity, and of creating categories of thought which will enable us to grasp them together as functions of one self-conscious personal life. (1926: 165)

In Macmurray's work the idealists' notion of Absolute Mind is replaced with an emphasis on agency. Macmurray is dissatisfied with the persistence of elements of Cartesian mind–body dualism in Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. That is, while Kant's distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal makes room for sense perception, the emphasis on pure reason relies on a concept of mind that is abstracted from its relation to matter. For Macmurray, this philosophical emphasis on the mind is inadequate, given that the common experience of human beings is the interaction of mind and body. A comprehensive conception of the person must account for our experience of mind and body. Hence, Macmurray states: 'I cannot both be a body and have a body, nor can I be a mind and have a mind' (1935b: 272).

By taking embodied experience as a given, Macmurray makes no attempt either to prove or to explain the interaction between the mental and the physical. According to Macmurray, thought is one of the activities of the human person and, thus, it implies the existence of the self as agent, which, in turn, implies the existence of the physical body. Hence, he states: 'we should substitute the "I do" for the "I think" as our starting point and centre of reference' (1957: 84). Macmurray is not denying that thought is a mental activity; rather, he is insisting that thinking and acting are activities of the same indivisible self, even though action employs mind and body more than thought. Not only does action require a body, it also requires the existence of that which is other than the self. Thus, from the standpoint of agency the material self and the material world are a given, since, Macmurray explains: 'When I act I modify the world' (1957: 91).

Thought, then, occurs as reflection on what we know from immediate experience, in order that we might know it better; that is, we retreat from immediate experience into reflection when action is thwarted in some way. Reflection, therefore, engages with our memory of previous experiences and makes inferences concerning the likely outcome of an act given the similarity of circumstances to previous actions. Macmurray insists, however, that the purpose of thought is to 'enable us to resume the concrete activity of life' (1933b: 38). To put it another way, the conclusions of our thoughts need to be put to the test in practical activity in order that they be either verified or refuted.

Action is irreversible; it cannot be undone. Thus, to act is to choose one option out of the available range of options: 'a choice of one possibility which negates the possibility of all others' (1957: 139). Moreover, the reason for acting in a certain way is underpinned by the agent's intention, which might not be entirely conscious but will have the possibility of being expressed verbally. At the same time, action is made possible by a whole host of physical activity which we have learnt previously and can carry out without concentration. Consequently, Macmurray distinguishes between habitual activity, which he equates with motive, and deliberate action, which he equates with intentional activity. He states that habit is the 'aspect of our action, without which the action could not take place. It is integrated and subservient to the positive aspect of deliberate purpose in terms of which the action must be defined' (1957: 161–2). It is

through the limitation of attention, then, that the agent is able to focus on the intention and not on the habitual activity.

There is, in Macmurray's theory then, a 'rhythm of withdrawal and return' (1957: 181) whereby the agent ceases acting for the purpose of focusing on mental activity that will enable more effective future action. In this respect, Macmurray's notion of the self as agent unifies our mental and physical properties in a continuous pendulum of mental and physical activity. At its heart, Macmurray's agency theory has an empirical basis that requires and confirms the existence of the material world—that which is acted upon—by taking seriously our experience of ourselves as embodied minds.[1]

11.3.1 Rationality and the Emotions

In addition, Macmurray's attempt to balance the relation of mind and body includes an emphasis on the whole self that takes account of the emotions. It is the emotions that underpin our choices in action. On this basis Macmurray contends that, as agents: 'What we feel and how we feel is far more important than what we think and how we think' (1932: 142). As with thought, it is action that determines whether or not our emotions concerning an object are accurate. In this respect, Macmurray holds that an appropriate emotion is tied to the nature of the object. Macmurray suggests that fear of something that cannot hurt us is inappropriate, whereas appropriate emotion 'grasps the value of what is not ourselves and enjoys it or disapproves it' (1932: 147).

A significant corollary of Macmurray's account of the emotions is his radical interpretation of reason in relation to them. He contends that: 'Whatever is a characteristic and essential expression of human nature must be an expression of reason' (1935c: 7). Contrary to the view that the emotions are chaotic and irrational and need to be subordinated to cognitive reason in order that action be rational and unemotional, Macmurray maintains not only that the emotions are essential to action but also that the emotions have the capacity for rationality. Emotions, he states, 'can be rational or irrational in precisely the same way as thoughts, through the correctness or incorrectness of their reference to reality' (1935c: 11).[2] In other words, both thought and emotion are rational when they relate accurately to the nature of the object. However, Macmurray is quick to point out that the educational system has favoured the intellect over the emotions to the extent that the development of rational thought has not been matched by a corresponding development in rational emotion, with the effect that inappropriate emotions are a common occurrence.

[1] Macmurray's theory of agency could be supported by Strawson, for example, and has proved useful to feminist theology. (See Strawson 1987; Parsons 2002.)

[2] Macmurray's account of rational emotion is supported by what de Sousa terms 'axiological rationality' (see de Sousa 1987: 171ff.).

To increase the rationality of emotion, Macmurray holds, we need to match the educational emphasis on the intellect with education in emotion, through training in 'sensibility', which is 'the capacity to enjoy organic experience, to enjoy the satisfaction of the senses' (1935c: 19). According to Macmurray, an education in sensory awareness will enable the appreciation of the intrinsic worth of objects as opposed to merely valuing that which is of use. In other words, the intellect gives us knowledge of an object's instrumental value, but this Macmurray argues is 'knowledge *about* things, not knowledge *of* them. It does not reveal knowledge of the world as it is. Only emotional knowledge can do that' (1935c: 22, emphasis in original). Admittedly, while our capacity for experiencing pleasure would increase with emotional education, so would our capacity for experiencing pain. Yet, Macmurray claims, it is much better to live a life full of capacity than to shy away from the risks that accompany it. He states:

> We must choose between a life that is thin and narrow, uncreative and mechanical, with the assurance that even if it is not very exciting it will not be intolerably painful; and a life in which the increase in its fullness and creativeness brings a vast increase in delight, but also in pain and hurt. (1935c: 25)[3]

Thus, Macmurray's account of the rationality of emotion and its capacity for education is reminiscent of Aristotle's work on the passions in *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Both Macmurray and Aristotle insist on the potential rationality of the emotions through training that encourages properly directed emotions. Moreover, Macmurray asserts that this does not mean dictating correct emotion and squashing negative emotions; rather, it is the development of mature recognition and discrimination of the range of emotions. Hence, he states: 'Emotional education should be, therefore, a considered effort to teach children to feel for themselves; in the same sense that their intellectual training should be an effort to teach them to think for themselves' (1935c: 39). To be successful, such an education will have to overcome an inculturation that subordinates emotions to the intellect in favour of reintegrating body and mind, reason and emotion. Significantly, therefore, while an intellectual education has productive and profitable citizens as its goal, emotional education focuses on living well and thereby improves the quality of life.

Admittedly, Macmurray's account of emotional education and its benefits can sound idealistic, and yet his own efforts with the Wennington School (mentioned previously) are testament to its practicability and its potential for success. Moreover, contemporary neurological and physiological investigation now provides a scientific basis from which to support Macmurray's claims and more widespread emotional education. Daniel Goleman, for example, in his 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, uses brain science and longitudinal studies to confirm the significance of our emotional brain, revealing that our 'emotional intelligence' is

[3] Hence, Macmurray holds that the utilitarian attempt to increase pleasure and decrease pain is conceptually flawed.

a better indicator of success than our IQ. Success here refers to the integration into society and happiness in adulthood, measured by factors such as the ability to retain employment and sustain long-term relationships, rather than materialistic excess or celebrity status; what Macmurray would refer to as living well and is more commonly referred to in contemporary studies as well-being. To have a high emotional intelligence, Goleman explains, is to be 'able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope' (1995: 34). While schools adopting emotional education focus on each of the above-mentioned areas, empathy is a key focus for improving interpersonal skills and has been found to reduce bullying and increasing community spirit; the other factors, Goleman attests, have been effective at reducing depression and violent outbursts, and, significantly, improving academic grades (1995: 229–87). I suspect that the ability to control impulse and delay gratification might be useful in reducing financial debt too. For Macmurray, emotional maturity would enable the maintenance of the quality of relationships rather than expecting the institutions of family and marriage to sustain them (see Macmurray 1935c: 75).

11.3.2 The Limits of Science

It is worth noting that Macmurray's understanding of the importance of educating the emotions has implications for art; it is a 'training in artistry' (Macmurray 1935c: 42). That is, while an intellectual education provides scientific knowledge of the instrumental worth of objects and, therefore, of the means the agent might employ to realize an intention, the emotions enable discernment of the intrinsic worth of objects and, hence, of a desirable end of an action, which is, for Macmurray, closely connected to artistic reflection (see Macmurray 1961b). Yet, Macmurray is concerned that the educational system with which he was familiar placed much greater emphasis on scientific investigation than artistic creativity, thereby providing little guidance as to the desirable application of scientific knowledge. In this respect he alleges that 'science is out of bounds' (1961b: 23; see also Macmurray 1939). That is, in Macmurray's opinion, the value judgements concerning the use to which science is put are external to science itself and involve a different sort of knowledge. For Macmurray, science is primarily concerned with matters of fact, whereas art is concerned with matters of value; in other words, valuable ends are determined by the emotional life and the sort of artistic reflection that grasps the intrinsic worth of an object.[4]

If we were to take this aspect of Macmurray's argument seriously, then, the pursuit of art and the development of an aesthetic appreciation, while often regarded as a luxury, would be given an educational status equivalent to that of science, on the grounds that it is vital in choosing between possible ends and, therefore, in the effort

[4] A work of art, then, is a representation of an artist's aesthetic appreciation of its subject.

to live well. However, Macmurray's main criticism of the changes afoot within British universities in the 1940s is that 'the development of science and its applications has disturbed the balance of traditional university life' (Macmurray 1944a: 277). As we discussed earlier, Macmurray maintains that universities are places for cultural progress, and yet he fears that the encroaching sciences are being studied in isolation from other aspects of the traditional curriculum. Not only does Macmurray view the separation of scientific study as a demise in the 'older and more important functions' (Macmurray 1944a: 278) of a university—namely, equipping students to live well—he also blames this shift for increasing tension between science and religion, or, rather, a conflict between science and the aspects of culture that maintain social cohesion (Macmurray 1944a: 280). Thus, as Walker holds, while Oxbridge is focused on 'how can we know'—the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, Macmurray is concerned with 'how can we know what we should do'—the pursuit of knowledge in order that our action might be more effective (Walker 1994: 139–40).

Moreover, George Davie equates Macmurray's concern with the boundaries of science as a characteristic of a Scottish metaphysic of the period, in which the central focus is the relation of mind to matter. He notes that the spread of philosophy of science from Oxbridge to Scotland 'put over the view that philosophy, when it functioned properly, was the handmaiden of the sciences, and not as men like Kemp Smith, Campbell and MacMurray had maintained, their metaphysical critic' (1986: 164). For Davie, it is his view of science that marks Macmurray as the last in a particular line of Scottish philosophers.[5]

11.4 From Agency to Relationality

Macmurray's theory of the self as agent rejects the notion of the solitary self and postulates the necessity of relation. Action requires that which resists and supports the action; hence, the agent exists in relation to that which is other than the self. He states: 'We know existence by participating in existence. This participation is action . . . Existence then is the primary datum . . . What is given is the existence of the world in which we participate' (1961a: 17). Moreover, that which is other than the self includes the material, organic, and personal worlds; in acting to realize an intention, the agent encounters resistance from other agents who have conflicting intentions. Hence, Macmurray states: ' "I" exist only as one element in the complex "You and I" ' (1961a: 24).

Relational existence is a permanent feature of humanity, Macmurray argues, from birth. Thus, he opposes the Aristotelian portrayal of human infants as animalistic, but with the potential for adult rationality. On the contrary, Macmurray

[5] He notes, however, that Macmurray's influence shifted to psychology and was rediscovered in philosophy in the late twentieth century (see Davie 1986: 170).

argues that human infants are ill adapted to survival and exhibit few of the animalistic instincts exhibited by other species. The extent of a newborn baby's adaptation to the environment consists of the ability to relay 'feelings of comfort or discomfort; of satisfaction and dissatisfaction' (Macmurray 1961a: 48). In comparison with other animals, the human infant is totally dependent upon adults for her or his survival for a surprisingly long time. An adult carer has to interpret the infant's cries of distress by a process of trial and error; when the child stops crying, the adult will be reassured that the child's needs have been met. Nevertheless, in addition to crying to communicate a need, a human infant also makes happy, gurgling noises when she or he sees a familiar face or hears a familiar voice, which go beyond those necessary to reinforce the relationship on which they depend for survival.[6] According to Macmurray: 'This is evidence that the infant has a need which is not simply biological but personal, a need to be in touch with the mother; and in conscious perceptual relation with her' (1961a: 49).[7] More than employing biological drives for survival then, a human baby is born with an impulse to communicate with other humans.

It is undeniable that human babies enjoy contact with other humans and suffer negative effects if they are denied physical intimacy, and, moreover, that their survival is dependent upon the knowledge, thoughts, and actions of their carers. In addition, as the child gains physical control and attains mobility, rather than becoming adapted to survival, the child is at greater risk of harm. As learned skills become habitual and further skills are acquired, it is up to the carer to direct the child towards their appropriate use. In effect, therefore, the child is encouraged to make distinctions between 'right' and 'wrong' behaviour and to cooperate with the carer. Hence, rather than learning self-sufficiency and survival in nature, the human infant learns 'to submit to reason' (Macmurray 1961a: 59). Yet positive relations amongst humans are so much more than this. Inasmuch as the child rewards the carer with unnecessary smiles and giggles, carers talk to, play with, and cuddle their children to an extent that goes far beyond the biologically necessary. In Macmurray's words: 'These gestures symbolize a mutual delight in the relation which unites them in a common life: they are expressions of affection through which each communicates to the other their delight in the relationship, and they represent, for its own sake, a consciousness of communicating' (1961a: 63). Significantly, then, human relations are more than mere matter of fact; they contain an intentional element. Moreover, the intention to sustain human relations through communication is a much more inclusive account of humanity than one which relies on cognitive capacity and excludes the profoundly disabled (see Swinton and McIntosh 2000).

[6] This view is supported by psychoanalysis (see, for example, Guntrip 1961).

[7] Macmurray acknowledges that this does not need to be the biological mother, but any carer, male or female.

11.4.1 Growth to Adulthood

During the early stages of human life, the carer is motivated in acting to satisfy the child's needs by love for the child and fear for the child's safety. Similarly, Macmurray holds, the child's cries of distress and smiles of contentment are expressions of embryonic forms of these motives (see Macmurray 1961a: 62). These motives persist into adulthood, since humans do not mature into independent beings but into mutually interdependent ones. It is through this germinal awareness of belonging with and existing in opposition to the carer that the child's awareness of both self and other grows, and leads, in time, to empathy. In addition, as the child learns to distinguish between carers, he or she becomes aware of being a member of a wider circle of humans, and the child's behaviour towards those other human beings will be connected to how much care they provide.

Initially, the young child sees all objects as animate and has to learn to discriminate between the animate and the inanimate. This discrimination is a practical one; it is through active relation with the various others that the child discovers which sorts of action are appropriate to the nature of the specific other. Despite the temptation towards dualism here, the discrimination of the different categories of other is threefold, since, in addition to human beings and inanimate objects, the child will become aware of the category of animals as others that do not care for the child but do respond and are not of purely instrumental value to humans. During the process of discrimination the child also becomes acquainted with the notion of possession, learning to associate objects with their owners. In this respect, Macmurray explains: '"My body" continues to occupy an ambiguous position in relation to me. From one point of view it *is* me or part of me; from another it is an object which I "have" or "own" or "possess", as I possess my clothes or my fountain-pen' (1961a: 81, emphasis in original).

It is essential for the child's development that the pattern of contact with the carer follows a 'rhythm of withdrawal and return' (Macmurray 1961a: 76). While the carer is absent, the child is anxious for her or his survival and for the continuation of the relationship on which she or he depends for survival. During the withdrawal phase then, the child's actions are motivated by fear for the self, and, in this respect, can be referred to as 'egocentric' (Macmurray 1961a: 89). Nevertheless, the successful growth from childhood to adulthood is not measured so much by the acquisition of skills during the withdrawal phase, Macmurray contends, as by the child's attitude to the carer's return. In other words, growth to maturity requires that the child learns to cooperate and mutual affection persists. However, if the child refuses to engage in a cooperative relationship with the carer, she or he has two options: 'either run away or fight' (Macmurray 1961a: 103). According to Macmurray, a child who 'runs away' from the carer's attempts at cooperation becomes submissive and fantasizes about an imaginary carer who does not require cooperation, while a child who 'fights' against cooperation uses aggression in an attempt to force the carer to bend to the child's demands. Submission and aggression are interchangeable modes of interaction

stemming from the defensive motive of fear for the self; although these modes of relating can persist into adult relations, the frequency of the rhythm of withdrawal and return provides multiple opportunities for the motive of love to establish the cooperation necessary for successful adult relations.

Object-relations theories provide support for Macmurray's theory of child development and the essential nature of carer–child relation. As Winnicott states: 'if you set out to describe a baby, you will find you are describing a *baby and someone*' (1962: 137, emphasis in original). Moreover, psychoanalytic theories agree that reciprocal human relations do not simply serve biological functions or childhood; rather, human relations are craved for their own sake and are of the utmost importance to human beings throughout adulthood, having a profound effect on mental health (see Guntrip 1971: 137–57). As a philosopher and not a psychologist, Macmurray demonstrates an intelligible and incisive account of human relations and child development, which, according to Jones, 'provides a philosophical justification for the relational psychoanalytic theories' (1996: 26).

11.5 Politics and Society

Macmurray's account of human beings as agents 'constituted by their mutual relation to one another' (Macmurray 1961a: 24) has wide-ranging political and moral implications. As mentioned above, when faced with an agent who requires cooperation, the child responds with love, aggression, or submission. These three attitudes are not entirely distinct and separable; actions can contain elements of more than one disposition, in the same way that the dominant motive of love or fear contains and subordinates the opposing motive. However, since actions in relation have effects on other agents in the relation, there is an inherent moral aspect to action. A child, as we have seen, might act cooperatively so as to aid the carer in action, or the child might act with the intention of preventing cooperation and ultimately aiming to prevent the carer from pursuing his or her intended course of action. Hence, Macmurray states: 'The moral problematic of all action—the possibility that any action may be morally right or wrong—arises from the conflict of wills, and morality, in any mode, is the effort to resolve this conflict' (1961a: 116).

Since the attitudes prevalent in the child–carer relation persist into adulthood, Macmurray's theory is both descriptive and normative. Children and adults express their human nature through reciprocal relations. Humans who adopt a submissive or an aggressive attitude in their relations with others will frustrate their own ability to exercise their nature by preventing mutual cooperation. Thus, we have to acknowledge that our actions can limit the freedom of others to act to achieve their intentions and, similarly, our freedom to act is bound up with the intentions and actions of other agents. For Macmurray, then, 'Every individual agent is therefore responsible to all other agents for his [or her] actions. Freedom and responsibility are, then, aspects of one fact' (Macmurray 1961a: 119). We are responsible, as members of groups, for

the effects that our actions have in supporting and strengthening or opposing and weakening the relations in that group. Nevertheless, responsibility in action is limited by the available knowledge and the intention behind the action; an agent cannot be responsible for the unintended consequences of an action.

Macmurray's account of the morality of action extends beyond familial relations to society in general; it applies to the relations among families, social groups, and across nations. At the national level, Macmurray contends that the submissive, aggressive, and loving attitudes of the child can be detected on a wider scale as pragmatic, contemplative, and communal nations. No one nation will operate exclusively from one of these 'categories of apperception' (Macmurray 1961a: 110), but at times the overriding dominance of one or other of the modes will be detectable. On the one hand, a nation that is dominated by contemplative concerns valorizes the spiritual over the material and functions in accordance with an aesthetic vision of good practice. On the other hand, a nation that is dominated by pragmatic concerns valorizes the material over the spiritual and functions on the basis of technical merit and regulations. Pragmatic and contemplative modes are egocentric, concerned respectively with power and intuition, whereas the communal mode is concerned with positive relations amongst agents; it is, according to Macmurray, 'heterocentric' (1961a: 122).

11.5.1 Pragmatic and Contemplative Attitudes

In support of his categorization, Macmurray claims that 'Thomas Hobbes, the father of modern political theory, provides an almost perfect example of an analysis of society in the pragmatic mode of apperception' (1961a: 134). Even though Hobbes makes no attempt to give an historical account of social interaction, his portrayal of humans as solitary, fearful, and aggressive does fit the pragmatic mode as described by Macmurray. In Hobbes' logical analysis, members of society recognize the need for cooperation, but cooperate only if sufficiently fearful of the law (Hobbes 1991: 121). Hence, the state exists as a pragmatic tool for ensuring the stability of social unity, by force. Macmurray holds that Hobbes' perception of humanity is at fault, since, for Hobbes, it is human reason as opposed to human nature that gives rise to positive inter-human relations. On the contrary, Macmurray insists:

> People enjoy being together and working together, quite apart from any calculation of self-interest, and even at times against their private interests. The war of all against all is at best an abnormal state of affairs, and a man [or woman] with no interests whatever in the fortunes of his [or her] fellows is a freak of nature, and hardly human. (1961a: 139)

As the antithesis to Hobbes' pragmatic apperception, but with a similar separation of human nature and reason, Macmurray cites Rousseau. According to Macmurray, while Hobbes views human nature as the cause of enmity and reason as the grounds for social cooperation, Rousseau views reason as the source of conflict and human nature as the grounds of social unity (1961a: 140). For Rousseau, humans have the capacity for self-improvement, but seeking it results in both virtuous action and

corruption; hence, the need for a social contract (Rousseau 1973: 165). Macmurray claims that Rousseau's conception of society fits Macmurray's description of the contemplative mode of apperception, since satisfaction in the present is to be found through identifying 'ourselves with the ideal end' and identifying 'our individual wills with the general will of society' (Macmurray 1961a: 141). In other words, Rousseau's social contract bears similarities to Macmurray's description of the child in flight, who imagines an ideal carer as a mechanism for submitting to rather than resisting the carer.

11.5.2 Social Bonds

Thus, social bonds are determined by the dispositions of the members of a group. If humans act from a negative motive of fear, social bonds will be maintained either by force or consent. Yet, Macmurray argues that humans, by their nature, require positive relations with their fellows for the growth and the full expression of that nature. In short, 'I need you to be myself' (Macmurray 1961a: 150). Hence, the relations in groups with negative motives might be described as impersonal, in contrast with groups that act from the positive motive of love and might be described as personal. Macmurray emphasizes the distinction between these two types of groups by referring to the former as 'societies' and the latter as 'communities' (1961a: 145). While, therefore, the term 'society' can be applied to any group of related humans, Macmurray highlights the differences between 'groups which consist of people cooperating for certain specific purposes, like trade unions, or cricket clubs, or cooperative societies', and 'groups which are bound together by something deeper than any purpose—by the sharing of a common life' (Macmurray 1941b: 22).

In other words, it is the kind of unity that holds a group together that is of primary importance for Macmurray. Nevertheless, this does not mean that societies and communities are mutually exclusive; on the contrary, there will be degrees of society within a community, and vice versa. Societies are formed and bound by a particular function, and are therefore a means to an end (even though communal bonds might develop among the members of a society). Communities are formed spontaneously as ends-in-themselves, fulfilling the human need for companionship (although some operations of the community will involve cooperating at a functional level). Thus, Macmurray states: 'The members of a community are in communion with one another, and their association is a fellowship' (1961a: 146). Crucial to this aspect of Macmurray's theory is the contention that the relations among people in a society are based on their functions in the group, whereas the relations among people in a community are based on their intrinsic worth. When we recognize the intrinsic worth of another human being, we relate to them as a person rather than as a useful object; it is only in communities, therefore, that we relate to one another *as persons*. Consequently, Macmurray argues that societies are necessary for and justified by their reference to communities. He states: 'The functional life is *for* the personal life; the personal life is *through* the functional life' (1941f: 822, emphasis in original). If we

were to translate this into more contemporary terminology we might say that our working life supports our family life and that our family life is possible because of our working life. In fact, Macmurray argues for what is now referred to as 'work–life balance', insisting that the functional life and its concerns with efficiency and resources must not override the personal life and its capacity for mutual enjoyment and shared experience. Such a balance, Macmurray contends, will require that the state exercise justice in running the economy; he states: 'maintaining, improving and adjusting the indirect or economic relations of persons is the sphere of politics' (1961a: 188).

11.5.3 *Justice and the State*

Justice is the least that is required of any moral action and essential to the morality of apparently virtuous acts. Justice represents both basic fairness and the standard by which acts of care, for example, retain their moral character and avoid either smothering an individual or neglecting other actions. On the one hand, Macmurray explains, justice 'expresses the minimum of reciprocity and interest in the other . . . what can rightly be exacted' and, on the other hand, 'justice seems to be the *sine qua non* of all morality, the very essence of righteousness, in a sense the whole of morality' (1961a: 188). In a society, where human beings are functionally related to one another and affected by the actions of others with whom they are indirectly related, morality is maintained by exercising justice in cooperative activities. In this respect Macmurray advocates a minimalist state arguing for state intervention in the relations of citizens only when the trust necessary for social cooperation is lacking. Nevertheless, if the law is either too extensive or too minimalist, some groups will experience injustice and revolt. Hence, the aim of the law is to achieve justice as efficiently as possible, which, Macmurray holds, means exercising 'the minimum of interference with the practical freedom of the individual which is necessary to keep the peace' (1961a: 194).

At the same time, however, he recognizes that large societies or societies composed of groups with diverging customs will require greater state intervention for ensuring cooperation. In particular, global trade has produced a global economic network of interdependent relations of cooperation, in contrast with the historical self-sufficiency of cities or nations, increasing competition across former boundaries and requiring extensive regulation to avoid exploitation. However, Macmurray warns that we must guard against personification of the state by remembering that it is an instrument of justice. To erroneously idolize the state, he argues, is to expect the state to create community, but, as we have noted, there is a distinction in Macmurray's work between society and community; societies can be organized into existence, communities cannot.

To overlook the utility value of the state, he asserts, by ascribing to it an intrinsic value 'is to make power the supreme good' and 'to invert the logical relation between means and ends' (1961a: 199). While there are some circumstances in which means can be accumulated rationally in advance of deciding on the ends to which those

means will be put to use, in the case of the state, Macmurray argues, the accumulation of power can become an end in itself. If the state is amassing power for its own sake, it will value its citizens only insofar as they make the state powerful; that is, only insofar as they are economically valuable to the state. In such a situation, Macmurray states: 'Law becomes not the means to justice but the criterion of justice' (1961a: 200), with the effect that the interests of state power override the interests of justice.

For justice to be served, the law cannot be the standard of justice but must intend justice by limiting the power that individuals, nations, and corporations have over others. We are obliged to abide by the limitations imposed by law, then, inasmuch as the law enforces such limitations in order that our actions do not have unjust consequences for others. Morality in action, therefore, is bound up with the intention to create and sustain justice; in Macmurray's words: 'Justice is an aspect of morality; it is a restriction which I impose on my own power for the sake of others' (1961a: 201).

Macmurray's understanding of justice is a demanding one; not only does it require that we limit our power to act in order that we do not limit another's ability to act, it also requires that we revolt if the laws set by the state are failing to achieve justice. Moreover, given the reality of global trade, Macmurray suggests that justice cannot be served in the absence of a global law that prevents nations from competing for power and special privilege. Nations will come into conflict with one another if their intentions clash; hence, Macmurray insists that the fair distribution of resources requires that 'There must be a compatibility of ends. Our intentions must not merely be possible. They must be compossible with those of all others' (1950: 50). In keeping with the emphasis on social cooperation and compossibility, Macmurray is opposed to nationalism and in favour of international unity. While not denying the possibility of national pride within international relations, Macmurray is opposed to nationalism as a political policy on the grounds that it is spurious and divisive (see Macmurray 1933a: 70). Furthermore, Macmurray believes that the political union of Great Britain is evidence of the possibility of uniting nations and overcoming nationalism (see Macmurray 1943: 10). He would, therefore, presumably be opposed to the movements for the independence of Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall from the rest of England, but not necessarily opposed to devolution, and in favour of greater unity with the rest of Europe. In addition, Macmurray does not discuss the difficulties in reaching agreement across diverse nations (which we have witnessed over environmental policies, for example). Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge that the wealthier nations have contributed to the sharing of resources when poorer nations have been struck by natural disasters, such as tsunamis and earthquakes, and that the United Nations represents a form of international political cohesion and an intention to increase international justice, despite debates over its effectiveness.

11.5.4 Types of Government

Understandably, Macmurray's work on international unity stems from his experience of and involvement in world war, which convinced him that democratic institutions represent the only solutions to fascism. Moreover, he insists that the freedom

and equality entailed in democracy will be realized only if the state exercises the minimum of interference necessary to maintain social cohesion without allowing particular groups to obtain special advantage. In other words, the key distinction between a totalitarian state and a democratic one is that the former controls all areas of life, whereas the latter is limited in the areas of life that it controls. He states:

> There are reaches of human life—and these the most essential, the most human—which in the nature of things lie outside the proper scope of political control. The moment we lose hold of this central issue—the limitation of political authority—democracy is lost, however seemingly 'democratic' the institutions may be which remain. (1941b: 9–10)

Again Macmurray expects the citizen to be proactive in its relations with the state, remembering that politicians exist to serve the populous and not vice versa. He insists that it is up to the citizens to set the limits of political control and establish the manner in which certain areas of human life will remain free of political interference.

Macmurray refers to a government whose political power is limited in the interests of democratic freedom as a '*positive* government', which he contrasts with the notion of a '*negative* government' (1943: 7, emphasis in original). In a negative democracy, he suggests, the government exercises limited control over the culture or the economy. It is essential to democracy that cultural freedoms—freedom of conscience, thought, speech—remain outside governmental jurisdiction, but the reverse is true of economic freedom. That is, the free trade of a capitalist economy benefits only those with capital and prevents the government from sharing the nation's economic resources equitably. Twentieth-century liberal democracy in Britain, however, maintained both cultural freedom and economic freedom, operating thereby as a negative democracy. Consequently, the progress of democracy is limited by the nation's economic inequalities. If we want to increase democracy, we have to realize, Macmurray asserts, that 'whereas cultural freedom grows as democracy advances, economic freedom decreases' (1943: 15). In a negative democracy the government is forced to intervene to prevent riots and exploitation between those with labour and those with capital; it might also subsidize struggling business to prevent economic collapse, but it cannot act positively to redistribute the nation's wealth equitably. In economic terms, then, a negative democracy produces more of an oligarchy, where the wealthy few have considerable power and influence, as opposed to producing equality of status and opportunity for the less wealthy majority.

Macmurray insists, therefore, that more expansive democracy, a positive democracy, would be produced by giving the government greater control of the nation's economy. While we might be anxious that losing economic freedom would compromise democracy, Macmurray contends that this would not be the case so long as cultural freedom was retained. He states: 'we can remove the ban on government control of the economic field and still remain a democracy, provided always that the cultural field remains outside the competence of political authority and we devise the machinery to enforce this limitation upon the government' (1943: 17).

In this respect Macmurray is clearly influenced by the rising socialist movement of the 1940s; nevertheless, he does not retract this opinion even after the realities of Soviet Russia are revealed. It seems that Macmurray's belief in the benefits of socialism outweigh his disappointment with the corrupt forms that came about. He remains committed to economic equality on the grounds that 'The means of life are also the means of a good life' (Macmurray 1943: 21). In other words, cultural freedom becomes an unrealistic ideal for those who do not have the financial means to enjoy it, and this situation is exacerbated by the capitalist system and its free market economy. In fact, Macmurray is sufficiently convinced of the inevitability of socialism in Britain that he focuses his discussion on the means for retaining cultural freedom in the absence of economic freedom. While Macmurray's efforts to guard against totalitarianism are understandable given the era in which he is writing, he was mistaken about the predictability of socialism; indeed, throughout the 1980s and 1990s Britain saw a decrease in state control of the means of production and an increase in their privatization. Thus, even though he did not foresee subsequent economic crises, Macmurray suggests that

> the powerful economic interests . . . could, if they were prepared to do so, disrupt the economic system upon which we all depend for our livelihood. The threat of an economic dictatorship is already present in negative democracy, and in a crisis it might become actual. In such circumstances it becomes a question whether an economic dictatorship in the hands of government is not a lesser evil than an economic dictatorship in the hands of an association of private citizens. (1943: 28)

Macmurray is not advocating economic dictatorship, but he is advocating a government that is somehow under public control and able to utilize the economic resources of the nation for the benefit of all its citizens, according to their needs. Hence, Macmurray promotes extensive decentralization of government that will allow local decisions to be made regarding the economic needs and most beneficial use of resources for local citizens. Greater equality in the distribution of resources, however, is heavily reliant on the commitment of civil servants to increasing democracy for all citizens.

11.5.5 Marxism and Communism

Clearly, Macmurray's high regard for socialist principles and his understanding of the relation between those with capital and those with labour stems from his understanding of Marxism. Macmurray is quick to separate Marxism from communism, however, given his religious underpinnings, which we will analyse in due course (see Macmurray 1933c). Moreover, while the adoption of Marxist realism takes Macmurray beyond the idealism of the Scottish philosophy that he inherited, his use of Marxism to argue for socialism is in keeping with the democratic principles of the Scottish universities.

Macmurray is particularly interested in the fact that Marx's analysis of society is undertaken from an economic standpoint. Furthermore, Macmurray emphasizes the fact that 'the relation between capital and labour really means the relation between the *people* who won't starve if they don't work, and the *people* who will starve if they don't work' (1933c: 47, emphasis added). In other words, while Macmurray is not in entire agreement with Marxism, he is concerned with the economic relations of groups of people. He maintains that changes in economic circumstances with have a great impact on societal relations; that is, groups of people related to one another on instrumental grounds in their economic lives. Nevertheless, he suggests that communities—groups of people related to one another on the basis of companionship—can withstand economic variation without necessarily being drastically altered. At first it seems that Macmurray underestimates the impact of poverty on communities. Yet, his point is that not all relations are bound up with the economic arrangements of a society and, therefore, while Marxism offers a helpful critique of the labour market, it does not account for the relations of persons as persons. Inasmuch as relations between persons transcend their economic circumstances and their functions in society, they are, Macmurray claims, 'superorganic' (1933c: 67).

Macmurray acknowledges that human societies appear to be organic and confined by their economic status. He admits that societies struggle to amass and control the means of production, and that in capitalist societies there is class division with the majority being economically controlled by a few. Moreover, such a situation frustrates the relation of persons as persons, encouraging competition for profit rather than cooperation and the meeting of equals. Nevertheless, Macmurray realizes that a government-enforced system of economic equality will not be a just one; instead of eliminating class division, it will introduce dictators. Justice, for Macmurray, involves the eradication of economic privilege, but, at the same time, the state has to remain a servant of the people. A planned economy and democracy can only coexist, he argues, when individuality is overcome by communal bonds that are strong enough for cooperation to be voluntary, which 'indeed, is the real need of all human nature' (Macmurray 1933c: 95).

With the passing of time, Macmurray's references to communism become less pronounced. Obviously the dictatorships that existed in communist countries weakened its plausibility, while the anti-communist sentiment in the west made it a dangerous proposal. In addition, Macmurray is critical of Marx's account of society on the grounds that it is based on an entirely organic conception of human relations, which, according to Macmurray, represents a weakness, an incompleteness, in its interpretation of human relationality. However, Macmurray retains his dissatisfaction with capitalism and his belief in the state ownership of industry and finance, alongside a strong sense of community for the creation of a democratic, classless society. In fact, Macmurray's claim that democracy requires socialism and that socialism can

avoid totalitarianism if it maintains democracy has been supported by contemporary democrats and socialists (see Gamble 1991: 18–31). This is a far cry, however, from New Labour's private–public partnerships.[8]

11.5.6 *Equality and Freedom*

Despite the historical failures of socialism, Macmurray's belief in the need for societal reform (rather than violent revolution) persists, because it is founded on concepts of freedom and equality that are contained within his understanding of the human need for relationality. Here Macmurray's emphasis on economic equality is clarified, since equality of opportunity requires financial means; nevertheless, Macmurray's primary concern is with equality of value and consideration, whereby all humans are valued equally and their voice counts equally in society. Freedom, for Macmurray, is bound up with human nature; it refers to the freedom to act in accordance with human nature, which, as we have seen, involves engaging in relationships of equality. In other words, freedom and equality are mutually inclusive categories; freedom of expression is made possible through the relations of equals and being equal involves having the freedom to act in accordance with one's nature.

Nevertheless, freedom is paradoxical; 'It is at once the Alpha and Omega of our humanity' (Macmurray 1950: 18). More controversially, Macmurray claims that it is not just economic factors and unequal relations that prevent people from exercising freedom; we are, he contends, afraid of freedom. Rather, we are afraid of the responsibility that accompanies freedom, craving the safety of security instead. While 'Fear is an essential element in our make-up, without which we should not be human' (Macmurray 1950: 28), preventing reckless action, too much fear will leave us paralysed in the face of action and unable to choose which course of action to pursue. As a result of our awareness that we cannot predict all the consequences of our actions and that we could have chosen otherwise, we seek to increase our defences against those consequences. However, each defence only reveals a further area of vulnerability, thereby increasing our fear and hampering our freedom to act. Thus, Macmurray argues that we are only free in our actions if we overcome our fear by accepting responsibility for the consequences, instead of seeking security.

Our freedom to act is maximized if our means are consonant with our ends. In the west, however, Macmurray suggests that desire has outstripped resource with the effect that freedom is decreased. Hence, he states that 'Humility is the handmaid of freedom'(1950: 24). Furthermore, the maintenance of relations of equals means not using one's freedom to act to prevent another from acting; hence 'the freedom of each of us is relative to that of the others' (Macmurray 1950: 24). It is, therefore, futile to attempt to obtain greater freedom for oneself, since we are interdependent beings whose freedom can be restricted by others. At best, we can aim not to curtail the

[8] That is, despite former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's claims to have been influenced by Macmurray. For further analysis of the disjunction between Macmurray and Blair, see McIntosh 2007b.

freedom of others in the hope that others will do likewise; we increase our freedom to act through cooperation rather than individualism. Thus, our freedom is conditional upon sustaining positively motivated relations with our fellows. In Macmurray's words: 'The primary condition of freedom, to which all other conditions are related, lies in the character and the quality of human relations' (1950: 26).

Where relations are indirect, such as in the global marketplace, it is the role of governments to ensure the fair distribution of means; Macmurray refers to this as the 'socialization of means' within and across societies (1950: 31). Yet the state cannot control the 'socialization of ends' (Macmurray 1950: 31) also necessary for increased freedom in action; this is the realm of community and the relations therein. Freedom in society is, Kirkpatrick holds, 'atomistic/contractarian' (1985: 568); fear of the other is suppressed by legal restraints and the appearance of cooperation is sustained through legal obligation. Likewise, equality of value is a fiction, since societal relations measure worth according to instrumental value. Political organizations, therefore, create and maintain loyalty and provide the opportunity for communities to grow, but they cannot create community. According to Macmurray, cultural freedom, which includes religious freedom, is essential for developing communal bonds.

11.5.7 Church and State

> [S]ocial unity is not a luxury or an ideal but a desperate necessity for each of us . . . it can be achieved in two ways. It may be achieved freely, from within, by sharing a common way of life, based upon common values. If this fails then it must be achieved by conformity to external laws which we keep under the threat of penalties. The unity of the social order may be maintained, in other words, either by affection of by force. (Macmurray 1941b: 26)

We see here a parallel between Macmurray's description of the child–carer relation and his perception of adult relations; the motives which underpin those relations are fear and love. Politically organized societies rely on the motive of fear to sustain cooperation among citizens, whereas, Macmurray holds, the cooperative activities of religious communities are motivated by love for one another. Thus, avoiding totalitarianism requires that politics is subordinated to religion; however, if religion is weak and is failing to sustain communal bonds, political power will increase, eventually resulting in a loss of democratic freedom and equality. On this basis, Macmurray portrays the state and the church as having distinct but interrelated roles in procuring a good life for humans.

In the 1940s, though, Macmurray's assessment of Britain is of a society in which a weakened religion has accompanied the rise of individualism and the belief that human value depends upon an individual's contribution to society; in turn this creates a hierarchy of workers. This situation, he holds, rests on a functional perception of human life, which is false. Rather, many aspects of human life are 'more-than-functional' (Macmurray 1941d: 787). While we can eat and drink to satisfy hunger and thirst, we also eat and drink as celebration and for fellowship; on such occasions inequalities in the workplace can be overcome and community enjoyed.

In reality, though, human beings engage in the functional and the more-than-functional aspects of life simultaneously, such that one or other will be dominant at any particular time. Yet, as we have noted above, Macmurray insists that 'The functional life is *for* the personal life; the personal life is *through* the functional life' (1941f: 844, emphasis in original). Thus, while that which is more-than-functional is enabled by the working life, the regulation of the working life by the state is for the purpose of supporting, providing the means by which the life of communal relations can exist. In short, 'the State is *for* the community; the community is *through* the State' (Macmurray 1941c: 856, emphasis in original). In reference to church and state, then, they relate to different spheres of life, the former being concerned with ends of the good life and the latter creating the means for the good life. Moreover, this implies that the church cannot exist independently of the state; it requires the material means for its existence. Similarly, the state needs the church to sustain communal bonds; a common purpose is weak in the absence of community, and communal bonds are weak if not expressed through common purpose. Consequently, Macmurray argues both that church and state are interrelated and that the latter needs to be subordinate to the former; stating: 'The proper relation of religion and politics is the unresolved problem of our civilization' (1941e).[9]

Macmurray's attempt to keep politics focused on justice and to give religion a positive function that guards against the temptation of expecting the government to be responsible for all facets of the good life is commendable. Nevertheless, in addition to leaving the manner in which the economy is to be redistributed from rich to poor an open question, his account of religion—as subordinating politics and being motivated by love—is widely at odds with secularization and with religions that operate on the basis of fear. He acknowledges that European religion does little to limit governmental jurisdiction and is frequently a private pursuit rather than a communal one. Yet his concept of religion is somewhat different from the notion of individual spirituality that is prevalent in European society. He states: 'individualism is incompatible with religion because it is incompatible with social unity' (1941b: 16). For Macmurray, religion expresses the human need for relationality.

11.6 Rejecting Institutionalized Religion for the Sake of Community

It is Macmurray's account of religion that most clearly displays his criticism of the influence of Hegelian Idealism on Scottish philosophy through his critique of Marx's view of religion as idealist. Macmurray argues that, while many forms of religion are idealist, religion is not idealist per se (see Macmurray 1944b: 6). Likewise, Macmurray accepts Freud's analysis of religion as reflecting the familial relations, but he denies

[9] For a more detailed discussion of Macmurray's relation of church and state, see McIntosh 2007b.

Freud's conclusion that religion is mere childish fantasy. He states that it is our relation with another human being that 'finds expression in religion . . . but there is nothing illusory about this' (1961a: 154). Four essential features of religion, according to Macmurray, are: religion has its roots in the universal experience of human relationality; religion is a peculiarly human phenomenon; religion is culturally pervasive; religion is inherently inclusive (1961a: 156–7). He states: 'Religion is the primary manifestation of the social character of human nature, and it is concerned with society, not with the individual' (1941b: 17).

Even though western individualism has led to the increased privatization of religion, often removing from the public arena, Macmurray emphasizes the persistence of religious ritual as communal activity. Not only is religion a fundamentally social pursuit, far from being illusory, it addresses the primary experiences of humanity such as fear and relationships. While certain aspects of the field of empirical data will lend themselves to religious consideration more readily than others, whether or not an experience holds religious significance essentially depends on a particular attitude of mind; in Macmurray's words, the religious person 'comes to worship, the artist to admire, the scientist to observe' (1936: 21). We can limit our attention to any one of these attitudes, but it is likely that we will employ a mixture of all three. Since religion is, according to Macmurray, primarily concerned with relationships, people are its field of data 'both as the source of valuation and as the object of valuation' (1936: 37). We exist as observers on the world and dependants in the world; in our relations with other humans we exist as judge and judged. As Macmurray points out, if we regarded all other people as means to be put to use, we would all be acting as masters; yet, if we regarded all other people solely as ends in themselves, we would all be acting as servants. For cooperative action to occur, then, we need to recognize both the utility and the intrinsic value of our fellow humans, while recognizing that we also have both utility and intrinsic value. In other words, cooperative action requires relationships that are mutually beneficial and respectful, which Macmurray refers to as 'fellowship' (1936: 43).

At the centre of Macmurray's definition of religion then lies the conviction that religion is a primarily practical activity; relations with other people require direct action. Consequently, Macmurray asserts that religion in its reflective aspect has actual rather than ideal communities as its focus; it 'expresses the consciousness of community . . . religion is the celebration of communion' (1961a: 162). As celebration, religion employs a symbolic representation of membership and enjoyment of the community to which it refers, thereby making factual relations intentional; that is, through reflection on past and present relations, future relations can be improved. In Macmurray's words, 'the task of religion is the maintenance and extension of community' (1936: 63). There is a sense in which maintaining community might be viewed as the negative dimension in comparison with community growth, which could be viewed more positively. Further, the extension of a community has 'both a quantitative and a qualitative side' (Macmurray 1936: 74); that is, a community can grow by

adding to its numbers or by deepening the relations of the existing members. A community that seeks to avoid stagnation will need to grow in numbers and in depth.

Consequently, the quantitative extension of community gives rise, Macmurray suggests, to the concept of God, as a symbol of that which connects large numbers of people. He states:

> The necessity is not primarily for a ruler, but for a ritual head, a representative of the unity of the community as a personal reality, so that each member can think his [or her] membership of the community through his [or her] relation to this person, who represents and embodies the intention which constitutes the general fellowship. (1961a: 164)

Similarly, ancestor worship can be seen as maintaining continuity between past and present members. Thus, it is the sense of belonging to a community that extends backwards and forwards in time that is, for Macmurray, the foundation of religious experience.

Moreover, Macmurray argues that the quantitative extension of community is unlimited; the intention behind the growth of community is inclusive and universal, although the quality of communal relations is under threat the larger a community becomes. In principle, community is based upon the mutually rewarding relation of equals; it is, therefore, the relation of persons as persons, based solely on their common humanity. Hence, the notion of an exclusive community is irrational and irreligious. Macmurray states: 'The primary religious assertion is that all . . . are equal, and that fellowship is the only relation between persons which is fully rational, or fully appropriate to their nature as persons. In this assertion the whole nature of religion is bound up' (1935c: 124). Nevertheless, a religious person fitting Macmurray's description might find that she or he is at odds with an institutionalized religion that has exclusive criteria attached to membership.

11.6.1 Religion and Science

Thus, inasmuch as Macmurray equates science and art with the means and ends of action, he equates religion with the morality of an act; as we have noted, a moral action is one which intends community and, for Macmurray, community is synonymous with religion. In keeping with Macmurray's critique of mind–body dualism and his positive view of the rationality of emotion, he is opposed to the view of science and religion as antagonistic. That is, the traditional division between intellect and emotion often regards scientific pursuit as the former and religious activity as the latter, giving each a separate field of data—giving science the material world and confining religion to spiritual matters—and holding them to be incompatible. If religion were a set of beliefs about the spiritual world, it would be in conflict with science; yet, Macmurray holds: 'This is surely a misconception' (1935c: 107). Science and religion cannot be assigned to different arenas, since these areas are not separable in practice; they are encountered by humans simultaneously. Science and religion have the same world as their empirical data.

Macmurray also discounts a number of proposals for rendering science and religion compatible (see Macmurray 1935c: 108–10). In addition to dismissing the notion that science and religion have different fields of data, he dismisses the argument that religion and science employ different methods—namely, qualitative and quantitative—as false in relation to biology and psychology, for example. Further, Macmurray disputes the claim that science is concerned with how the world works but religion is concerned with why the world is here, on the grounds that evolutionary theory is a scientific account of teleology in the world. Finally, Macmurray suggests that a view of science as an attitude of enquiry and religion as an attitude of worship is more fruitful, but still inadequate, since worship without the pursuit of knowledge of that which is worshipped is merely an activity of superstition and imagination.

Yet, he claims: 'It is only through confusion . . . that the validity of religion can be doubted' (1961b: 9). In essence, scientific method involves abstraction and is primarily concerned with matters of fact and utility, whereas religion reflects on the whole of reality and looks for intrinsic value therein. In short: '*Science is impersonal; religion is personal*' (Macmurray 1935c: 114, emphasis in original). Science and art, he argues, provide knowledge about people, but to actually know a person is to engage in religious activity; that is: 'Religious knowledge . . . universalizes the problem of personal relationship, and seeks an understanding of personal relationship as such' (Macmurray 1961a: 168). In other words, we can gain knowledge about people from observation and investigation as a scientist or an artist, such as identifying their blood group and the shape of their features, but we cannot claim to know them, since we do not discover the true nature of a person as an onlooker. People reveal their natures through communication; we can only claim to know a person if we have a relationship with them. Moreover, communication has to be mutual, since it is through the process of revelation that humans come to know themselves. Thus, Macmurray states: 'if Peter knows Patrick, then Patrick knows Peter . . . all interpersonal knowledge is by revelation. I can only know you if you reveal yourself to me, and you can reveal yourself to me only in so far as I am prepared to do the same' (1961b: 56).

Macmurray uses the structure of language to provide an analogy of relationships and the knowledge they provide (see Macmurray 1935c: 86–93; 1961a: 178–83). In the type of communal relationship that Macmurray characterizes as religious, he suggests that 'I' speak to 'you' about 'it', with first and second persons being interchangeable while the third person, the subject, remains constant. Artists limit their attention to the first and third persons in the dialogue; that is, at the time of making the work of art the relationship between the first person, the artist, and the third person, the object focused upon, overrides the relationship with the audience who will access the work of art following its completion. Scientists limit their attention to the third person, inasmuch as they focus on the object under investigation in a manner that minimizes the influence of the observing scientist (first person) and those who will make use of the results in the future (second persons). Further, the results of a

scientific experiment are, in theory, the same for each experimenter, whereas aesthetic appreciation of an object is as varied as the artists and their creations inspired by it. According to Macmurray, therefore, while science deals primarily with matters of fact, it is art rather than religion that deliberates on matters of value, and, therefore, science that is borne of the intellect and art that is borne of emotion.

Clearly people can relate to each other in any of the ways described, but, whereas since science and art involve a deliberate limitation of the attention as detailed above, relations among persons need not. When two friends converse on a particular subject, at the same time as sharing information, they are expressing the interest that they have in each other; they are enjoying fellowship. In other words, there is a reciprocity involved in person-to-person relations that is lacking in the artistic and the scientific modes of relating. Whereas scientists amass technological means through observation and artists find satisfactory ends through contemplation, it is in person-to-person relations that we engage in active cooperation. Thus, Macmurray states: 'Religion . . . is the knowledge which must inform all action for the achievement of community, and therefore the ground of all really efficient and really satisfactory action whatever' (1961a: 185).

11.6.2 Reality in Religion

Admittedly, the form of religion exhibits artistic and scientific attitudes respectively in its ritual and doctrine; yet, for Macmurray, the validity of these aspects is to be found in their integration in action (see Macmurray 1961a: 174). Consequently, an essential part of Macmurray's definition of religion is the distinction between what he refers to as 'real' and 'unreal' religion (1961a: 170). He contends that 'Real religion is heterocentric' (1961a: 170), engaging in communal relations for the purpose of caring for others, whereas unreal religion exhibits egocentric tendencies, focusing either on material power or on spiritual immortality by instituting dualism. Hence, Macmurray is interested in whether religious ideas refer accurately or inaccurately to reality, or whether they refer to another world as a substitute for referring to reality. In the latter case, Macmurray agrees with Marx that religion which operates as an 'opium for the people', by focusing on an afterlife instead of engaging in action towards a more free and equal society, is to be rejected.

Yet, Macmurray demarcates two differing responses to fear found in religion. In the first case, religion states: 'Fear not, trust in God and He will see that none of the things you fear will happen to you' (Macmurray 1961a: 171), but this, Macmurray argues, is unreal or 'pseudo-religion' (1935a: 48). The second case represents real religion, which deals with fear by stating: 'Fear not; the things you are afraid of are quite likely to happen to you, but they are nothing to be afraid of' (Macmurray 1961a: 171). In other words, since death is an inevitable part of life, a religion that seeks to offer security against death can do so only by constructing an imaginary world of immortality. Thus, belief in immortality is an example of religious idealism; belief in an ideal world that distracts from the real world and judges it to be insufficient. Proponents of

immortality might claim to be acting in a manner that seeks to bring the ideal world into existence, but this, Macmurray explains, 'is a blind and vain hope' (1944b: 16), since action is necessarily constrained by the realities of the actual world. In the idealist religion then, the spiritual life is valorized over the material life, with the effect that adherents maintain a belief in miracles without expecting to see any. To persist in a belief in the illusion of an ideal world, the believer must engage in self-deception, denying the reality of death in the actual world. In order to maintain the illusion, therefore, an idealist religion is likely to be retrospective, favouring tradition over progress. Marx is rightly critical of such a religion, but, Macmurray holds, real religion can be 'a creative force in material human life' (1935a: 57).

Nevertheless, despite his criticism of belief in immortality, Macmurray does not entirely dismiss belief in God. He does, however, declare that belief in God is shown to be an illusion if it does not result in heterocentric action; that is, if there is a god, giving the world a purpose, then believers in that god would have a confidence in the teleology of life that enabled them to give up fears for self in favour of other-centred community. He states: 'Belief in God is properly an attitude to life which expresses itself in our ways of behaving' (1935a: 19). Thus, a real religion will be less concerned with the possible nature and existence of God and more concerned with the human fellowship as a religious experience. Similarly, a real religion will not focus on refining its doctrine, since its primary concern will be action to increase freedom and equality.

11.6.3 Christianity as Real Religion

In keeping with his era Macmurray assumes the validity of Christianity and is faced with the challenge of having to salvage from its various forms something that fits his description of a real religion. Consequently, he looks to the roots of Christianity, as found in the reported actions more than the reported sayings of Jesus of Nazareth, rather than to its expression in post-war Britain, stating that: 'Christianity is primarily the movement that Jesus founded rather than the doctrines that he taught' (Macmurray 1938: 4). In so doing, Macmurray emphasizes the fact that Jesus' heritage is Jewish; hence, clues as to Jesus' intention (if this is discernible at all) are to be found in the culture of the ancient Hebrews. According to Macmurray, the ancient Hebrews were a religious society as opposed to having a religion; their religion was not a separate sphere of activity but pervaded all activities. In other words, they avoided a dualistic interpretation of the material and the spiritual by retaining a religious consciousness. Most significantly considering Macmurray's criticism of idealism in religion, he claims that the ancient Hebrews have 'no unambiguous trace in the whole of their classical literature of a belief in another world or in a life after death' (1938: 20).

Macmurray does not address the fact that the Hebrew Bible is a deliberately theological rather than historical portrayal of the ancient Hebrews, nor does he resolve the conflict between the theocracy of the ancient Hebrews and his rather different account of the roles of church and state. Nevertheless, the purpose of his account of

the ancient Hebrews is to serve as insight into the background and culture of Jesus of Nazareth, especially in reference to religious idealism and practical activity.

It is from an examination of the material in the New Testament Gospels that Macmurray constructs his view of Jesus' life and action. During this endeavour, Macmurray deliberately avoids engagement with the Pauline material and the centuries of tradition that have followed it, so as to minimize the influence of distortions and conflicting interpretations. Underlying Macmurray's investigation into the Gospel narratives is the premise that Jesus is 'the culmination of Jewish prophecy and the source of Christianity' (Macmurray 1938: 42). In accordance with Macmurray's account of the ancient Hebrews, therefore, he insists that Jesus has a religious consciousness. He claims that the period of temptation in which Jesus declines the use of miracles is evidence of his rejection of material–spiritual dualism (see Matt. 4: 1–11 and Luke 4: 1–13 KJV; cf. Macmurray 1938: 46–8 and 1935a: 64). However, the ethical and apocalyptic elements of Jesus' reported sayings have often been interpreted dualistically as idealism and symbolism. On the contrary, Macmurray argues that Jesus' sayings offer insight into the means for achieving a purpose and the conviction that the intended purpose will be realized; they depict life as it *is* and could be, but they do not state what *ought* to be so.

Furthermore, Macmurray is most interested in the aspects of Jesus' life and action that go beyond the tenets and expectation of his Jewish heritage. Jesus' mission, Macmurray holds, is the extension of human community, which he starts by choosing disciples and continues beyond the boundaries of Judaism (see Macmurray 1938: 54–5). In particular, the parable of the Good Samaritan advocates person-to-person community regardless of race (Luke 10: 30–7 KJV; cf. Macmurray 1935a: 65).

Moreover, and in support of his own view of humanity, Macmurray finds that Jesus' sayings regard fear as a stumbling block to human community. In the New Testament narrative Jesus repeatedly asks 'why are ye fearful', adding 'O ye of little faith' (see, for example, Matt. 8: 26 KJV). Thus, Macmurray claims, Jesus is contrasting fear with faith, because an attitude of trust is required for reciprocal relations. In addition, he finds in the Gospels evidence for the claim that fear is overcome by love, which is in agreement with Macmurray's portrayal of loving communal relations. Jesus states, 'love thy neighbour as thyself' (see, for example, Lev. 19: 18 KJV), suggesting that love is the basis of human community, and he adds, 'Love your enemies' (see, for example, Matt. 5: 44 and Luke 6: 27 KJV),[10] thereby advocating the creation of community where there is none. It is of primary importance for Macmurray that Jesus' command to love is not ideal, but practical, since fear prevents both action and positive relations. If we pretended to love someone, we would be engaging in fantasy or sentimentality, and any such relationships would be based on a false premise. Rather, Macmurray asserts that Jesus renders the command to love plausible by example; hence, Jesus

[10] In accordance with his Jewish heritage, Jesus also relays the command to love God (Deut. 6: 5).

states: 'love one another as I have loved you' (John 15: 12 KJV). In essence, therefore, the commands to love are, according to Macmurray, concerned with living well; that is, fulfilling human nature through positive relationships (see Macmurray 1973: 11).

In contrast with many traditional accounts of sin and salvation that are bound up with the breaking of moral codes and striving for immortality, Macmurray contends that Jesus' concern is with salvation from fear and the sin of negative relationships (see Macmurray 1935a: 110–11). Accordingly, rather than punishment or revenge, Jesus urges his disciples to forgive one another 'seventy times seven' (Matt. 18: 22 KJV), since it is forgiveness that can restore broken relationships.

In addition, Macmurray stresses Jesus' promotion of equality in relationships through sayings such as 'whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant' (Matt. 20: 27 KJV); through Jesus' own example of washing the disciples' feet; as well as through his attention to the socially deprived and his criticisms of the wealthy. In fact, Macmurray regards the use of the term 'disciple' to be especially significant, since it means 'friend' rather than servant. Again in contrast with traditional interpretations of Christianity that promote self-sacrifice and servanthood, Macmurray insists that friendship, not service, is the foundation of community and at the heart of Jesus' message (see Macmurray 1964: 4). He justifies his position by interpreting the statement 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15: 13 NRSV) as a commentary on the value of human life as opposed to praise of martyrdom. Likewise, he asserts that the statement 'He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life . . . shall find it' (Matt. 10: 39 KJV) is preferencing heterocentric action and self-revelation over defensive egocentricity (1964: 5).

Overall, therefore, Macmurray is suggesting that Jesus, as a religious exemplar, teaches and practises friendship as the essence of a good human life. Such a suggestion is in sharp contrast to much institutionalized Christianity, which concentrates on doctrine and the condemnation of alternative points of view. Yet Macmurray's interpretation is in agreement with the analysis from Harvey. Harvey criticizes traditions that portray Jesus as a moralist, instead arguing that Jesus invites the rejection of victimhood in favour of living life to the full, by striving to realize one's potential despite setbacks and hardship (see Harvey 1991).

On the grounds of his interpretation of Jesus' understanding of humanity, Macmurray refines his perception of real religion by claiming that Jesus brings a dimension of maturity to religion. A mature religion, Macmurray holds, comprehends the means of creating and extending community. Immediately after Jesus' death, his followers took the mission of extending community seriously; however, they lost the impetus for social equality when they became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Hence, Christianity became an instrument of the state, working for the government rather than the citizens. Thus, by accepting the power offered by the Roman authorities, Christianity adopted the dualism of secular and spiritual. Furthermore, the practical problems that the dualism gives rise to have led to a number of schisms, especially that between the east and west. According

to Macmurray, the Greek Orthodox Church prioritizes the spiritual, engaging in a contemplative form of religion that elevates the aesthetic and apocalyptic elements, whereas the Roman Church exhibits a more pragmatic form of religion that focuses on duty-ethics (see Macmurray 1938: 153–4). Thereafter, institutionalized Christianity is largely a conservative rather than a creative force, which, in spite of a few notable exceptions such as liberation theology, maintains the status quo more than it increases equality (see Macmurray 1938: 121). In addition, the manner in which Christianity has developed has led to greater focus on belief than on social action, with the effect that those who are serious about extending community find themselves criticizing (and being criticized by) the official churches. Yet Macmurray states: ‘there is religious irrationality in the limitation of community to a particular group. There is nothing in the relations of persons that demands, or even permits, of such limitations’ (1961b: 60).

Hence, Macmurray contends that the persistence of material–spiritual dualism in Christianity is an explanation for its decline in membership and its lack of credibility in society. He boldly claims that the disjunction between Jesus’ social action and that of institutionalized Christianity is ‘pious fraud’, in which the church has been alternately afraid and feared (1941b: 50). For Christianity to be a vital force in the extension of community, it needs to reject dogmatism, conservatism, hierarchy, and privilege, and embrace creativity and equality, supporting the most marginalized members of society rather than the authorities.

In this respect, Macmurray’s stress on common humanity over religious doctrine leads him to make a distinction between belief and faith; belief is assenting to creedal statements, whereas faith is an attitude of mind. A religious person could, therefore, have faith without belief. Doctrine, Macmurray argues, is rooted in the dualism of intellect and emotion and operates as a static method of ensuring unity, whereas rituals are more fluid and a more practical means for sustaining community (see 1961b: 71–2).

11.7 Personalism

As we have seen, then, Macmurray’s work is in continuity with the Scottish philosophical tradition in the sense that he retains deeply held democratic principles and a belief in the notion of virtuous citizens. In addition, he adapts the idealism of his predecessors to fit the changing social circumstances of a post-war generation, primarily by abandoning Hegel’s concept of Absolute Mind in favour of a ‘thick’ concept of the person, which is both descriptive and evaluative, bound up with the notion of community. As Bevir and O’Brien note, something like Macmurray’s perception of community can be found in the contemporary works of communitarians, such as Walzer, Sandel, MacIntyre, and Taylor, who agree that justice and the good are found in a shared life; that is, not by separating self and society, but by forming communities of friends (2003: 322–4). However, Macmurray is not strictly a communitarian.

Macmurray's description of community has much in common with an Aristotelian perception of friendship. Both Macmurray and Aristotle describe friendship as a relationship based on love that is an essential to human flourishing (see Aristotle 1934: 8.1.1 and 9.9.5–7). Aristotle distinguishes between different types of friendship, according to whether certain properties of a person are highly regarded or whether it is the person her- or himself; this latter type, which Aristotle refers to as 'perfect' or 'primary' friendship (cf. Aristotle 1934: 8.3.6 and Aristotle 1952: 7.2.38), fits Macmurray's description of friendship as grasping the intrinsic worth of a person.

Clearly, then, Macmurray is not a liberal individualist, yet he also guards against the communitarian emphasis on community over and above that of the individual. Macmurray critiques individualism and promotes community, but he does not tie individual rights and benefits to the exercising of obligations to the community. Not only were New Labour policies more communitarian than Macmurray in their emphasis on the individual's duties; they were less socialist; and they eroded Macmurray's distinction between societies and communities (see McIntosh 2007b). In fact, it seems that Macmurray's account of the significance of human relationality and the emotions might have more in common with David Brooks' 2011 book *The Social Animal*, in which it is argued that contemporary brain science reveals social connections and emotional maturity to have a greater impact on human decision-making than rationality or IQ.

Macmurray is a religious socialist, with the qualification that his definition of 'religion' is broad. In fact, his criticisms of institutionalized Christianity, especially the concept of self-sacrifice, have proved useful to feminist theology, and his concept of the person presents a philosophical underpinning for the notion of embodiment found in feminism (see McIntosh 2007a). Consequently, while Macmurray's concept of the person has much in common with thinkers outside the Scottish philosophical tradition, such as the relational theory of Levinas (see Wright et al. 1998) and the description of the I–Thou relation found in Buber's work (see Buber 1959), his very interest in the human person is rooted in the Scottish intellectual tradition. Indeed, as Beveridge and Turnbull state: 'a strong case could be made that what is most representative of modern Scottish thought is a position which combines a critique of naturalism with the development of personalist ideas—a movement represented by, among others, Macmurray, MacQuarrie and R. D. Laing' (1997: 120).

11.8 Conclusion

If Cowley is right when he suggests that 'Ignorance of the intellectual background from which he sprang has become a barrier to the reception of Macmurray's thought' (2004: 5), Macmurray's place in the Scottish philosophical tradition is of paramount importance. It is significant, then, that Macmurray was concerned to write his philosophy in a vernacular rather than a specialist language with the express purpose of reaching a broad audience, and that he held that the purpose of philosophy was to

make sense of everyday struggles. In other words, Macmurray values philosophy as a subject in its own right and believes that it is of benefit to all people, not just those with a specialized education. Hence, insofar as Macmurray's philosophy strives to explain the human condition and the means to live well, it is entirely consonant with the Scottish philosophy that preceded him. Similarly, Macmurray's understanding of the role of emotion has more in common with the Scottish philosophy he was taught at Glasgow than with the emphasis on rationalism found in high Cartesianism. Moreover, Macmurray's naturalistic explanation of the existence, development, and persistence of religion has much in common with the account given by Hume, who undoubtedly ranks as the most studied Scottish philosopher.

Nevertheless, it is also the case that Macmurray comes after and does not engage directly with the most famous tension in Scottish philosophy; namely, the Enlightenment debate between Hume's scepticism and Reid's 'School of Common Sense', in which Reid maintains that the senses give us direct awareness of the world against Hume's insistence that we cannot trust the senses. However, it is the reaction against this debate that sees the rise of Scottish Idealism, which, through Caird, promotes the educational role of moral philosophy that informs Macmurray's ideas on the subject. It is apparent that Macmurray shares Caird's view of the function of philosophy as producing virtuous citizens, and this view persisted in the Scottish universities until the rise of logical positivism and the revival of Humean thought in the twentieth century. Consequently, in an effort to maintain the Scottish conception of humane philosophy, Macmurray attempts to hold out against linguist philosophy, opposing the appointment of A. J. Ayer at University College London.[11] In this respect Macmurray could be seen as the last of a certain breed of Scottish philosopher; yet, the person-centred focus of his philosophy and the Scottish philosophers who came before him has been far-reaching. One of Macmurray's better-known phrases is this: 'All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action for the sake of friendship' (1957: 15); and according to Craig, the heterocentricity at the heart of this quotation 'lies behind much of modern Scottish writing' (1999: 114).

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[11] Macmurray suggested George Davie or D. D. Raphael for the post. Ayer was appointed in any case, but did not mention Macmurray in his inaugural lecture (see Costello 2002: 307–8).

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12

The Integrity of Scottish Philosophy and the Idea of a National Tradition

Gordon Graham

What makes the tradition of Scottish philosophy a tradition? And what makes it Scottish? These are the questions that were deferred from Chapter 1. They are not historical but philosophical questions. At the same time, the philosophical answers we give to them in this context must accord with the 'facts' recounted in the preceding chapters. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to address these two questions in this light.

12.1 Scottish Philosophy and the School of Common Sense

In 1908 the first volume of the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* edited by James Hastings was published. Hastings was an Aberdeen-educated Presbyterian minister, and his project was massive—twelve volumes of lengthy entries by a very large number of contributors. The *Encyclopedia* was published between 1908 and 1927, and it served as the definitive work of reference for many decades thereafter. It went to a second edition, and its enduring value led to its being reprinted fifty years after its first publication. The volumes cover not only religion and ethics, but a huge range of topics relating to folklore, myth, ritual, anthropology, psychology, and philosophy. In volume xi, William Davidson, then Professor of Logic at Aberdeen, contributed the article entitled 'Scottish Philosophy'. Davidson was clear and emphatic about the identity of 'Scottish philosophy'.

> The term 'Scottish philosophy' is properly restricted to a certain type of Scottish thinking and must not be so extended as to include any and every philosopher (Hume, e.g., or Hutcheson or Thomas Brown) who happened to be by birth or by residence a Scotsman. It is the name for the philosophy of 'common sense', characterized by its devotion to psychology, its adherence to the inductive method in philosophical research, and its determination to find in human nature itself the guarantee for truth. (Davidson 1925: 261)

Davidson does not offer any explicit rationale for his restriction. The ensuing article runs to ten pages (double column, small type) in which detailed attention is given to just six figures—Reid, Campbell, Gerard, and Beattie, followed by Stewart and Hamilton. This heavy emphasis on the eighteenth-century Aberdonians and their two most enthusiastic nineteenth-century exponents might suggest an element of partisanship in Davidson's treatment of his subject. However that may be, his account of the matter is at odds with that of many others. Pringle-Pattison, it is true, identified 'the Scottish philosophy' especially closely with Reid, but McCosh, as Davidson must have known, began his account with Hutcheson, and though he describes Reid as 'the true representative of the Scottish philosophy' this is in the context of asserting the importance of Reid's teacher, George Turnbull. In fact, McCosh not only included both Hume and Brown, he devoted more pages to Hume than to Reid, Campbell, Gerard, and Beattie combined. Even G. A. Johnston, the title of whose *Selections from the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (1915) implicitly endorsed Davidson's restriction, nevertheless included Adam Ferguson among the authors whose works he excerpted.

Davidson, however, was not being especially eccentric. 'Scottish philosophy' was regularly identified with the 'Scottish School of Common Sense', by both its disciples and detractors, to the point where the expressions were widely used as though they were interchangeable. This identification has persisted to modern times,[1] and yet there are good reasons not to make it. As was observed in the first chapter, the label 'Scottish philosophy' had no currency in the eighteenth century, and when it did become current its use was essentially an exercise in hindsight. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is difficult not to trace its origins further back than Reid and Common Sense. Reid was widely regarded in his own time, and for several decades afterwards, as Hume's most trenchant and effective critic. Making sense of this accolade requires us to set his accomplishment within a context—the context of an already ongoing philosophical debate. That debate was part of a shared intellectual project—the 'science of human nature'. Hume was engaged in this science, and in the preface to the *Treatise* he makes much of its innovative character, since it necessitated a 'reformation' in moral philosophy that promised to make it much more like 'natural philosophy'. Still, by Hume's own admission this was not *his* innovation, nor did it constitute a methodological departure that set him at odds with his Scottish contemporaries. On the contrary, he was following the lead of Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Butler, and 'Mr Hutchinson' (*Treatise*, xxi). Francis Hutcheson, of course, was himself building upon Gersholm Carmichael, while in Aberdeen, George Turnbull was at the same time, perhaps fortuitously, advocating a strikingly similar approach to the traditional problems of philosophy. By mid-century, certainly, 'the Scottish philosophers' saw themselves as in need of an 'answer to Hume', but this

[1] See, for example, Somerville 2007: 235–57.

was not because his project of a 'science of man' was ill conceived, or because they no longer shared it. Rather, his sustained pursuit of this 'science' appeared to result in scepticism—metaphysical, moral, and religious.

Hume's metaphysical scepticism is most marked at the end of Book I of the *Treatise*. In Books II and III, his moral sentimentalism suggests, though it need not necessitate, scepticism about the significance of morality. His reworking of the *Treatise* into two *Enquiries* in part seeks to mitigate both forms of scepticism, while his *Natural History of Religion* and related essays, though profoundly unsympathetic to beliefs and practices that were generally endorsed, nevertheless retained a (highly attenuated) concept of 'true religion'.[2] If Norman Kemp Smith's influential interpretation of Hume is correct, Hume's contemporaries, including Reid, were mistaken in construing him as a sceptic; he was simply a consistent naturalist. Be this as it may, the point remains that it was not Hume's approach to philosophy that set him apart; it was the conclusions he was thought to arrive at in adopting that approach. Reid's task, and his alleged success, did not lie in rejecting Hume lock, stock, and barrel, but in identifying the particular step where he had gone wrong.

The error (according to Reid) lies in 'the ideal theory' that underlies Hume's conception of the human mind, and Reid formulates his 'principles of common sense' both to identify and to correct this error. In his own *Inquiry*, and the first book of *Essays* that followed some years later, Reid undoubtedly gave most sustained attention to the intellectual operations of the mind. He thereby exhibits, we might say, that 'devotion to psychology' on which Davidson's characterization of Scottish philosophy lays emphasis, a 'devotion' that many of those who followed his lead also exhibited. Yet, *contra* Davidson, this psychological focus was far from universal, and led other, later commentators to question whether Reid was not, for this reason, a somewhat peripheral contributor to 'the Scottish philosophy'. Almost 200 years after Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind* appeared, Gladys Bryson published a study of Scottish philosophy entitled *Man and Society*. Her book is an investigation of the relation between the Scottish philosophers of the eighteenth century and the emergence of what subsequently became known as the social sciences. For Bryson, the intellectual project that held the Scottish philosophers together went far beyond the formulation of psychological laws. It extended to the systematic empirical study of social development, political activity, economic behaviour, 'conjectural' history, and 'natural' religion. That is why it is Adam Ferguson, not Thomas Reid, who provides her starting point as the archetypal 'Scottish' philosopher. 'Probably no other group of thinkers before the twentieth century', she writes,

> so self-consciously set about encompassing the whole range of discussion which now has become highly elaborated and parcelled out among the several social sciences. To be a moral philosopher in the eighteenth century was to take for one's self just such a comprehensive program, within the limits of the knowledge of the time. (Bryson 1945: 239)

[2] The *Dialogues* that appeared posthumously were largely unknown to his contemporaries.

The Scottish philosophers Bryson identifies as the intellectual leaders in this project are not the popularizers of the 'Common Sense school'; that is, Beattie and Oswald. Both were held in considerable esteem in their lifetimes, but neither, she declares, exhibited the intellectual acumen and originality of Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, Reid, Ferguson, Kames, Monboddo, or Stewart. But whereas for obvious reasons both the criteria of 'common sense philosophy' and 'introspective psychology' make Thomas Reid a leading, even a founding figure in the Scottish school, Bryson finds Reid to be something of an exception, an outsider almost.

> Reid interested himself not at all in the problems of man's past. He did not concern himself with the physical aspects of man's life; he did not write of domestic or political economy, of jurisprudence, of religion or of government. His range was limited to psychology and theoretical ethics, with a little attention given to aesthetics . . . [Even] James McCosh . . . throughout his life an exponent of the Scottish philosophy [and] especially eager to extol Reid as the bulwark against Hume's scepticism . . . had to admit . . . that unless Reid taught his classes more than he put into print, his system of moral philosophy would appear to be very defective, as judged by the scope accepted by most of the philosophers toward the end of [the eighteenth] century. (Bryson 1945: 84)

Bryson could not have known that Reid *did* teach his classes more than he put into print, namely lectures on *Practical Ethics*, since these were not published until 200 years after his death. Still, her general point remains. While Reid's *Inquiry* and *Essays* can properly be identified as part of the 'science of human nature', not least because they are a response to Hume's investigations in the same 'science', there is no reason to regard them as the whole of it. If Bryson was wrong to question Reid's participation in the enterprise, she was right to see manifestations of this 'science' in a much more 'comprehensive program'. And because of their work within *that* programme, philosophers such as Hutcheson, Smith, Kames, and Ferguson, who had relatively little to say about the intellectual operations of the mind and made no reference to 'principles' of common sense, are nonetheless properly identified as 'Scottish philosophers'.

From this point of view, Hume, despite many evident differences with his contemporaries, might be supposed to be the Scottish philosopher *par excellence*. Until he became more obviously an historian (the principal source of his fame in his lifetime) his enquiries covered the full range that Bryson identifies—political economy, jurisprudence, religion, government, psychology, theoretical ethics, and aesthetics. Hume, then, is perhaps a better starting point than Reid—but only a starting point. The task of assembling a complete bibliography of Hume, T. E. Jessop tells us, brought him 'into the presence of a national philosophical activity so much richer than even McCosh's *Scottish Philosophy* had led me to expect' (Jessop 1938: v). Jessop was thereby prompted to survey the works of Hume's many Scottish contemporaries and successors. As a result he extended the roll call of Scottish philosophers far into the nineteenth century and a little beyond, ending, in fact, with William Davidson, who retired from the Chair of Logic at Aberdeen in 1926 and died in 1929. Jessop

lists no fewer than seventy-nine ‘Scottish philosophers’ (eighty including Hume), and records very many works that they published between 1718 and 1885. The list includes J. F. Ferrier, who expressly, and emphatically, distanced himself from Reid and Common Sense, as well as Alexander Bain, who had pushed the study of mind in much more strictly empirical directions than his predecessors had ever done. But Jessop’s list *excludes* other prominent and respected Scottish philosophers of the late nineteenth century—notably ‘the two Cairds’ (John and Edward) and Hutchison Stirling. He explains this exclusion on the grounds that though they ‘powerfully sponsored’ a ‘new idealism’ and thereby ‘evoked the most impressive achievement of Scottish philosophical thought of the century’, it was ‘not distinctively Scottish’, but ‘closely fused with the like movement in England’ (Jessop 1938: vi–vii). Ferrier, though he rejected Reidian common sense on idealist grounds, had no part in this new idealism, hence his inclusion in Jessop’s list of ‘Scottish’ philosophers.

Although the lists composed by Davidson and Jessop differ greatly, they both identify Alexander Campbell Fraser (about whom McCosh has reservations) as a quintessentially Scottish philosopher. Campbell Fraser was Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh in succession to Sir William Hamilton, and though he was perhaps best known in his own day for producing new Clarendon Press editions of Locke and Berkeley, he was very conscious of the historical line in which he stood. After his retirement he authored the volume on *Thomas Reid* in the *Famous Scots* book series, and in it he articulates some important continuities between Reid’s philosophical endeavours and his own constructive thoughts in *The Philosophy of Theism*, the published version of his Gifford Lectures, delivered in Edinburgh over the years 1894 to 1896. In contrast to Jessop, though, Fraser also finds continuities between Reid and the ‘new’ Scottish Idealists. Reflecting on the fact that in Scotland Idealist philosophy had indeed appeared to displace the philosophy of common sense, he points to a significant convergence.

> The inspired Common Sense or Common Reason of Reid seems to be sublimated in universally necessitating dialectical Reason, in [the] Scoto-German way of resisting the agnostic . . . Yet Reid, if he were among us now, might find the common sense not superseded but idealised in the more articulate response of reason in man to the all-pervading active Reason . . . Can Reid’s ‘common sense’ be sublimated into the universal consciousness of Hegelian dialectic, and does this translation of faith into absolute science constitute the true ideal of Scottish common sense philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century? . . . Surely only omniscience and omnipotence can dispense with the moral and religious venture of our inspired common sense . . . as the root of reason in man . . . True philosophy is then the moral and religious venture which accepts and applies the principles of common sense, in the assurance that, in genuine submission to their inspired authority, we cannot finally be put to intellectual or moral confusion. (Campbell 1896: 155–8)

If we follow Fraser in this line of thought, then idealism, at least in its ‘Scoto-German’ version, even if it risks excessive epistemological ambition, is, at its less ambitious moments, an exercise in ‘true philosophy’. Its cogency requires a conception of

omniscience that could only be realized in God, and it thus lies unmistakably on a continuum with the philosophy of Hutcheson, Reid, and their more obvious successors. Accordingly, and contrary to both Davidson and Jessop, if Fraser is right, the Scottish Idealists *were* Scottish philosophers, albeit unawares.

To summarize: to identify 'Scottish philosophy' with 'the Scottish School of Common Sense', as Davidson's *Encyclopedia* article does, fails to take account of the context in which Reid's appeal to common sense arose; it ignores major contributors to that context such as Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, and Ferguson, gives unwarranted prominence to relatively minor thinkers like Beattie and Oswald, and necessarily excludes philosophers like Brown and Ferrier who expressly dissented from Reid; it obliges us to focus narrowly on philosophical psychology and ignore the much wider range of topics on which philosophers in Scotland continued to teach and write for much of the nineteenth as well as the eighteenth century. Most importantly, perhaps, it makes subscription to a doctrine the criterion for participation in a tradition of enquiry. Debate and disagreement are indispensable in philosophical enquiry. How are they possible if subscription to shared doctrines is a criterion of engagement?

12.2 'Moral Science' and the Social Sciences

It might be supposed that the characterization of 'Scottish philosophy' requires something less than subscription to a philosophical *doctrine*. Could the unifying factor not be a common philosophical *method*? McCosh suggests something of this sort. In *The Scottish Philosophy* he does make philosophical doctrines the key criterion: 'All who are truly of the Scottish School', he writes, 'agree in maintaining that there are laws, principles, or powers in the mind anterior to any reflex observation of them, and acting independently of the philosophers' classification of them' (McCosh 1875: 7). However, in a later essay he alludes to 'the Scottish philosophy in which I was reared and to which I adhere, not, however, in all its doctrines, but simply in its method, which discovers truths prior in their nature to the induction which discovers them, and which indeed could not discover them unless they were already there in the mind' (McCosh 1882: 49).

We might wonder whether McCosh successfully identifies a distinctive method here, and if so, what it is a method of doing. Nevertheless, there is something initially plausible about trying to characterize Scottish philosophy as a method of enquiry since it is precisely in terms of method that Hume and others explained the innovative nature of their work. Having noted that 'there is no question of importance, whose decision is not compriz'd in the science of man', Hume famously goes on to remark that just 'as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation' (Hume 2007 [1739]: 4). To 'glean up our experiments in this science' is not a matter of armchair introspection, but 'a cautious observation of human life'. It is for this reason that the subject cannot be narrowly psychological, but

must range over 'men's behavior in company, in affairs and in their pleasures' (Hume 2007 [1739]: 6).

The adoption of this new method was marked (for a time) by 'moral science' being the term that was preferred to moral philosophy, just as 'natural science' came to replace 'natural philosophy'. The terminology reflects the determination to seek empirical knowledge of human nature. So far as it goes, this term is a plausible indicator of the distinctive new methods of 'Scottish philosophy'; none of its practitioners in the eighteenth, or their successors in the nineteenth century (when the expression had grown less fashionable), would have denied that philosophy ought to proceed along these lines, though Ferrier and the 'new' idealists rejected any conception of 'experience' that interprets it as 'raw' data after the fashion of Humean 'impressions'. The trouble is, however, that the 'method' so characterized is too abstract to make Scottish philosophy in any way distinctive. Moreover, it would singularly fail to explain a striking feature of the centuries between Hutcheson and Davidson. The greater emphasis on careful empirical study of 'men's behavior in company, in affairs and in their pleasures' which the 'science of man' called for, had the result of producing a variety of social sciences, notably economics, sociology, literary studies, psychology, and political science. Each of these can be seen, after a time, to break free of the philosophical contexts that gave rise to them. Most famously, Adam Smith, while a moral philosopher of the Scottish kind, laid foundations for the subsequent development of economics as a distinctive science. Connections like this can be exaggerated, certainly—Ferguson's influence on sociology is a much more debatable matter than Smith's on economics—and it is indisputable that the growth of the social sciences owed much to other sources than the investigations and debates of the Scottish philosophers. Nevertheless, it is easy to demonstrate an important link between the two—not least in the fact that in Scotland the teaching of several of these other disciplines was initially, and for a long time, the responsibility (and in some cases the initiative) of the professors of philosophy.

What then must be added to the method of 'experience and observation' if the Scottish philosophical enterprise is to be adequately distinguished from the empirical social sciences to which it gave rise? This is an issue that Bryson addresses. She identifies some fundamental ideas on which the eighteenth-century project of the science of man rested. These included the concepts of a universal and enduring human nature, and progressive social development over time, as well as the assumption that teleological explanations were properly scientific. The last on her list (of nine) is the 'practice of introducing norms and values into their science . . . [E]thical relationships were not only the ultimate but the immediate desiderata of their study. They were working as consciously to educate administrators and public servants as were Plato and Aristotle' (Bryson 1945: 242–4). It is this dimension that justifies the prominent place she gives to Adam Ferguson, for as David Allan remarks, Ferguson is notable for 'his unswerving devotion, as one of the Scottish Enlightenment's leading teachers of philosophy, to the traditional duties of moral instruction . . . Ferguson was, more

than anything else, a moralist . . . just like many of his closest Scottish friends and contemporaries who likewise combined a penchant for philosophical investigation with the obligations of university teaching' (Allan 2007: 41).

An important aspect of the development of the empirical social sciences as subjects and disciplines in their own right was the abandonment of this normative dimension. 'Value free' enquiry may, ultimately, be impossible, but it is an aspiration that has regularly marked the social sciences in their more empirical and less theoretical versions. It is true that some social sciences—economics, political science, criminology, for example—have assumed 'practical' value by being promoted as a valuable resource for 'policy makers'. But even viewed in this light, their practical relevance is generally held to be consistent with moral and political neutrality. Not even the most 'policy' driven conception of the social sciences would be taken to imply that social science underlies the moral education of the students to whom it is taught, or that its teachers have any responsibility to be moral educators.

Here then is a considerable point of difference. The 'moral science' of the eighteenth century was intended both to advance knowledge and to morally educate those who studied it. The 'reformation' in method that Hutcheson, Hume, and others recommended was to be welcomed, not just because it would put knowledge of human nature on a more solid foundation, but because it promised thereby to make philosophy better at producing good citizens. For Reid this meant strengthening their natural ability to make moral judgements. Hume failed in his application to be a Professor of Moral Philosophy in part because his philosophy was perceived (in Hutcheson's phrase) 'to lack warmth on the part of virtue'. Nevertheless, his philosophical contentions were still meant to have 'moral' benefits by (for instance) guarding against the gross dangers of 'superstition and enthusiasm', dangers to which (Hume thought) human beings are alarmingly prone.

Eighteenth-century 'moral science', therefore, was indeed a forerunner of nineteenth- and twentieth-century 'social science', but it was not simply that. Its purpose, certainly, was to supply the mind with more detailed knowledge and a better understanding of human beings. This is something the social sciences could also claim. In addition, however, moral science aimed to *improve* the minds of those who studied it, to educate them in the business of making better moral, political, religious, and aesthetic judgements. It was precisely this dimension that commended 'the Scottish philosophy' to college professors and presidents in pre- and post-revolutionary America as the means of uniting 'science and piety' in a single educational enterprise.[3] As the years passed, the social sciences gradually secured a separate identity from the philosophical tradition that gave birth to them. At the same time, they did not *displace* the philosophical 'sciences' from which they sprang. All the Scottish universities continued to teach, and require their students to study, 'moral philosophy' and/or 'logic

[3] See Sloan 1971.

and metaphysics'. Why so? It is relatively easy to see how the new social sciences arose from the 'comprehensive program' of enquiry in which the Scottish philosophers were engaged. But why did they not simply replace it?

The answer is that the long line from Hutcheson to Hamilton and beyond, despite their commitment to a 'science of human nature' with or without an appeal to 'principles of common sense', saw themselves as continuing to work within the much older tradition of philosophical enquiry that stretched back to Plato and Aristotle. Their problems were set, and their historical conversation partners given, by the long history of European philosophy. All the principal works of the eighteenth century are replete with references to the ancient philosophies of Platonism, Aristotelianism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Pyrrhonism, and most engage with the writings of more recent figures such as Descartes, Mandeville, Locke, Hobbes, and Spinoza. Whatever the benefits of the 'Baconian' method, it was the recurrent problems of philosophy—the nature of reality, the foundations of knowledge, morality and the virtues, justice, law, and politics, taste and beauty. The social sciences had their beginnings in attempts to grapple with these questions, but their development as independent disciplines turned on reconstructing these questions in ways that changed them from philosophical problems to empirical enquiries of a more tractable kind.

Late in the nineteenth century, Alexander Bain published a paper on the 'Associationist Controversies' of his time. In this paper he argued for the separation of 'Metaphysics' and 'Psychology', and held that the two subjects should be conducted independently at least 'for a certain length'. He made this plea on the grounds that metaphysics could only make progress if psychology was given time to 'amass' enough facts to provide the material around which some fundamental assumptions could be tested and, if necessary, revised. Bain's concern with the lack of 'progress' in philosophy was shared by others, who were ready to recommend a similar move with respect to the study of society, politics, and even ethics. It was this concern, and some of the thinking that underlay it, that prompted Henry Jones, Edward Caird's successor in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, to give a talk at St Andrews on 'The Nature and Aims of Philosophy'. In this lecture, subsequently published in *Mind*, he identifies an important mistake at work in the frustration some people experienced at the lack of philosophical 'progress'.

> Unprejudiced observers—if ignorance, more or less complete can ever be unprejudiced—who contrast the long catalogue of defeats sustained by the philosophers and the shattered condition of their ranks today, with the solid and advancing conquests of the natural sciences, have very naturally concluded that philosophy is seeking by a doubtful method and unattainable goal.

The sharp contrast they draw, he notes illuminatingly, replicates 'the sad picture which Hume drew of philosophy in his day'.

> 'Principles taken upon trust, consequences lamely deduced from them, want of coherence in the parts, and of evidence in the whole—these are everywhere to be met with in the systems

of the most eminent philosophers and seem to have drawn disgrace upon philosophy itself. Nor is there required such profound knowledge to discover the present imperfect condition of the sciences, but even the rabble without doors may judge from the noise and clamour, which they hear, that all goes not well within.' I concur [says Jones] with the rabble as to the noise and clamour, but I dissent from the conclusion it draws from them . . . The wise from the same premises will draw the opposite conclusion. They know that there is the vigour of life in a philosophy which excites the clamour of the disputants. It is the philosophy which has sunk into silence that is dead. (Jones 1883: 160)

Natural science can be expected to produce 'solid and advancing' theories, but philosophy, properly understood, cannot.

I should describe the metaphysical science, in the spirit of the ancient philosophers and without sinking any of its ancient pretensions, as the reflective reconstruction of the life of man. It is a process rather than a dogma, a process whereby man lives over again in thought the experiences of his theoretical and practical activities. It is our way, and our only way, of lifting into the clear light of thought those principles which have been acting within us and in the events of our times with the blindness and imperiousness of instinct. (Jones 1883: 162)

In these few lines Jones captures something important about the nature of Scottish philosophy. While it is undoubtedly true that the philosophers of the eighteenth century, and some of their nineteenth-century successors, thought that they had uncovered a method for the human sciences that would produce fresh 'results' after the fashion of the natural sciences, they never abandoned the 'spirit of the ancient philosophers' or relinquished its 'ancient pretensions' to formulate a 'reflective reconstruction' of human life. This is just what they aimed to teach their students how to do. This description of philosophical enquiry fits both Reid and Ferrier, whose writings, in most other respects, are at philosophical odds. Despite the fact that Ferrier repudiates Reid so fiercely, his conception of the relation between reason and moral consciousness is such that he could hardly disagree with Reid's instruction to his Glasgow students; namely, that a key role for philosophical ethics lies in enabling us to 'take a view of the whole Course of human Life, and consider the different Roads that men take and the Ends to which they lead' (Reid 2007: 32). This is 'metaphysics as moral philosophy', the conception of philosophy identified at the conclusion of Chapter 1. Teachers of philosophy in Scotland, and further afield, though differing widely in both their philosophical doctrines and their methods, can be said to have pursued this same conception of their subject over the course of two centuries. Here, arguably, we find the core of their *common* endeavour.

This common endeavour had three aspects. First, it was a 'modern' engagement with the perennial and ancient problems of philosophy. Second, it sought to address these problems with the help of close attention to general facts about human nature and the human condition. Third, it located the value of these investigations in their bearing on moral education. Some distinctive methods and related doctrines found widespread favour from time to time—the appeal to principles of common sense,

introspection, providentialism, direct realism, moral sentimentalism, for example—but not all of those who engaged in the common endeavour employed these methods or subscribed to these doctrines. Moreover, the three aspects of their enterprise generated internal tensions. Hume thought that a seriously scientific pursuit of the 'is' of human nature cannot generate rational prescriptions about how it 'ought' to be. Ferguson thought that the whole point of the study of human society was to generate guidance for action. Smith fell somewhere in between. Reid held that the habits of mind which direct human thought and belief must be rational processes and cannot be merely laws of psychological 'association', while Brown, Mill, and Bain regarded 'association' as the most promising concept to emerge for the advancement of our understanding of the mind. Hamilton thought Reid's common sense philosophy, suitably embellished, solved some of the most long-standing philosophical problems. Ferrier thought that it simply evaded them. And so on. These internal tensions are the cause of the 'noise and clamour' to which Jones refers, and though he thinks that this merely reflects the vitality of philosophy as such, they can plausibly be said to signify an inherent instability within Scottish philosophy. This instability ultimately led to its demise, as empirical investigation, metaphysical speculation, and moral education went their separate ways. Economics, political science, cognitive psychology, idealism, British empiricism, American pragmatism, and Utilitarianism are all, plausibly, descendants of the parts into which, sooner or later, Scottish philosophy was destined to fragment. There remains this question, however. If these tensions were indeed present from the outset, what made them *creative* tensions for so long? Why did the project not collapse soon after it had begun? This issue is related to the question of what made the project distinctively Scottish.

12.3 The Identity of Scottish Philosophy

To many minds the attribution of *national* labels to philosophy is suspect. By most people's reckoning, there is a universality about philosophy that makes it impossible to confine its problems, or the answers we give to them, within political or national boundaries. The expression 'Scottish history', say, is unproblematic in this respect because 'Scottish' refers to a distinctive subject matter—the story of a particular state and nation—not a distinctive discipline by which history in general is to be studied. Scottish history must be written in accordance with the canons of all historical enquiry. 'Scottish philosophy', however, cannot have this kind of particularity. Sensation, perception, feeling, knowledge, morality, politics, trade, religion, beauty, are facets of humanity in general, not attributes or institutions peculiar to Scotland and the Scots. So much, in fact, is explicitly acknowledged by the eighteenth-century conception of philosophy as a 'science of *human* nature'. On the other hand, 'Scottish philosophy' cannot be the name of a discipline distinctive of one place and time. To suppose that it is, is to sever its connection with the intellectual history that gives it

meaning, one that stretches back to the ancient Greeks. The philosophers of Scotland thought their enquiries to be coextensive with the philosophers of previous centuries, contemporary Europe, and (after a time) the New World. But if 'Scottish philosophy' cannot denote either a distinctive subject matter or a distinctive discipline, how can it be anything more than a label with which to refer, in Davidson's somewhat dismissive phrase, to 'any and every philosopher who happened to be by birth or by residence a Scotsman'? And if it is no more than this, why would we regard it as a *useful* label?

In his account of its nature and aims, Henry Jones considers philosophy a form of reflection that falls somewhere in between the sciences and Art.

> The whole aim of philosophy is to articulate, by means of experience, one thought, and owing to the imperious demands of unity it is so like Art that it may be described as Art made conscious of itself. Nevertheless, this consciousness of itself can be reached by philosophy only with the help of the sciences with their analytic processes. The understanding must come between the imagination and reason. (Jones 1883: 170)

Jones lays special emphasis on attending to the sciences, but his plausible parallel with Art might suggest a more substantial interpretation of the label 'Scottish philosophy'. The expression 'Scottish literature' meaningfully draws attention to a distinctive style of writing that was emulated, amended, reacted against over several generations of writers, all of whom saw themselves as standing in a single line. Sometimes they approached it with satisfied admiration, sometimes with frustrated contempt. But both attitudes reflect the perception that this was *their* literature, even when it prompted critical rejection. George Douglas Brown's novel *The House with the Green Shutters*, published in 1901, is unmistakably different from the Scottish 'kailyard school' novels of the late nineteenth century. Yet it gains almost all of its literary significance from being a conscious, and negative, reaction to them.

Could something of the same be said about Scottish philosophy? Can we conceive of it as a body of literature that benefits from being read as a single corpus? The problem with this suggestion is that philosophy is more than literary style and recurrent themes; it is a method or discipline of *enquiry*. Although Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, Reid, Hamilton, and so on did, broadly speaking, share a view about philosophical methodology, the method of enquiry they recommended—some adaptation of Newton and Bacon let us say—was recommended for *anyone* studying these phenomena, and not merely for those who happened to be studying them in Scotland. Literature has (often) cultural boundaries. It arises from, and speaks to, a particular cultural context, and this includes a particular readership. The same claim is made, sometimes, about philosophy, yet trying to confine it in this way has a measure of absurdity about it. Time and space, personal identity, mind and matter, knowledge and belief, are all concepts whose articulation may partially be shaped by cultural and historical context. The realities to which these concepts point, however, defy such confinement. If it should happen to be the case that some one group of people, who share the same national identity, produce innovative insights into those concepts, their insights are not any the less available

for anyone's and everyone's philosophical reflection. The principal works of Scottish philosophy—especially some parts of Hutcheson, Turnbull, Hume, Blair, Kames, Witherspoon, and Ferrier—can certainly be read *as* literature; it is only a modern prejudice that tends to restrict 'literature' to works of imagination. But, leaving aside the fact that other writers in the Scottish philosophical tradition are less 'literary', to read them *as literature* is to suspend any concern with the truth and cogency of the propositions they seek to advance, and thereby to abandon interest in their value *as philosophy*.

If neither subject matter, nor method, nor style can be called upon to articulate what is distinctively Scottish in 'Scottish philosophy', is there anything left? One remaining suggestion is this: the Scottish philosophical tradition was an intellectual *project*. To describe it as a project is to invite analogy with, say, the development of a great civic amenity such as an art museum, a city orchestra, or a national park. Such projects take time to materialize; they begin with aims and ideas that have to be amended in the light of new information and changing conditions; their ultimate realization is more powerfully influenced by some of the people engaged in them than by others. Often they go in directions that their originators may not have anticipated, and over the course of time, some changes in conception or realization may be so radical that they amount to the abandonment of the original project and the commencement of a new one. But absent changes of this magnitude, we can say that in many cases a single project unites all those who have been and will be contributors to it, despite the many evident differences between them.

Projects of this kind have to be undertaken within an institutional framework of some sort—government departments, religious organizations, major foundations, civic associations, and the like. In the case of Scottish philosophy, it is not hard to identify just such a framework. Whatever its internal intellectual tensions, philosophy in Scotland was conducted within an institutional setting that was both unusual, and unusually enduring. As was observed in Chapter 1, after the Act of Union of 1707, Scotland retained its distinctive institutions of law, education, and religion. It was within the context of these institutions, and especially the church and the universities, that philosophy was pursued and taught. And it is because of these institutions that philosophy had the wider social significance that it did. T. E. Jessop, in the introduction to his *Bibliography*, raises the question of what caused the general and sustained interest in philosophy that produced the long list of works he records. Though he declines to offer an answer in 'a mere preface', he does think it worth observing that 'of the 79 writers treated . . . nearly half were ministers of religion, and more than half were holders of university chairs', and many, he might have added, were both. The first fact is a reflection of the strongly intellectual character of Scottish Presbyterianism—a religion, as Hume thought, that resisted the 'superstition' of Roman Catholicism with the 'enthusiasm' of Reformed dogmatics,[4] and which required its clergy to undergo seven or eight years of university education before being eligible for ordination.

[4] See Hume 1963.

The fact that a significant majority of Scottish philosophers held university chairs was a consequence of the organization and social role of the Scottish universities. This arose, as has been noted on several previous occasions, by a conscious reorganization of university teaching that took place over the course of the eighteenth century.

> Under the old system each tutor, called a regent, carried his class through the four years of the Arts course in all its subjects. In 1708 in Edinburgh, 1727 in Glasgow, 1747 in St Andrews, 1753 in Marischal College, and 1798 at King's College, regenting was abolished and chairs instituted, thereby making it possible for tutors to research intensively, to develop their own ideas, and to speak and write with the authority of specialists. With not one professor of philosophy but two in each university, and with philosophy as an unavoidable subject in the Arts curriculum . . . it was natural that the subject should become an accepted and treasured element of the national culture. (Jessop 1938: viii)

This one historical change is illustrative of a larger fact, that the Scottish universities effectively comprised a 'system' each part of which kept in step with all the others, albeit at contrasting paces. Their academic unity was further reflected in, and maintained by, the fact that professors moved so regularly from place to place. The circulation of professors between institutions is remarkable, in fact, as is the historic 'line' in which professors were succeeded by their students, over several decades in many cases. Both phenomena were especially marked in the nineteenth century.

As Jessop notes, philosophy had a special place in the Scottish universities. This status was established at the time of their medieval foundation and retained until the early twentieth century. Moreover, being 'an unavoidable subject in the Arts curriculum' meant that interest in philosophy was reasonably widespread among Scotland's educated and professional class—lawyers, teachers, doctors, and especially clergy. In addition, the practice of having the principal professor teach the introductory class (even after 'assistants' became common) forged a still closer connection between the study and the teaching of philosophy.

This distinctive context produced and sustained further institutional expressions of philosophy's special role in Scottish life and letters. The importance of the philosophical societies in eighteenth-century Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow has already been noted, as has the existence of people like William Smellie (1740–95), editor of the first and second editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and author of a *Philosophy of Natural History* that became a set text at Harvard University. Even into the early twentieth century publishers were able to make money from a public that was interested in reading and buying philosophy books. Philosophers were held in high esteem—the monument to Dugald Stewart on Edinburgh's Calton Hill constitutes an especially striking manifestation of this—and philosophy lectures open to the public could be guaranteed large audiences. Robert Flint, professor first at St Andrews and then at Edinburgh, gave his Baird Lectures on Theism three times—in St Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and hundreds of people came to hear them. Newspapers covered these events extensively, and the published version of the lectures ran to twelve editions.

Preceding chapters have recounted the serious intellectual differences that divided Scottish philosophers in the course of the nineteenth century, and divisions in the eighteenth century were not much less marked. Hume was a focal point for these divisions, and provided an important stimulus (one might even say goad) to philosophical debate. But Scottish philosophy cannot be characterized simply in terms of opposition to Hume. Conversely, Reid was revered by many, but not by all. Something broadly described as 'Theism as grounded in human nature', the title of the Burnett Lectures given in 1892–3 by William Davidson, was widely endorsed over several centuries, but by no means universally; both Deism and agnosticism found adherents among the Scottish philosophers. To make philosophical Realism the marker (as some have done) automatically excludes the idealist philosophers of the late nineteenth century. This is a matter that is open to debate, certainly, but it also excludes Ferrier, and this, given his strenuous assertion to the contrary, is simply question begging. The criterion of a 'devotion' to psychology is even more unwarrantedly restrictive. Hutcheson, Smith, and Ferguson can hardly be included by this test, and even Hume and Reid were as much concerned with, and at loggerheads about, ethics and aesthetics as they were with perception and belief formation. Special emphasis on psychology is indeed evident in Brown and Bain, and to a lesser degree Hamilton, but logic, metaphysics, and moral philosophy continued to provide the subject matter of the philosophy that students were taught and the books and papers that philosophers wrote.

This considerable variety of approach, of emphasis, and of opinion constitutes the 'noise and clamour' of more than two centuries, and Jones is surely right to regard it as evidence of intellectual vitality rather than scientific failure. Exploiting Hume's image a little further we might say that the unity of Scottish philosophy arose from the fact that the noise and clamour emanated from a single house, and that the walls of this 'house'—the church, the universities, and the wider sphere of publishing, lectures, learned societies—were a feature distinctive of Scottish social life. By the same token, the decline of Scottish philosophy set in when the walls of this room began to crumble and people moved ever more frequently in and out of it. The image helps direct attention to the historical process that, broadly speaking, George Elder Davie traced in *The Democratic Intellect*.

The story Davie tells is one of division, betrayal, and subversion. By his account the Disruption that took place in the Church of Scotland in 1843 reversed the balance of cultural power and gave the nineteenth-century descendants of the eighteenth-century 'Evangelicals' ascendancy over the descendants of the 'Moderates'. This was compounded by the treachery of Anglophiles who increasingly took Oxford, Cambridge, and the English public schools to be educational ideals. The combined effect was to undermine opposition within Scotland to a sequence of official commissions established by the Westminster government. These led to university reforms that substantially altered the curriculum and especially the place of philosophy within it. The ultimate consequence of all these forces was a steady diminution of the

place of liberal learning, and philosophy in particular, within Scottish cultural and intellectual life.

The dramatic nature of Davie's story makes it compelling, and explains in large part the widespread attention his book secured and the vigorous discussion it prompted. Yet its strongly intellectualist character necessarily renders it defective as history. Important factors were at work besides the philosophical battle for hearts and minds that exercised educators, and the decline of the church and the changing place and structure of the universities was the outcome of a wider range of factors. Not the least of these was the First World War, the impact of which left no facet of Scottish society and culture untouched. Universities found their finances, student populations, and professoriate all greatly diminished. It was with deep reluctance that A. A. Bowman accepted the Chair of Logic at Glasgow in 1925 because it meant leaving a far better position in Princeton. But he felt strongly obliged to assist his native country, city, and *alma mater*, all of them 'impoverished, economically crippled . . . assailed by every spiritual danger' . . . with Glasgow at 'the centre of the derelict north' (Bowman 1938: xxxii–xxxiii).

The war and its aftermath also had a general effect on the minds of British citizens as a whole. It left them with a *common* consciousness that greatly overshadowed previous cultural differences. In this respect, however, the war may be said simply to have hastened a tendency already well under way. The United Kingdom had been brought into existence by the Act of Union in 1707. Two hundred years of political unity slowly, and inevitably, changed the identity and integrity of Scotland as a national unit. Ever improving methods of travel and communication set in train a process of political and cultural convergence that the mobilization of the whole country for a massive war effort intensified still further.

A further factor lay in the rapid expansion of universities. In 1800, England, Ireland, and Wales had three universities in comparison to Scotland's five. Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin were somewhat larger than Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews, and the two university colleges in Aberdeen, but their being restricted to the education of Anglicans meant they had less widespread cultural influence. By 1900 these restrictions were gone, multi-collegiate universities had come into existence in London, Wales, and Ireland, and further universities had been established in Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Hull, Liverpool, and Manchester. One result was that there were employment opportunities for Scottish-educated philosophers outside Scotland, opportunities still further extended by the growth of universities across the British Empire, notably in Canada and Australia. It had long been common for students to study abroad, of course—in France from early times and increasingly in Germany. But those who held lectureships elsewhere, even if, like Andrew Seth, they soon returned to Scotland, could hardly fail to acquire a sense of belonging to a wider philosophical world. The creation of UK-wide learned societies and philosophical journals—another noted feature of the nineteenth century—increased this sense. Davie is not wrong to see the changing place of the Scottish universities as a key

element in the erosion of a distinctive Scottish philosophical tradition. The explanation of this, however, lies as much in the changing world of universities as in politically motivated Scottish university reform.

These are just some of the dimensions and events within which Davie's more narrowly educational story has to be told. The decline and demise of the Scottish philosophical tradition was not caused, in the end, by intellectual division, or by the rise of rival disciplines that promised better 'results' in the study of mind and society. The tradition, as exemplified in figures such as John Veitch, Campbell Fraser, Henry Calderwood, William Davidson, and A. S. Pringle-Pattison, can be seen to have survived both these pressures. Rather, Scottish philosophy as a distinctive intellectual enterprise declined because the very special social and cultural world that had made it possible gradually disintegrated. It is certainly true, as Davie contends, that curricular revisions, prompted by university reforms, created a Bachelor of Science degree that had the effect of displacing the Master of Arts degree from its traditional place as the basis of Scottish university education, and inevitably this development diminished both the Faculty that taught it and the place of philosophy within it. For several decades thereafter, however, arts graduates were still required to take a course in philosophy so that Moral Philosophy especially retained a special status. Its final relegation to just one subject among many did not come about until the mid-twentieth century. That was when further large-scale changes in British cultural institutions, including its universities, removed the last vestiges of the world that had made the Scottish philosophical tradition possible.

There remains this question, deferred from the opening chapter. Is there anything to be lamented about the demise of Scottish philosophy, and anything for contemporary philosophy to learn from it? The answer seems to me to be 'yes'. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, philosophy was unusual in Scotland and Germany by being so firmly based in universities. That has subsequently become the norm. For the most part, though, the way in which philosophy is written and studied is much more in the German than the Scottish style. It has not only become much more specialized, but professionalized, the province of experts paid to teach formal classes and publish scholarly work. There are no contemporary equivalents of Joseph Butler, David Hume, or John Stuart Mill, none of whom ever held a university (or even a teaching) position. This is the result, chiefly, of a variety of forces—social, educational, financial—all of which have powerfully pressured philosophy's academic practitioners to model their subject more and more on the natural sciences. One striking consequence is that, compared to times past, the very best philosophy has little connection with the general stream of human thought and the conduct of ordinary life. The philosophical curriculum in many, perhaps most, colleges and universities has been structured in a way that presupposes a progression from undergraduate to graduate to professional. It is common and expected that philosophical works are unlikely to be understood by the generally well-educated reader, and, in more specialist areas may not even be comprehensible to other philosophers. Again, the contrast with

Butler's sermons, Hume's essays, and Mill's books is sharp. Even when philosophers have set themselves to recover 'relevance' by teaching and writing 'applied ethics', the need for professional recognition has quickly led to the creation of academic journals in which specialist language and arcane problems prevail.

In the natural sciences a similar change has taken place, of course. Educated contemporaries of Newton and Darwin could expect to read their works, while papers in modern quantum mechanics and cell biology are intelligible to very few. There is this important difference, however. The natural sciences are progressive, and so it is inevitable that with steadily accumulating knowledge and dramatic theoretical advances, especially since the seventeenth century, higher levels of specialization are required. Philosophy is not progressive in this sense. There are no settled solutions. As Hamilton held, philosophy is an intellectual activity in which searching is more basic than finding. The questions with which it deals are academically important, certainly, but they are also perennial, and those who wrestle with them are confronted, not as experts or specialists, but as human beings. A central part of philosophical enquiry is framing the questions properly, and not simply formulating answers to them, still less making use of answers others have already formulated.

Philosophy, it is plausible to say, is *necessarily* connected with ordinary life in a way that physics and biology are not. When this connection is hard to detect, as it is with a great deal of contemporary philosophy, the significance of philosophical endeavour declines; it ceases to matter very much, and assumes the status of an intriguing intellectual puzzle rather than a deep philosophical problem. At the same time, to say that there are no settled solutions is not to say that these are 'personal' questions to which every answer is as good as any other. Philosophy is intellectually demanding, and so needs the intellectual skills and discipline characteristic of the academy. It is at this point that we can isolate the special merits of the Scottish philosophical tradition. By a happy coincidence of circumstance, for two centuries or so, the perennial questions of humanity—our place in the cosmos, to use Seth's phrase—were explored at the level of intellectual enquiry appropriate to a research-driven university, while at the same time retaining their essential links to social and cultural life beyond the walls of academe. It is a condition of philosophical enquiry rarely secured elsewhere, and never, I think, over such a long stretch of time. To recover something of its spirit can only be beneficial to contemporary philosophy, which faces the real danger of descending into a new phase of scholasticism. The thought behind this book is that it may be possible to aid this recovery, at least to some small degree, by studying the Scottish philosophical tradition more closely.

12.4 Conclusion

This volume has charted, and explored, the development of the Scottish philosophical tradition in the century or more that succeeded that of its most famous exponents. On any reasonable estimation the vigour, richness, variety, and productivity of philosophical activity within Scotland from the time of Brown to that of Pringle-Pattison

is remarkable, and equals that of the preceding century. Indeed, it could reasonably be held that in all these respects the nineteenth-century philosophers exceeded their eighteenth-century predecessors, a plausible claim if we take into account the important fact that the nineteenth century had the eighteenth century to build on. At the same time, this other fact remains. Little of their activity, and few of their publications, seem to have any interest for contemporary philosophical scholarship. Hume, Smith, Reid, and, to a lesser extent, Hutcheson all have modern editions of their works, and generate considerable numbers of books and journal articles each year. There is nothing comparable in the case of Brown, Hamilton, Ferrier, or Caird. Why is this, and might it change?

The second question calls for speculation about the future, which is always highly hazardous. But the first simply calls for explanation, which is less risky to attempt. Simple ignorance no doubt plays its part. These works and writers are almost completely unknown, and people cannot study work of which they know nothing. We can hardly rest content with that as the final word, however, since it simply presses the question further—why are they unknown? One relatively contingent factor is this. With some exceptions (Mill, for instance), English philosophical prose in the nineteenth century is less accessible to the modern reader than the prose of the century before. It is undoubtedly true that Brown, Hamilton, and Ferrier all tended to high-flown verbosity. Yet contemporary philosophers have shown themselves more than willing to struggle with the near impenetrability of Hegel and Heidegger (for example) because they believe that the effort will ultimately be worth it. In the case of the nineteenth-century Scots, a similarly motivating judgement seems to be lacking. A more substantial suggestion, therefore, sustained in part by some of the chapters in this book, is that 'the Scottish philosophy' of the nineteenth century did not merely decline; it was positively displaced by the empiricism of Mill and the pragmatism of Peirce, which then became philosophically fashionable in a much wider intellectual context. There is undoubtedly some truth in this. Yet even philosophical fashion is generally fleeting, and things that fall out of fashion can usually be expected to return.

Perhaps an explanation is to be found in the suggestion that the works which the Scottish philosophers of the nineteenth century published proved not to have the enduring quality that can go on engaging new generations of philosophers. Very few philosophical works do, after all. Such a judgement is hard to sustain, if we rely only on the simple evidence of neglect. Astonishing though it may be in retrospect, it is a fact that J. S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* was neglected from not long after the time of its composition until its revival by Felix Mendelssohn 100 years later, yet is now recognized to be one of the greatest musical works ever composed. Another example, more relevant to the present context, is close to hand. Hume's *Treatise* was not reprinted for seventy years until Selby-Bigge brought out his definitive edition in 1888, and Hume was not regarded as an author of enduring philosophical relevance until Kemp Smith's famous articles appeared in *Mind* in 1904. Reid provides another.

His *Inquiry* was held in high esteem for forty years or more before vanishing almost completely. It was 150 years before new editions began to replace Hamilton's 1846 heavily annotated version of the *Collected Works*. The appearance of new editions late in the twentieth century both reflected and contributed to a very substantial revival of interest in Reid. This shows every sign of continuing, and suggests that we should be slow to declare of any substantial work that it has no enduring philosophical interest.

In the end, it may be that there is no one explanation for the state of deep neglect into which nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Scottish philosophy has fallen. It remains a puzzle, unless, of course, future events should prove that an explanation is no longer needed. This would be the case if one or more of the authors in question were to attract renewed and serious attention. A plausible speculation, in my view, is that J. F. Ferrier is the most likely nineteenth-century philosopher to be rediscovered in this way. But this book, let us hope, has shown that he is by no means the only possible candidate.

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