Thesis in Philosophy IV,
on
Scholastic Ethics.
1889.
The Renaissance of Ethics: a critical comparison of Scholastic and Modern Ethics.

For the James Wilden Johnson Memorial Collection Yale Univ.
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17 July 1946
The Renaissance of Ethics.

Having always in accordance with the modern fashion entertained a hearty contempt for any thing scholastic, a skeptical distrust of opinion has led me to think and read a little upon Scholastic Ethics, with the result that my present thesis is: that the Renaissance of Ethics has not yet wholly passed, i.e., that modern systematic ethical study has practically made but little advance upon the Scholastic method. I will first briefly...
Set forth the development and units of Scholastic Ethics, and critically compare it with Modern Ethics.

Scholastic Ethics.

The rise and development of Scholastic Ethics is a wonderful phenomenon in the world's history. First we have the rise in a thietic teleology, of the most ultra-mundane character, whose corner-stone was faith, and practical outcome lives of the purest and deepest love, then, by natural sequence, a disregard of this world as a further revelation of the End, of Truth as a supporter.
of faith, and a pernicious substitution of dogma for the faith, resulting necessarily in subjection of reason to dogma; finally, the emancipation of the reason from a degrading sub-
dom. While reason and dogma were thus involved, an attem-
ted science of ethics was formulated, based on dogma instead of fact, and resulting in a
cycle of words, beautiful as a structure, but useless as a
science. The following diagram may roughly explain the
movement, leaving out for the present minor com-
lications of thought. Epic
teleology, as represented by
Aristotle and Plato, was wholly deduced from, and subservient to, reason. The early Christian Fathers are divided into the apologists and dogmatists, the former of whom are represented by Justin Martyr, the second by Origen; they attempted a reconciliation of reason

and faith which resulted in the subjection of reason to dogma. Then beginning with Oecumen came a counter-movement, assuming bolder proportions with Abelard, and with Aquinas coming to the recognition of reason to an equal place with dogma, until finally with Francis Bacon entered the modern era.

Founded on dogma Scholastic Ethics quarried its building material from the same source, and, hindered by no internal difficulties, built an edifice, imposing but fallaciously simple. It sought to enclose in its four walls the
the whole universe of teleologic truth; it knew not doubt, everything was so because it said so, and authority was all in all. This vast structure did not grow up in a day or a century, nor was it the work of one man or a thousand: from Justin to Oecumen, from 103 A.D. to 1347 A.D. it was building, directed by zeal, now honesty, now interest, now vice, now foolish, now roaring to a God, now groaning after a devil. In it mysticism and anthropomorphism were strangely blinded with a theism that touched the strongest and deepest motives of the human
human soul. Upon such a system it all becomes us to look with contempt— it did a great work in the world: it is a wonderful example of that force which impels the mind to the Unity of Truth, and though it sought to grasp that unity without search and reach the place of science, yet its mistakes were mistakes of method, not of aim, and its soul will ever live in the human heart. Let us seek a glance at its chief outlines: Ethics is the science of the nature and laws of morality: it is divided into Ethics,
(general), and concluding the first treatise on the nature of
morality, the second of its application in practice.
Taking up the first part we turn to the analysis of
goods. There are two kinds of
goods: subjective and objective; therefore there must be
a subjective and objective
highest good: the difference
is that the subjective highest
good is that through the
promotion of which we have
the highest happiness and per-
flection, the great End of life, to
which all other goods are
subsidiary; the subjective
highest good is the subject-

we happiness, reflection and contentment attendant upon the possession of the objective Highest Good. We therefore ask: What is this? There are two kinds of goods, the uncreated and the created, eternal — God, and, created and temporal, viz.: (1) Goods of Fortune, (2) Goods of Body, (3) Goods of Soul. Some place the Highest Good among these latter, but it cannot be among the Good of Fortune, because the latter, as it appears, Health, Reason, and Virtue; nor among the Goods of Body, because the body is lower than the soul, and the highest
Good can be lower than nothing; not among the goods of soul because they can be attained only by a few and then imperfectly, and abstract virtue is impossible; therefore the highest good is God, who is perfect, comprehends all goods, and only in him is man perfect. Man may strive after God implicitly, i.e., after happiness, or explicitly, through the will. All other goods in the world are bona utilia, means to the highest good. The subjective highest good is, consequently, the knowledge and love of God. If man seeks the
Highest Good he will make his life like God's. This depends on action and this action must be the highest and noblest and on the highest object, i.e. knowing God; this, according to the definition of Highest Good should make man perfect, which it does, but not in this world — only in the higher life, which must be eternal, but the fear of losing it impairs the happiness: this life then is only relative to the next. In this life however a man must have a life-work, on the fulfilling of which depends his hope of the life to come; in doing
This there is a temporal happiness, joy, the goods of body and
of Fortune, and especially the
goods of soul, which give us
knowledge of Truth, i.e. God, who
is Eternal Truth. Without the
domination of Will ethical conduct
is impossible. There is a differ-
ence of good and bad in
men's actions for (a) reason
makes certain demands on
the will and it makes a
vast difference whether they
are fulfilled or not, (b) all peo-
ple have made this distinc-
tion, (c) even materialists rec-
ognize it in practical life. We
need a moral rule to point
out the difference. This rule
must not only direct but compel, and thus we have it divided into the Norma directive and Norma imperata; we ask what is the Norma imperata? There are true false theories: the Exegete, Sibylla, Natural (direct command of God), the Subjective Rational (Hume's), and the Moralistic (Utilitarian). The real rule is the moral hierarchy of inner motives, supplemented by Divine intelligence as far as revealed in man. The Norma imperata is the Reason, a law implies a law giver—a moral law a legitimate law giver, a universal law, and one for the high.
But good of all, God is the author of all the laws underlying the natural moral order. The obligation to obey these laws lies not in the reason, but in the will of God. It does not however depend on his free-will because having made a free choice he must carry it out.

This is in main the general structure—the scientific basis—of Scholastic Ethics. It dogmatic character, careful distinctions, and the vacillating treatment of reason will be especially noticed—yet it was a whole so simple and beautiful as to gain respect.
not allegiance

Critical

The fundamental question of the Universe for ages past, present, and to come, is Duty. Given a universe with two possible futures and the question becomes to each individual how much difference will it make if this be tomorrow’s universe rather than that? In other words, the great question the world asks is How much better is the best possible universe I can help make, than the worst possible? If the difference between these two possible universes is the dif-
The distinction between Heaven and Hell, my duty is a

metaphysical difference than

as though the difference were

that of Pleasure and Pain; in

one case it would be a question

of Right and Wrong, in the other

of Like and Dislike. Contrary

to general opinion

then the question of duty is not

What is the Summum Bonum?

as Scholastic and most Mod-

ern ethical philosophers would

say, but how much better is

the Summum Bonum than

the Infinissimum Malum; in oth-

er words: How much better is

the best that can be than

the worst? It is plainly evi-

dent that this takes hold up.
On telology—the whole question of duty hangs upon the Cause and Purpose of this great drama we call life; in fine, to understand duty, we must know Ends. We can now see the real position of Scholastic Ethics; having implicit faith in revealed telology, the question of duty was settled; but then came a natural reaction, they repudiated the reason which should have justified the alleged revelation and substituted dogma for faith, and then attempted the logical impossibility of building a science upon these data. And what have
Modern ethics done by way of improvement? Let us trace more carefully the advance of thought for a thousand years:

SCIENCE—Tyndal.

METAPHYSICS—Kant, Royce.

ETHICS—Martineau.

We notice here that the knowledge of the What and Why of the universe, science and ideology, have divided twice but in neither case from each other. When in the 13th century Thomas Aquinas acknowledged two parallel sources of knowledge, Reason and Revelation he divided the stream.
of thought in turn, but how? Certainly not on the mental line between Facts and Ends, for the revelation he believed in was at best but a partial answer to the Why, and the division was in reality between Christian theology, on the one hand, and science and a part of teleology, on the other. What was the result? Scholasticism. The second division took place at the time of Descartes and Bacon. The mischief of Scholasticism was seen and for the first time since the advent of Christianity a branch of science was separated from
teleology, but here again the scholastic spirit prevented the separation on the medical line: the method of far-fetched distinction was here to blame, for having with some reason divided the world into mind and matter, they came to the conclusion, by a strange analogy, that only matter was capable of scientific treatment, and consequently science has in these days strictly confined itself to matter, while in metaphysics and ethics the science and teleology have remained blended; and the result? In material advance, in metaphysics, scholasticism.
Each science and teleology, fact and ultimate cause, are indissolubly bound and shut up together in a manner positively forbidding advance, the science of matter was emancipated and sent onto triumph when teleological guess and dogma, whether true or false, were banished from her domain; and metaphysics will gain an equal place, when instead of inquiring into the categories of the reason, space, perception, and the authority of conscience, it shall systematically study the facts accumulated and the minds accumulating by it wonder.
ful manifestations for half a century, or centuries, as the physicist studies heat not by its inner consciousness, but by what it does. But scholastics in metaphysics is not all that has followed the Baconian division of thought; two divergent lines of development have ensued, almost antagonistic. The physicist, making all the advance made anywhere, not unnaturally concluded that the science of matter was all the world, and consequently began to evolve the world ethics and all therefrom. On the other hand Christian
This remained practically untouched, except a necessary retreat from dogma to faith. Science however was not satisfied — there must be found a "scientific" basis for duty, and pleasure, life, and chance, were at different times, called into question; as far as good; for either stands had the questionable advantage of not being "disprovable" (to come word); but they went one step further and demanded that man should follow pleasure or life with the same deep moral sense as he follows God, i.e. that like and dislike be right and wrong, or that man
have no moral nature at all. This was demanding an impossibility; for the very idea of duty depends entirely on what is the teleologic base, the End of existence; consequently the deep moral faith of the world found no resting place here, but clung to the scholastic God. The Christian ethical philosophers, on the other hand, in formulating their moral philosophy, approximated the truth more nearly; indeed were only kept from it by the strange oversight which in these days has found together in Metaphysic, science of mind and
theology of the Universe. "Act"

says Martineau and his school

in accordance with the high-

not motive," which is but a

subjective statement of the

Scholastic "Seek the Highest

Good," a rule which, to anyone

having faith in a certain

teleology, is as ultimate as

possible. Lately however, with

Professors James and Royce,
a vaccination of this comes in:

an attempt to base ethics

upon fact - to make it a sci-

ence. This theory may be re-

stated: the attempt to uni-

ify goods and find a sum-

munum bonum is fruitless and

impossible: there is therefore
No summan conceve and one must arrive to realize all that anyone anywhere calls Good. This is really Martinian's proposition as may be thus shown:

![Diagram]

let the intervals between the best and worst possible worlds which these men believe in respectively be so marked. What now is a Good to Origen? That which will lead to Heaven; Helvetius, that which will lead to his own fluorescence; Goethe, what is; now Professor James asks, either that.
Helvetius act so as to realize Heaven which he decides and calls visionary, and Origen to unite with Goethe in worshipping Sickle Nature and asserting that what is is best, which of course means a surrender of his Christi-
anity, or that each act as each thinks best, which is nothing more than a broad way of
saying Martineau's rule. Is
ask a more "universal" mind
than this latter, is to ask a
man to believe all possible
teleologies are true—a man
is at absurdity.

What then is the step need-
ed to complete the renais-
sance of ethics and differ-
modern from scholastic ethics? Or is it, I take it, that
thought re- units and separate as below:

Science

Metaphysics

Ethics

Science, WHAT IS TRUTH

Teleology, WHY? THE THINGS

Thus

The question is then what
would the real change be
in each case and what the
relation between science
and teleology. It is difficult,
not to say dangerous, to seek
analogy when discussing the
ultimate, yet I will venture:
Suppose a man has before
him a piece of finely woven
and intricately woven
lace; he asks two ques-
tions: What? and Why?—What is this, why is it such as it is. There are methods by which people may guess at why it is, or by which systematically and carefully find out what it is in order that facts may guide his guesses and ultimately lead him to the truth. Manifestly if his work is any way intricate, and if it is of any moment whether he arrives at the Truth or not, he should take the latter method: true it may never lead him to the Truth, but it will lead him nearer than any other path. He will in pursuing this meth-
ed strictly separate inquiry into the What from inquiry into the Why – this was indeed the very gist of his method. He
reaches the What for the Why, and cannot, consequently, see the Why to reach well; if however by strange oversight or ignorance he does mix them, explains an isolated fact by a wild unbridled guess instead of subduing the hypothesis by multitudinous systematized facts; speculates when he should reach; what happens? Scholasticism. How
he separates his piece of lace into two parts; on one part still persists his mongrel method.
on the other confines himself to a strict search for the

What - what then? On one side, advance: on the other, scholasticism. Now apply this to the world: science on one part of the scale, metaphysics on the other. Since it first saw the sun rise, the world has wondered - has asked What and Why. First it wondered, then it guessed a thousand years, and finally began a systematic search for Truth - on half the scale. It has partially come to the conclusion. It must fully come to the conclusion, that the only way to find why the world is
is to find what it is — the only path to theology is science.
But, we remind ourselves that
in the example of the case
this was the method "if it was
of any moment whether we arrive at
the truth or not?" In the
world then — to see, is it of any
moment whether we arrive at
the truth or not? Yet answer
the philosopher: we want truth
for its own sake — not to an-
swer, has always answered,
the world: "Nay, truth is not
our End; we worship not
as tick of fact; the very
situation of not knowing
the Why of a mockingly-
miesterious Universe, of
not knowing how vast
or how slight is the differ-
ence between the Beet and
the Woret that universe can
be by our own efforts, makes
the the qeuestion What is the
End? a question that touch
the deepest depths of our souls,
that over shadows the awful-
ness of life and Death itself
in the greater question of Heav
en and Hell. The object then
of science is Truth. Truth is
the one path to teleology, tele-
ology is ethics. In this view
these main objections may
be raised: 1 By this theory Ethics
will not become a science until
the mystery of teleology is solved.
2. A science of mind is impossible. 3. The relativity of human knowledge precludes any hope of ultimate success.

I. This is perfectly true; indeed how could it ever be supposed that the science of duty could be perfected until we know what duty is; and this we can never do until it is as certain as you declare that either God, Pleasure, fickle Nature or blind Chance holds the keys of the universe, for duty varies in direct ratio to the change of teleologic base, and the attempt to make duty = Pleasure the same thing as duty = God.
is as wild a venture as ever a human being after conceived. But what is the
Duty to do? Here comes the buming question of practical ethics;
not scientific ethics is now asked, but what ought I to do in
this case? The fact that a science of ethics today is not possi-
cible for lack of facts upon which
take it ought not to hinder
ethical conduct. The "great an-
ting multitude" may, as Profes-
sor James says, be "working out
the great ethical problems," yet
this should not blind us to the
fact that for those problems
there are scientific facts,
though they may now be
far from us in teleology is truth. What then is my duty in this case? "So act that the Ends of the Universe may not be nullified"; thus practically, this world answers—but I object: there's the doubt which seeps through my life, stifles God and my Right; in other words—what are the Ends? Shall I be St. Paul, Jeremy Bentham, or Walt Whitman? Thus the world answers—farther than which it cannot go: "So act that the Ends of the best Universe of which you can conceive the world a part, may not be nullified." In thus acting Re-
— you may be a fool, but in the great hereafter, be it Elysian fields or deepest oblivion, you will be a moral hero, who, if the World is the Kingdom of God, shall see the King in his beauty, and if it is a mere fable shall have been infinitely above it. One momentous fact, however, future science must not forget: Christian Theology is the only one yet invented which seems worthy of a man. This is the true status of Ethics and this status it will only attain when, aiming to be a depart.
ment of metaphysics, it became
the aim of teleologic search,
and metaphysics ceased to
warp the place of science. Above
and beyond is this beacon-
light; that gradually, year by
year, science will narrow
the field, more and more will
our thoughts converge upon
eternal Truth. If you say
this is impossible — a dream
of youth, I only answer that
the world has not yet discov-
ered the word "impossible"
and until it does I'll know
not Impossible
2. That a science of mind
is impossible.
The world over it has gen-
really been the residue of man
kind that what has not been
done cannot be done; accord-
ingly it is a generally accep-
ted axiom that a scientific

treatment of the phenomena
of mind is impossible; the
Scottish school attempted it
and landed in the stiffer met-
aphysics of introspection; the
"new" psychology and the mod-
ern effort at psychical re-
search are tentalives in that
direction, but the one is more a
science of brain, the other very
analogous to a study of the
human body which should
begin with the investigation
of the most glaring anomalies.
ities: of great use no doubt, but never declined to reveal its true value until the type of which it is a caricature is more thoroughly known. Even in modern anthropology, the arduous science of man, mind as mind has received little notice in theory, none in practice; a philosophy of history has long been a cherished scheme but has scarcely risen above a study of manis environments. Do, then, a science of mind possible? Let us see: a science is a systematization of what we know about anything; it has no mystic marriage with induction—de-
Deduction is just as scientific, provided it is deduction from what we know and not from what we think may be. Bacon's work was not the substitution of induction for deduction, it was the total separation of search for facts from speculation as to final ends - of science from teleology. If then we have knowledge of mind it is possible to systematize that knowledge, to have a science of mind, provided that in the study of mind (metaphysics), science and teleology are strictly separated. Upon a field so broad, so wonderful as the phenomena of mind, the scientist need have
It is difficult to gain the requisite knowledge. Indeed, already here and there the field has been invaded: in social science, statistics, Max Müllo's Science of Thought, etc., but never boldly, for the reason that a scholastic metaphysics has nominally held the field and talked. The world demands such a science; nothing so well attests this fact as the phenomenal rise and development of the modern novel, synchronous with empirical science— it has in some measure balanced our rapid tendency toward the mechanical automaton. The Metaphysics of today
must take its proper place along
side scholastic disputations
as a mental gymnasticum,
and science, not of this or of
that, but of the World must be
left untrodden to solve the
eternal What. The third objection
here comes in, and divides it-
self in two parts:
3. The relativity of human know-
ledge. This objection is urged in
two forms: 1. the physicist says
from the very nature of the case
the knower cannot directly
know that which knows. The
idealists say there are no
facts of mind in contradis-
tinction to those of matter—
mind itself is the one ultimate
To the objection of the physicist I answer that I acknowledge that introspection as a method and an inner consciousness as a field of research will never alone yield a science of mind, for the very fact that we know not how much individual minds differ nor how much they are alike. We could not study chemistry by a single reaction, though the same laws work in all reactions, nor physics from an electric spark though perhaps all forces are correlative, so in the science of mind, we must study not my mind, but the great universal mind, in its millions.
of manifestations past and present, using introspection, not as a hindrance to science, but as an additional help; this largely invalidates the objection of the scientist, for in the wonderful panorama of history, in the throbbing world of today are multitudinous facts as to the working of the most wonderful of forces: mind, they only need to be scientifically treated to the yield fruit in great laws. The objection of the idealist is far more subtle, and in strict logic can not be disproved: although the world may with some truth of
from that if matter is an illusion of mind it is a remarkably well-behaved illusion. Yet the bare truth remains that the only fact we can absolutely postulate is the existence of our own minds. Yet in practice the idealist does not remain in a negative position, but seeking advance in knowledge, postulates a knower and a known. Since then to do anything beside idly wonder it is necessary to make this postulate the only question is as to procedure. Here then we can apply the rule urged throughout the thesis: mix not the What and Why in your search; prostituting
a known and known, through
Science carefully find out what
you perceive and on that sci-
ence build your belief. On the
other hand to guess out, with Pro-
fessor Royce, a logical univer-
se is interesting as a piece of celeb-
ration, but the patient fact remain
that it is guesswork not science,
and the latter is the only system-
atic advance to truth. Before
leaving this however, at the
risk of being illogical, I can-
not forbear to mention one in-
ternal logical difficulty in
absolute idealism which in my
limited philosophical reading
I have not met, and for which
I have never found a satis-

factory answer. The only fact that idealist A can affirm is his own mind; all the remaining world (if world there is) is his

receptacle illusion; B however knows another, fact, viz. B's mind; and C, C's mind. Now it is found that

if A performs certain preliminary actions he receives a house;

if B performs the same prelimi-

naries, he receives a house iden-

tical in all minutest particu-

larities; such is the case with C, D, E the world. It is then conclus-

ive, if a common effective cause

called the universe that for

thousands of years individual

minds have agreed upon mi-

nutest particulars and never

Absolute

idealism, as I

understand it, is

well an attempt to account

rationally for just this fact.

It says A, B, C, E

can share one object

only through

themselves

one mind.
have decided as to whether this is a house or a cat without seriously questioning the sanity of the defender of the cat. With them, objective reality thus proved we may proceed to science.

Along these lines I conceive the advance of the future will be made, and the renaissance of ethics completed by taking it from a subordination to metaphysics, and contempt in science, to be the end and aim of an all-embracing science—the beacon light of a struggling humanity to guide to knowledge of the Infinite, to know whether life is pleasure or duty. In such a world...
sance, in fine, it is the cor-
ner-stone of a world struc-
ture - first the What, then the
Why - underneath the Everlast-
ing Ought.

This is a very original thought, full of indepen-
dent thought and vigorous expression, but, as
it seems to me, this work of a man who
has yet found his way into clearness and
has a great deal of discrimination, such as

to define how, or how the facts of the
world are to be "scientifically"
and exactly. To me, that is impossible -
we can only trust in its ends being what we
sympathize with, The last doga pages or
so especially need more thinking. On the whole,
however, I regard it as an exceptionally promising production. War.