Why Be A Relativist?

Emrys Westacott

Imagine two communities who bake bread according to different recipes. The first group (whom we will call the Weet), when they adhere strictly to their recipe, almost always produce what they consider to be excellent bread. In their view, bread should be tasty, well-risen, not susceptible to early staleness or mould, so nutritious as to be capable of being the year round staple for an entire community, and capable of being produced in large quantities with relatively little labour. They hold their recipe in high regard just because it seems to be the key to producing bread of this kind. When bread is produced which meets all these desiderata, they describe it as "perfect." The other group (let us call them the Chaph) make bread in a different way, and what they produce is, from the Weet point of view, obviously not perfect. What they pull from their oven is a tough, unrisen brick which tastes like charred cardboard and has about as much nutritional value. Moreover, because the Chaph insist on grinding and kneading by hand, their recipe does not lend itself to mass production. The inferiority of the Chaph's bread is explained by the Weet, naturally enough, as due to the inferiority of their recipe. Some of the Chaph occasionally get to see the Weet bread making process and to taste the result. Often, those that do are quickly converted to the idea that the Weet recipe is much the better of the two. Sometimes, though, one of the Chaph may observe the Weet process, sample the product, acknowledge its many good qualities, and yet continue making bread the Chaph way. Asked why, they answer that while the Weet recipe undoubtedly has much to commend it, they are unwilling to give up certain aspects of traditional Chaph bread making which they value: such things as the expenditure of physical effort, the actual contact between one's hands and the dough, and the personal involvement in the process which means that each loaf produced is entirely the work of a single individual and possesses an individual character.

The Weet regard the Chaph recipe as clearly inferior to their own. While the bread it produces sustains its makers well enough under normal circumstances, it provides much less protection against hazards such as disease or short term crop failures, and falls short on almost every other count too. Even the Weet philosophers tend to agree with each other on this matter. They disagree, however, on the status of this comparative appraisal. Some say that the superiority of the Weet recipe is simply an objective fact, impossible to dispute. But others argue that the recipe's claim to superiority rests on certain assumptions about what counts as

good bread. If one accepts these assumptions – as most people do – one will naturally take the bread itself to be proof of the superiority of the recipe that produces it. But reasonable people can challenge these assumptions; indeed, they are questioned by some of those wedded to traditional Chaph ways and values. In that case, argue the philosophers of this second school, all one can do to persuade such people is offer them some Weet bread to taste, take them on tours of the Weet bakeries and storage facilities, and let them see the health and happiness of those nourished on Weet bread. But this is an empirical rather than a logical demonstration, and those it is intended to convert have the right to remain unconvinced without forfeiting their claim to reasonableness.

This difference of opinion among the Weet philosophers relates to another disagreement on a more fundamental matter: namely, the nature and meaning of the statement that Weet bread is "perfect." The first school maintain that what this means is that bread produced exactly according to the Weet recipe satisfies some condition which is independent of anyone's actual tastes and values. They say that while bread may be *identified* as perfect by reference to the recipe that produced it and on the basis of its satisfying certain desiderata (taste, texture, nutritional value, etc.) what one *means* when one says it is perfect goes beyond this. What actually makes perfect bread *perfect*, they say, is its being a term in a certain relation. The precise nature of this relation is not completely clear, but the general idea is that "perfect" bread in some sense matches, resembles, conforms to or corresponds to an existent ideal. Following the Weet recipe exactly may not absolutely guarantee that one's bread is perfect in this sense, but it greatly increases the probability of its being so. And the fact that the bread produced satisfies the Weet criteria for excellence in bread can be taken as evidence that the bread does indeed resemble the ideal.

Philosophers of the second school take a different view. They acknowledge that in common parlance when one says that bread is "perfect" one usually means or implies that it resembles an existent ideal. But, they say, so what? No philosophically significant conclusions follow from that. In fact, from a philosophical perspective there seems to be neither justification nor point in claiming that perfect bread stands in some relation to an existent ideal. How could anyone justify such claims without some sort of privileged access to the ideal in question? All that one is really justified in saying about perfect bread, they argue, is that it is made according to a certain recipe and satisfies certain desiderata. So why insist on trying to say more? These philosophers allow that the term "perfect" has an unobjectionable use in everyday speech where it plays a useful role as a kind of shorthand; but they deny that the term has any deep philosophical significance. It is, as one of them puts it, just an "empty compliment" one pays to bread which has been made according to the Weet recipe and which brings all the benefits one

expects from bread.

Accordingly, the second school doesn't grant any special status to the Weet recipe. It is, they say, just a set of instructions which it has so far proved beneficial to follow. Conceivably, the recipe could still be improved so as to produce bread which is better according to their present criteria. Perhaps these criteria, which express certain values, could alter. Perhaps the circumstances of Weet existence could change so as to be better served by a different kind of bread. These are all possibilities to which one should be open and which it would be foolish to discount. The problem, though, is that in calling a loaf of bread "perfect," without condition or qualification, one implies that none of these are possible. And this is a significant drawback to the view that the very idea of perfect bread necessarily involves something more than the idea of bread which is made in accordance with a certain recipe and which possesses certain desirable qualities.

The purpose of this allegory is to illuminate the nature of and motivations for a relativistic conception of truth and rationality. In the analogy, the Weet represent a scientifically advanced culture while the Chaph resemble what anthropologists used to call a "primitive" society. Bread stands for beliefs; the notion of perfection plays the role of truth. The recipes represent the norms of rationality by which the two communities decide what to believe. The characteristic features of the bread produced are analogous to the practical advantages or disadvantages that accompany the holding of certain views. The philosophers of the first school are the equivalent of rationalistic realists; those of the second school are the counterpart of relativists.[1] Of course, the analogy is not perfect (in any sense!).[2] But I believe it can serve to clarify what a relativistic account of rationality involves and to indicate how the pragmatic attitude to epistemic norms which such an account encourages may plausibly be held to carry certain benefits.

Critics of cognitive relativism generally attack it on one of three counts, arguing either that it is theoretically incoherent, not practically viable, or pernicious. They hold a relativistic view of truth and rationality to be incoherent because it is self-refuting. They deny it is an outlook one can live and think by on the grounds that it undermines our notion of intellectual autonomy. And they argue that, like skepticism, relativism inevitably has a corrosive effect on our commitment to the unending yet noble quest to attain objective truth and realize better forms of life.[3]

Let us assume, though, that relativism is internally coherent, practically viable, and not necessarily pernicious – claims which I believe can be justified, although to justify them is not my purpose here. Even if all this be granted, a further question remains: What is the point of relativism? What advantages can it claim to offer that cannot be found in non-relativistic accounts of truth and rationality? What can relativists say to non-relativists that might persuade the latter to adopt a relativistic way of thinking? In my opinion, this is one of the most difficult ques-

tions relativists must face. To see why this is so it will help if we supplement the allegorical representation of relativism given above with a philosophical definition.

I believe cognitive relativism is best understood as consisting of two principal claims: i) the truth value of any judgement is relative to some particular standpoint; ii) no standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others.[4] The first thesis rests on the idea that since we cannot ever compare our beliefs about the world with the way the world is in itself, we can only decide which of our judgements are true by seeing how well they satisfy certain epistemic norms. Different sets of epistemic norms constitute different standpoints, and truth can only be determined in relation to these standpoints. The second thesis makes a metaphysical claim. Sensible relativists will not try to *prove* there is no uniquely privileged standpoint any more than sensible atheists will try to prove the non-existence of God. But their skepticism regarding the existence of such a standpoint may be viewed as a pragmatic extension of the epistemological thesis that it is not possible conclusively to prove (i.e. without circularity) the superiority of one standpoint over any other.

Relativism, as I have defined it, can be conceived equally well as a view about truth or as a view about rationality. This is because the relativist refuses to make a distinction, at the deepest philosophical level, between a statement's being true and its satisfying certain norms of rational acceptability. An implication of the relativist thesis that no standpoint is transcendentally privileged over any other is the idea that even the standpoint we identify as that of reason lacks any special metaphysical status. To be sure, we can describe as "true" those statements that meet our preferred norms of rational acceptability. But this is, as Richard Rorty puts it, just an "empty compliment."

It is not hard to see what makes the questions posed earlier awkward for a relativist. If truth is relative, then non-relativist points of view can legitimately claim to be true relative to some theoretical standpoints. Moreover, relativism, as I have defined it, excludes the possibility of demonstrating the superiority of one standpoint over any other. So the usual reason that we give, on both mundane and theoretical issues, as to why someone should come over to our own way of thinking – namely, that our point of view is true, the other point of view is false, and it is better to believe what is true – is not available to the relativist who wishes to proselytize.

Richard Rorty (who, notwithstanding his own self-description, I take to be a relativist) recognizes this very clearly. It is why he justifies and recommends his perspective almost entirely by appealing to its practical virtues.[5] In my view, as I shall make clear shortly, the claims he makes regarding the practical advantages of a position such as his are not wrong, but their persuasive power is rather limited. I think he takes the right tack, though, in seeking to justify his position in pragmatic

rather than theoretical terms.

There are several arguments that relativists could offer in attempting to persuade others to come over to their point of view. I take the most important to be the following:

1) Relativism may be the philosophical position that best coheres with the other beliefs that self-styled non-relativists hold.

2) Relativism is the most reasonable response to the plurality of internally coherent standpoints and the lack of agreement as to which, if any, is superior.

3) Relativism is the view that nowadays best coheres with and promotes liberal values such as tolerance, freedom, and democracy.

4) Relativism encourages a pragmatic attitude towards rules and norms, recognizing them as having a contingent, conventional status, and therefore as being open to reflective criticism and modification according to our needs and interests.

All four arguments deserve to be examined in depth, but for reasons of space I propose here to examine only the final one.[6] This argument – which is employed by Rorty – is one that causes much perturbation since it challenges some long-standing and deeply held beliefs about the nature and status of the norms of rationality we employ. From the time of Parmenides to the present day, the great majority of philosophers have assumed that certain norms of rationality are obligatory on us, as responsible epistemic subjects, because they reflect the way things are independently of our thoughts about them; they lead us toward the truth as the lights on a runway guide an aeroplane to its proper destination. In earlier times this idea was expressed by saying that reason is the divine element in human beings, or at least a unique faculty which allows us to reach out and connect to – even participate in – a reality that transcends our experience. A more contemporary version of what is essentially the same idea declares the criteria by which our statements and theories are – or, rather, should be – evaluated to enjoy a trans-historical, trans-cultural validity.

The analogy laid out earlier which likened epistemic norms to recipes was intended to clarify how this view of reason appears from a relativist point of view. Two conclusions regarding the status of epistemic norms follow from the relativist perspective. First, where different communities exhibit differing conceptions of rationality there is no justification for thinking of any one as *metaphysically* superior.[7] Secondly, even if certain norms – for example, logical consistency – happen to be universally accepted and employed in any community, human reason should still be regarded in a naturalistic way. We should view it in the same way that we view such things as our erect posture, our prehensile hands, or our capacity for learning language. Characteristics such as these helped determine the particular course of human evolution and are necessary to our success as a species, to the development of complex forms of social interaction, and to the production of cul-

ture, political institutions, science, technology, the arts, and so forth. Rationality, like prehensility, can be valued for the practical benefits it confers. It can also be made the object of reflection, and within certain limits we can experiment with the norms of rationality we employ, adopting and adapting them according to what seems to best serve our purposes. But no good purpose is served – at least not nowadays – by supposing that reason somehow reflects or puts us in touch with the true order of things as they are in themselves. On the contrary, conceiving of rationality in that way represents a form of dogmatism that may exclude valuable alternative perspectives and inhibit potentially fruitful experimentation in ideas, attitudes and life-styles. The practical advantage of viewing the standards of rational acceptability we employ as metaphysically contingent in this way is that we will be more willing to modify them should either our purposes or our circumstances change. In fact, if we acknowledge their contingency we will be more willing to countenance experiments in ways of thinking and acting through which we might discover modifications which help us better realize our present ends.[8]

In my view, this pragmatic apologia for relativism clearly has some plausibility. However, as with the other reasons for preferring relativism over its rivals mentioned earlier, its persuasive power is limited. For it does not show relativism to be the *only* point of view to carry the practical advantages in question; nor does it show that these advantage necessarily outweigh other advantages which alternative positions might be able to offer. If all the alternatives to relativism could be shown to contain or imply an authoritarian insistence on the absolute superiority of one particular standpoint, then the argument that relativism is the outlook that best accords with liberal ideals could be granted. But I do not think this can be shown. Nor is there any obvious reason to rule out the possibility that non-relativist views could provide practical benefits to their adherents which relativism is unable to offer. To illustrate these points briefly, let us consider again the claim mentioned earlier that it is impossible to demonstrate in a non-circular manner the superiority of one cognitive standpoint over another. This is an idea which has become fairly widely accepted in modern philosophy. Yet one could endorse this thesis and consistently maintain that there is, or might be, a uniquely privileged standpoint. It might be that any one who attains it recognizes its absolute superiority in a non-discursive way – for instance, by intuition or revelation. Or it might be that the supremely privileged standpoint is such that although we can attain it, we can never be sure that we have done so. Or it could be that it is unattainable by human beings but nevertheless a hypothetical or logical possibility. All these possibilities arise out of the fact that there is a logical distinction to be drawn between denying the *existence* of a supremely privileged standpoint and denying only that any standpoint can be *proved* to enjoy this status.

Now, the natural pragmatist response to this sort of speculation would be to

dismiss the idea of an absolute standpoint that we can never actually identify or be certain of having attained as a pointless concept, a free-spinning wheel in our conceptual scheme that can play no significant role in our thinking or in our lives. But this kind of dismissive response may be too hasty. The idea of an absolute or supremely privileged standpoint, it could be argued, can have practical significance as something like what Kant calls a "regulative ideal." If the absolute standpoint is understood as the standpoint from which the objective truth of our beliefs, the objective rightness of our actions, and the objective worth of our lives could be determined, it could be that, at least for some people, presupposing the possibility of this standpoint makes a difference – and a difference for the better – to the way they think and the way they live.[9] Thus, while relativists can point to the practical advantages of jettisoning notions like that of a supremely privileged standpoint, non-relativists can also make a plausible case for claiming that their are other practical benefits to be gained by holding onto such ideas.[10]

Is it possible to decide between these opposing views on the value of retaining a non-relativistic understanding of our fundamental moral and epistemic concepts? I do not think it is. I am inclined to think that this is one of those places, like those points which mark other basic divisions of philosophical opinion, where each person will feel compelled to endorse the view that accords with his or her fundamental intuitions and general philosophical orientation. The position one favours depends on one's initial philosophical leanings, and the attempt to justify these either quickly gives up or becomes manifestly circular. At this point, explanation is likely to prove more fruitful than repeated attempts at rational justification.

The recognition of this throws light on a paradox to which relativism gives rise; for it does have a paradoxical aspect, even though this has nothing to do with its being self-refuting, as is so often claimed. Relativists are typically individuals who start out with a particular set of philosophical intuitions and inclinations. They will tend, for instance, to be non-realist, nominalist, perspectivist, and pluralist in their initial attitudes and sympathies. With this initial orientation, they follow a line of thought in a certain direction, motivated, ideally, by a desire to clarify the issues, to understand the logical relations between ideas, and, like it or not, by a desire to render their beliefs true. This last desire is probably an inescapable motivation at the outset of almost all theoretical enquiry. Proceeding in this way, they eventually arrive at relativism, which declares truth, including the truth of its own claims, to be relative to a particular standpoint that cannot be proved superior to any other. This means that they cannot consistently hold that their own view alone is true, or that the truth they espouse is demonstrably deeper or more valuable than the truth as perceived from some other perspective. Yet relativism is *their* point of view. It is where they stand: they can do no other. They can, as we have seen, seek to justify their position on pragmatic grounds, as Rorty does. But such justifica-

tions have only limited persuasive power and can be countered by the argument that non-relativistic views may carry other advantages.

It is possible for relativists to acknowledge that alternative, non-relativist points of view may well offer practical benefits. Conceivably, these benefits could even outweigh those which relativism can legitimately claim to offer. This does not mean, however, that these non-relativist alternatives are a real option for the relativist who, if only he or she were sufficiently rational, would jump ship. To think this is to think of philosophy as essentially similar to natural science where, while there can be relatively long-standing disputes between rational and knowledgeable members of the scientific community, it is expected that differences of opinion on important questions will always eventually be overcome as all rational thinkers eventually accept one way of thinking as the correct way. In the case of fundamental philosophical disagreements, however, I would suggest that a more plausible view to take, at least when one detaches oneself from the particular philosophical battles being fought, is that we subscribe to the fundamental tenets that define our overall philosophical outlook not in the way scientists endorse scientific theories but more in the way individuals adhere to a particular religion. Of course, in both philosophy and religion, one can be more or less dogmatic or open-minded. But the general point I am concerned to bring out in making this comparison is that one's guiding philosophical orientation, like one's religion, is not chosen in an abstract manner, by pure reason alone. One starts out within some particular framework of beliefs, assumptions, values, and concern, and modifications of one's views will be made within that framework. An understanding of other religions (like an appreciation of rival philosophical positions) can often occasion such modifications, and occasionally a conversion. But conversions are unusual and not to be expected.

Because one's religion is not chosen abstractly, one is not simply free to adopt that religion which can offer the best arguments for its superiority over the others. Islam may be able to point to certain practical benefits it can confer which Christianity does not offer; but a committed Christian cannot be expected simply to consider these advantages, weigh them against any perceived disadvantages, and then convert or not convert on the basis of this reckoning. Religious belief may offer advantages over a secular outlook; but most atheists, even if they were to acknowledge this, would not consider themselves free to embrace religion. The situation of philosophers confronted with options such as those presented by relativist and non-relativist outlooks is similar. In making these remarks, I do not mean to deny the possibility of conversion to a quite different way of thinking, either in philosophy or religion. Nor do I wish to present a view of philosophical opinions as being completely determined by the cultural environment of those who hold them. My concern is, rather, to emphasize that one's philosophical "choices" inevitably reflect one's general intellectual orientation and pre-philosophical leanings, and to recognize that this fact significantly qualifies the sense in which one is free to choose between rival philosophical positions.[11] Relativists are those who, starting out with certain initial leanings, pursue a line of enquiry in a particular direction to what appears to be its logical conclusion. They need not and, given their views, should not insist that everyone else think as they do. But for them, relativism is the position they arrive at in attempting to meet a self-imposed obligation to maintain intellectual integrity.

Notes

1. One could, if one chose, extend the analogy to cover more complex positions. Putnam, for instance, resembles a Weet philosopher who recognizes that "perfect" cannot be explicated in terms of correspondence to some ideal since to justify any claim about a loaf's perfection would require one to adopt a "God's eye point of view" from which a comparison could be made between actual bread and the ideal. But, unhappy with the relativist position, he argues that "perfect" should be understood as meaning something like "made according to an ideal recipe." Habermas is like one who argues that the Weet recipe is demonstrably superior to the Chaph recipe since any bread making process involves an implicit commitment to producing bread which has certain qualities; and since Weet bread exhibits these qualities to a greater extent than Chaph bread, the Chaph have to acknowledge that even on their own terms the Weet recipe is better than their own. (To which Habermas' critics would respond by pointing out that it is perfectly possible to make bread with other intentions, such as the intention to poison whoever eats it.)

2. One obvious disanalogy lies in the fact that reason, unlike a recipe, has a reflexive capability and function.

3. All three lines of criticism can be found in Hilary Putman's writings on relativism. See, for instance, his *Reason, Truth and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) chapters 5 and 7; "Why reason can't be naturalized," in *Realism and Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); "Realism with a Human Face," "Why is a philosopher?" "The Craving for Objectivity," and "Beyond the Fact/Value Dichotomy" (all reprinted in *Realism with a Human Face*, ed. James Conant (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990); and *Renewing Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), chapters 5 and 8. Jürgen Habermas is another important thinker who objects to relativism on similar grounds (see his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1987) especially chapter IX and X). Throughout the following discussion I will use Putnam and Habermas as convenient reference points; for although there are, of course, many other critics of relativism, these two thinkers offer what I believe to be the most penetrating critiques backed up by fully worked out alternative conceptions of truth and rationality. For other examples of the kinds of attack mentioned above see I.C. Jarvie, *Rationality and Relativism: In search of a philosophy and history of anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984); Karl Popper, "Facts, Standards, and Truth: A Further Criticism of Relativism," addendum 1 to *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. II, 5th ed. revised (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966); Israel Scheffler, *Science and Subjectivity* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967).

4. Richard Bernstein takes (ii) to be the central thesis of relativism. "As I have characterized the

relativist, his or her essential claim is that there can be no higher appeal than to a given conceptual scheme, language game, set of social practices, or historical epoch. There is a nonreducible plurality of such schemes, paradigms, and practices; there is no substantive overarching framework in which radically different and alternative schemes are commensurable – no universal standards that somehow stand outside of and above these alternatives." Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 11-12.

5. See Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

6. I choose to focus on this argument because I believe that of the four it is the most important and the most plausible. The first two arguments have a more theoretical character in that they aim to show how a relativistic view of truth and rationality harmonizes better with other beliefs that most critics of relativism are likely to hold. While there is much that can be – and has been – said on this issue, the debates have, predictably, tended to be inconclusive. The third argument is both theoretical and pragmatic; it is the main argument advanced by Rorty when recommending his own philosophy as an improvement over what it is intended to replace. In my opinion it has some plausibility, even though Rorty's elaboration of it is problematic. But I would argue that the general claim it makes – that a relativist conception of reason best coheres with and promotes liberal values – is most plausibly supported by appealing to the sort of considerations raised by the fourth argument.

7. This is the point of Peter Winch's remark, made in the course of criticizing the way some anthropologists feel able to pass absolute judgements on what they view as non-scientific standards of rationality, that "criteria of logic are not a direct gift from God." Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 100.

8. Although one can look backwards to past changes in our norms of rational acceptability – such as the jettisoning of the requirement that beliefs conform with scripture – for examples of alterations that come to be regarded as improvements, it is naturally difficult to point to an example of a specific improvement on our present norms of rationality which taking up a relativistic view of these norms would help us to make. For if we already recognized such an alteration as an improvement we would, presumably, have already made it. Nevertheless, for a suggestion regarding how we might modify with advantage our present ways of thinking, one might consider the important norm of logical consistency as it figures in the philosophical evaluation of ethical theories. When philosophers discuss an ethical theory they typically proceed on the assumption that any inconsistency they might find is highly damaging, even fatal, to the theory. The reason is because it is assumed that a theory which harbours a contradiction cannot be true; for reality, to which true theories are thought to correspond, cannot exhibit contradictions. But consistency is only one desideratum of an ethical theory, and taking it to be a sine qua non of any acceptable theory could be viewed as an intellectualist bias. There are other desiderata which we look for in an ethical theory, such as existential viability, relevance to our present concerns, conformity with our general theoretical outlook, explanatory power, and problem solving potential. The relativist view of rationality can encourage us to be open-minded in novel ways in our appraisal of a theory. Instead of insisting that the norms of rationality guide us toward the Truth – a view which leads one to make consistency the first and indispensable condition of a theory's acceptability – we should regard these norms as simply expressing what we value in a theory. The set of values to which we refer can vary according to the field and the subject matter. Their importance relative to one another can vary also. Thus, consistency is undoubtedly an important conventional constraint we impose on theories and the argumentation that supports them. But it is not the only constraint, and it need not be the most important. Arguably, an ethical theory which contains some inconsistencies but which also offers sound and workable practical guidance in relation to contemporary moral concerns is to be preferred over a logically watertight theory which we find to be of limited practical significance. Consistency can still be a consideration in our overall evaluation of a theory; but the presence of an inconsistency could usefully be viewed more like a fault which generates penalty points than as the argumentative equivalent of a third strike.

9. Robert Kane argues for this point of view in *Through the Moral Maze*, Chapter Four.

10. The argumentative strategy of the non-relativist in this case would be similar to that adopted by William James in essays like "The Will to Believe" and "Is Life Worth Living?" (Both essays appear in William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Dover, 1956.)

11 William James expressed something like the same idea when he wrote: "If we take the whole history of philosophy, the systems reduce themselves to a few main types which under all technical verbiage in which the ingenious intellect of man envelops them, are just so many visions, modes of feeling the whole push, and seeing the whole drift of life, forced on one by one's total character and experience and on the whole *preferred* – there is no other truthful word – as one's best working attitude." (William James *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, pp. 14-15.)