

**THE MEETINGS OF
EXTREMES
IN CONTEMPORARY
PHILOSOPHY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649145652

The meetings of extremes in contemporary philosophy by Bernard Bosanquet

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

BERNARD BOSANQUET

**THE MEETINGS OF
EXTREMES
IN CONTEMPORARY
PHILOSOPHY**

THE MEETING OF EXTREMES IN
CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA · MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
DALLAS · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE
MEETING OF EXTREMES
IN
CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

BY
BERNARD BOSANQUET
FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1921

THE INSTITUTE OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES
KINGSDALEY PLACE
TORONTO 5, CANADA

MAR 12 1982

4549

COPYRIGHT

PREFACE

I TAKE as the leading example of what I desire to discuss in the present work the familiar opposition of Realism and Idealism. These terms, as understood throughout the various aspects of life, are traditional battle-cries and watchwords rather than names of precision; but even as designations of philosophical attitudes they have histories full of inspiration; and, varied as are the meanings which they have possessed and possess to-day, it would seem a churlish proposal that those whose hearts are set upon what they suggest should be called upon to employ them no more. Yet the very fulness of signification which they have acquired is inimical to definiteness of application, more especially when the application is an antithesis. Every philosophy, we must suppose, is bona fide impressed with the significance, which seems to it pre-eminent, of some certain general character or interest which it finds attractive and commanding within the universe. But it is not inevitable, nor is it the case, that the general name or watchword which indicates the principal passion distinctive of any persistent philosophical attitude is or has been sustained by the same facts

and arguments throughout, or, again, by facts and arguments in conflict with those which have sustained its traditional opposite.

It may be true at starting that the "Idealist" is taught to say, "On earth there is nothing great but man, in man there is nothing great but mind"; while the Realist's temper may be "to order man and mind to their proper place among the world of finite things."¹ But it is certain that each of them, if he follows his primary clue freely, with an open mind, and his eye upon the object, may, or rather must, be led to investigations and appreciations which will carry him to seek completeness in regions within his opponent's spiritual home. It is, I believe we might in general say as an example, at least one party of the most realistically minded who care most intensely for transcendent theism or polytheism and for the persistent finite individual subject—for spirit and spiritualism, in short, as a bounded division of the universe, sharing it with matter; it is at least a faction of the idealistically minded who refuse to see in mind and nature either the factors of an ultimate antithesis, or provinces of data either of which is simply reducible to the other. Each of them, to the best of its power, finds room for the complementary elements; and the freer, more subtle, and more penetrating their

¹ Alexander, *Proc. Brit. Academy*, 1913-14, p. 279.

respective explorations, the more they show indications of supporting one another. The substitution of these fine and dissolvent analyses, of this sapping and mining under fortifications of an obsolete type, for a warfare of crude antagonism and bombardment at long ranges, is perhaps on the whole a new thing in the history of philosophy (though indeed it began with Plato), and is a feature of remarkable promise in the philosophy of to-day.

There may be others, therefore, besides the present writer, who are weary of the clamorous and spurious pretensions to highly significant antagonism on a basis of etymology misunderstood which attach in common usage to the titles in question; and who will be ready, under any such heading as that of "speculative philosophy," to recognise with Professor Alexander and the neo-idealists of Italy (the recognition is itself a case of what I have in mind) that every philosophy, and not "idealism" only, is attempting to do justice to the standpoint of "the whole,"¹ and to appreciate to the best of the experience it controls and the analysis it can command the respective places of externality and mind and value in the universe.

It is with a view to illustrating what I hope is a convergence of investigations towards some such

¹ Cf. Alexander, *Proc. Brit. Academy*, p. 297.