

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Elements of Ethics*. by James H. Hyslop

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individual, with these impulses and "induced experiences," and consequently with just this real opportunity to weave his life into one whole. He must note his situation, and his qualities,—*i. e.*, he must be aware both of his impulses and of the consequent experiences; and his moral consciousness, like his moral conduct (for the latter is the expression of the former), might be embodied in the rule: Live this your life as the life of one whole self. The following of this rule will satisfy, not the desires of every moment, but precisely the reflective decision of the whole man himself.

This must suffice for a sketch of the fundament of Professor Dewey's doctrine as here stated. The contrast with the various forms of the "abstract ideal" is sketched; the contrast with hedonism, a doctrine which, in every form, Professor Dewey altogether opposes, is more fully and very skilfully developed. Extremely interesting is also the discussion of the problem of freedom.

That our author may soon give himself a completer expression, in place of these rough-hewn and fragmentary notes, as well as in place of the too brief "Outlines," is the earnest wish of the present reviewer, who both agrees and disagrees with Professor Dewey in too many and too varied respects to make a discussion of the *pro* and *contra* here possible. Ethical realism seems to the present reviewer an essentially partial doctrine, and not the "whole" for which Professor Dewey so frequently contends. But of great value, in the present state of controversy, is a statement of a decidedly realistic form of ethical doctrine which is still in a sharp and conscious contrast to the hedonistic interpretation of the facts of the moral consciousness. As a sketch of such a theory, the present volume, despite its hasty form, seems worthy of this somewhat extended notice.

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THE ELEMENTS OF ETHICS. By James H. Hyslop, Ph.D. Instructor in Ethics in Columbia College. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895. Pp. ix., 470.

In sharp contrast with Professor Dewey, Dr. Hyslop, in his decidedly minute and extended work, proceeds upon the basis of a definition by virtue of which (p. 5) "The chief function of Ethics is to do this, to determine what is an ideal existence, and to promote its realization." The preface announces that "the present work is designed as an introductory treatise upon the fundamental

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problems of theoretical ethics, and therefore to obtain standing-ground from which to consider the practical questions that are affected by general principles." The elaborateness of the treatment is admitted to be greater than might be expected in an introductory book, but this Dr. Hyslop justifies by the "complications of ethical problems," and by the variety of the opinions that have been current regarding them. The "analytic method" has been followed in order to determine the precise meanings of terms, and in order to define the precise nature of ethical problems, and Dr. Hyslop admits that his book "may try the patience of those who desire synthetic and comprehensive results."

As a fact, few of our ethical text-books in English contain more detailed analyses of the meanings of terms, or more lengthy classifications of the various theories relating to ethics. Herein lies the strength, and also the weakness, of Dr. Hyslop's book. It may well be questioned whether the student's best intellectual interests are served by a method which, after taking him through seven long chapters, wherein the "elementary principles," and then the problems of Freedom, Responsibility, and Conscience have been discussed historically, critically, and with great detail, still has to tell him, on p. 349, when three-fourths of the book have been finished, that "the definition of terms has thrown much light upon what the human mind means by morality, but it has not determined anything in regard to the nature of the highest good, or ideal end of conduct." Hereupon, in Dr. Hyslop's text, follows a classification of the "theories of morality," whose sub-classes are thirteen in number; and only after the "analytic method" has thus received such full justice does our author permit himself to go on to a positive decision as to the respective merits of the views that fall under these thirteen sub-classes. Now, it is indeed doubtful whether one is altogether wise to appeal in this way to the "patience" of the undergraduate; but, after all, every teacher must judge such things for himself. At all events, Dr. Hyslop's student will be well introduced to the art of suspending his judgment.

On the other hand, while Dr. Hyslop's method is certainly unfavorable to giving any elementary student a "synthetic" grasp of the connections of the subject, it is, in its decidedly thorough scrutiny of various points of view, in general most laboriously fair and judicial in tone; and herein, again, lies its strength, as a discipline in fair-mindedness, and an example of the judicial attitude. To be sure, it must be observed that the moments in Dr. Hyslop's

text where he at length comes to a decision (as concerning freedom, pp. 190-219, or concerning the nature of morality, pp. 393-397) often leave us less satisfied with his actually stated reasons for just this decision than we had been with his foregoing statements of the views among which he decides. And here one does indeed come to doubt whether Dr. Hyslop has always really understood his opponents as well as he has meant to do. For example, in the matter of freedom, one feels a strong doubt whether Dr. Hyslop can have ever fully appreciated the case of the partisans of necessity as Spinoza or as Schopenhauer would conceive such case, when one finds our author at length deciding, on p. 204, against the "objective determinist," on the sole ground that if the latter "reduces all causation to the purely mechanical form he must deny the fact of deliberation, because the law of cause and effect requires an immediate nexus between the two terms;" while "on the other hand, if he admit the fact of deliberation, he must surrender his theory." Surely one has stated in vain, with judicial coolness, the case of the "objective determinist," if one has not seen that the theory in question supposes deliberation to be a process subject to its own psychological necessities, like any other process. And if a theory has already supposed that psychological necessities are, at bottom, of the "mechanical" type, one has no more reason to give up this hypothesis on account of the existence of deliberation than in view of the existence of any other psychological process. I have sensory incitements *a, b, c*, and they lead directly to acts, *p, q, r*, without intervening deliberation. So far I am on a relatively low level of psychical life. The "objective determinist" thinks this to be a mechanical process. Later on there come to me the same or other stimuli. But my externally observable response is now very slow in coming. Within me I observe what I call deliberation. An external observer sees me apparently inactive. After a long time I respond to the stimuli, try acts so complex that nobody, in the present state of psychology, could have predicted their character. Is there here a process that you cannot interpret mechanically, *even if* you hold that the first process, that of prompt reaction to stimulus, was determined by conditions which are mechanical and outside of the subject's consciousness? Not at all. The same reasons that impel you to call the first process mechanical may apply, quite as well, to the second process. One who deliberates is, from the determinist's point of view, not suspending any causal nexus. All the while the supposably mechanical

processes are going on in his life. Acts, or their psychical equivalents, fill up all the intermediate stages during which he is supposed, by a superficial observer, to be inactive. Regard him, in a now customary fashion, as a psycho-physical mechanism, and you may affirm that all the while that he is said to be deliberating he is really engaged in motor processes,—just as genuinely such as would be his most active muscular contractions, only that these processes, by mutual interference, prevent any externally visible motor result excepting the attentively preserved attitudes of deliberation. Is the supposed causal nexus of my activities, affirmed by an objective determinist, shown to be suspended because, while I deliberate, I do nothing more than knit my brow, move my eyes, or cross my legs, or sigh? No, just these *are* the acts which outwardly express my deliberation, and the mechanical theory views *these* intermediate acts as necessarily determined, and as involving no suspension of causal nexus. On the other hand, if you regard a man's mind in Herbartian fashion, as the conscious resultant of a mechanical interaction of psychical elements, themselves largely existent outside of consciousness, then the fact of deliberation is once more just as easily, just as much, and just as little explained as is any other psychical process. The *Vorstellungsmassen* act and react, until the decisive configuration occurs, and one's mind is made up. That is the mechanical nexus supposed by such a determinist. This nexus is nowhere suspended. Such theories may be false, but the mere existence of deliberation cannot be quoted against doctrines which explicitly undertake to explain deliberation itself as a portion of a mechanical process.

The present writer notes these imperfections in Dr. Hyslop's argument about freedom as examples of the occasional speculative imperfections of our author's method, and does so with all the more readiness because, in the end, he agrees with Dr. Hyslop in asserting the inadequacy of mechanism to express the ultimate nature of the conscious process, and because, although for other philosophical reasons than Dr. Hyslop here adduces, he would also hold that there exists in the universe a kind of freedom corresponding to what Dr. Hyslop skilfully defines as *Velleity*. Moreover, much of the analysis in this chapter on Freedom is of an excellent sort, and the chapter is well worth writing at a time like the present. But here, as elsewhere, the general judgment regarding the strength and the weakness of this volume seems to hold good: Dr. Hyslop's conscientious and detailed analysis do honor to his

fairness, and make his work an extremely thoughtful one; but in matters that concern speculative skill of a constructive type this book is often, to the present reader's mind, distinctly unsatisfactory.

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A SYLLABUS OF ETHICS. By William M. Bryant, M.A., Instructor in Mental and Moral Philosophy, St. Louis Normal and High School. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1894. Pp. 82.

Briefer, but in its chosen form more finished than the Syllabus of Professor Dewey, this little work, by the author of the treatise entitled "The World-Energy and its Self-Conservation," and of several other philosophical essays, represents, with a somewhat individual and relatively independent development, an idealistic ethical theory. This sketch, the author tells us, "has been prepared with a view to meeting the needs of the St. Louis Society of Pedagogy in so far as one of the Sections of that Society is organized for the express purpose of studying Ethics." The concept of "self-realization" is central in the discussion. "Conscience is a fundamental aspect of mind in its totality" (p. 28), and so is no separate faculty. It develops with the whole mind, and is not an initially perfect guide. On the other hand (p. 34), "Man (in so far as he is mind) must be conceived as descending from (that is, arising through, and constituting the culminating aspect of) the creative self-unfolding of the primal perfect mind," and so "must be credited with fundamentally the same characteristics as those inhering in the primal mind itself." And "self-determination is the central characteristic of that mind." In "deliberation" man learns to repeat this character of the primal mind; but deliberation, in its developed form, involves a conscious and as such a conscientious conforming to law,—a submitting of conduct to reason. Accordingly (p. 40), "Virtue consists in a *normal life*,—that is, it consists in practical and progressive conformity on the part of the individual to the universal norm or type of human life." And this norm is of necessity identical with the "divine law." The specific virtues, on their subjective side, are defined as temperance, courage, and justice. The "objective aspect of Ethics"—*i. e.*, the theory of rights and duties in their social aspect—is discussed from p. 47 on. The little treatise is, to the present reviewer's mind, a little too fond of an ineffectively abstract manner of statement, which is increased by the great brevity to which the author has here con-