



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Studies of Good and Evil* by Josiah Royce

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conception of an active causative principle underlying and pervading the material cosmos.

Although the work is full of interest and suggestion, it can scarcely be regarded as a successful study of epistemology. Idealism is treated too much as a system of negatives, while realism is uncritically compounded. But epistemology is not simply an issue between idealism and realism. In any adequate view of the field, some attention should be given to the analysis of experience to show how the antithesis of the outer and the inner arises. All this and much more is excluded from consideration. Indeed we are told: "We know things and we know that we know them. How we know them is a mystery indeed, but one about which it is idle to speculate, as it is absolutely insoluble. The oft-repeated question, 'How is knowledge possible?' is, therefore, one of the most idle and futile questions which can be asked" (p. 56). "All inquiries into the origin and causes of our convictions are futile for epistemology" (p. 275). We close our too imperfect notice by a word from Lichtenberg: "*Die gemeinsten Meinungen und was jedermann für ausgemacht hält, verdiente oft am meisten untersucht zu werden.*"

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Studies of Good and Evil. A Series of Essays upon Problems of Philosophy and of Life. By JOSIAH ROYCE, Professor of the History of Philosophy in Harvard University. New York, D. Appleton & Company, 1898.—pp. xvii, 384.

Professor Royce has in former books presented, in more or less detail, the arguments for philosophical idealism. In the present volume, he is mainly concerned, as he himself tells us, with the application of this doctrine to concrete and practical problems of life. Idealism "is not, as many have falsely supposed, a theory of the world founded merely upon *a priori* speculation, and developed solely in the closet. It is, and in its best historical representatives always has been, an effort to interpret the facts of life" (pp. iii, iv). By employing his idealist doctrine to throw light upon various complex problems of man's psychological and moral nature, Professor Royce not only furnishes the best test of its truth in its power of explaining facts, but this contact with actual experience seems to react upon the theory itself, and to render it more many-sided and richer, even from a speculative point of view.

The essays of which the volume is composed have the following

titles: 'The Problem of Job;' 'The Case of John Bunyan;' 'Tennyson and Pessimism;' 'The Knowledge of Good and Evil;' 'Natural Law, Ethics, and Evolution;' 'The Implications of Self-Consciousness;' 'Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness, and Nature;' 'Originality and Consciousness;' 'Meister Eckhart;' 'An Episode of Early California Life;' 'The Squatter Riot of 1850 in Sacramento;' 'Jean Marie Guyau.' All of these, except the one on 'Meister Eckhart,' and that on 'Guyau,' which now appear for the first time, have been printed in journals during the last four or five years, and are now reissued without any material changes. The paper on 'Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness, and Nature,' is a reprint of the author's articles in this REVIEW (Vol. IV, Nos. 5 and 6), and gives, together with the essay on 'The Implications of Consciousness,' a theoretical statement and expansion of the author's previously-published views on ultimate philosophical questions. The former paper seems to the present writer one of the most important pieces of speculation which has appeared in recent years. As, however, the readers of the REVIEW are familiar with the position there advanced, and, as it has already been discussed to some extent in this journal, we may turn to notice some of the applications which Professor Royce makes of his idealistic doctrines.

In discussing 'The Problem of Job,' the author shows by an instructive analysis of various aspects of experience that we must not be led by "the abstract meaning of the words good and evil into thinking that these two opponents exist merely as mutually exclusive facts side by side in experience." "When we go back to the fact of life, we perceive that all relatively higher good, in the trivial as well as in the more truly spiritual realm, is known only in so far as we accept as good the thwarting of an existent interest, which is thereby declared to be a relative evil, and love a tension of opposing impulses which is thereby declared to be good." To simply destroy and obliterate moral evil would be to destroy all knowledge of moral good. "What is needed, then, for the definition of a divine knowledge of a world that in its wholeness is perfect, is not a divine knowledge that shall ignore, wipe out, and utterly make naught the existence of any ill, . . . but a divine knowledge to which shall be present that love of the world as a whole which is fulfilled in the endurance of physical ill, in the subordination of moral ill, . . . and in the discovery that the endless tension of the finite world is included in the contemplative consciousness of the repose and harmony of eternity. To view God's nature thus is to view Him as the whole idealistic theory views Him, not as

the Infinite One beyond the finite imperfections, but as the being whose unity determines the very constitution, the lack, the tension, and relative disharmony of the finite world" (pp. 24, 25). Moreover, Job's difficulty came from the thought that God is a far-off sovereign, and that for his pleasure man has to suffer. But Idealism, which regards God as the complete Self within whose experience all things fall, and in which alone they have meaning and reality, teaches that God suffers and sympathizes with us. But we cannot say that God wills evil. The function of evil in the Divine life, as in that of the finite individual, is to be endlessly triumphed over and suppressed (p. 28).

The essay on 'The Knowledge of Good and Evil' (pp. 89-122), is directed against an article by Dr. Georg Simmel, of Berlin, which appeared in the *International Journal of Ethics* (Vol. IV, pp. 48-80), in which the author attempted to show that moral deficiencies, to a certain degree at least, favor intellectual development. Against this view Professor Royce argues that morality does not consist in simple innocence, that moral life, as well as physical and intellectual life is a unity of opposites. In all moral excellence there are always present tendencies which *if they were alone* would be the very destruction of any such excellence. "And this must be the case, not because of the weakness of man, but because of the organic dignity and consequent complexity of virtue; and not because the moral world is a mere maze of perplexing confusions, but because the very principles of every organic life is the combination in harmony of opposing tendencies" (p. 98). Virtue then is the choice of the good and the consequent inhibition of opposing tendencies. And "the chances are largely in favor of the greater knowledge of the virtuous chooser, since in general strong temptations are comparatively elemental, while the reasons in favor of goodness are in nature usually complex and abstract" (p. 103). Nor does moral progress, the formation of virtuous habits, involve a loss of knowledge, but progress here is exactly parallel to progress in the intellectual field. But it may be said that it is only from an experience of comparative immorality that one can understand the elemental passions of the soul. To this the answer is that such an experience in itself is not a sin. The fault of a man is not that he has elementary passions, but that he does not order and subordinate them. Moreover, one does not better understand these passions because one has yielded to their chaotic rule. The moralist should be a man of experience in a wide range of elementary life. But this does not imply that he should be a sinner in order to be wise (p. 116).

It will be noticed that Professor Royce solves the paradox which

Dr. Simmel has advanced by insisting that 'good' and 'evil' are not mere verbal opposites, but are constituted by the relations of concrete impulses and tendencies; and this concrete tendency which refuses to rest in abstract opposites, characterizes all his discussions. Indeed, throughout the whole book, a reader cannot but be impressed with the wealth of the author's empirical knowledge, his eye for the facts, as well as by the skillful use which he makes of analogy and generalization in interpreting facts from the point of view of idealism. The style, as in Professor Royce's earlier works, is often provokingly diffuse, but there are fewer carefully prepared paradoxes than in some of his former writings, and the discussions perhaps gain as a consequence in seriousness of tone, without losing at all in logical clearness and acumen.

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