

Chapter 1

Introduction: The "Social Approach" to Metaphysics

Metaphysical Problems and Contrasts¹

Substances and insubstantial facts*

Entities and their characters

The what and the that

Mental and non-mental

Actual and possible

Present, past, future

Real and apparent

*First
Meeting
Sept. 30,
1915*

This is a general course on metaphysics.** I have given something equivalent since the year 1894. The course has changed its shape a good deal since that time. Various changes have been made as to textbooks and some in the views maintained, more perhaps in the mode of presentation. This year I shall follow in the presentation the lines which I developed last year in this course.² The courses in this department used to be rather more in the history of philosophy. The department agreed that certain topics, psychology, logic, ethics,

* [On the Board]

**{Referring to his records for the first half-year, R. W. Brown warns, "These notes are greatly condensed."}

metaphysics—ought to be prominent in our work. At present, our historical courses no longer receive quite as much attention as I think they ought to receive. Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* at the time it appeared was almost alone as a deliberate careful treatment of certain problems of metaphysics. I don't know that in the early days when I used Bradley's book the reputation for difficulty of this course was fully warranted, for the possibility of writing theses without knowing why one said a thing was present. I think the recent changes in philosophical discussion make that possibility less feasible, and on the whole I suppose that since 1900* the course has been more difficult than it was before.

Arthur James Balfour in his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* (1879), tried to make a sharp distinction between a man's ethics and his morals: you can differ with a man ethically without necessarily taking potshots from behind a hedge. In metaphysics, questions arise which involve problems about this or that object said to be real. Someone may hold opinions of the materialistic sort. One ought to criticize those opinions altogether with respect to whether or not they follow from certain principles, or with respect to what they mean. We may condemn a man's metaphysics both as to what he holds in general and as to what follows from it in particular, without leaving the field of theoretical metaphysics.

From another side, the issues of metaphysics are practical. As in ethics, the questions will inevitably bear upon practical consequences somehow, and if a man deals with metaphysical questions, his opinions involve matters of deeply practical interest somewhat and will have results that will bear upon them. Thus our metaphysical differences are practical differences, but when we study metaphysics we don't intend them to be. If I take up the question, "Is there a God or not?" assuming a definition of God, I should make the inquiry without regard to the practical issue. It would not be our question as students of metaphysics, "What are you going to do about it?" The issue isn't intended to be practical. The question, "Is there a God?" is directly raised by a good many positively disposed theologians who are not talking about something expressly and explicitly practical. St. Thomas Aquinas^{CA} raises this question very early in his compendium; he first considers what you mean by God, what, and then he definitely raises the question, "Is there a God?" and he treats the question with characteristic calmness as a philosopher. He didn't mean there should be any concern. Metaphysical topics are peculiarly free from that character.

The questions of logic also have an indirect relation to conduct. The pragmatists say we think in order to act. But the questions of logic are not ques-

*{Approximate publication date of Royce's *The World and the Individual*}

tions in which the interests are passionate interests. We shall see where the connection between theory and practice come in.

The atmosphere ought to be one of decided freedom, and authority ought to count for nothing in metaphysics. We shall approach the problems of metaphysics from two intimately related but distinct sides.

(1) Social approach to metaphysics. Royce's *The Problem of Christianity*. First half-year.

(2) The logical approach to metaphysics. Royce's *The World and the Individual*. Second half-year.

The philosophy of Bergson has been much affected by his interest in the biological sciences, and the philosophy of Bertrand Russell has been largely determined by the fact that he is a mathematician and logician; his interests in nature have been much affected by his studies in physical science. He said to me, "I think that the influence of the biological sciences upon philosophy has been altogether evil." Russell expresses the concepts of philosophy so far as possible in terms drawn from the physical sciences. Metaphysics can be approached also from the side of Aristotle; a scholastic philosopher has an interest in certain problems above others and a tendency to certain views. Any religious views would decidedly affect at least one's approach to metaphysics. Some come to the subject from the study of economics or from some interest in the so-called sociological studies.³

Oct. 2

If the teaching in this course succeeds, and if the reports are written with sufficient care, one ought to anticipate as a result the growth in his own interest in some of the large issues in human life. There is, no doubt, an outlook naturally connected with a course in metaphysics which ought to be of value to a student sufficiently interested in the course to approach it. Metaphysics is a sort of astronomy of life. Here are ethical issues, the problem of the good and the bases of human destiny. There ought to result a greater clarity about certain large problems.

There is in metaphysics an interest which may have survived since childhood. Herbert Spencer, in his *Autobiography*, reports something which his father told him about one of his earlier sayings.⁴ Children often say such things, he comments. There is a good deal of naive metaphysics in childhood. From that side, one interest in this course would be the generality of many of the topics; you would be led closer to a connection with your own childhood.[#] Wordsworth was an instance of a metaphysically disposed child. That influenced him later, and although he was never a technical metaphysician, he tried to express life experience. He was something of a mystic, and that was important for his whole work as a poet.

Spencer's story as told to him by his father: When he was sitting on the floor playing with his toys, he seemed to be very meditative, and his father asked him what he was thinking of. "I am thinking," said he, "how it would be if there hadn't been anybody or anything in the world but myself."

One day on a train on Cape Cod returning towards Boston, I heard by chance two little boys talking behind me, mere voices in my memory. The little one was appealing to the elder, "What is the sky?" The elder was somewhat materialistic, "There ain't no sky." He had been taught that the sky was appearance and not reality, an optical illusion; there is no solid object there as children often think. He had reached the stage where he knew the vanity of this illusion. But the younger was the deeper thinker of the two, and asked a further question which was technically metaphysical: "What is it that ain't?" This implied that where there is appearance there has to be a basis and that basis has to be real; there must be a some what that lies at the basis of this appearance. The apparent sky being a fact of experience, he asked about the what of this. That insistent question of the boy, "What is it that ain't?" mentions the problem of metaphysics in as good shape as you could give it at first trial.

Oct. 5

The word "idea" and the meaning that I give to that word will be the subject of both halves of this course, the "social approach" and the "logical approach" to metaphysics. I don't mean that the approach in the first half-year will be illogical, but the stress will be laid on certain considerations which will not be prominent in the second half-year's work, problems namely about our social knowledge and the things that we know in our social world, and certain aspects of the nature of knowledge. On the whole, the schools of metaphysical discussion have made quite an inadequate use of our social experiences and problems.

We have today a very strong interest in a number of social problems which are also metaphysical problems. The most passionate interests of the current war are defined by some people in terms of a contest between a certain kind of individualism and a certain kind of collectivism; and these people are thinking of metaphysical matters, realities that belong to the ultimately real. From a now familiar point of view, the present war involves a conflict between nations and civilizations, one of which lays special stress on the rights of individuals, while the other side is committed to the dignity, authority, importance, welfare, and consequently to the reality of the State. The war has been defined as a conflict between people who believe in individuals and people who believe in States as real beings. I don't believe it is altogether right to identify the over-individual with the State. In my book *The Problem of Christianity* you will see that this is a metaphysical issue and also an intensely practical issue. There are conditions under which it would be my solemn duty to oppose my State insofar as it is a political entity, so that the State hasn't any such authority over me as has been maintained by some. There is another overindividual entity that I regard as much more important than the State, the type character-

istic of the Christian religion, the ideal Church, the community of mankind. Thus metaphysical discussions can be about intensely practical matters.

Aristotle defined the function of what we now call metaphysics: to consider Being in so far as it is Being.⁵ It is to define the meaning of reality, what it is to be real. I just gave you some illustrations of what is involved in the question of the meaning of the word "real." "The sky is not real," "There ain't no sky," and the child raised the question, "What is it that ain't?" So one may well raise related questions: What do you mean by being real? In what sense isn't it real? Explain to me the appearance that I have taken to be real. What do you mean by calling that object real or unreal? What is the difference insofar as that difference is generally definable? How real is it? Is it quite real or only partially real? Such questions make the topic of metaphysics.

Having thus given a perfectly elementary approach to the subject, it is well to become a little better acquainted with such questions by giving a few illustrations.

The one that my story was intended to bring before you may well serve to define an important metaphysical problem, the distinction between what is sometimes called the phenomenon or that which appears, and the noumenal or fundamentally real object. This question is suggested by a familiar distinction: we frequently call a thing real and later illusory.

Further, I may know what I mean by a certain kind of object without knowing whether anything of that kind is real or not. The question, "What do you mean by that?" can be answered by a definition involving various mentions of what you mean by reality. At any rate, the definition involves what you are talking about. But suppose you assert that this is, that it is real. There is then a distinction between what you are talking about and the reality or unreality of what you are talking about. That is the difference between the what and the that. The difference is often called the difference between essence and existence. You will find this difference discussed in the ontological vocabulary in *The World and the Individual*.⁶ The difference between the essence or nature of a thing and the existence or reality of that thing is a very important difference. A case in question is about God. It is one thing to know what you mean by God; it is another thing to decide whether God is or not. Is that which this idea defines also a reality? This is the difference between the what and the that.

This is a very fundamental metaphysical difference. You can gather how deep it is from the fact that there have been theologians and philosophers who have endeavored to prove the existence of God by declaring that his existence followed necessarily from his essence. He is such a being, if you understand the definition, that he must be real. This ontological proof has been questioned. The fact that the question has played a part in philosophical thought shows the importance of the difference in question. People say the State is an important reality and can determine my duties to a certain extent. These people are open to the question, "What is the State?" and their assertion that the State

is real is a different matter. Or if a man says, "The only real things in the world are individual men," he would have to tell what are individual men.

The difference is not at all stupidly abstract. You can define beforehand the what of an enterprise, some success you hope for. You hope to "pass" in a certain college course. It is another thing to know the that I am to do so.

Another question of metaphysics—actual and possible. This distinction struck the mind of Aristotle. So far as his early training went, he was something of a naturalist; he was the son of a physician, and his enemies are fond of calling him an apothecary. He was a student of living things and loved the living sorts of beings with the fascination of a naturalist. One of the most characteristic things about a living being is that you can't tell about it very fully without making a distinction between what it is and what it is capable of, what it might be. There is a difference between the wakefulness of the man actually awake and the possibility of awakening which belongs to the normal sleeper. A builder by trade is a possible maker of houses; if this house is made, he is the actual builder of it. Aristotle says you can't get on in the world without recognizing the difference between the actual and the possible. Shut your eyes and you are a possible perceiver: can you see? Yes, if I open my eyes. This distinction becomes harder from another point of view. The possible extends further than the actual. You conceived of tentative events such that if they had occurred, events which now occur would not be actual. Some slight change of events would have prevented you from meeting this man with whom you are now associated. Thus you see your actual life surrounded by a vast range of possible lives that might have been yours. Haven't the possibilities some sort of quasi-reality? A possibility may come so near to your actual life that you think of it as a very important affair. It is an issue as to what reality possibilities possess. Aristotle found that they have a great deal of reality about them. A student of life can't very well get on without distinguishing between what an organism is at a given moment and what it might be under different circumstances.

Again, the world has certain kinds of real beings in it, material and non-material, mental and nonmental. These are not altogether identical differences.

Aristotle further noted that when you speak of any object to which you ascribe reality or being, and which you may therefore call an entity, you make a distinction between the object and its characters, its connections, its relations. Aristotle loved to say, "Being is a word of many meanings," and one way in which its meanings may be diversified is according to the categories. In grammar, the divisions into subjects and predicates, relations, qualities, places, times, and such things are categories. Aristotle closely connected with the categories the difference between substances and attributes.

When we put problems of that kind together, they suggest the feasibility of a philosophical study devoted to clearing up these distinctions and their ac-

companying problems. Metaphysics is concerned with what you mean by the term reality, or what it is to be real.

The Scope and Purpose of a Social Approach to Metaphysics

The social approach is emphasized in my *Problem of Christianity*, especially in the second volume, and you will be likely to associate it with problems in the field of the Christian religion; but I have so much else in mind in that connection that I do not wish you to confine yourselves to that. The social approach will be guided and represented especially by these two problems:

Oct. 7

1. *Ego and alter*; the self and the *socius*
2. Individual and group

Ego and alter

This reminds you of a certain persistent illusion which we all have: every man seems to himself to be rather at the center of the world. In the field of vision, the sky is a great globe such that I am about at the middle. This world of the ego presents problems from the side of a realistic metaphysics: Professor Perry has made prominent the problem of the "egocentric predicament." But however egocentric a man is, everyone is disposed to contrast himself and the other fellow.⁷ Max Stirner, a schoolmaster who lived a quiet life, put out a book on ethics under a pseudonym entitled *Der Einzige und Sein Eigenthum* (1845), which means "the only one and what belongs to him," a doctrine of the most nearly complete and conscious selfishness that is possible: a man's business is to look out for himself as opposed to society, neighbors, friends, and enemies; it is his right to have his own way in his own world so far as he can; it is an art and a difficult one. The question of this dual structure of the world is important for our view of what it is to be real, and it appears that the whole metaphysical study of reality, as well as of ethics, could be approached in this fashion.

Individual and Group

Any portion of the world which possesses any kind of unity consists of individual men in a group somehow distinguished from the rest of the world.

Most social questions are describable in terms of the relation between any individual and his group. Is the individual so related to his group that there are no groups except collections, like pebbles on the beach? What sort of reality and what sort of unity belongs to a social group? In what sense is this class a collective unit, and in what sense is it simply a collection of the individuals that belong to the class? If one looks at the class list, the names give you some account of all that belong to the class. Does the being of the class consist in the several members of the class, or is there something else that makes it a class?

Aikins' little textbook in logic⁸ reiterates that the world consists wholly of individual things, including persons, every one of which has certain qualities and characters, and stands in certain relations to certain other things, so that all you know, when you know facts, consists of individual things, their relations, qualities, and characters, and there is nothing else there to know. With that in mind, Aikins condemns people who talk misleadingly about the world as if other things than individuals were real. The expressions that such people use, says Aikins, are sometimes metaphorical: they commonly forget that by the State you mean just all of us; when you say the State does this and that, you mean we the individuals do it; everyone of us does his part in the activity, with the result that such and such things get done. "This nation fights" means that such and such members do the fighting. Since one's part resembles the part that other people take, you can shorten the matter by saying that the group shoots, the army shoots, the nation is at war. —I don't think that that account of the matter covers all the facts. The issue is metaphysical.

(Other Minds)

A third matter to which we may point as indicating how important the social approach to metaphysics may be: What is the evidence that I have for the existence of my neighbor as a conscious being with a mind of his own? What knowledge have I of the mind of my neighbor? How do you know that there is anybody in the world but yourself? What being or reality belongs to my neighbor, and how do I know that it belongs to him? That is connected with the question, "What do you mean by the other man?" Certain experiences lead to a certain answer to that question, an answer to which I have decidedly lively objections. It is said, "It's all a matter of analogy: I notice that I move thus and thus when I want to do something, and the analogy between your movements and mine is the main basis of evidence that I have of your existence." I don't accept that as the account of the evidence; I think that if we were confined to that, our evidence would be very poor; but on the whole it is the predominant tradition among philosophical writers.

Whether we are talking about beings or physical facts, there is a relation between what we assert and believe we know about them, and what we take

our social order to be. However it is that we come to believe in the existence of the other man, we use the hypothesis that the very nature of things is that they can be known or experienced by many individuals. The physical world is a world that we can have in common—in some respects at least. People don't always notice that this affects the sense in which the world is real. Heraclitus said when we are asleep every man lives in his own world, but if we are awake then we all see the same world. A man can have a dreamworld pretty vividly and persistent before him, as in delirium. We have a test as to that world: it isn't real because nobody else can get it. We all hold that the real physical world has a character that makes it more or less common to many people. If we look at the blackboard and touch it, we have experiences very much in common. It couldn't be a reality if it appeared consistently to one of us only.

The social problems about things have to do with our very definition of reality.

The Nature of Ideas

In beginning this section, I want to expand on *The World and the Individual*, vol. I, Lecture 1, especially pages 19–37.⁹ Oct. 9

In what sense have you reality? Either “knowledge of acquaintance” or “knowledge about” is very baffling. I don't know much about myself that I should like to know.

Bergson, in his essay on the right method of metaphysics, defines a method of intuition.¹⁰ You must get into a position in which you are somehow in the interior of the object itself and know it as from the interior. He mentions the self as the being such that if we know it at all we know it by intuition, by direct acquaintance.

Bertrand Russell, a natural and profound opponent of Bergson's type of method, said in his Lowell Institute lectures, somewhat sardonically, “Most men, for example, have in their nature meannesses, vanities, and envies of which they are quite unconscious, though even their best friends can perceive them without any difficulty.”¹¹

What sort of knowledge have I of myself that I have of nobody else and that nobody else has of me? What is the nature of the evidence whereby we may prove to ourselves that we are not alone in the world? What is the evidence against the view of solipsism? What is the evidence for the existence of a social order of even two people?

James says the reason for belief in other minds is psychological; the best logical argument is that from analogy.¹² But I say you can see plainly that this would not lead readily to a belief in the reality of a group, for the movements

of a group are decidedly unlike those of myself. I don't believe that the argument from analogy plays any great part in our belief in the existence of our fellowmen. My uncanny double who did precisely what I did would not impress me as showing great evidence of another mind.

Contrasts are the interesting and fascinating proof of intelligence. I am quite ready to believe that a social group, which is not very analogous to a person in many ways, is real by virtue of its very contrast with the individual.

The real argument is something of this kind: Suppose you look at an advertisement which arouses in you an idea. What I mean by an idea you can best find out by reading the pages I have just mentioned.¹³ You don't reason either tacitly or explicitly that whenever you wanted to advertise your wares, you'd take such means of doing it as are present in that advertisement, so that it must have been written by an intelligent being. No; the idea intrudes upon you and strikes you. What strikes you is the contrast. The experience isn't, "Perhaps there is an idea there," but, "Obviously, this idea isn't mine. I didn't write this advertisement: that isn't myself; here is an idea not my own."

If such ideas hang together well enough, they constitute another mind. Another mind is a system of ideas which is intelligible in itself but which certainly isn't mine.¹⁴

{If someone shouts "Fire!"}^{CA} I didn't know that news. I am not crying fire; but it is an expression of an idea and it isn't my idea. The signs of another mind are peculiarly direct in this way. Any idea that isn't my own is *ipso facto* an expression of a self not my own.

A company of selves satisfies that notion of a self just as well as an individual self. I can't see nearly so well the evidence that there is an individual here as that there is somebody here not myself. The writer of a newspaper article isn't an individual man—I don't know who it was—but a locus where certain ideas have germinated. There is no reason why the individual should have the priority. In beginning the acquaintance of a neighbor, you deal with ideas that have a certain amount of coherence; you don't begin with an individual. I regard the idea of a group as a primary thing.

In his *Principles of the History of Language*,¹⁵ page xxxvi, {Hermann} Paul says that the reality of individuals must be insisted upon as the primary fact of social life. Minds don't influence minds except through bodies. Therefore, we must never speak of a group as if a group of minds could work as a unit.

{Wilhelm} Wundt, a German psychologist, maintains that a social group has a mind of its own. On page 27 of his *Ethics: Principles of Morality* {sic},¹⁶ is a passage on the individual will and the social will, in which he maintains that the social group has a consciousness and a will of its own which is in some respects prior to that of the individual.¹⁷

If you raise the question, "Is the State a reality?" or "Is there such a being as Harvard University?" you find there are two answers.^{CA} One would say that a supposed reality—an institution, or a corporation—has no reality except as

an abstract or legal fiction. The State, or any given railway corporation, or the Church, exists only as a group. The law has many fictions, such as the corporation treated as a person. Thus some would say that social groups are real, first as abstractions, second as legal fictions. They are treated as though they were real. This constitutes one of the views.

On the other hand, there is this view. To me, a social group may be a reality, an entity, which is just as real as an individual human being can be. Or, if you are going to make a difference in grades of reality—upon which I should not insist—there are corporations which are more real than any individual.

A group of individuals standing on the street corner is not a social group to which I should ascribe any reality as a group. The State, on the other hand, has that character; but it is by no means the most interesting or important social group. I shall defend the thesis that there are social groups as real as any individual can be.

There is a familiar technical expression used by those who deny this—"hypostatizing an abstraction." Over against this kind of discussion about social groups you will find a well-known discussion as to the human individual. Those who say that a social group has no reality, say that there exist only individual men. Notice the book of Professor Sumner of Yale, *What Social Classes Owe One Another*.¹⁸ By the State, we mean, said Sumner, simply "all of us." If anybody should say that the State should have institutions to look out for the defective, for example, that would mean that some of us ought to cooperate in looking out for the rest of us. The result was that when Sumner treated social classes, he claimed that there were no such things as "capital" or "labor." What are the rights of labor? That means, what are the rights of certain laborers? This we call "nominalism."

The nominalist declares that social groups are nothing but collections. If the world consists of individual men, then the metaphysical student who undertakes to study this will be led to ask, "What is a human individual?" Most of the nominalists treat this as self-evident. An individual is regarded as an axiom.

How do you know that the world of human beings consists of individuals? What is an individual? You cannot define this obvious entity, the individual, merely in terms of relationships. We cannot define things merely in terms of relations.

I have often used this illustration of the difficulty of defining facts in terms merely of their relations. Lotze used to say that the being of things is the standing in relations. This illustration takes the form of a story of a faithful servant maid who took care of an aged man. She was asked as to his condition and replied, "Sometimes he be's one way, sometimes t'other; but most of the while he be's the same way."

If you answer that question as to what an individual human being is, you have answered all the questions in metaphysics. The matter of knowing that

you are the same self is involved here. If your assertion that this is true is called into question, what proof are you to offer? If a man's identity is once questioned, it forms one of the most baffling problems.

Many years ago the {Roger} Tichborne case in England attracted much attention.¹⁹ It was to the effect that a man of the laboring class from Australia claimed to be the long lost heir. While he could give some evidence which would seem hardly to be in the possession of any one who was not the heir, it was objected that he had gained this knowledge from the true heir who had died in Australia; and it was on these grounds that his claim was finally rejected.²⁰ Notice the identification in cashing a check. You don't prove you are the right man by a signature. Notice {Oliver Wendell} Holmes' poem on Dorothy Q., where he speculates as to what a difference it would have made in him, had she answered "No" instead of "Yes." Questions of this sort show us how little it is self-evident as to what a person is. How abstract a being the ordinary human being is will be shown shortly.

Oct. 16 I have just presented to you some problems that ought to make you pause a little when you say it is perfectly obvious that this "community" is simply a collection of individual men. Why is one so sure that only individual men exist? If you say it is just plain common sense that a social group is just a collection of individual men, you presuppose that it is obvious to you that an individual man is a reality and that the human world consists of such realities; but neither in your own case nor in the case of your neighbor is it easy to define what you mean by this individual self.

I desire to show you that you yourself have some of the characters that may be said to belong to a group of men. I am going to maintain the thesis that we cannot say what an individual man is without some of the characters of a social group. On the other hand, a group under certain circumstances can get the characters of an individual man.

I am not merely my physical organism. If you try to get at what an individual is, you cannot define an individual man merely in terms of an organism, for the organism can be very slightly changed and yet the individual man be very decidedly out of our ken. A slight change in the state of my organism sets me, for example, dreaming, and when I wake up I say there was something about the dreaming self which is foreign to me. The difference between your self and your organism comes out further in the variations which come from excitement, ether intoxication and the like. Patients partially etherized notice that the self is considerably changed; the question who I am is somewhat confused by the intervention of an ether intoxication.²¹ The etherized organism differs from the unetherized organism in a different way from that in which the etherized self differs from the unetherized self.

James says that a good deal of what we call self sometimes is our own view of our organic sensations.²² James analyzes the varieties of selfhood which appear as we grow and meet various influences. Since a man undertakes

a good many things, he normally tends to have as many selves as there are such ideals. The choice may be said to take the form of suppressing one possible self and trying to live up to another, the different selves being different plans of life. James said he would be a saint and a lady killer and many other things {at the same time}, but this is not possible. My life depends on my choosing amongst rival selves. In saying, "Evidently all social activities are carried on by individuals," one forgets that if you look for the individual, you will find a crowd, a collection.

James was disposed to limit the varieties of selfhood. In the normal man these "selves" are not so distinct from each other as "different men" are. Conflicts within the individual self are not so great as the rivalry and contrasts between selves in the community. James was unwilling to accept the view that the abnormal divisions of a self are extreme cases of these normal contrasts. James was interested in cases of more or less permanent double and treble personality, as when a man declares that he is somebody who he cannot be. In cases of head injuries, men sometimes show a loss of their old personality. Those cases suggest to me that the normal variations of selves are minor instances of the same thing, multiple personality. We are all of us made up of a variety of personalities. I as a lecturer am not the same self as a person who last evening was lecturing in a University Extension course. The self of Phil. 9 is distinct from the self of an elementary ethics course. The lecturer in one course questions the lecturer in the other as to how they agree or differ. The abnormal cases are an extension of that. James would never admit it.

The so-called individual man is in certain respects a social group. He consists of various selves. Anybody is more or less a multiple personality. This belongs to the normal plasticity and fecundity of social life. In abnormal cases, because of loss of memory, the transition from one self to the other is not easy.

However unified I am, you notice this. I must live some sort of a life in order to be conscious. The self isn't given, it is expressed in a life. You must be conscious of some enterprise, work, interest, concern. You are yourself by virtue of the fact that you are engaged in doing something. The coherence involves memory and expectation; you remember a past life and expect a future life. If your memories and all your expectations dropped out, you wouldn't be the same self that you are now. You must remember a past life, you must look forward to a future life. Such and such things have happened to me, and I expect such and such things to happen to me. In vain you look for the self of this instant; you find only a fragment of self; you have certain throat sensations perhaps, or somebody calls your name, but such experiences don't give you yourself. You are obliged to think of your past self and your future self.

In consequence, every man has a life past and future as an essential part of him. The relations of the self at any moment to its past and future are relations to whose analysis we shall devote considerable attention. The situation is this: I am the doer of so and so, the lecturer in Phil. 9, and in view of this in

which I am engaged, these and these things have been done by me; I remember these deeds and I propose to go on to something more. The life of the self is always this: at present it is doing something which it connects with a past set of deeds and also with future deeds. It is the connection of these deeds that constitutes the connection of self. In view of what I have so far done and undertaken and of the present situation, hereupon I proceed to the next, to adjust myself to the future. That is a stereotyped form of autobiography. It is every man's life. The self is a being who just now connects its past with its future. At present I act because my past demands of me this act with reference to my future. I must get on with this enterprise one step more. Only the self can expect to judge the connection, the coherence, though he never likes to judge it wholly alone. The dreaming self has a certain difficulty in finding the coherence: What have I been doing? What did all this mean? In any case, the self consists at any moment, if it is active, of an attempt to bring its past into a coherent connection with its future. If I wholly forget what I have done so far in this lecture, then the self fails and I am confused. For that reason I should say to you that every acting self consists from its own point of view of what at every instant may be called three different personalities: the past self, the present self, the future self.

The past self in certain moods may loom up with importance as by far the most significant of these three. The future self, when we are eager, is sometimes the most important self. The present self has a different function. It knows that beyond the value of contributing its share to the development of this triple personality it has no value except its current pleasures and pains.^{CA} The present self may feel as if it were the most important part, as in the case of the doctor with a broken leg who cried out under ether that he alone knew how to set bones; but as soon as a man gets a little clearer about the situation, it appears to him that the present self isn't such an important personality. The present self is deliberately subordinated to the past or future self.

This community of three selves is always changing as life goes on. The past self is the self up to the present moment; it is growing all the time. The future self we seem to be chasing or creating it. The present self changes while you watch it, so you can never say, "This I am now." These three are needed in order that there should be a self at all. I am that threefold self. You can't get your unity of personality without having this endlessly fluent variety of these three.

I call the self a social group for excellent reasons. These three selves are constantly communicating with each other. The present self remembers the past self. The future self is expected by the present self, and the expectations of it affect one's present self. The relations are well represented by the ordinary memorandum book where one has noted something in the past and now consults it. Every man is a society of at least three selves, and on occasion of many

more. Therefore, a self is a community. I shall soon show you how a community can be a self.

If we start from the literal social order, we shall find all sorts of unity there which determine our loyalties and the significance of our family and political ties. We find certain communities characterized by extremely practical features; these communities occur in business life and are not the product of mystical thinking at all. Such communities consist of at least three individuals who are joined by a linkage which I regard as peculiarly apt to illustrate to you what I mean by three different individuals forming one united self. I call them communities of interpretation. Wherever these communities exist at all, they have powers which no individual man can possess unless he borrows or learns them from some such community. In my little book, called *War and Insurance*, there is a passage, pages 44–64, which gives several instances of this kind of community, which we should all regard as consisting of individual human beings who are characterized by their function in that community, so that you would speak of them by speaking of their functions.^{CA} They have familiar names:

Oct. 19

1. The judicial community, {consisting of}
 - A. plaintiff
 - B. defendant
 - C. judge
2. The banker's community, consisting of
 - A. borrower
 - B. lender or depositor
 - C. banker
3. The agent's community, consisting of
 - A. agent
 - B. principal
 - C. client
4. The insurance community, consisting of
 - A. insurer, usually a corporation
 - B. an "adventurer"
 - C. beneficiary

By chance any two of these persons may be identified in the same individual. In the case of the insurance community, for instance, a man may identify in himself the owner of the property and the beneficiary; but the beneficiary is in general the future man. He who is insuring against accident is obviously a different man from the future man who may get hurt. The whole business depends upon the fact that there are three here. In case two of them are one, then you have the difference of past, present, and future keeping them apart. In the case of an endowment policy, the man twenty-five years hence is another man, for the reason that this present man may be dead long before the endowment accrues.

The community in question is essentially triadic. If I insure my own house and it burns, it is my future self who gets the money. Again, to save money for oneself is wholly social. You meet with this triadic structure in vast numbers of socially significant business transactions. The threefold man divides up into three socially different men. Our selves have a structure which literally breaks up, on notable occasions, into the life of three different people, held together by the same sort of bond that makes the self.

The contemporaneous people in a borrowing transaction are also temporal people: the man who lends is a present man, but the man who is going to receive the return of the loan (an important element) is a future man; and so also of the borrower.

In the case of individual men there is no particular psychological continuity between the past, present, and future selves; and some of these triadic communities, like country banks, hold together better than almost any individual man. I insist upon the stable character of the ethical relations between a man and his past self, but even there a change occurs.

The general formula for identity is coherence of life plan. I am unable to define the unity of a man in any other terms that are satisfactory to me. Of course we make all the use we can of the permanence of a man's body; but when we examine the sense in which a part of the material world exists, we shall find it a very puzzling metaphysical problem.

The self I define as a life lived in accordance with a plan, or to use the word idea, as a life with a coherent idea. A man hopes to keep a good deal of his coherence within him, but he is always failing to keep as ideally coherent as he ought to be.

I am trying to arouse in you a doubt of the proposition that it is perfectly obvious that a man is an individual, because here he is, you can shake hands with him and he will be the same man when you come back!

In response to your questions, I say that these triadic communities have a sense of self-direction as communities.^{CA} There is a general unity of feeling. When you say, "It was I that felt in my individual self that feeling," you are out of the crowd; but there are moments in life when you can't express the thing otherwise than by saying "we." In chorus singing I don't say to myself, "I am

singing with them.” For the moment I don’t exist apart from the chorus. You don’t say, “I agree with you in feeling this,” when you are excited; you say, “We feel this,” and the other people say “We.” There are feelings that are expressed only by the first person plural. In case you object that some organism must thrill with them, that is a psychological comment; but that isn’t the important fact that you express when you say “We.”

It was my older view that the individual man is more or less the product of civilization and specialization; but I am now impressed by the fact that along with these individualizing tendencies there are highly unifying tendencies. There are so many things which we do together that I think it belongs to a highly developed community to do these things together.

When Thackeray was asked about the marriage with which *Henry Esmond* closes, he said, “They did it themselves; I didn’t do it.” That word “they” expressed a fact; not he did it or she did it, but they did it. Aren’t there some things that we do?

A crossing policeman told me that he too is chased by the automobiles when he takes off his uniform and puts on citizen’s clothing. Here he was making these metaphysical distinctions between past and present self, and between the self of the uniform and the private self.

Oct. 21

Duns Scotus had his name for the abstract quality, the thisness of the this, that makes an individual such: he called it *haecaeitas*, meaning that which makes this this.

How would I answer a question about the distinction between the present self and the past and future selves? A deed is a perfectly natural discontinuity of life. Suppose I sign a contract: the moment of signing my name to that paper stands out from both my past and future life. This act is against all that preceded it, and before all that followed it; the deed was never done before and it will never be done again.

A naughty boy, to entice a younger playmate to go to town with him said, “I will show you something that nobody ever saw before and nobody will ever see again.” In the Sunday school book, this proved to be the kernel of a nut, which the elder immediately swallowed. There is the present moment for you. You will look vainly for the Bergsonian fluidity there. Our deeds are breaks in the time process. The character of the present is well expressed in the saying, “I shall come this way no more.” Nietzsche, before he reached the abyss of madness, amused himself with the idea of recurrence, the doctrine that everything happens again and again: we have been here in this room an infinite number of times before, exactly as today. Nietzsche had experiences, somewhat pathological, which made this very interesting to him. It led him to poetical metaphors: the process of the world is spoken of as a ring. But this raises the question: this particular recurrence, this time when we are together, has never occurred before; the *haecaeitas* of this particular lecture is distinct, and would remain so even in Nietzsche’s fancied world of recurrence.

The passage in my book, *War and Insurance*, pages 44–64, is in connection with an inquiry into the motives that lead to war. The relations of individual men and individual men are especially provocative of strife, and the same is true of communities in their relations one to another. When two are together, there are constant causes of friction.

But as a matter of fact, our social relations are not limited to pairs of individuals. Some communities consist of three people, or three groups of people, where B is the agent of A in approaching C. The agent represents the principal in approaching the client. This is a community of interpretation, consisting of A, B, and C, one of whom, B, is in the position of the interpreter of A to C. The interpreter is the agent, banker, insuring corporation, or other intermediary. Page 51 is most important: "This cooperation . . . will bring A and C into some kind of social unity, such as will make them act in a certain respect, as if they were one man." The main function of B is to keep A and C together. The agent desires not to do A's will alone, or C's will alone, but his whole business is to create, keep conscious, and carry out their united will. Since B has this united will of A and C, he must be what I call loyal, the thoroughgoing servant of the cause of uniting the will of A to the will of C, and the will of C to the will of A. If he succeeds, all of them act as one man, though no two of them do the same thing.

The community is essentially one man if the self means the coherence of a life. That is the community acting as one man.

The Triadic Community of Interpretation

Oct. 23

As set forth in *War and Insurance*, pages 44–64, a community of interpretation consists of three persons or groups of persons, A, B, and C. These may tend to vast size, greater than any now existing nation. If the individuals are atoms, the atoms are grouped in a molecule such that each atom has two different affinities. The community in itself is a peaceful group and often a highly active affair. The most potent and reasonable factor in the modern world consists in such communities.

A, B and C then are individuals whose relations in the community I have described.²³ Although this is not a complete picture, and there is more to consider than this, the point at present is that A has a relation which looks toward

B; B has a relation which looks towards C: $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$. There is some tie which

ties two pairs which have a member in common. If you merely mention pairs, if you try to limit yourself to dyadic terms, you have to mention what is really essential to triads. They work together upon a task which is in its social aspects

at once businesslike and ideal. The task is this: A and C have their own individual business and desires such as they are; every man has business and desires such as they are. The remaining member, B, has as his peculiar business in this community the task of addressing C. He appeals to C, or makes use of his social relations to C, and explains or interprets to C what A's business or desire is, in order that C may be brought into relation with A.

The cooperation of A and C will bring them into some sort of social unity which may make them think and feel and will as if they were one man. There is the same sort of unity which constitutes the life of an individual man. An individual man is not an individual because he has an individual organism, for a self is a self by virtue of the fact that he is doing something that constitutes a plan having a unity or coherence, which you can't tell by watching an organism but by telling what a man means, what he is up to, what he is after.

In communities of interpretation, the time-order plays a somewhat various part. In consequence of the intermediation brought about by B, A, B, and C act as if they were one man. To bring about this solidarity is B's main business. The interpreter is the one who addresses C on behalf of A; he is the agent in an ordinary agency transaction.

A self is a self by virtue of some coherence of a plan. So far as one's selfhood is the selfhood of the interpreter of a community, that is his main business, and to do it in one direction, that of addressing C on behalf of A. B is a self who desires to carry out a plan which furthers not A's will alone, or C's will alone, but to create and to make conscious and to carry out their united will, insofar as they are both to remain members of the community in which he remains as interpreter. Therefore, B must be loyal, the willing and thoroughgoing servant of the cause and plan of C and A.

B is always the most important member of the community in question. He both defines and expresses its united purpose; he more or less invents its united purpose. He brings C into touch with A, A into touch with C. His essential aim as interpreter is that the will of the three shall be done. He loses his position as interpreter unless he is engaged in that business. If he is there as A's or C's servant, then he is not the interpreter of the community; or if he is there for his own good. It is his will that A and C should act as one man. If he doesn't bring this to pass, he doesn't succeed. I mean just precisely as one of us acts as one man.

The combined will of A and C has constantly to be created. In bringing A and C together, B usually discovers or creates their common will; hence, B is above all the most obviously and explicitly loyal member of the community. In his will, when he finds it and expresses it, is the peace both of A and of C. To this end he comes into this community. He furthers and enlightens its aims insofar as he furthers his aims as interpreter.

There is no ideal activity of man which is too lofty to be interpreted by a community of interpretation. The unity and cooperation of men cannot be stable, secure, and enlightened unless there is added a third man whose business

and desire it is to keep these two in touch with each other. He has the function of transforming the essentially dangerous pair into the consistently and consciously harmonious triad. I call him the “spirit of the community.”

One very notable community might be called the “community of scientific investigation.” It consists of the (1) collectors or observers of nature or some group of natural facts; (2) the more speculative theorists; (3) a group or individual whose business it is to test the theories. A very large group of naturalists had collected the facts upon which Darwin depended; he advanced the theory of natural selection as the origin of species. Darwin was the interpreter: he summed up the results of the past, he addressed the future. He stood in the same place in which in an individual life a man stands to his past and future. Darwin was appealing for his authority to the collectors of facts, and he was appealing for the confirmation of his theory to future investigation. This is the “inductive community.” There are also similar instances in the case of the deductive sciences.[#]

Our present civilization depends for all its peaceful activities upon judges, bankers’, insurers’, agents’ communities. If you removed all these from our social order, it would deteriorate into the dangerous pair type. The judicial community consists of a pair of contending individuals or groups; the judge interprets to the defendant the will or rights of the plaintiff.

President Lowell, in his recent book on party politics,²⁴ talks about this as the age of brokers. Solon had to deal with the hostility between borrowers and lenders. Polonius tells his son to be neither a borrower nor a lender. The most dramatic appearance in modern civilization has been that of the banker community of interpretation. The banker’s interest is that both parties should be content; his interest is their interest.

The interpreter is engaged in a business that goes beyond his individual power to invent. He meets constantly the borrower’s appeal and the lender’s willingness. But in bringing them together he has to be constantly inventive.

I don’t see how you can define an individual as a life according to a plan, without saying that a community of interpretation, insofar as it is successful, is a self. The unity found in any one of the members is of the same nature as the unity of the larger entity. Any man is such a community of interpretation insofar as his present is interpreting his past to his future. You can have a triad of functions where there are only two persons.

It is a curious fact that while human language always involves the effort of a man to make himself clear to another man, it is still a fact that languages which have never yet been written and which are spoken by a people without “cultivation,” express a wisdom and ingenuity which has never become conscious in any individual persons who spoke that language. No Greek of the Homeric period knew the difference between a noun and a verb—the language was so much wiser than the individual Greek. It became so because a peaceful conversation involves an endless process of interpretation. The roles con-