

## **The Proper Affiliation of Psychology: With Philosophy or the Natural Sciences**

James Gibson Hume

Philosophy and psychology are affiliated in the Southern Society, and in the University of Toronto we do not divorce them.

Certain ultra-scientific psychologists, identifying philosophy with obsolete medieval metaphysics, naturally do not wish any affiliation. They can provide for philosophy under the sub-division 'Psychology of illusions and aberrations.' 'Psychology without a soul', means psychology without metaphysics. We may get along without medieval quibblings about occult essences. Pre-Kantian philosophy repudiated and refuted this dogmatic analytic method, Kant and his successors developed a better method and a more adequate metaphysic. It is as legitimate to distinguish modern philosophy from medievalism as it is to distinguish chemistry from alchemy, astronomy from astrology.

If the soul in question is the one David Hume could not 'catch,' the 'simple substance' demolished in Kant's 'Paralogisms,' we can get along without it also. But Kant reinstated another self or ego in his 'unity of apperception' and 'practical reason,' an organizing function within experience. This we cannot afford to lose. If we have a self within experience we do not need a second one beyond it. Those who are most vigorous in repudiating metaphysics usually reject idealistic metaphysics and adopt materialistic metaphysics instead. A mechanical explanation allows for no distinction between good and evil; it also takes away the distinction between true and false, fact and fancy; as each so-called fancy is as necessarily determined, it is therefore as legitimate as any so-called fact. This destroys science. Hence, materialistic metaphysics ought to be as obsolete as medievalism.

A state of consciousness may be dealt with abstractly, scientifically, and atomically, nevertheless in actuality it is an integral part of a continuum of living, synthesizing, conscious process.

Philosophy and psychology are really complementary. They deal with the warp and woof of the same undivided concrete human experience. Psychology turns special attention to the content and its analysis, philosophy to the organization or synthesis of this same content. Hence, psychology without philosophy is blind, philosophy without psychology is empty.

Reference: Hume, J. G. (1909). The proper affiliation of psychology: With philosophy or the natural sciences. *Psychological Bulletin*, 6, 65–67.

Experimental psychology has a perfect right to be ranked with the exact sciences; it shares with mathematics the work of making other sciences more exact, nevertheless it is closely bound up with philosophy. Both start from the same data of directly given actual human experience and on this common ground overlap. Further, the philosopher must cultivate the psychological soil if he would gather philosophical fruit; and the psychologist, after getting his scientific results, if he would interpret their meaning must philosophize.