SKEPTICISM AND SELF REFERENCE: SOME REMARKS ON THE BENEFITS OF DOUBTING

Charles J. Harriman
College of Santa Fe

I would like to call attention to two relatively recent developments that I believe will have wide-ranging consequences within philosophy and beyond. The first development is the growing acceptance of a view that can be loosely characterized as sceptical. The second is the recognition and practical application of certain techniques of self-reference. Most familiar among them is the concept of the feed-back loop that is so fundamental in computer operation and programming. There are important connections between these two developments both historically and at the level of theory. In the folowing remarks I will first say a bit about what I mean by "scepticism" and then sketch some of the connections that exist between the growing acceptance of the sceptical position and the increasing awareness and use of self-referential models.

The scepticism intended there may be called "mitigated" or "scientific" scepticism. Scientific scepticism is the attitude described by Bronowski in *Science and Human Values* that regards all statements as corrigible. Even the ancients recognized the logical difficulty in describing scepticism. Since it is not one philosophical position among others, but in a sense parasitic on other views, and since it asserts nothing, defining it is a tricky business.

I have a valued colleague, a thorough-going realist, who, when presented with some such statement as, "All statements are corrigible, including this one," is wont to ask if indeed I know that this statement is true. My usual answer is, "Well, I'm not sure, but I believe that it is." By and large, in the history of philosophy, knowing and believing have been respectable pursuits, while doubting has been regarded as at best an obstacle to be overcome, or, at worst a subversive and destructive activity. Many writers have deemed it necessary to refute scepticism before presenting their own views, presumably because if the sceptical position were allowed to stand they would be forced to acknowledge the uncertainty of their own.

Stephen Pepper wrote an introductory book on metaphysics

that was widely used when I was an undergraduate in the early 1950's. It is called *World Hypothesis* and it begins with a scathing rejection of the position occupied by the utter sceptic. Taking the definition of a sceptic from Berkeley's Hylas in the *Dialogues* as "one who doubts all things," Pepper shows that the position is an impossible one.

> An utter sceptic is obviously not a believer. Nor is he a disbeliever, since a disbeliever is simply a negative believer. He must, then, be an unbeliever. An unbeliever could be either a partial or an utter unbeliever. But a partial unbeliever is only a partial sceptic. Some things he holds in suspense, but others he believes or disbelieves in various degrees. An utter sceptic must, then, be an utter unbeliever. But we find this utter unbelief sets demands upon the nature of fact and judgment which must be believed to guarantee the possibility of utter unbelief. An utter sceptic thus turns into a dogmatist (p. 9).

Now if it is impossible for anyone to be an utter sceptic, it seems unlikely that the position was ever occupied, and at the conclusion of his criticism, Pepper acknowledges that this is the case.

> The utter sceptic has apparently no firmer substance than an empty name, nor any good use. If there is anything in his position to be saved, it will be found in that of the dogmatist, and in that of the partial sceptic (p. 10).

Pepper has attacked and demolished a straw man. Why would he take the trouble to attack a position that on his own account is unoccupied? Perhaps because his own position is that of the "partial sceptic." The critics of partial scepticism, especially in the popular press and undergraduate discussions, often ignore the distinction between "utter scepticism" and "partial scepticism." They assume the easy arguments against the utter sceptic are also a refutation of partial scepticism. Perhaps Pepper wanted to make it perfectly clear that his view is distinct from the extreme and foolish forms of scepticism.

The view that I've called mitigated or scientific scepticism is much the same as Pepper's partial scepticism. Pepper holds "that claims of self-evidence or certainty for any cognitive materials are untrustworthy." But he goes on to say:

> From this it does not follow that we are not in

> possession of trustworthy evidence, but only that the grounds of trustworthiness are not to be attributed to certainty or self-evidence or to any other sort of dogmatic claim. We showed that no cognitive material can justifiably claim exemption from critical scrutiny. There are no "natural rights" in cognition any more than there are in society. Any item of evidence is subject to correction by any other item of evidence, and may in the light of further evidence require revision, refinement, or reinterpretation (p. 318).

Perhaps it would be better to follow Pepper in his use of the term "partial" since it avoids the historical associations of Hume's mitigated scepticism, but Pepper's position is itself very loosely drawn, and I would like to keep the historical associations with Hume and the positive connotations of science.

To say that Pepper's account of utter and partial scepticism is loosely drawn is not to find fault with his work, which is directed toward other ends. However, noting some of the ways in which it is loose may be instructive, since what Pepper overlooks knowingly, many opponents of scepticism overlook unwittingly. First, Pepper makes no mention of the traditional distinction between belief and knowledge. Whether this distinction can be sustained or not is another question. If the distinction is operative, then any account of scepticism must allow for it. Pepper maintains that the opposite of belief must be disbelief, but if the knowledge-belief distinction holds, the opposite of knowledge is ignorance, not disbelief. To believe that God exists or to believe that God does not exist are, as Pepper says, equally dogmatic. But to *know* that God exists is dogmatic, while not to know is agnostic, which Pepper admits is only partial scepticism and, as such, acceptable.

A second point that Pepper treats loosely is the justification for the distinction between utter and partial scepticism. If we accept the view of the partial sceptic that any items of evidence is open to question, haven't we logically accepted the view that all items of evidence are open to question? And isn't the latter view just that of the utter sceptic--the person who doubts all things?

No student of philosophy would be guilty of this confusion, and I would be embarrassed to mention it here if it were not so frequent among non-specialists. Clearly, to say that any statement is debatable or corrigible is not to say that there is anyone who doubts all statements or who takes them all to be false.

In terms of the distinction betweeen belief and knowledge, the partial sceptic may believe as many things as anyone else, and among those beliefs may be one to the effect that all knowledge

claims may be doubted.

Pepper argues that the doubts that may be raised against individual knowledge claims may be diminished by techniques of corroboration so that a given collection of such claims becomes less debatable than any claim taken individually. The degree of corroboration depends in part on the scope of the hypothesis. If a hypothesis is successful it expands. The most successful hypothesis would have unlimited scope. Ultimately, Pepper finds that there are four equi-probable "world-hypothesis" each with its own theory of truths and corresponding interpretation of the evidence of common sense. His book is a veritable well-spring of scepticism, calling attention as it does to the doubtful nature of the individual claims of common sense, the existence of equally plausible but incompatible world views, and multiple inconsistent theories of truth. As a kind of bonus for the thoughtful reader there is the dubious nature of some of Pepper's own arguments as well as his often uncritical use of language.

In 1929, John Dewey published *The Quest for Certainty*, an extended attack on the traditional view that knowledge must be certain. "The business of thought" he writes, "is not to conform to or reproduce the characters already possessed by objects but to judge them as potentialities of what they become through an indicated operation" (p. 137). And further, "The natural man is impatient with doubt and suspense: he impatiently hurries to be shut of it." On the other hand,

> The scientific attitude may almost be defined as that which is capable of enjoying the doubtful; scientific method is, on one aspect, a technique for making productive use of doubt by converting it into operations of definite inquiry. . .Scepticism that is not such a search is as much a personal emotion indulgence as is dogmatism. Attainment of the relatively secure and settled takes place, however, only with respect to specified problematic situations; quest for certainty that is universal, applying to everything, is a compensatory perversion. One question is disposed of; another offers itself and thought is kept alive (p. 228).

As thoughtful creatures, according to Dewey, we should move from doubt to doubt, resolving one and moving on to the next. The resolution of doubt is objective. It is defined in terms of the inquiry. The sort of scepticism I'm attempting to describe here has no problem with this kind of "certainty" or beliefs. If we define in advance what is to count as truth, and by our efforts create that

condition, then in this sense we may indeed have knowledge. But we always could define the conditions of our inquiry differently, and were we to inquire again the results might be different.

Dewey called attention to what was going on in the sciences, arguing that the successes of scientific inquiry did not depend upon its special access to truth or to the ultimate nature of reality but rather to its ability to specify the conditions it seeks to realize, and its willingness to modify or replace any or all of the terms of the inquiry as the inquiry progresses. By freeing us from a futile quest for certainty in the realm of knowledge Dewey hoped to unite thought and action and to obtain in ethics, politics, and social action the same kinds of success that the sciences exhibit. I have used the term "scientific" to characterize the kind of scepticism which has gained broad acceptance in philosophical circles, and which is gradually filtering into the popular consciousness. (Judging from my most recent freshman classes, the filtering may be entirely too gradual.)

There is an interesting sequence of texts which traces the growing awareness of scientific scepticism from the time of *Quest for Certainty* to the present. In *The Quest for Certainty*, Dewey seizes on the recently developed Hesenberg uncertainty principle, which he regards as "crucially decisive" for the position he advocates (p. 201).

> Since either position or velocity of a particle may be fixed at choice, leaving the element of indeterminancy on the other side, both of them are shown to be conceptual in nature. That is, they belong to our intellectual apparatus for *Dealing With* antecedent existence, not to fixed properties of that existence. An isolation of a particle for measurement is essentially a device for regulation of subsequent perceptual experience" (pp. 202-3).

More than two decades after Dewey seized upon recent theoretical developments in science to bolster his case against the finality of knowledge claims, James B. Conant published his still very valuable historical account of the development of scientific theories, *Science and Common Sense*. To illustrate how claims within science change, he cites the articles on the nature of light from the 1911 and 1929 editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The 1911 article opens with the assertion that discovering the nature of light is the ultimate goal of optical research. The 1929 article explicitly abandons any effort to say what light really is apart from its behavior: "We shall therfore describe, largely by the means of analogies, the behavior of light, and this *is* the "real" nature of light" (Conant, p. 30). Conant remarks that, "The

contrast between the attitudes of scientists about the nature of light is intended to bring out the extreme difficulties of defining science today in terms which were commonly used fifty years ago." Conant goes on to say, "To those of my scientific friends who may object to the sceptical approach to science that runs throughout these pages, I suggest the difficulty of talking in terms of reality when we are forced to be so cautious in regard to such an apparently simple question as "what is light *really"?* In 1962, Thomas Kuhn, who credits Conant with his introduction to the history of science, published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in which he explicitly rejects Conant's belief in the cummulative nature of scientific knowledge. Like his teacher, though, he draws upon the history of theories of light to illustrate the transient character of scientific knowledge.

> Today's physics textbooks tell the student that light is photons. . .That characterization of light is, however, scarcely half a century old. Before it was developed by Planck, Einstein, and others early in this centruy, physics texts taught that light was transverse wave motion. . .Nor was the wave theory the first to be embarced by almost all practitioners of optical science. During the eighteenth century the paradigm for this field was provided by Newton's *Opticks,* which taught that light was material corpuscles (p. 12).

Whether Dewey was justified in the implications he draws from Heisenberg's work is certainly open to question. From specific kinds of uncertainty at the subatomic level to the uncertainty of all scientific claims is indeed a quantum leap but Conant and Kuhn cannot be charged with such a mistake, and I will try to avoid it also, but I cannot resist mentioning some very recent developments in the theory of light which appear to have sceptical implications even more sweeping than those already mentioned. (In what follows, I am relying on the reports of Dietrick E. Thomsen in *Science News* during January, February and March of this year.) Einstein and Niels Bohr had a thirty year argument over the nature of light. Bohr was willing to accept the paradoxes of quantum theory as irreducible; Einstein was not. Together with Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, Einstein published in 1935 what came to be known as the EPR paradox. it was intended as a reductio argument against Bohr's interpretation of quantum theory. Described very roughtly, it maintains that if an atom emits two photons of opposite polarity, and the polarity of one is measured, then the polarity of the second is known without measurement, and hence must be an objectively "real" property of the photon. On the

other hand, if Bohr were to maintain that the act of meaurement itself determined the polarity of the first phonton, while granting that the second photon must indeed have the opposite polarity, Bohr would be committed to the existence of something that Einstein called *Spukhafte Fernwirkungen*, spooky action at a distance, a consequence that Einstein thought would be clearly inconsistent with other well established theories, and hence untenable.

Recently, it became possible to test the opposing claims experimentally and as Dietrick Thomsen puts it, "The Spooks seem to be loose in physics" (Jan 11, 86, pp. 28, 29). The paradoxical view that information is transmitted instantaneously appears to be confirmed by observation. The results, of course, are subject to varying interpretations, and there may be one or more alternative acounts which will prove to be non-paradoxical. However, it is not the physics of the matter that is of sceptical interest, but rather the willingness of at least some physicists to entertain the idea that nature is not logical, or alternatively that certain well-established beliefs are incorrect. Barry Stroud has considered some recent efforts to escape from the traditional doubts about the possibility of knowledge.[1] He argues that common sense refutations of scepticism, such as G. E. Moore's, fail to come to grips with the general question of knowledge, since they "assume a direct and unproblematic relation between particluar cases," like I do know this pencil exists, and a general theory of knowledge. According to Stroud, "Since at least the time of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. . . there has been no excuse for making that simple assumption.[2]

> Our direct and unproblematic access to objects around us is possible, according to Kant, only because the things we are directly aware of in experience are appearances and are dependent on us. That idealist thesis in turn implies that we can have knowledge only about those things that are dependent upon us. But when we say or believe in everyday life that we see a pencil or a piece of paper and thereby know that it is there, and we also believe that pencils and pieces of paper are things that are not dependent on us, we are not saying or believing anything that contradicts those idealist thesis. Not only do those ordinary assertions or beliefs not refute Kant's idealism; their literal truth and full legitimacy do not even conflict with it. That is the deeper reason why Moore's assertions, and those of the rest of us in everyday life, could not refute Kant's philosophical position.[3]

In our ordinary empirical judgment about reality we do not commit ourselves one way or the other on the question whether reality in general matches up with or corresponds to the way it is perceived to be; so in claiming knowledge or certainty about the world we do not commit ourselves to the falsity of philosophical skepticism.[4] Stroud also argues that the efforts of Quine and others to develop a naturalized epistemology remain open to general sceptical objections:

> So I think that if we try to ask with complete generality how it is possible for any human being to know anything at all about the physical world, and if we adopt Quine's traditional two part conception of knowledge as a combination of a subjective and an objective factor, we cannot get a satisfactory answer to that question. On that conception, we would have to recognize that countless "theories" could be 'projected' from the sensory impacts we receive, so if we do happen to accept one such "theory" it could not be because of any objectively discoverable superiority it enjoys over its competitors. Every competing "theory" is equally compatible with the meager "data" that make up what Quine thinks of as the objective component, so our selection of one "theory" over others could arise only from some aspect or other of our subjective constitution. And this is precisely what the traditional epistemologist always saw as a threat to our knowledge of the external world. the possibility that our view of the world is nothing more than a *mere* "projection" is what had to be shown not to obtain in order to explain how our knowledge is possible. Unless that challenge is met, or rejected, we will never understand how our knowledge is possible at all.[5]

The problem is, of course, logically equivalent to the problem which confronts Pepper when it comes time to choose among equally plausible "World Hypotheses." Robert Nozick in his long book on *Philosophical Explanations* (Harvard, 1981) gives a great deal of space to a refutation of scepticism. His reasoning depends on the acceptance of a subjunctive conditional of the form "if p weren't true, S wouldn't believe that p." Nozick is careful to point out that the subjunctive relation is not entailment, and does not authorize a move like motus tollens, so that "If p were true, q would be true," is compatible with q being false and p being true.

"This point is brought out especially clearly in recent possible-worlds' accounts of subjunctives: the subjunctive is true when (roughly) in all those worlds in which p holds true closest to the actual world, q also is true" (p. 173). Nozick is careful to say that he is not committed to a "possible-worlds" interpretation of the subjunctive, but employs it only as an explanatory device (p. 174).

In addition to the subjunctive conditional qualification in the list of conditions necessary to warrant knowledge claims, Nozick finds that he must also maintain that it is wrong to suppose that knowledge is closed, when it is entirely possible that some could know that p entails that q is the case, and still not know that q is the case.

Nozick's complete list of conditions that a knowledge claim must fulfill is as follows:

(1) p is true
(2) S believes that P
(3) If P weren't true,
S wouldn't believe that P
(4) If p were true, S would believe it.

The last two provisions are, of course, subjunctive conditionals. A detailed criticism of Nozick's position would not be appropriate here, even if I were prepared to make it. (Note the double subjunctive.) That the interpretation of subjunctive statements is a question still in dispute, and that Nozick's contention that knowledge is not closed under known logical implications is the subject of current controversy are familiar points. A detailed criticism would certainly begin with them. However, what is required here is a short and necessarily crude estimate of Nozick's reasoning. Nozick's list of conditions presupposes a theory of truth. While he does discuss the problem of evidence, and allows that knowledge "tracks" its object, he gives no detailed explanation of how we are to pick out the true assertions from among the rest, or of exactly how "tracking' works. If truth is to be determined by the usual empirical methods, then the sceptical questions raised above with regard to science would be, with suitable changes, relevant to Nozick's position as well.

This survey of the spreading influence of scepticism would be incomplete without some mention of its most prominent present spokesman, Richard Rorty. His performance in *Consequences of Pragmatism* reminds me of one of Auntie Mame's husbands, who in an effort to record photographically their successful assent of the Matterhorn, stepped back to put Mame in better perspective, and made her a widow again. Philosophy, capital "P" if not actually a widow is at least single again as far as Rorty is concerned.

Rorty's appropriation of pragmatism is certainly irritating, and many of his characterizations and hyphenated summaries are suspect. (What are we to make of a sentence like, "The Wittgenstin-Sellars-Quine-Davidson attack on distinctions between classes of sentences is the special contribution of analytic philosophy to the anti-Platonist insistence on the ubiquity of language, followed by exemplary quotes from Peirce, Derrida, Sellars, Gadamer, Foucault, and Heidegger" (p. 19-20)? Rorty makes a distinction between old idealism and new textualism: "nineteenth-century idealism wanted to substitute one sort of science (philosophy) for another (natural science) as the center of culture, twentieth-century textualism wants to place literature in the center, and to treat both science and philosophy as at best, literary genres" (p. 141). He then goes on to distinguish weak textualism (Dilthey and Gadamer) from strong texatualism (Foucault and Bloom). The weak textualist "thinks that there really is a secret code and that once it is discovered we shall have gotten the text right. He believes that criticism is discovery rather than creation. The strong misreader doesn't care about the distinction between discovery and creation, finding and making. He doesn't think this is a useful distinction, any more than Nietzsche or James (1) did. He is in it for what he can get out of it, not for the satisfaction of getting something right" (p. 152). In interpreting a text the strong textualist "asks neither the author nor the text about their intentions but simply beats the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose" (p. 151).

Rorty sees textualism as the literary counterpart of his version of pragmatism. Those who shy away from "strong misreading" of texts (Abrams and Trilling) do so on moral grounds which Rorty would like to dispose of if he could (p. 158). Perhaps it is that inability which constrains him to weak textualism for the most part in his own work.

Bernard Williams, who advocates a sceptical, or perhaps pragmatic postion in ethics, *finds in* Rorty's work--rather charitably--two major faults: Rorty takes for granted a picture of the world "already there" which helps to control our description of it. On Rorty's terms this implies a cultural or anthropological explanation, but there is no indication of what it would be. The second fault follows from the first. Without some basis outside the phenomena he describes, his claims are self-defeating. (*Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, pp. 136-138) These objections, I think, are not compelling. Rorty is not a solipsist, and even the strongest of misreaders still requires a text to practice on. As for Williams' claim that Rorty is "trying to reoccupy the transcendental standpoint outside human speech and activity" (pp. 137-138) and that the attempt is self-defeating because on Rorty's own acount no such standpoint exists, it is, I believe, another instance of the general

claim that utter scepticism is impossible. As we have seen, neither Rorty nor anyone else is an utter sceptic.

Rorty is persuaded that his role as a small p philosopher is to show how things may hang together. In so-doing he waivers between weak textualism and strong textualism. His strong textualist's impulses manifest themselves in the lumping together of discrete individuals and points of view. The reference we have already seen to the hyphenated attach of Wittgenstein-Sellars, Quine-Davidson would be one instance, his pair of James and Neitzsche would be another, and the ones just mentioned; Dilthey and Gadaner, Abrams and Trilling, additional instances. However, weak textualism dominates in his work so far. He does try to find the secret of the code in Heidegger and Derrida, and to give more or less conventional readings of the classical texts.

Bracketing detailed objections to Rorty's case, his general position is, I think, correct. However, I take his genreal positon to be just that view already described as mitigated scepticism. As the critics of scepticism frequently observe, scepticism is a recursive concept; its definition involves reference to itself. When Rorty declares that old style Philosophy with a capital "P" is no longer possible, he must be speaking from the point of view of the new style philosophy with a small "p" which, if I am correct, is simply an elaborated version of mitigated scepticism. If so, Rorty has overstated his case. What he requires is a middle-sized "p" position which would allow him to say something on the order of "What if things were as I describe them"? And further, "What current problems do we 'solve' or what interests do we serve by describing them this way"? And further still, "Is this the only way that I can imagine to describe them, or, if there are alternative ways, is one or more of them preferable because it more nearly satisfies the conditions of our inquiry, or shows us how to improve upon those conditions"? I take it that this is more or less the way that Dewey would have described the situation, and if James and Dewey were waiting at the end of the road for Foucault and Deleuze as Rorty says, then they are waiting at the conclusion of his journey also.

The second theme of this paper is the growing awareness of self-referential techniques. I've spent too much time on scepticism - itself a self-referential position, so this section must be brief.

Dewey was among the first people to recognize the recursive nature of understanding. In 1896, Dewey published an article called *"The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology"* in which he rejects the concept of the reflex arc as too fragmented to explain adequately the behavior observed. According to Dewey "We ought to be able to see that the ordinary conception of the reflex arc theory, instead of being a case of plain science is a survival of the metaphysical dualism, first formulated by Plato. . ." (*Readings in Psychology*,

p. 161) "What we have," he tells us, "is a circuit, not an arc or a broken segment of a circle. This circuit is more truly termed organic than reflex because the motor response determines the stimulus just as truly as sensory stimulus determines movement" (p.159). In today's jargon we would describe this a "feed-back loop."

Since 1896, Deweys's idea of a circuit in which all the elements mutual affect each other has been extended to many areas beyond psychology. The early "servo-mechanisms" of the Second World War, and Ross Ashby's "homeostat" of the 1950's are practical examples of its application outside of that field. The principle returns to psychology today from computer science, congitive psychology, and the philosophy of mind. Daniel Dennett, who works at the intersection of those areas, and who gave us the brain in the bat as the technological replacement for Descartes' evil demon, has recently also provided us with an example of sceptical speculation toward practical ends.

Dennett has for sometime recommended that psychologists adopt what he calls the "intentional stance," that is that they allow the introduction of intentional terminology into their theories of mind, provided only that the theories are empirically successful and that the intentional terms are eventually found to have empirical grounding or are eliminted as soon as it becomes possible to do so. In the *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* (1983) Dennett argues that the intentional stance can have useful application in cognitive ethology, specifically in the interpretation of actual observations of the behavior of ververt monkies in their natural environment. In the spirit of Dewey and in accord with the letter of Rorty, Dennett makes no claim for the *truth* of the intentional stance, but only for its (temporary) usefulness.

In mathematics, iterative or recursion procedures have been familiar for a long time, but it is only with the advent of the computer that the surprising power of such procedures has become evident.

The August issue of last year's *Scientific American* contains pictures of the Mandelbot set, images generated by a simple iterative procedure that can be run on a PC. The results turn out to be, literally, infinite. And, even more surprisingly, organic in appearance. What profound consequences if any, may follow from the application of fractal mathematics are presently unknown. One minor consequence is to make it clear that an often heard (and irritating) objection to the possibility of artificial intelligence is no longer tenable; that objection is that the machine cannot do anything it wasn't programmed to do, and hence that anything the machine does must have been thought of first by the programmer. The example of the Mandelbot program shows that such is not the case.

The growing recognition that we are like the Argonauts

gradually rebuilding piece-by-piece the very ship that we're sailing on, so that in time none of the parts are the same as the ones with which we started, is, I think, a positive development. We need the ship. It is the means of our survival. But none of it is permanent or needs to be permanent. As Dewey recognized and Rorty repeats: the important thing is that we acknowledge that we are the shipwrights and are responsible henceforth for the form that replacements and alterations take. We are (like it or not) a kind of metaphysical-planning committee. Given the success of ordinary civic planning committees, these observations may not be a source of joy to everyone but there are areas where civic planning has prevented abuses, and areas where it has created beneficial conditions and improved the quality of life, in the current phraseology. I think that it is a hopeful change because I believe that it is better to know what you are doing, than not to know. I recognize the paradoxical nature of this remark given a sceptical point of view, but for the moment I'm willing to let it stand.

Rorty says that the task of philosophy has been reduced to seeing how things hang together at any given stage of our historical development. But this has always been the task of philosophy, whether individual philosophers acknowledge it or not. It is by no means a reduction. There will no doubt continue to be both large and small "p" philosophers and middle-sized ones as well. Indeed, currently in active areas of philosophy, such as ethics, cognitive psychlogy, and artifical intelligence, these divisions persist. There are those, like Searle, who are convinced that intentionality is real, and not reducible to anything else; those like Dennett who see intentionality as an interim notion that will lead to other things, and those who reject it entirely. If mitigated scepticism is correct, we must listen to Searle and pay attention to the behaviorists. If we know what we are doing in a sceptical sense of know, there is a *chance* that perhaps we'll do things better.

Notes

[1] Barry Stroud, "The Significance of Naturalized Epistemology" *Naturalizing Epistemology*, ed. Hilary Kornblinth (Cambridge: MIT P, 1985) reprinted from *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 6 (1981) and "Kant and Scepticism" in *The Sceptical Tradition*, (U of CA P, 1983).

[2] Stroud, *Sceptical* 415.

[3] Stroud, *Sceptical* 430.

[4] Stroud, *Sceptical* 430-431

[5] Stroud, *Naturalizing Epistemology* 83.